

1. Minutes

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 30th March 2010** in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.00 a.m. – 12.50 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Dave Bulmer
John Calvert
Carol Goodall
Tony Lock
Roy Mills

John Richardson
Jo Roundell Greene
Keith Ronaldson
Alan Smith
Martin Wale

Also Present:

Councillors Tim Carroll, Tony Fife and Tom Parsley.

Officers:

Mark Williams	-	Chief Executive
Sue Eaton	-	Performance Manager
Alice Knight	-	Third Sector & Partnership Manager
Steve Brewer	-	Community Safety Co-ordinator
Steve Joel	-	Assistant Director (Health & Well-Being)
Ian Johns	-	Property Management Officer
Jo Gale	-	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	-	Scrutiny Manager
Jo Morris	-	Committee Administrator

145. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd March 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

146. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pat Martin and Geoff Clarke.

147. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Wind Turbine at Yeovil Innovation Centre and Agenda Item 11 – Wincanton Community Sports Centre – Lessons from the Swimming Pool Failure, as at the time decisions were taken

on these items by the District Executive, she was the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste.

Councillor Tim Carroll declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11 - Wincanton Community Sports Centre – Lessons from the Swimming Pool Failure, as he was an observer on the Wincanton Sports Centre Management Board. He left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor John Calvert declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11 - Wincanton Community Sports Centre – Lessons from the Swimming Pool Failure, as he was a Director of the trust operator, Wincanton Community Sport Centre Ltd. He left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillor Keith Ronaldson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 14 – Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1st April with regard to the report on Private Water Supplies Regulatory Charges, as he had a private water supply at his property. He left the room during consideration of the item.

148. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

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

149. Issues Arising from Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 5)

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the item on the Recession Strategy would now be considered by the Scrutiny meeting on 1st June 2010.

With regard to additional signage at the Innovation Centre, as suggested by the Scrutiny Committee at a previous meeting, it was noted that the size of the sign currently located at the Innovation Centre would be increased but there were no plans for any additional signage.

150. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman welcomed Mark Williams, Chief Executive to the meeting. She also welcomed back Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager from maternity leave. She would be undertaking scrutiny development work one day per week.

The Chairman and Scrutiny Manager had recently been interviewed by the Audit Commission, which had mainly focussed on finance.

151. Verbal Update on Task and Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 7)

Cultural Strategy

Councillor Dave Bulmer reported that a meeting was due to be held that afternoon where they would be discussing the Action Plans within the Cultural Strategy.

Choice Based Lettings

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene reported that they had now managed to get members from all the authorities involved. The next meeting of the web and publication group was due to be held on 12th April. Some of the work currently being undertaken involved spending time shadowing the Housing Advice Centres. She expressed her thanks to Carol Goodall, lead member on the web and publications group and Sue Steele, lead member on policy group for all their hard work.

152. Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 3rd Quarter 2009/10 (Agenda Item 8)

The Performance and Communications Manager introduced the performance monitoring report covering the period to the end of the 3rd quarter (1st October – 31st December 2009). She highlighted the areas where performance was below target and the reasons for variances in performance as follows:

NI157a – Processing of Major Planning Applications determined within 13 weeks – this indicator continued to be below target. The number of cases currently being dealt with was included in the appendix as previously requested by Scrutiny. The main reason for deterioration was due to not enough new cases being received and existing cases requiring re-negotiation.

LI 021 – Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence – this indicator has dropped slightly in quarter 3. The main reasons was partly seasonal but may have also increased due to Swine Flu and staff being more cautious. A project was currently taking place to analyse 4 year sickness data and would pick up any concerns.

Members noted that there had been 60 complaints during quarter 3. There had been a marked improvement in the Waste Service, which was due to the change in policy to the roll out of the Sort It Scheme.

The Performance Manager highlighted that the performance in respect of NI 195 – Improved Street and Environmental Cleanliness, had improved significantly and was now at 6.5% compared with 14% in quarter 2. She circulated a paper in response to the information requested by the Scrutiny Committee at the meeting in January.

