

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008** in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

*(10.00 am – 11.15 am)*

**Present:**

**Members:** Sue Steele (Chairman)

David Bulmer	Pat Martin
John Calvert	Tom Parsley
Geoff Clarke	Keith Ronaldson
Hannah Lefeuvre	Alan Smith

**Also Present:**

Tim Carroll	Martin Wale
Robin Munday	Colin Winder
Peter Roake	Derek Yeomans
Sylvia Seal	

**Officers:**

Philip Dolan	Chief Executive
Rina Singh	Corporate Director & Deputy Chief Executive
David Stapleton	Corporate Director (Health & Well-Being)
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny & Acting Democratic Services Manager
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator
Jo Morris	Committee Administrator

**Others:**

Stuart Brown	Corporate Director, Mendip District Council
Alan Brown	Yeovil Vision Projects Director

### 132. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

### 133. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors John Vincent Chainey, Peter Gubbins, Derek Nelson and John Hann.

### 134. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

**135. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no questions from members of the public.

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

It was noted that the training session on planning enforcement issues arranged for 22<sup>nd</sup> May also coincided with the Yeovil Business Awards ceremony and the Area North Annual meeting with Town and Parish Councils.

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**137. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman reminded Members that future meetings of the Committee would be held on Thursdays, starting with Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June in Committee Room 3/4 to allow for a change of Committee Administrator.

The Chairman said she was pleased to announce that the previous Scrutiny Chairman, Councillor Rupert Cox, had been short listed for the award of Scrutiny Chairman of the Year by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The Chairman also advised that she and her two Vice Chairman had recently attended an Overview and Scrutiny training day in Taunton which had proved very interesting and informative.

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**138. Progress Reports on Scrutiny Commissions (Agenda Item 7)**

The Scrutiny and Acting Democratic Services Manager reported that the Well Managed Services Commission looking at the review of Octagon Theatre had met twice and was on target to report their conclusions to the Scrutiny Committee in June or July 2008.

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**139. LIFT South West Bid – Enhanced Two Tier Working (Agenda Item 8)**

The Leader of the Council introduced Stuart Brown, Corporate Director at Mendip District Council, who was attending to answer questions on the Pioneer Somerset project. He reminded Members of the failed unitary authority bids the previous year and the need to work with neighbouring District Councils to achieve savings and efficiencies within services amounting to £20m by 2013.

He drew Members attention to an error on page 2 of the report and stated that the South Somerset contribution to the project at the moment was in the region of £30,000 to £40,000 of officer time only.

The Corporate Director (Communities) advised that this was a preliminary report, aimed at informing Members of the detail of the 5 year plan. She noted the 9 strands of work within the project, which each Chief Executive officer was taking a lead on, and that the project was still at developmental stage 1. A Communication Plan for the Pioneer Somerset project was being worked on, commencing with a briefing to all Members on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Executive advised that:-

- He had a series of meetings with staff arranged to further disseminate information.
- Although SSDC was already working with Town and Parish Councils on the devolution of work to them, discussions were also ongoing with SALC on the best way to inform Town and Parish Councils of the Pioneer Somerset project.

The Corporate Director (Communities) confirmed that progress of the Pioneer Somerset project would be regularly monitored by the GOSW board and by reports to District Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- In the Draft Programme Initiation Document, it should be clearly worded as to the intention of the new political leadership structures across all authorities.
- The SSDC contribution to the project in officer time only be made clearer.
- SSDC should look further than a Somerset partnership and consider other neighbouring authorities to work with to achieve partnership savings.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report and the comments made at the District Executive Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008.
2. That the above comments be notified to the District Executive Committee.
3. That regular progress reports on the Pioneer Somerset project be brought to Scrutiny Committee.

*Rina Singh, Corporate Director and Assistant Chief Executive – (01935) 462010  
e-mail: rina.singh@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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## 140. Yeovil Sports Zone Briefing Notes (Agenda Item 9)

The Scrutiny and Acting Democratic Services Manager advised that the briefing notes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 had been included in the Agenda, at Scrutiny Members request and that this was their opportunity to comment on the robustness of the process. She noted that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Well-Being had been invited to attend the meeting to clarify any points that Members of the Committee may raise.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that:-

- The additional briefing for Ward Members included County and District Councillors whose Wards adjoined the boundary to the proposed site.
- Notes of future briefing sessions would be made available to Scrutiny Committee.
- The time of future briefing sessions could be brought forward to allow wider Member attendance.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the project management consultants, EC Harris, had utilised the proper tender process to engage Atkins as survey sub-consultants to produce an assessment of the whole site.

Members were content to note the report and briefing notes.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and briefing note be noted with the updates as above.

*Steve Joel, Head of Sport, Arts & Leisure  
e-mail: steve.joel@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462278*

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#### **141. Annual Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny and Acting Democratic Services Manager asked that Members of the Committee to consider issues which they may wish to include in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09. She noted that she had been working with colleagues from neighbouring Authorities on the scrutiny arrangements for the Somerset Waste Partnership.

During discussion, Members suggested the following topics for future inclusion in the 2008/09 Scrutiny Work Programme:-

- Planning Policy and their impact on local employers
- Economic Development service
- The appropriateness of Section 106 Obligations

**RESOLVED:** That a draft 2008/09 Scrutiny Work Programme be presented to the Committee in June 2008.

*Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny & Acting Democratic Services Manager – (01935) 462148  
e-mail: emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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#### **142. Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/08 (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny and Acting Democratic Services Manager advised Members that:-

- the Scrutiny Commissions looking at Cycling Promotion and Members IT Provision had now been successfully concluded.
- the Scrutiny Commission for Village Shops and Post Offices had been superseded by ongoing work on possible closures undertaken by the Head of Area Development (North).
- it had been agreed to defer the Scrutiny Commissions looking at the Housing Advice Centre and Affordable Housing until the IDEA housing inspection had been completed.
- an encompassing report on Objective 19 would be presented to both District Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

**RESOLVED:** That the Scrutiny Work Programme 2007/08 be noted with the updates as above.

*Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny & Acting Democratic Services Manager – (01935) 462148  
e-mail: emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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### 143. Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12)

During discussion it was noted that:-

- the evaluation report on the Frontline Members Grants Scheme would also be presented to Scrutiny Committee.
- questions relating to the allocation of capital for affordable housing schemes should be addressed during scrutiny of the Capital Strategy report in September 2008.

**RESOLVED:** That the Executive Forward Plan be noted with the comments as above.

*Ian Clarke, Head of Legal & Democratic Services – (01935) 462184  
e-mail: [ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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### 144. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would take place on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 10.00a.m. in the Committee Room 3/4, Brympton Way, Yeovil.**

Members of the Committee are invited to attend at 9.30a.m. to scope questions on the reports in the Agenda.

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**Chairman**