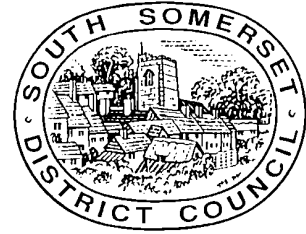


**South Somerset District Council**

*Notice of Meeting*



# Scrutiny Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Tuesday 5th December 2017**

**10.00 am**

**Main Committee Room, Council Offices  
Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



The following members are requested to attend this meeting.

**Chairman:** Sue Steele  
**Vice-chairmen:** Dave Bulmer and John Clark

Jason Baker  
John Field  
Carol Goodall  
Tony Lock

Paul Maxwell  
David Norris  
Alan Smith  
Rob Stickland

Gerard Tucker  
Martin Wale  
Colin Winder

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Officer on 01935 462596 or [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Monday 27 November 2017.

**Alex Parmley**, *Chief Executive Officer*

This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) and via the [mod.govapp](http://mod.govapp)



# Information for the Public

## What is Scrutiny?

The Local Government Act 2000 requires all councils in England and Wales to introduce new political structures which provide a clear role for the Council, the Executive and non-executive councillors.

One of the key roles for non-executive councillors is to undertake an overview and scrutiny role for the council. In this Council the overview and scrutiny role involves reviewing and developing, scrutinising organisations external to the council and holding the executive to account

Scrutiny also has an important role to play in organisational performance management.

The Scrutiny Committee is made up of 14 non-executive members and meets monthly to consider items where executive decisions need to be reviewed before or after their implementation, and to commission reviews of policy or other public interest.

Members of the public are able to:

- attend meetings of the Scrutiny Committee except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings (limited to up to 3 minutes per person and at the Chairman's discretion usually no more than a total of 15 minutes is allocated for public speaking); and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Committee are held monthly on the Tuesday prior to meetings of the District Executive at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Agendas and minutes of these meetings are published on the Council's website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk).

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

## Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

# Scrutiny Committee

## Tuesday 5 December 2017

### Agenda

#### *Preliminary Items*

**1. Minutes** (Pages 4 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 October 2017.

**2. Apologies for absence**

**3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

**4. Public question time**

**5. Issues arising from previous meetings**

This is an opportunity for Members to question the progress on issues arising from previous meetings. However, this does not allow for the re-opening of a debate on any item not forming part of this agenda.

**6. Chairman's Announcements**

#### *Items for Discussion*

**7. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 2 November 2017** (Page 9)

**8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 December 2017** (Page 10)

**9. Monitoring the SSDC Council Tax Support Scheme - Report and Findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (November 2017)** (Page 11)

**10. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews** (Page 12)

**11. Update on matters of interest** (Page 13)

**12. Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 14 - 16)

**13. Date of next meeting** (Page 17)

# Agenda Item 1

## South Somerset District Council

**Draft minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 31 October 2017.**

(10.05 am - 11.30 am)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	David Norris
Dave Bulmer	Alan Smith
John Clark	Rob Stickland
John Field	Gerard Tucker
Carol Goodall	Colin Winder

**Also Present:**

Jo Roundell Greene	Val Keitch
Henry Hobhouse	

**Officers**

Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer
Catherine Hood	Finance Manager

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**68. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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**69. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Lock and Martin Wale.

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**70. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**71. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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## **72. Issues arising from previous meetings (Agenda Item 5)**

The Chairman reminded members to feedback comments to the Scrutiny Manager as soon as possible regarding the report request for the Yeovil Innovation Centre, as had been discussed at the previous meeting.

Members were also requested to forward any specific questions regarding the Westlands Entertainment and Conference Centre to the Scrutiny Manager so that they could be addressed in the next report by the Arts and Entertainment Manager.

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## **73. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman noted she had attended the recent member briefing about Transformation. She had raised some questions about locality working and also requested that a person independent of SSDC chair the locality group meetings. In response, the Scrutiny Manager confirmed that an independent person had now been brought in to facilitate the group meetings.

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## **74. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 October 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.

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## **75. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 November 2017 (Agenda Item 8)**

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 2 November 2017 and made the following comments:

### **Presentation by SPARK Somerset (Voluntary and Community Action) (Agenda item 6)**

- Members sought re-assurance that SPARK were meeting targets and performing as expected, as they were financially supported by SSDC.

### **2017/18 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (Agenda item 7)**

- Members noted both budget reports seemed to be lacking context in places with addresses of some projects being omitted. E.g. Page 7, para 7 – the comment doesn't refer to the notes being related to the Westlands project, Page 30, para 10 table – Millers site doesn't detail that this is in Crewkerne etc.
- Page 9, para 18 – members queried how relevant was the drop in collection rates, and was the reason for the drop known? Scrutiny also asked if we benchmark our collection rates with other authorities?
- Page 12 – New Homes Bonus – it was noted that changes were likely in the future and queried if officers knew the likely effect should those changes happen,

or if they might have a major or minor impact. Some members queried if it was possible to scope for any likely scenarios.

- Page 14 – bottom line of table. Scrutiny queried if the canteen facility is subsidised?

### **2017/18 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Quarter Ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (Agenda item 8)**

- Page 30, para 9 - members queried whether the word 'income' should say expenditure instead, as otherwise the sentence did not seem to make sense?
- Appx B on page 43 – members commented it would be useful if the Leadership Board Proposals were SMART and had an indication of timeframes detailed.
- Middle of lower table on page 41 – Scrutiny sought clarification about when the funding allocation for 'Investment in Market Housing' had been agreed it would be useful if all future monitoring reports could have an additional column with the decision date and link to the report so you could refer back to the report and minutes

### **The Installation of a 14.8 kW Photovoltaic Array at Yeovil Innovation Centre (Agenda item 9)**

- A member asked some technical questions about the project (issues around insurance, potential vandalism, and types of meters etc) , and Scrutiny were satisfied that the comments had been adequately addressed by the Portfolio Holder at the Scrutiny meeting.
- Members sought reassurance that there would be no business rates liability regarding the installation of the photovoltaic panels.
- Some members were concerned about the timeframes involved for the project, and if there were to be any slippage with the project installation if there would be a risk of failing to meet the deadlines to receive the specified feed-in tariff?
- Scrutiny queried the risk matrix, and noted the increased risks of proceeding with the project seemed unusual.

### **Increase in Councillors and Change of Name of Barwick Parish Council – Community Governance Review (CGR) (Agenda item 10)**

- Members acknowledged the parish council wished to change its name and why. However members did note that the number of councillors requested seemed high for a parish of its size, and the reason for the increase in councillors seemed to not be based on population and representation.

### **District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 11)**

- Scrutiny made no comments.

### **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).

## **Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision: Disposal of 11-12 South Western Terrace, Yeovil (Confidential) (Agenda item 14)**

- Scrutiny made several comments in confidential session with regard to the processes relating to the disposal.

## **76. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)**

**Council Tax Support Scheme 2018** – Revenues and Benefits Officers were finalising some data in response to monitoring recommendations made in the last Scrutiny Task and Finish report. The reports regarding the 2018 scheme should be presented at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting.

**Council Tax Support Scheme 2019** – The Task and Finish group had held their first meeting. They sought re-assurance with regard to the financial support/pressure to make savings and the potential risks or complications of making changes at a time when there will be significant change as a result of Transformation.

**Homefinder Somerset** - No updates since the last meeting

**Car Parking Charges** – The review would commence when resources permit. SSDC has lots of data to help inform the Task and Finish Group's strategy for conducting the review.

**Transformation – Accessible Services** – The Task and Finish Group would commence in January and will work with the Transformation Team to identify, and deliver, Best Practice to provide accessible on-line information and services for all.

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## **77. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny Manager provided an update to members regarding Performance Monitoring. She noted the new Director for Strategy & Commissioning would like to speak to Scrutiny members in December to discuss some proposals for performance monitoring. During discussion members raised several comments including:

- Where was the evidence about what customers want?
- Need to get monitoring right. Need to know how we will compare post Transformation to now, like for like.
- Acknowledge data will be captured differently in the future but it needs to be comparable.
- Acknowledge much information is being captured but it's not being reported to members. Members need to also say what information they think is important to capture.
- Need to be able to monitor the 'channel shift'
- Background information also needed to give context to some data.

At the end of discussion, members expressed a preference for an informal workshop initially to discuss performance monitoring with the Director for Strategy & Commissioning, if possible to be arranged to take place before the next Scrutiny Committee meeting. Members also requested that the Scrutiny Manager circulate some background information prior to the workshop.

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**78. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Manager provided members with the following updates regarding future items on the Scrutiny Work Programme:

**Innovation Centre** - As mentioned previously on the agenda, this had not progressed due to waiting for sign off from some Scrutiny Committee members.

**Customer Accessibility (website)** - The Technology Implementation Manager had noted that his team were not intending to look at developing anything customer facing until March. The Scrutiny Manager advised that members would probably look to start a review after Christmas. She asked members to view other websites and note examples of good practice and style of language used.

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**79. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)**

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on 5 December 2017, in the Main Committee Room.

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Chairman



# Agenda Item 7

## **Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 2 November 2017**

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 2 November 2017.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 2 November 2017 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

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# Agenda Item 8

## **Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 December 2017**

*Lead Officer:* Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager

*Contact Details:* joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 7 December 2017.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 December 2017.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 7 December 2017.

### **Please note:**

The Press and Public will be excluded from the meeting when a report or appendix on the District Executive agenda has been classed as confidential, Scrutiny Committee will consider this in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under paragraph 3 (or for any other reason as stated in the District Executive agenda):

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).”

It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from the Access to Information Rules outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

# Agenda Item 9

## **Monitoring the SSDC Council Tax Support Scheme – Report and Findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (November 2017)**

*Lead Officers:* Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager

*Contact Details:* [joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk) or 01935 462077

Report to follow.

