

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in **Council Chamber B - Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil** on **Tuesday 3 March 2020**.

(10.05 am - 12.50 pm)

Present:

Members: Gerard Tucker (in the Chair)

Robin Bastable	Paul Maxwell
Nicola Clark	Sue Osborne
Brian Hamilton	Robin Pailthorpe
Charlie Hull	Jeny Snell
Mike Lewis	Mike Stanton (to 12.10pm)
Paul Maxwell	Gerard Tucker



Also Present:

Tony Lock

Officers

Dr Alex Murray	Fit For My Future
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Cath Temple	Specialist (Performance)
David Crisfield	Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Toffer Beattie	Specialist (Projects & Programmes)
Jo Gale	Specialist (Members)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)

106. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

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

107. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crispin Raikes and Rob Stickland.

108. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

109. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

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

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

111. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

112. Fit For My Future (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman noted there had been some confusion regarding the purpose of the presentation. He briefly explained that representatives were present from Fit for my Future in order to raise awareness of a formal mental health consultation and to listen to the views of members.

Dr Alex Murray noted that Fit for my Future was the health and care strategy for Somerset. She explained that they wanted to share with members the new model of care regarding mental health services, and to get views of the Committee on the potential future location of adult acute inpatient beds (mental health). She provided a comprehensive presentation including information about:

- The strategy meant people in Somerset would receive a different model of care within their community – and a brief overview of how this would be achieved.
- The process for the review.
- The public consultation on the future location of adult acute inpatient mental health beds including:
 - Why there was a need to focus on mental health services
 - The mental health model in Somerset
 - What it would mean for people in Somerset
 - The current provision of acute mental health inpatient beds across Somerset
 - Why the acute mental health inpatient beds needed to be reviewed.
 - Which wards were being considered in the consultation
 - The three options considered
 - The preferred option and why
 - Implications of moving beds to Yeovil and why going to public consultation
 - What it means for people in South Somerset
- The consultation would run until 12 April 2020.

During discussion, representatives from Fit For My Future responded to points of detail, including:

- The number of beds would remain the same but some beds would be changing use.
- There was a national model for crisis cafes, and Fit for my Future had looked at examples elsewhere in the country and they were also looking at best practice.
- Recognise the important role played by the voluntary sector. There was an aspiration for different sectors to come together as a mental health alliance.
- Need to look at services and engagement with hard to reach groups and in particular how to help people in their own home – this a value in the Fit for my Future vision.

- Most people diagnosed with depression did not require specialist treatment, and severe cases were infrequent.
- Figures stated in the presentation included people with dementia.
- There had been extensive discussions with Mendip District Council.
- Where possible patients were encouraged to make their own way to hospital.

Members wished it to be noted that whilst they supported the proposals as they clearly provided a solution in terms of managing risk, they acknowledged many residents in Mendip may feel disadvantaged regarding the proposals, and that there were concerns regarding the travel arrangements and the potential impact for some patient's recovery when they are outside of their local community. At the end of discussion some members were of the opinion that the Health and Well Being Board should take the lead on behalf of the district councils.

The Chairman suggested that a briefing note be sent to all members and to encourage them to participate in the consultation. He suggested he could do a summary under the Scrutiny Committee item at full Council in order to raise awareness, and this was agreed by members.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Fit for my Future for their informative presentation.

N.B. A copy of the presentation slides are attached to these minutes.

113. Equality Policy - Verbal Update (Agenda Item 8)

The Specialist (Strategic Planning) provided a verbal update on the Council's compliance with the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty since the adoption in April 2019 of the new Equality Policy, Equality Objectives and Equality Impact Assessment processes

He informed members about:

- a number of SSDC specific activities, some of which included:
 - Implementing the new Equality Impact Assessment process
 - Equalities and Armed Forces e-learning modules were now available to all staff
 - Grants awarded to Access For All and Chard Together
 - Promoting the EU Settlement Scheme
- a number of county-wide activities, some of which included:
 - employment of two Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) engagement workers, with one covering South Somerset and Mendip
 - Funding for part-time Gypsy and Traveller engagement workers
 - Work underway to identify land for creating Gypsy and Traveller transit/temporary site provision.
- Some of the tasks looking forward included:
 - Monitoring of the policy and Equality Impact Assessment process
 - The future of Access for All
 - Promotion of e-learning modules
 - Policy alignment across south west councils regarding Reservists and Housing allocations.

There was a brief discussion, during which the Specialist (Strategic Planning) responded to points of detail. It was noted that all members needed to be aware of policies and extending the availability of the e-learning modules to members would be useful.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his verbal update.

114. Key Performance Indicators 2020-21 (Agenda Item 9)

The Specialist (Performance) presented the District Executive report which set out the proposed key performance indicators for the 2020-21 reporting period. She highlighted some of the proposed changes to key performance indicators and explained discussions had taken place with Community of Practice leads. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had also considered the indicators, and the Specialist briefly went through some of the suggestions made by SLT.

During discussion, suggestions and comments by the Scrutiny Committee included:

- PCS4 – a statement to explain the measure or term ‘assessment’ would be useful. Scrutiny Committee were content that the indicator remain under Protecting Core Services or that it be moved to Environment.
- PCS15 and PCS16 – Scrutiny members understood that these measures would be performance indicators rather than service monitoring / management information. Members felt that the planning function was under much scrutiny and the indicators should be reported in the public domain.
- PCS15 – it was not clear where the requests for extensions of time would come from. A suggestion was made that the word ‘any’ be added before the word ‘extensions’.
- E1 – how will the spend be established?
- EN5 – it was thought that from later in the year that most residual waste would be going for incineration rather than landfill, and hence whether the wording of the measure is correct.
- It would be helpful to see some target relating to action to address the lack of public transport, but there did not appear to be anything.
- EN4 to EN6 – it was questioned if there was a place for these indicators as data specific to the South Somerset area was unable to be sourced.
- EN1 – due to the possibility of trees being felled or new trees not surviving, members queried if perhaps the percentage tree canopy may be an alternative measure.

