

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 31st May 2011** in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil

(10.00 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Cathy Bakewell
Dave Bulmer
John Calvert
Carol Goodall
Tim Inglefield
Pauline Lock

Tony Lock
Paul Maxwell
Wes Read
Martin Wale
Colin Winder

Also Present:

Councillors Ric Pallister, Tim Carroll, Tony Fife, Henry Hobhouse, Jo Roundell Greene, Sylvia Seal, Peter Seib and Marcus Fysh

Officers:

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| Rina Singh | Strategic Director (Place & Performance) |
| Vega Sturgess | Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus) |
| Jayne Beevor | Principal Accountant – Revenue Budgets |
| Amanda Card | Finance Manager |
| Laurence Willis | Assistant Director (Environment) |
| Sue Eaton | Performance Manager |
| Emily McGuinness | Scrutiny Manager |
| Becky Sanders | Scrutiny Manager |
| Jo Morris | Committee Administrator |

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2011 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Oakes and Linda Vijeh.

3. Declarations on Interest (Agenda Item 3)

With reference to Agenda Item 8 – Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2nd June 2011 Item 13 - Yeovil Town Centre Management, it was noted that Councillors Tony Lock and Wes Read were members of Yeovil Town Council who were representatives on the Yeovil Town Centre Partnership.

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

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

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

The Chairman welcomed the new members to the Scrutiny Committee.

7. **Verbal Update on Reports Considered by District Executive on 7th April 2011 (Agenda Item 7)**

The Chairman confirmed that District Executive had noted Scrutiny's comments with reference to the reports on Support for Household Waste Recycling Centres and SSDC Partnerships.

8. **Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2nd June 2011 (Agenda Item 8)**

Members considered the reports contained in the District Executive agenda for 2nd June 2011.

Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 4th Quarter 2010/11

The Performance Manager introduced the performance monitoring report covering the period to the end of the fourth quarter of 2010/11. She commented on those areas highlighted under 'performance exceptions' where performance is below target levels. Reference was also made to the number of complaints received by the Council.

One member referred to Indicator NI192 – Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting and made the comment that if the trend shows that this figure is constantly decreasing due to thinner newspapers etc. would it not be worth amending the target accordingly to make the target more meaningful. In response it was stated by the Strategic Director (Place & Performance) that targets were reviewed annually and revised as appropriate, but were not changed during the year as it was better to set annual targets and then monitor against them.

With reference to LI004 – Number of incidents of antisocial behaviour reported to SSDC, one member commented that the results did not give a full picture, as complaints reported to the Police were not included. However, the indicator is only expected to include incidents reported to SSDC.

In response to a member comment, the Strategic Director (Place & Performance) outlined the sickness and return to work procedures. It was noted that Managers regularly monitored sickness and provided support to staff that have been absent through long-term sickness.

Members commented on the successful reduction in the number of complaints received and wished to pass on their thanks to officers.

Members sought clarification over when there will be a review of the Corporate Plan and associated performance indicators. Members acknowledged that it might be appropriate to amend the current set of indicators and wished to know the timescales involved.

Replacement IT Transport Monitoring System

The Assistant Director (Environment) introduced the report, which requested funding from the IT Capital Reserve to purchase and interface a new Transport Management System, as the current system was unfit for purpose and expensive to run.

In response to a question, members noted the annual savings as outlined on page 8 of the agenda.

Members supported the recommendation outlined in the report and noted that it seemed a sensible way forward.

2010/11 Revenue Outturn Report

The Principal Accountant (Revenue) introduced the report, which informed members of the actual spend against budgets for 2010/11.

Members emphasised that they had every confidence in the work of SSDC Officers and sought confirmation that Officers were satisfied with the external advice being provided by Arling Close regarding interest rate predictions.

In response to a member question regarding the loan to Crewkerne Aqua Centre, the Finance Manager confirmed that there were no defaults on repayment of the loan and that there was also no cause for concern about repayments in the future.

The Principal Accountant explained the difference between above and below the line costs.

2010/2011 Capital Outturn Report

The Finance Manager introduced the report, which informed members of the outturn of the capital programme of the Council for 2010/11.

In response to a member question regarding capital salaries, the Finance Manager explained that staff salaries could be capitalised if staff spend a lot of time working on capital projects.

One member requested an explanation on the uncommitted balance figure for Area South as he felt that the figure was quite high. The Finance Manager explained that the figure was skewed and related to money being transferred from the corporate pot for the purchase of the Tattoo Parlour.

Members requested further details about those Capital projects, which have been delayed to enable them to make informed recommendations about which projects should go forward. It was suggested that this information is considered as part of the work of the Capital Task and Finish Group which is set up on an annual basis.

District Executive Forward Plan

Members queried when a report would be included on the Forward Plan on future partnership working with East Devon District Council. In November last year, Scrutiny member were told that a report would be considered following the elections. It was also noted that a report was included on East Devon District Council's Forward Plan for July.

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 items in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. "Information relating to any individual" and "Information relating to the financial business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Future of SSDC Workplace Nursery

The Assistant Director (Environment) introduced the report, which sought approval to offer to the market the Houndstone site to provide a more cost effective Nursery for SSDC.

Members endorsed the recommendations outlined in the report.

Yeovil Town Centre Management

Members noted that the review of the Town Centre Partnership had reached the same conclusions as the Scrutiny Review of Partnerships in that the Partnership is not achieving its original purpose. Members endorsed option three as outlined in the report.

Car Park Winter Maintenance (Gritting) Policy

Scrutiny members noted the success of the winter maintenance arrangements during the adverse weather of the recent winter and endorsed the recommendations outlined in the report.

9. Verbal Update from the Local Strategic Partnership (South Somerset Together) meeting held on Friday 27th May 2011 (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman of Scrutiny reported that LSP were undertaking a structure review with the partners and that the LSP Chairman had agreed to remain as Chairman for the next 6 months subject to approval at the Annual General Meeting on 12th July. It was noted that the next meeting of the LSP would be held on 23rd September. A questionnaire had been sent to all partners and subject to the results a revised structure would be proposed to the partners.

The Strategic Director (Place & Performance) commented that the SSDC review of the LSP would be undertaken and would focus upon efficiency, best practice and minimising duplication of work. Members noted that Scrutiny would be kept informed of the review.

10. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 10)

Members of the Scrutiny Committee put forward the following items as suggestions for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2011/12:

- S106 Agreements – clarification and discussion on S106 agreements for contributions to strategic sport – definition, policy, guidance documents and decision-making process
- Impact of GP drop- in centres on local GP practices
- Somerset Waste Partnership – establishing more formal arrangements for effective Joint Scrutiny of the Joint Board
- Monitoring the progress / future direction of the partnership with East Devon District Council, bearing in mind that it was stated a report on the future of the partnership would be presented to members following the elections in May
- Localism Bill – impact of and making most of potential and opportunities
- Social Housing – identifying and minimising the impact of fraudulent social housing allocation from SSDC's perspective and ensuring we can provide the best use of resources.

The Scrutiny Manager stated that she would look at each of the suggestions and draw up more detailed outlines to be discussed at the next meeting.

It was noted that Scrutiny would also have a strong role in working with finance on the budget setting and monitoring process.

The Scrutiny Manager informed members of the new section on the SSDC website called 'Have your say' which allows members of the public to come forward with ideas for potential inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Plan as well as an opportunity to get more involved in the work of Scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Work Programme is a 'living document' and as such could be added to at any time. Members were encouraged to bring forward any suggestions for the Work Programme including issues/areas for training to the Scrutiny Manager.

(Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager)
(emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566)

11. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 5th July 2011 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 reports in the agenda.

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 Chairman