

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil on Tuesday 5 June 2018.**

(10.00 am - 11.50 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Carol Goodall
Dave Bulmer	David Norris
John Clark	Martin Wale
John Field	

Also Present:

Henry Hobhouse	Ric Pallister
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Officers

Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Nicola Hix	Lead Specialist (Finance)
Becky Sanders	Case Services Officer (Support Services)

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Lock, Rob Stickland, Gerard Tucker and Colin Winder.

3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

No issues were raised from previous meetings.

6. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman noted she had recently attended a meeting of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) where the precepting had been discussed. An information leaflet was also being circulated to members and parishes about the work and role of the SRA.

It was noted that with recent agreed changes to various Boards it was now becoming increasingly difficult for members to stay informed about future meeting dates and memberships of the new Boards. She suggested, and other members agreed, that more information needed to be available on a members' portal or similar. In response, the Leader commented he would look into the matter.

7. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 3 May 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.

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 June 2018 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 7 June 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.

Review of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) (Agenda item 6)

- Page 5 – Scrutiny noted that use of the RIPA powers to date by the Council had been limited, and queried if there was a reason for this.
- Scrutiny were content that the recommendations go forward.

Establishing Special Purpose Vehicles for SSDC Investments (Agenda item 7)

- When a Special Purpose Vehicle is established, members asked how they would be able to find out information about the activity of that vehicle. For example agendas and minutes of Board meetings or AGMs etc.
- Page 42 Risk Matrix - regarding the left matrix showing the profile before officer recommendations – Scrutiny felt the positioning of Financial and Reputational risk was too high and may be conveying the wrong message.
- Members acknowledged the responses and information provided by the Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation). Scrutiny suggested that the report did not clearly indicate that the process only applied if an investment or project was time limited, but read as if it was a general procedure. It was suggested that additional wording be added to clarify this and also a slight change to wording of recommendation 7a.
- Scrutiny acknowledged setting up of SPVs was a big step for the authority, but also a necessary one. However it was felt there needed to be some improvement to the

process described in the report, and to make clear that a formal proposal will be required to set up an SPV.

- It was also suggested that the advantages and risks of proceeding with an individual SPV also be clearly identified, together with possible mitigation measures for any identified risks.

Commercial Strategy and Investments Progress Report (Agenda item 8)

- Members thanked officers for the detailed report and appendix.
- Para 30 – Scrutiny felt the use of appointed agents was a constructive way forward.

CONFIDENTIAL – Exclusion of the Press and Public (for discussion of confidential appendix – Agenda item 8)

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).

- Members made several comments in confidential session regarding information within the confidential appendix.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 9)

- Members noted an item on the Local Plan review was scheduled for October, and asked if members would have an opportunity to input into the process before that date.
- It was asked if there would be a report in due course regarding the Somerset County Council proposal to explore the option of a unitary authority for Somerset.

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

Members noted the updates provided by the Chairman and Case Services Officer on each of the Task and Finish Groups currently in progress or commencing in the near future.

Homefinder Somerset Plain English Policy – No updates since last meeting.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019 – Draft consultation text was currently with the Scrutiny Specialist for initial comments prior to circulation to Task and Finish Group members.

Customer Accessibility – Some members have taken part in a card sorting exercise to help shape the structure of the new website. Details of further Scrutiny involvement was awaited.

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

There were no updates on matters of interest.

11. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

The Case Services Officer advised that the item scheduled for July regarding Monitoring of Pre-Application Development Control Advice would now be made to the September meeting.

The Chairman reminded members to consider any reports or items they may wish to see added to the Work Programme.

12. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 3 July 2018 at 10.00am in Council Chamber B, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman