

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on **Tuesday 1st September 2009** held in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil

(10.00 a.m. – 11.10 a.m.)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Dave Bulmer
John Calvert
John V Chainey
Geoff Clarke
Pat Martin

Roy Mills
Keith Ronaldson
Jo Roundell Greene
Alan Smith
Andrew Turpin (until 11.00am)

Also Present:

Councillors Tim Carroll, Tom Parsley, Sylvia Seal and Paull Robathan

Officers:

Saveria Moss	LSP Co-ordinator
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Jo Morris	Committee Administrator

40. **Minutes (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th August 2009, copies of which had been circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Minute 34 – Bring Bank Provision (Agenda Item 8)

An additional recommendation to be inserted as follows:

- (2) That the District Executive be made aware of the concerns of the Scrutiny Committee with regard to the withdrawal of the Bring Banks prior to the roll out of the Sort It Plus Scheme.

Recommendation (2) to become Recommendation (3)

41. **Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Lock and Derek Nelson.

42. **Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

43. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

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

44. Issues Arising from Previous Meetings (Agenda Item 5)

The Leader of the Council informed members that the Portfolio Holder briefings were being rescheduled to start at 12 noon in order to accommodate the Portfolio Holders attending Scrutiny Committee meetings.

45. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

Members were informed that the Audit Commission had recently interviewed the Scrutiny Committee Chairman and the Scrutiny Manager. The outcome of the meeting would be known sometime in October.

46. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3rd September 2009 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee briefly ran through the reports due to be considered by the District Executive at its meeting on 3rd September 2009.

Members noted that the report expected on Castle Cary Library, Public Conveniences and Car Park Enhancement Scheme had been replaced with a report on the purchase of Park Homes for Gypsy families residing on the sites at Chubbards Cross, Ilton and Marsh Lane, Tintinhull.

The Chairman agreed to take forward the following points raised by members:

- **The purchase of Park Homes for Gypsy families residing on the sites at Chubbards Cross, Ilton and Marsh Lane, Tintinhull**
 - Clarification was required over the calculation of the rental charge figure of £92 per week
 - Concern was expressed over the lack of consultation with local residents
 - Concern was expressed over the insurance implications for SSDC
 - Why are more homes placed at Tintinhull than Ilton?
 - The management must be robust at both sites
 - Rent should be reviewed annually

- **Yeovil Sport Zone Project**
 - The site must be fully vehicular accessible and well signposted
 - Will it be known as the Yeovil Sports Zone? (this name appears to exclude the rest of the district)
 - No sites may be excluded from the site evaluation

- **Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 1st Quarter 2009/10**
 - An additional column showing the cumulative figure for complaints was requested in order to draw comparisons
 - A further TENS training sessions should be held for Members.
 - **Strengthening Local Democracy Consultation**
 - This was a difficult report but SSDC needed to make a response.
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47. Local Strategic Partnership: South Somerset Together – Annual Review (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman welcomed Paull Robathan, Chairman of the LSP and Saveria Moss, LSP Co-ordinator to the meeting.

The Chairman of the LSP introduced the report and referred to the changes affecting the LSP being brought about by the Strengthening Local Democracy consultation paper issued by Secretary of State. He highlighted that the views expressed in the consultation document were in contrast to the views of the Regional Improvement Executive. He said that the LSP was lucky in South Somerset as it already had senior officers taking an active role at its meetings. He also referred to the consultation paper giving Scrutiny extended powers to scrutinise public services (e.g. health, fire etc.) and suggested that the LSP and Scrutiny Committee in future may want to discuss areas where there was a common role.

The Chairman commented that the LSP had performed very well over the last year and had delivered on the targets that were set. He referred to the Zero-Sum Sustainability Event held by the LSP at the Innovation Centre, failing to attract the visitor numbers hoped for and that the LSP had learnt a number of lessons from the day and would be taking these into consideration for future public events. He explained that the LSP would be taking an exhibition stand to the Food Festival where it would be promoting the LSP priorities and climate change and that attending an organised event would hopefully achieve a larger footfall.

Members were informed that the LSP would be presenting its requirements for funding to the next meeting of the Somerset Strategic Partnership Executive.

Members noted that the National Trust, West Dorset and RNAS Yeovilton had joined as new members of the LSP.

During the Committee's consideration of the report, the following comments were made:

- The Innovation Centre was a difficult place to find as there was no signage;
- One member spoke about the difficulties of getting the public on board. He referred to the new bus service in operation from Yeovil to Taunton via Chard and Wellington and that nobody seemed to know about it;
- One member felt that the concept of Transition was an area that should be pushed further. He referred to a number of food production projects in his ward and said that it was difficult to draw down funds for these projects. He also commented about the difficulties with getting the public on board with taking projects forward;
- Did all the Partners get involved and feel they got value from attending the LSP?

- With reference to page 19 of the agenda, there was no expenditure against many of the projects listed;
- With reference to pages 39 and 40 of the agenda there seemed to be some areas of duplication of work between the LSP and the District Council;

In response to comments and questions, members noted the following:

- Recognition of the Innovation Centre needed to improve and that having the wind turbine located on site was making a difference. The Tour of Britain Cycle Race was finishing at Yeovil Town Football Club and would pass the Innovation Centre. The Economic Development Team Leader was working with the Tour of Britain regarding opportunities for promotion;
- Climate Change was at the front and centre of everything that the LSP undertakes. Natural England was a member of the LSP and was committed to climate change and would be attending the LSP stand at the Food Festival. The National Trust was involved with an allotment project. The majority of work on climate change was being driven by the LSP partners;
- The LSP did not have funds but were supporting Transition Communities through its Partners. There were already mechanisms in place for sharing best practice through the Transition Towns Forum;
- A detailed survey was sent to all partners on a regular basis and most of the partners felt that it was worthwhile being part of the LSP. This was also demonstrated by the fact that they continued to attend meetings and were willing to volunteer to sit on the Sub Groups and be fully involved with how things work;
- The Sustainable Community Strategy was a key document for all Partners;
- The Environment Agency were actively involved with the LSP but as a rule they did not normally engage with LSPs but saw South Somerset as attempting to undertake serious work and were a committed partner;
- Most of the projects for 2008/09 were completed or on target. The affordable housing project was taking longer than expected because of the work with the RSLs.
- In terms of finance, the LSP was not bound by years and was project related and therefore no funding for projects had been lost;
- The LSP did not look to duplicate work and its aim was to pump prime projects. The work of the partners on some projects had added value to what SSDC could have achieved by itself. Without the work of the LSP, the District Council would not have been successful in obtaining funds for the Milford Project. Reassurances were given that the LSP and District Council were aware of each others work. The affordable housing project was also key example of pump priming;
- All the LSPs across the County were non-statutory partnerships and their role was enshrined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The LSP and District Council were equal partners. The District Council's role was overarching with responsibility for the budget.

It was requested by one member that future annual reports should include monitoring information. The Chairman said that partners would also be more than willing to attend in future.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman of the LSP and the LSP Co-ordinator for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the progress of the Local Strategic Partnership in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2026) be noted.

48. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 9)

In view of the number of reports due to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 29th September, the Scrutiny Manager suggested the possibility of delaying the Cultural Strategy report to the November meeting. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture didn't envisage any problem with delaying the report but asked members to note that the Lead Officer post at County was only funded until November.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted as outlined in the agenda.

*Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager – (01935 462077)
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49. Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

Members were informed that the report on Castle Cary Library, Public Conveniences and Car Park Enhancement Scheme was due to be considered by the District Executive in October.

Members were content to note the District Executive Forward Plan as outlined in the agenda with the update as above.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Forward Plan be noted as outlined in the agenda.

*Angie Cox, Democratic Services Manager – (01935 462148)
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50. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 29th September 2009 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Members of the Committee are invited to attend at 9.30am to scope questions on the report in the agenda.

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Chairman