Members also acknowledged information provided by the Specialist (Performance) regarding:

- PCS19 – more work needed to be done regarding this indicator.
- PCS20 – a residents survey would be going out during the summer, members requested an opportunity to have input to the survey in advance of it being issued.

At the end of discussion, the Specialist (Performance) acknowledged the suggestions made and noted she would feed back the comments to the appropriate officers for consideration.

The Chairman thanked the officer for attending the meeting and explaining the performance indicators

115. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 February 2020 (Agenda Item 10)

The Chairman noted that at the February meeting of Scrutiny Committee, members had raised some queries to the District Executive, and he provided a brief update regarding responses, including:

- Whether an independent review of the Transformation process would be undertaken, similar to that undertaken at Somerset West and Taunton Council. – The Chairman noted, as yet, he believed there had been no response to the question. The Specialist (Members) noted she had requested a response from the Leader or Chief Executive about on the matter.
- Regarding queries about the Digital Strategy – the questions had been raised at District Executive and the Chief Executive had responded by explaining that the budget was just a budget provision and it would be subject to formal approval of a Digital Strategy and implementation plan.

116. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 March 2020 (Agenda Item 11)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 5 March 2020 and raised comments as detailed below. Responses to most questions and comments were provided at Scrutiny Committee by the relevant officers, except those marked by an asterisk.

Adoption of the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Agenda Item 6)

- *Some members felt Area South should have had opportunity to comment ahead of District Executive being asked to endorse the public realm design guide and shopfront guide for adoption by council.
- The document refers to a consultation which has been undertaken. The results gave an indication of why some people may not wish to visit Yeovil, including concern about the level of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. What is being done to address those concerns?
- Have the proposed works been costed yet?
- Was there any indication of what the expected increased footfall might as a result of the regeneration projects?

SSDC Transformation Programme – Progress Report (Agenda Item 7)

- *A member commented they were pleased that work has progressed around reporting a planning breach. Some members felt that more resource was required to enforce planning breaches.
- *The Committee raised again that they would like to know if the target of reducing staff by 22% had been achieved through transformation. The Committee feel it is important to understand where we are to ensure savings are being achieved and if the staffing level differs from the original agreed business case. Members asked

for not only details about full time equivalent (FTE) figures, but also a breakdown regarding permanent and temporary staff etc.

- Regarding some planning applications being outsourced to Capita – how would the performance of Capita be measured?
- Para 31 – what is the impact to services when then are losing some staff that are temporarily being redeployed to increase capacity in another service?
- *A member asked if some of the performance measures for Transformation should be included in the corporate performance report.
- Para 34 – refers to reviewing of some planning procedures – is there a timescale for the work and when details will be circulated to members? What is the scope and process for the reviews?
- Para 3 - Some members sought clarity about the figures regarding recurring net annual savings from the investment figure and the duration of the ‘pay-back’ period.
- Regarding flexible and agile working, is it necessary to hold monthly full council meetings as many other authorities of a similar size meet quarterly or bi-monthly?

Corporate Performance Report 2020-21 Key Performance Indicators (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered this item in full as an item on the Scrutiny agenda.

- *Some of the terminology for the measures needs to be revised to be more meaningful to the public, for example PCS4
- *It would be helpful if measure E1 gave the amount spent – how will the spend be established?
- *Is there a need to keep measure E5 - Residual Waste sent to landfill - when all residual waste will be going to Avonmouth from April?
- *EN1 – Number of trees planted, members suggested a better target/ indicator would be percentage growth of tree canopy cover
- *One member suggested an additional target should be included for Environment for improvement in the provision of public or shared transport.

Business Rates Relief (Agenda Item 9)

- Was there a view of what the changes to the Business Rates Relief would have on the income to the authority?

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

- No comments.

117. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the updates provided by the Specialist (Members) and Chairmen of the Task and Finish Groups including:

SSDC Environment Strategy - Green Travel Plan – nothing to update.as yet.

Council Support Scheme 2021/22 – group are awaiting feedback and data from neighbouring authorities to see how they are approaching a review this year. .

Effect of short term lettings – currently on hold.

The Chairman and other members expressed their concern that the dedicated officer support for Scrutiny work was being temporarily deployed to Elections, and how this would impact the scrutiny function within the authority. It was noted the matter may need to be discussed more formally at a later date.

118. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 13)

There were no updates on matters of interest.

119. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 14)

The Chairman noted the comments made at the previous item, that it was felt the work of Scrutiny was being impacted by the availability of officer support, and asked the Specialist (Members) to comment.

The Specialist (Members) noted that at the previous meeting, with regard to Transformation and Performance, a member had referred to some of the officer skills being lost or displaced - In specific terms, how the backfilling was being managed and managing the skills gaps. At the time it was discussed at the previous meeting, members had mooted that they would like a report to come forward. However if members wished a report in order to discuss the matter, then specific information about what was to be covered in the report would be required and also clarity about the outcome or what would be achieved by Scrutiny Committee receiving such a *report*. It was suggested that this could be discussed under the Scrutiny Work Programme at a future meeting when there is more time.

There was a short discussion about whether members felt Scrutiny was valued within the authority, and the amount of influence Scrutiny had in the decision making process. It was suggested, and agreed, that the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of Scrutiny Committee should arrange to meet with the Leader of Council to discuss the role of Scrutiny and how the function operates within South Somerset.

120. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 31 March at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Brympton Way.

Post meeting note - the Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 31 March was cancelled.

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Chairman