

## **Scrutiny Committee**

This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Committee since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

### **Items considered at 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015 Committee**

Scrutiny Committee requested a report on the current telephony response for the council.

Jason Toogood - Customer Focus Support Manager attended the meeting with Roger Brown – ICT Manager.

The Committee members appreciated the work that been done to date to try to maintain service. A further update report is scheduled to come to Committee in December 2015 to review the impact of a software fix that is due for installation later this month.

### **Reports to be considered by District Executive**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive Agenda for 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The following comments were taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

#### Somerset Rivers Authority

Scrutiny Committee members support the recommendation that creating a separate precepting body is the preferred option for sustainable funding of the SRA.

Members sought clarification as to how the SRA would be funded in the interim, whilst a long term solution is formulated. The current funding is only in place for 2015/16 and it anticipated that at least 2 years' funding will need to be identified.

Members questioned the impact of creating a new precepting body on SSDC's Council Tax Support scheme? Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) kindly clarified if the requirement was to raise £2.7 million the cost to SSDC would be approximately £270,000.

The report states that progress against delivery of the 20 Year Levels and Moors Action Plan is currently being reviewed – Scrutiny members requested that the findings of this review be reported to SSDC Members.

#### Approval of Local Development Scheme

Members noted that the funding for the external resources identified in the report would be coming from the Local Plan Reserve and that it was most cost effective to use consultants.

### Draft Asset Management Plan

Scrutiny members endorsed the inclusion of the Yeovil Crematorium within the Asset Management Strategy and noted the improved layout and format of the report.

Members would like clarity on the current position of the Car Parking Strategy, in particular, when does the current strategy run out and what plans are in place to draw up the successive strategy?

### Capital Budget Monitoring Report

Members questioned the position regarding Broadway Farm in Merriott and why the £240k had been moved back to reserves?

### Revenue Monitoring Report

No comments.

### Commercial Property disposals – land at Lakefields, West Coker (for residential parking)

Members asked if the residents would be charged for the permit parking proposed in the report and suggested that the legal agreement should specify how any profit made would be allocated.

### Commercial Property disposals - land adjacent to 1-4 St Johns Cottages, Charlton Musgrove (for use as a community garden or allotment site)

Again, members questioned if there were to be any charges applied by the Parish Council to allotment holders, and if so, the legal agreement made reference to how any profits would be allocated.

### Monthly Snap shot

Members would like to commend the Development Management Service for the improved performance relating to number of planning decisions overturned at appeal.

### Disposal of former Grove Alley Public Conveniences, Bruton

Members had no comments.

## **Items considered at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 Committee**

### **Reports to be considered by District Executive**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive Agenda for 3rd September 2015. The following comments were taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

#### Future of Westlands Leisure Complex

- Scrutiny members would like to commend the officers for the considerable amount of work they have put into this report, and whilst broadly supportive to the general premise, would make the following questions:
- Members sought clarification about the decision making process – Scrutiny members would rather a more sequential approach is taken. The report states that Full Council be recommended to approve the 30 year loan – Scrutiny would recommend that final approval is postponed to a future meeting date and that an interim recommendation is made to agree the principle with further reports to be submitted in due course and prior to the signature of any lease.
- Scrutiny members recognised the community value of this venue but questioned the viability of running both the leisure and social complexes and suggested that the potential of separating the two elements be further explored before progressing?
- Scrutiny recommend that a member of the Scrutiny Committee be included in the Project Board Group that was suggested by the Portfolio Holder at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

#### Five Year Land Supply

- Members noted the significant implications in terms of Local Plan policy documents represented by the shortfall in the 5 year land supply and the subsequent shift in perspective required. Scrutiny members agreed that all necessary support and resources should be provided to the Spatial Planning Team so that every effort can be made to improve the situation.
- Scrutiny members noted the importance of planning decisions needing to be made in accordance with the adopted Local Plan and potential impact this could have.

## **Update on Task and Finish Reviews**

**Council Tax Reduction Policy and Monitoring** – The proposed Scheme is currently out for consultation, the group have met on 13 August 2015 to:

- Review the interim consultation results.
- Agree what performance/monitoring information they require in terms of collection, arrears and costs monitoring for the current scheme.
- To identify what information and data is required to monitor the impact on different households to ensure no specific type is adversely affected.

**Licensing Fees and Charges** – The first meeting of this Task and Finish Group had gone well with the review Terms of Reference now agreed – the next meeting will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## **Informal Scrutiny Committee Briefing - Exploration of potential Joint Management Arrangements**

At the August Scrutiny Committee Members requested the Leader give a briefing on the process to date and the process and methodology that would be applied to assess all potential options.

Councillors Ric Pallister, Jo RoundellGreene and Dave Bulmer with Andy Bates - South West Principal Adviser, Local Government Association gave a brief overview of the current situation and answered member's questions.

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