

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT** on **Tuesday 5 December 2017.**

(10.05 am - 12.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

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| Jason Baker | David Norris |
| Dave Bulmer | Alan Smith |
| John Clark | Rob Stickland |
| John Field | Gerard Tucker |

Also Present:

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| Val Keitch | Sylvia Seal |
| Jo Roundell Greene | |

Officers

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| Alex Parmley | Chief Executive |
| Clare Pestell | Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation) |
| Chris Cooper | Streetscene Manager |
| David Norris | Development Manager |
| David Clews | Spatial Planner |
| Charlotte Jones | Performance Manager |
| Adam Burgan | Arts & Entertainment Manager |
| Nicola Hix | Corporate Accountant |
| Jo Gale | Scrutiny Manager |
| Becky Sanders | Democratic Services Officer |

80. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

81. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carol Goodall, Tony Lock, Martin Wale and Colin Winder.

82. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

83. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

84. Issues arising from previous meetings (Agenda Item 5)

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

85. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman asked everyone present at the meeting to observe a moment of silence in memory of Ian Clarke (Solicitor to the Council and Director of Support Services). She noted he had been a great support to the Scrutiny Committee and would be greatly missed.

The Chairman noted that on 24 November, several members of the Scrutiny Committee had met with the Director of Strategy & Commissioning and the Performance Manager to discuss Performance Monitoring, which had been interesting and useful. She noted a formal report would come forward to the Scrutiny Committee in the New Year for discussion.

86. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 2 November 2017 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman noted that the Scrutiny comments had been considered and were included in the District Executive minutes which had been circulated.

87. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 December 2017 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 7 December 2017 and made the following comments:

Somerset Waste Partnership Annual report and Draft Business Plan 2018-2023 (Agenda item 6)

- Page 24 – Core services contract review – members noted Viridor had many such contracts nationally and queried if there are likely to be other alternative providers.
- Page 5 – Purpose of the report refers to an agreement not being reached with the contractors, Kier, regarding the delivery plan and implementation of Recycle More. Members were concerned if similar issues may arise with alternative contractors. (although were reassured by the Officer and Portfolio Holder why this would be unlikely)
- Members noted the same report has gone, or will be going, to the other authorities within the Somerset Waste Partnership, and queried where we were in that process. i.e. first or last authority to consider the report.

Community Infrastructure Levy - Guidance and Governance (Agenda item 7)

- Rec B – Scrutiny queried if there would be a timeline associated with the Infrastructure Business Plan.
- Page 29 - Members sought clarification that the table at the top of the page did not take into account the parish or town councils that may be eligible to receive 25% of CIL receipts (ie those with Neighbourhood Plans).
- Members sought clarification that SSDC were continuing to encourage parishes to do Neighbourhood Plans.
- Members also queried if a parish has a need for a specific project but no Neighbourhood Plan, was there scope for the parish to bid for, or receive more than 15%. (Dave Norris did clarify the situation in response to this and provided examples of the 123 list)

SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation (Agenda item 8)

- Members supported the structured approach and more feasibility work being undertaken.
- Scrutiny queried the potential for losing car parking spaces in some of the proposals for development/relocation and what impact this would have and the cost implications.
- Members sought reassurance that that SSDC owned the freehold of all the properties concerned, and queried if there were any ground rents due on properties, and also that penalties associated with any leases would also be taken into consideration.
- Some members noted the Locality Working Group had met 3 or 4 times, but only now had the aspect of operational accommodation been added to the scope for the group. Members felt things could have been done in a different way as concerns had been raised previously, and it now felt like the issue was being rushed.
- One member requested reassurance around the commitment to the redevelopment of Chard given the changes in Officer roles.
- Members requested that regeneration groups were consulted as part of the feasibility work.
- Committee members requested more frequent Communications to keep members informed at each stage.

The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (Agenda item 9)

- Members acknowledged much work had been done to get to this stage, and endorsed the recommendations.
- Members queried which other parishes were also going through the process, and what obligations SSDC had for costs of the process.

Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter (Agenda item 10)

- Members commented that the summary of progress for each priority in the Council Plan was useful.
- Page 149 - Regarding priority 5, some members raised queries about the Superfast Broadband, and in particular if it was known if the SSDC area had lost out on any delivery as a result of not putting in our £640k?

Purchase of Land Adjoining Boden Street Car Park, Chard (Agenda item 11)

- It was noted the site was in the Chard Holyrood Ward – and hence report should refer to the ward member being Cllr Jason Baker not Cllr Dave Bulmer.
- Members queried which budget the money would be allocated from, and how much would remain in that budget after this purchase.

Yeovil Refresh – Delivery Arrangements (Agenda item 12)

- Some members commented that funding for quick-win projects to be delivered in the Old Station area of town was needed and would be welcomed.
- Page 161 – Rec C – It was queried if the Programme Manager would be a contractor or an officer employed by SSDC, and for how many years?
- Page 162 – para 9 – Scrutiny noted that Appendix A had been published as a confidential document, however the report did not indicate it was confidential which may be confusing for the public.
- Page 167 – the table – members sought clarification regarding the ownership of Foundry House.

Westlands Revised Business Plan (Agenda item 13)

- Members queried what assumptions had been used in order to generate the revised Business Plan?
- It was also noted that some tenants had re-located from other SSDC premises to Westlands, and it was acknowledged that while this had improved the business at Westlands it may have had a knock on effect at other venues such as the Innovation Centre.
- Members noted that Steve Joel had been referred to by name rather than job title several times in the report, which was unusual and they did not feel it was the correct way to refer to an officer in a report.

CONFIDENTIAL – Exclusion of the Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the following items in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Appendix for Westlands Revised Business Plan (Agenda item 13)

- Scrutiny made several comments in confidential session with regard to details in the confidential appendix.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 14)

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Plan had been on the Forward Plan for December but had now been moved to January.
- Update on Yeovil Crematorium Refurbishment – The Chairman noted she had been surprised that the report had been circulated direct to members by email rather than a report on the District Executive agenda. Members asked when there would be opportunity to ask questions either by them or the public.

88. Monitoring the SSDC Council Tax Support Scheme - Report and Findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (November 2017) (Agenda Item 9)

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report which summarised the monitoring activity and work conducted since the last Task and Finish report in December 2016 about the Council Tax Support Scheme. The report also detailed recommendations for the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19. Members of the Scrutiny Committee were asked to endorse the report to District Executive.

The Chairman, Task and Finish members and Scrutiny Manager responded to points of detail. Some members queried if it was cost effective to be running the scheme and sought re-assurance of the monitoring of the costs of collection.

At the end of the short discussion, members were unanimously in agreement to endorse the report of the Task & Finish Group to District Executive. Members also wished to thank all the officers involved for their work.

ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to forward Task & Finish report to appropriate officers.

89. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted the updates provided by the Scrutiny Manager on each of the Task and Finish Groups currently in progress or commencing in the near future.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2018 – This Task and Finish work was now complete. The report and recommendations would go forward to be considered by District Executive and Full Council in January.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019 – The Task and Finish group had held their second meeting and were progressing with potential options to reduce administration time for the scheme.

Homefinder Somerset - No updates since the last meeting.

Transformation – Customer accessibility - this review would commence in January 2018.

Car Parking Charges – The review would commence when resources permit.

Members briefly discussed the priority for Car Parking Task and Finish work and agreed it had a low priority until resources became available.

90. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Manager noted that an update regarding Performance Monitoring had been provided earlier on the agenda under Chairman’s Announcements. A member also briefly provided some feedback to those who had been unable to attend the Performance Monitoring meeting on 24 November.

91. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

It was noted a Performance Monitoring report would come forward to the January meeting, as mentioned under Chairman’s Announcements earlier on the agenda.

92. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on Tuesday 2 January 2018 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

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Chairman