

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held by video conference using Zoom meeting software **on Tuesday 1 September 2020.**

(10.30 am - 12.30 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Crispin Raikes (Chairman)

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Brian Hamilton | Sue Osborne |
| Charlie Hull | Robin Pailthorpe |
| Mike Lewis | Mike Stanton |
| Mike Lock (to 11.00am) | Gerard Tucker |



Also Present:

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| John Clark | Linda Vijeh |
| Val Keitch | |

Officers

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Kirsty Larkins | Director (Strategy and Commissioning) |
| Nicola Hix | Director (Support Services) |
| Jo Nacey | Section 151 Officer |
| Jo Wilkins | Specialist (Strategic Planning) |
| Robert Orrett | Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager |
| Stephanie Gold | Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) |
| Becky Sanders | Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning) |

155. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

156. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robin Bastable, Nicola Clark, Paul Maxwell, Jeny Snell and Rob Stickland.

157. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

158. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

160. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman explained to those viewing the meeting that towards the end of the agenda the committee would need to go into confidential session and the YouTube streaming would end at that point.

161. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 7)

Members noted that a Special Meeting of Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 8 September at 2.00pm and would be held as a virtual meeting. It was also noted the next ordinary meeting of Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 29 September at 10.30am and would probably be held as a virtual meeting using Zoom.

162. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 August 2020 (Agenda Item 8)

There were no updates on reports considered by District Executive at the August meeting.

163. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)

One of the Scrutiny Vice-Chairmen provided an update on the Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group. She noted a further meeting with the consultant was scheduled to take place shortly to discuss proposals and evidence regarding the new proposed scheme prior to going out for consultation.

164. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 10)

There were no updates on matters of interest.

165. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

During a short discussion on the Scrutiny Work Programme, several comments and suggestions were raised including:

- Meetings of Scrutiny were currently focussed on the District Executive agenda, and Scrutiny should now start to work on other items.
- What would be happening about the Productivity Analysis work as it had been paused / suspended due to Covid?
- Feel the Task and Finish Groups should re-start.

- A report on the Council's response to the pandemic from a Scrutiny perspective would be useful.
- The current situation had highlighted the issues regarding broadband coverage across the district – would an update report be appropriate?

In response to comments made, the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) noted she was due to have a meeting with the Director (Strategy & Commissioning) shortly to discuss the Scrutiny Work Programme. The Portfolio Holder (Economy) also noted he had requested officers to produce an update report on broadband to include clear details about what SSDC were doing regarding exploring the feasibility of delivering broadband hubs at community and village levels.

Members were content to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

166. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 September 2020 (Agenda Item 12)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 3 September 2020 and raised comments as detailed below. Responses to most questions and comments were provided at Scrutiny Committee by the relevant officers or Portfolio Holder – except those marked by an asterisk:

The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (Agenda Item 6)

- The ward member noted there were many local concerns regarding the settlement boundary element, and felt that the content of para 22 in the covering report may not be accepted by the local community.
- * Members shared concerns that if the plan goes to referendum with the settlement boundary removed then the plan not be supported. This could affect our reputational risk and the risk matrix in the report.
- Members acknowledged it was a difficult situation and that very good reasons would be needed to go against the Examiner's recommendations.
- * Some members queried if parishes were being advised that the environment / climate emergency element should be reflected in Neighbourhood Plans.
- * Page 7 - Members were content regarding recommendations B and C. However regarding recs A and D, it is suggested that at Director level there is discussion with the parish to try and find a compromise before the referendum.

Disposal of Churchfields Office, Wincanton (Agenda Item 7)

- In closed session at the end of the meeting, members raised a comment and question regarding information contained within the confidential appendix.

Investment Assets Quarterly Update Report (Agenda Item 8)

- In closed session at the end of the meeting, members raised some questions regarding information contained within the confidential appendix.

Reconstruction & Adoption of Roadway, Chard Business Park (Agenda Item 9)

- Some members expressed concern that full costs of the works may require substantial funding – is there a risk that this may draw money away from Chard Regeneration Scheme projects?
- * Members asked if any costings had been done to indicate reasonable best and worst cost scenarios.
- Some members queried if there was confidence that there is no ransom strip at the end of the road?
- Members sought reassurance that SSDC would not be taken advantage of regarding costs and specifications.
- * Members also sought reassurance that there were no other similar situations to this elsewhere in the district.
- * Some members noted that SSDC had responsibility for other roads on the development – would it be possible to look at getting all the roads on the development adopted?

Shared Building Control and Somerset Independence Plus Service (Agenda Item 10)

- Members were content the recommendations go forward.

Shared Legal Services (Agenda Item 11)

- . Members were content the recommendations go forward.

Urgent Decision – Support for Leisure Provider (Agenda Item 12)

- Regarding possible MHCLG funding – when would any funding or support be known?
- Some members sought reassurance that as part of the SSDC funding support that a clause would be included regarding an expectation for the facility to remain open.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13)

- A member queried if the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy item is still scheduled for November as it was understood there was some pressure to bring the report earlier?

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)."

Yeovil Refresh Ring-fenced Assets and Development Opportunities (Confidential)
(Agenda Item 16)

- Members raised a question about a particular asset detailed in the confidential report.

Note: During the closed session members also discussed the confidential appendices for Agenda items 7 and 8:

.....
Chairman