

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber B, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT** on **Tuesday 3 July 2018**.

(10.00 am - 12.50 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	David Norris
Dave Bulmer	Rob Stickland
John Field	Martin Wale
Carol Goodall	Colin Winder
Mike Lock	

Also Present:

Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton
Val Keitch	Sylvia Seal
Jo Roundell Greene	

Officers

Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Caron Starkey	Strategic Lead for Transformation
Charlotte Jones	People, Performance & Change Lead
Zac Tredger	Specialist (Performance)
Jan Gamon	Lead Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Jo Manley	Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Sarah Hickey	Senior Planning Lawyer
Nicola Hix	Lead Specialist (Finance)
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Jo Calvert	Housing Development Officer
Katy Menday	Leisure & Recreation Manager
Becky Sanders	Case Services Officer (Support Services)
Jo Morris	Case Services Officer (Support Services)

13. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Clark, Alan Smith and Gerard Tucker.

15. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

16. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

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

No issues were raised from previous meetings.

18. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman made no announcements.

19. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 7 June 2018 (Agenda Item 7)

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

20. Corporate Performance Reporting (Agenda Item 8)

Prior to introducing the report, the People, Performance and Change Lead introduced Zac Tredger, the newly appointed Performance Specialist.

The People, Performance and Change Lead gave a presentation on Corporate Performance Reporting which covered the following:

- Overall vision of the corporate performance management framework
- Progress to date
- Building the framework
- Style and layout of reports
- System requirements

The Officer responded to points of detail raised during discussion which included the following:

- For the new performance indicators there were 3 years of baseline information available which was a good starting point for looking at trends.
- Telephone performance was a key performance indicator which would form part of the quarterly performance reports.
- The system used for monitoring information had not changed only choosing what to measure had altered. All previous data was still available within the system.
- In future the performance system would need to be developed in order to accommodate dashboard reporting.
- Benchmarking information against other Councils would be included in future reports, and would involve looking at the use of a single data set. The way data was collected would mean there was a time lag of several months with the reported data provided in quarterly reporting, but this would be indexed in the reports.

- With regard to internal benchmarking, previous trends would be analysed. It was more difficult to look forward and undertake predictive work.
- It was the intention to have performance information available on the members portal.
- A view on tolerance levels would be taken internally and whether interventions were required within the service.
- Members needed to be mindful that the reporting did not deal with real times and would normally be reporting information 6 weeks after the quarter. If there were spikes in performance, action was likely to have already been taken and so an indicator may be back in the green.
- In future, performance monitoring reports would be submitted to District Executive one month earlier than previously and would follow the same reporting schedule as finance reports.
- Systems will be in place to ensure appropriate action is taken if an indicator is in the red.

Members supported the use of the Red, Amber & Green (RAG) system in future reports as this gave a good indication of performance levels and easily highlighted if an area required immediate action.

The People, Performance and Change Lead advised that the quarter one performance monitoring report would be brought forward in August. She intended to start with a simple report and use the remainder of the year to really understand how best to view the Council's performance and make improvements to develop the report.

The Chairman thanked the People, Performance and Change Lead for her presentation and report.

21. Organisational Capacity to Deliver Transformation and Maintain Service Delivery (Agenda Item 9)

The Strategic Lead for Transformation introduced the report. She assured members that there were mechanisms in place and approaches had been devised, to closely monitor the organisational impact of Transformation and balance resources, in order to ensure the Council was delivering effective services whilst implementing the Transformation Programme.

The Director (Service Delivery) acknowledged there were some dips in performance and there were staff shortages in some areas. The Leadership and Management Teams, and the Programme Board, had a good understanding of where the current pressures were with certain services, and active measures were being put in place to make sure that the period of turbulence was minimised. He advised that in order to address these issues a range of measures were being implemented to improve service delivery.

The Strategic Lead and Director responded to points of detail raised during discussion including information about:

- The immediate measures being taken, including use of temporary resources, to fill gaps where services are currently under resourced, to ensure that services are kept at acceptable performance levels and statutory duties are delivered within required timescales.
- The actions being taken to improve customer access via the Contact Centre.

- There were a number of other factors contributing to service pressures and workforce performance such as regulatory changes and business sector skill shortages.
- The additional provision of £250,000 from the agreed budget for additional resourcing was one off funding. It was recognised from other authorities that the operating state would not be perfectly formed from day one and would require supplementing resources as the new technology, processes and roles bed in.
- The difficulties with staff recruitment and shortages of professional staff.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for attending the meeting.

22. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 July 2018 (Agenda Item 10)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 5th July 2018 and made comments as detailed below. Responses to all comments and questions were provided at the Scrutiny Committee meeting by the Leader, relevant officer, or Portfolio Holder.

Dualling of the A303 from Sparkford to Ilchester (Agenda item 6)

- Members queried if the funding from Highways England was adequate to cover SSDC resources?

Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda item 7)

- Paragraph 5.5 – some members queried if Magna Housing Association are restarting their development activities whether this was likely to cause any issues in the short term.

Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and associated charges (Agenda item 8)

- Members noted that there had been a low response to consultation and queried whether the response rate was adequate to draw conclusions. Members queried if landlords would be made aware of the new charges.
- Page 57 Table 1 – Members queried the terminology as charges are stated per hour. What happens if it's part of an hour - should it state 'per hour or part thereof.'

Adoption of the South Somerset Playing Pitch Strategy 2017 – 2028 (Agenda item 9)

- Some members raised concern that the Strategy seemed to focus on the number of grass pitches rather than the availability of pitches, and noted that grass pitches were high maintenance in terms of resources.
- Chard Ward Members raised a number of concerns relating specifically to the Chard area including:
 - Concern about description of 'deliverable' when there are external factors involved and hence SSDC may not necessarily be able to control delivery of projects.
 - Concern that one club was seen as the focus for the Chard area.

- Some members raised concern about community use of school pitches and noted that negotiations were needed for wider use at some locations.
- Scrutiny queried if the number of responses to the consultation was low/average/or as expected? If low, it was queried if there was a need corporately to look at how SSDC do any consultations in the future (*as this is the second report to possibility mention low response rate to consultations*).

Capital Budget Outturn Report for 2017/18 (Agenda item 10)

- Members noted that it was difficult to keep track of the budget for Transformation and requested if it was possible to have a table that collated all the information together for easy reference.
- Page 197 - Scrutiny queried when the reserve schemes were routinely reviewed to see if any schemes could be removed, re-profiled or funds returned to balances.

Revenue Budget Outturn Report for 2018/18 (Agenda item 11)

- Regarding recommendation C, members sought clarity that if approved what would the new total be in the Transformation Reserve?

SSDC Annual Performance Report 2017-18 (Agenda item 12)

- Members noted that Chard Refresh should be referred to as Chard Regeneration.

SSDC Transformation Programme – Progress Report (Agenda item 13)

- Members queried how many staff in total across all 3 phases had not been offered roles and what this figure was as FTEs - as in the report to Council in April 2017 it had been suggested that we “should seek to reduce our FTE’s by 77”.
- Some members commented the report was difficult to understand as there was much ‘jargon’. They also noted paragraph 18 had a typo and ‘able’ should read ‘unable’.
- Page 238 - Members noted that the remaining communications budget seemed very low and queried if this was intentional.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 14)

- Members noted a report on the purchase of land at Ham Hill was on the Forward Plan for September and queried if this was correct given that a report was being considered this month.

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).

Purchase of Land at Ham Hill Country Park (Confidential) (Agenda item 17)

- Members did not raise any queries and were content that all the recommendations go forward.

Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision: Battery Project – Establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (Agenda item 18)

- No comments.

23. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted the updates provided by the Chairman on each of the Task and Finish Groups currently in progress.

Customer Accessibility – The website work has progressed considerably. Representatives from the Task and Finish group will be involved in testing a desktop version of the website over the coming weeks as will representatives from all sectors.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019 – no updates since the last meeting

Homefinder Somerset Plain English – no updates since the last meeting

24. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 12)

There were no updates on matters of interest.

25. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 13)

Draft Yeovil Innovation Centre (YIC) 2018 Business Plan - the Chairman commented that the Director (Commercial Services and Income Generation) had noted that all of the commercial services have individual operational business plans, including YIC, which have been approved and signed off by the Senior Leadership Team and are being implemented. If any Scrutiny members wished to see the YIC business plan, or any of the other business plans, this could be arranged. The Chairman suggested that as the YIC business plan had been signed off that the item be removed from the Work Programme, and this was agreed by the Committee.

26. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 31st July 2018 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman