

Scrutiny Committee

This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Committee since the last Council meeting.

Items considered during Scrutiny Committee 31st March 2015 (April meeting)

At their April meeting, members of the Scrutiny Committee considered a report they had requested from the Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing, looking at the Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre.

Members had asked that a report be prepared that outlined how this successful project was delivered and how any learning could be shared across the organisation. The report outlined the key stages of the project which had spanned over a number of years and had resulted in a highly regarded community resource.

Members were pleased to note that the centre and café were doing well and congratulated the volunteers for their work and support. Thanks were also expressed to the Project team for the successful delivery of such a high profile project.

A further update report was requested in 12 months time.

In addition to this, the Committee made the following comments on the reports due to be considered by District Executive:

South Somerset Together

Members were pleased to note the progress of SST and how well the partnership now seemed to be working.

Adoption of Balanced Rural Lettings policy

Scrutiny thanked officers for their hard work and obvious expertise in this area. Scrutiny felt that the explanation of the shading on the maps should be made clearer, for example there seemed to be differed reasons for an areas being shown as white. Scrutiny felt that the maps should be reviewed quite frequently and requested that an update report is made to Scrutiny in 12 months time.

South Somerset District Council Advertising Policy

As part of the Budget Task and Finish Group members had already discussed and supported the principle of income generation through advertising. Some members commented that there needed to be a fine balance and whilst general principles of health and well-being should be promoted, this should not prevent local industries such as Wincanton Racecourse or local cider producers being able to advertise. Members also commented that some members of the public may not agree with SSDC taking an advertising approach but in the current financial climate all sources of income generation

need to be explored. Scrutiny requested that an update report is presented in 12 month's time.

Loan to Kingsdon Parish Council

Scrutiny were content to agree the recommendation but sought clarification on the following:

- Has the capability of Kingsdon Parish Council to repay the loan been assessed?
- Is there a limit to the amount or quantity of loans that SSDC could make?

Safer Somerset Partnership

Scrutiny queried what the difference is between the Yeovil One Team and the previous LAGs and further queried if the One Team approach would be extended across the district?

Finally, members received an 'End of Term report' outlining the key successes of the authority's Scrutiny function over the past 4 years. The report provided a review of the work of the Scrutiny function over the past 4 years. Many members had given a significant amount of time to deliver successful Task and Finish reviews and had made a real difference to a number of services and residents – the rewards gained were validation of the work undertaken. Members commented that the list of reviews included in the report could be used as a training tool for newly elected members to demonstrate the potential of Scrutiny.

Members further commented that what makes Scrutiny so effective at SSDC is that we have three sides that can work effectively and sensibly together.

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