In response to member questions, the following was noted:

- With regard to NI157a – processing of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks, the Performance Manager agreed to obtain further information from the Assistant Director (Economy) detailing the types of cases and the levels of negotiation;
- A complaint was defined as a complaint if the council had not delivered a service. Complaints were recorded wherever the customer first contacted the Council. The complaints policy set out the definition of a complaint;
- The Performance Manager agreed to re-issue to the members the information she reported at the January Scrutiny Committee meeting with regard to sickness comparison figures;
- The data for NI191 – Residual household waste per household and NI192 – Percentage of household waste sent for reuse was not available. The SWP were 6 months behind in providing this information;
- The Performance Manager agreed to let members have information on the amount of compensation paid out with reference to stage 4 complaints;

- In relation to staff sickness, the Performance Manager agreed to let members know the timescales for producing the individual action plans.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the performance monitoring report be noted including those areas highlighted under 'performance exceptions' where performance is below target; and
- (2) That the summary of complaints for the second quarter 2009/10 be noted.

*Sue Eaton, Performance Manager – (01935) 462565
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153. Revised Delivery Structures for Community Safety in Somerset (Agenda Item 9)

The Third Sector and Partnerships Manager introduced the report and explained that the Scrutiny Committee was responsible under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 to review Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships at least once a year. She also referred to the report considered by the District Executive in March on the Revised Delivery Structures for Community Safety in Somerset. The decision to join a single Countywide Crime and Disorder Partnership had been deferred in view of the uncertainty regarding delivery and staffing. A further report was due to be considered by the District Executive in June.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator gave a brief overview on the achievements of the Mendip & South Somerset Community Safety Partnership during 2009/10. A copy of the presentation slides are attached to these minutes for information.

An update on the revised delivery structures for community safety in Somerset would be available following the next meeting of the Safer Communities Group. It was noted that the process of moving to a single CDRP would require all authorities to sign up and agree.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator commented that the draft Annual Strategic Assessment would continue as normal despite the proposed changes. He said that he would welcome the views of the Scrutiny Committee.

One Member commented that a single countywide CDRP would mean that delivery would become more remote and out of touch with local activities.

During the discussion, members supported the stance of the District Executive to defer the decision to join a single Countywide Crime and Disorder Partnership as more clarity was needed regarding the staffing and delivery arrangements. Comment was expressed over the Council's obligation to deliver the service under S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the report and presentation be noted; and
- (2) That the Scrutiny Committee supports the District Executive decision to defer the decision to join a single Countywide Crime and Disorder Partnership; and
- (3) That the Scrutiny Committee will consider the Annual Strategic Assessment and the CDRP 3 year plan at a future meeting.
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Exclusion of the Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and “Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings”.

154. Wind Turbine at Yeovil Innovation Centre – Progress Report (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Tom Parsley, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste informed members that the wind turbine at the Innovation Centre was not currently in operation. The blades would be braked until at least 8th April to allow time for procedures to be finalised with regard to health and safety, functioning and operation.

It was noted that a further upgrade of the facility would be required in late summer/early autumn.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the report be noted; and
 - (2) That a further update report be presented to Scrutiny Committee in May.

Exclusion of the Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. “information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

155. Wincanton Community Sports Centre – Lessons from the Swimming Pool Failure (Agenda Item 11)

Councillors Tim Carroll and John Calvert having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item left the room during its consideration.

The Assistant Director (Health & Well-Being) introduced the report, which asked Scrutiny members to consider the lessons that should be learnt following the pool failure at Wincanton Sports Centre. He informed members that the District Executive were also due to consider a report on 1st April 2010 detailing the scale of the consequential loss.

In response to member questions, the Assistant Director (Health & Well-Being) commented that the lessons learnt should apply to any major construction project. He suggested that each stage of any future projects should be considered by the Scrutiny Committee to minimise the risks occurring in the future.

Members commented that the main lessons learnt from the swimming pool failure should be taken forward and written into Council policy to prevent similar occurrences happening in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee considers the lessons learnt from the swimming pool failure and ensure that appropriate measures to prevent similar occurrences happening in the future are contained within the relevant Council's policies, procedures and strategies.

*Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well-being) – (01935) 462278
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156. Update from the Local Strategic Partnership (South Somerset Together) meeting held on 26th March 2010 (Agenda Item 12)

The Scrutiny Chairman reported on the meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership (South Somerset Together) she had attended on 26th March 2010. Members noted the following:

The LSP had won the Community Partnership Award in Best Local Strategic Partnership; SCC would no longer be offering match funding for the LSP's Investment Plan. The LSP Co-ordinator would be looking for other funding;
A SCC workshop for the South Somerset economy would be held for 12th April to inform the draft Somerset Economic Assessment;
Presentations had been given on the Milford Project and the South Somerset Bio-diversity Action Plan.

157. Verbal Update on Issues Raised by the Scrutiny Committee at the District Executive meeting held on 4th March 2010 (Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Jo Roundell-Greene reported that the comments raised by the Scrutiny Committee had been taken forward to the District Executive meeting held on 4th March 2010. She particularly mentioned the following:

Roll Out of Sort It Plus Enhances Kerbside Recycling

District Executive had been informed that the Scrutiny Committee had considered this report and were grateful for the Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) having attended their meeting to explain the financial implications in further detail and the report had been welcomed. The Scrutiny Committee had also been informed that publicity and advertising costs would come from within existing District Council and Somerset Waste Partnership resources and been assured that the new vehicles would be able to access all narrow access properties and in an event where that was not possible a different form of collection would be arranged.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2010/11

District Executive had been informed that the Scrutiny Committee had sought clarification regarding the role of Scrutiny as the revised Code of Practice indicated a preference for an Audit Committee to provide that role as part of their governance remit.

Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The Executive noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee who felt that data on carbon emissions should be compiled from all the Council's buildings and not just the largest ones.

Deposit Guarantee Scheme Policy

The Assistant Director responded the comments from the Scrutiny Committee on points of detail regarding the operation of the scheme.

158. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1st April 2010 (Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Keith Ronaldson having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item left the room during its consideration.

The Scrutiny Chairman agreed to take forward the following comments to the District Executive meeting on 1st April 2010:

Gypsy Park Home Project – Progress Report

What is the definition of a gypsy?

Concerns were raised over there being no change in the site management arrangements in the short-term. It was felt that this should be right from day one.

The issue of security and monitoring was raised. Scrutiny members were informed that CCTV cameras had been built into the specification.

Scrutiny members were keen to comment on the licensing, tenancy and management arrangements prior to implementation.

Members were informed that the current draft restricted up to one travelling unit per pitch to support the touring way of life.

Disposal of Toilets at West Street, Ilminster

The 'Council's current policy' is mentioned several times throughout the report – what exactly is the policy? (When and where was it approved?)

Why has it taken 4 years from the initial in principle decision in June 2006 to bring forward the actual report recommendations?

How likely is it 'that the current car parking strategy may change in the longer term? Surely decisions should be taken in line with policies as they stand at the moment rather than what they may be in the future? If the argument is taken further, should a decision

be taken in line with the current public convenience policy if it may well change in the future.

Clarification required over whether the disposal includes the disabled toilet?

159. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted the following updates to the Scrutiny Work Programme:

- A Partnerships Task and Finish Review would be established in June and led by Emily McGuinness;
- With regard to a Review of Sustainable Transport, it was noted that the LSP had looked at this as part their Strategic Priorities and it was felt that the LSP had achieved everything a Scrutiny review would look to achieve. It was agreed that the LSP Co-ordinator would attend the Scrutiny Committee on 29th June 2010 to give an update;
- The Joint Integration Committee (JIC) was due to meet for the first time on 8th April 2010. It was agreed that Martin Wale and Jo Roundell-Greene, as members of the JIC, would report back to the Scrutiny Committee and this would be a standing item on the agenda;
- An update on the Recession Strategy to be considered at 1st June 2010 Scrutiny meeting.
- An overview of the TENS system to now include monitoring of the Local Strategic Partnership and the Corporate Plan on 29th June 2010.

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

*Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager – (01935 462077)
e-mail: joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk*

160. Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 16)

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

*Angie Cox, Democratic Services Manager – (01935 462148)
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161. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 17)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 11th May 2010 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.

Members noted that Councillor Tony Lock would be attending the Somerset County Council Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11th May 2010, which will be considering feedback on the initial review on the outcomes of how SCC coped with the adverse

weather conditions in January. Councillor Tony Lock agreed to feedback on the SCC meeting at the June Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Members also noted the dates of future meetings as follows:

- 1st June 2010
 - 29th June 2010
 - 3rd August 2010
 - 31st August 2010
 - 5th October 2010
 - 2nd November 2010
 - 30th November 2010
 - 4th January 2011
 - 1st February 2011
 - 1st March 2011
 - 5th April 2011
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Chairman