# Agenda Item 10

## **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews**

The Task and Finish Review Chairs or Scrutiny Manager will give a brief verbal update on progress made.

### **Current Task & Finish Reviews:**

- Council Tax Support Scheme 2019
- Homefinder Somerset

### **Task and Finish Reviews due to start:**

- Transformation – Accessible Services
- Car Parking Charges

# Agenda Item 11

## **Update on matters of interest**

*Lead Officers: Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager*

*Contact Details: joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077*

## **Action Required**

That members of the Scrutiny Committee note the verbal updates as presented by the Scrutiny Manager.

## **Purpose of Report**

This report is submitted for information to update members of the committee on any recent information regarding matters of interest to the Scrutiny Committee, and for the Scrutiny Manager to verbally update members on any ongoing matters including:

- Performance Monitoring
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## Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
Jan '18	Discretionary Housing Payment policy monitoring	✓		An update report on the implementation and outcomes of the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy that came in to effect on 1 April 2017 following a Task and Finish review.	Ian Potter
Feb '18	Yeovil Innovation Centre	✓		An update report on the Innovation Centre's performance including progress of phase 2. With a brief overview of the work to achieve the related Economic focussed Council plan targets and related strategies.	David Julian
Feb / March 2017	Council Tax Penalties and Civil Penalties in Housing Benefit			In April 2017 the council agreed to introduce penalties for those who have failed to notify the Council of change of circumstances that has resulted in them continuing to receive a Council Tax exemption, discount, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support award that they are not entitled. Scrutiny Committee agreed at their meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 for an item to be added to the forward plan for October to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. Figures with regard to the cost of issuing and collecting penalties have been specifically requested.	Ian Potter
Feb TBC	Monitoring of the implementation of Charges for Pre-Application Development Control Advice	✓		In April 2017 Scrutiny Committee supported the introduction of charging for Pre- Application Development Advice and requested a monitoring report is brought forward to establish the effectiveness of recouping costs and to consider the re-evaluation of fees.	David Norris
TBC	Troubled Families Programme	✓		Members requested an update report on the progress of the troubled families following a report covering the work of South Somerset Together, Local Strategic Partnership. A specific report request needs to be compiled.	Helen Rutter

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
TBC	Review of Economic Development Strategy	✓		This Strategy is due for review and Scrutiny members have previously been involved in the review and development of this Policy. The Lead Officer has agreed that Scrutiny involvement will be factored in to the review process and we will be kept informed regarding the most appropriate point for effective Scrutiny engagement.	David Julian / Cllr Jo Roundell Greene.
TBC	Increased Joint Working Between Police Forces			At the meeting of Scrutiny Committee on 30 August 2016, the SSDC representative on the Police and Crime Panel requested that there be a report looking at the proposals for increased joint working between police forces across the South West.	

The Somerset Waste Board and Somerset Waste Partnership Forward Plan of key decisions can be viewed at:  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=196&RD=0>

### Current Task & Finish Reviews

Date Commenced	Title and Purpose	Members
February 2017	Council Tax Support 2018/19 Monitoring the effectiveness of the current scheme and how best to manage the reductions in the Administration grant as part of efficiency savings and as a consequence of the changes with Universal Credit	Cllrs Jason Baker, Val Keitch, Andy Kendall, David Norris, Sue Osborne, Sue Steele, Alan Smith, Rob Stickland, Derek Yeomans
February 2017	Accessible Homefinder Common Lettings Policy A review of the policy to ensure it is accessible for customers/the general public. Phase 1 completed with comments re style, layout and terminology fed back, phase 2 to commence June 2017 or later.	Cllrs Sue Steele, Carol Goodall

<b>Date Commenced</b>	<b>Title and Purpose</b>	<b>Members</b>
October 2017	Council Tax Support 2019/20 Consider the merits/risks of moving towards a discount based policy.	Cllrs Carol Goodall, David Norris
Due to start January 2018	Working with the Transformation Team to identify, and deliver, Best Practice to provide accessible on-line information and services for all.	TBC
TBC	<p>Car Parking Charging/Strategy</p> <p>To ensure we have a strategy and policy that encourages an effective and efficient use of car parks for generating an appropriate surplus.</p> <p>To make sure the provision of car parking in terms of location, layout and cost helps to support the Objectives in the Council Plan and related strategies, for example Economic Development, Regeneration and Commercial Property.</p> <p>To ensure consistency across the District.</p>	
TBC	<p>Rural Allocations Policy</p> <p>The Disposal of Third Party properties had highlighted issues with the Rural Allocations Policy and some work now needs to be done to review the policy, no start date has been agreed for this as yet.</p>	
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are committed to ensuring they have capacity to contribute to the Council's Transformation programme and therefore fewer Task and Finish reviews may be conducted during the Transformation period.		



# Agenda Item 13

## **Date of next meeting**

Members are requested to note that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 2 January 2018 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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