

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Committee** held on Wednesday 6th June 2012 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.03 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

David Bulmer	Peter Gubbins	Graham Middleton
Pauline Clarke (sub.)	Pauline Lock	Sue Osborne
Nigel Gage	Tony Lock	Martin Wale
Carol Goodall	Paul Maxwell	Nick Weeks

Also Present:

Councillors Ric Pallister and John Calvert (for item 10).

Officers:

Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Committee Administrator

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 1st May 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cathy Bakewell and Wes Read. Cllr Pauline Clarke substituted for Cllr Cathy Bakewell.

3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of 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 informed members that she had attended the Somerset County Council (SCC) Scrutiny Committee on 29 May 2012 for the Community Safety update. SSCDC had submitted 12 questions for consideration and the responses were included within the SCC Scrutiny agenda report.

7. Scrutiny Work Programme – Selection of Items

Members considered the list of topics that had been suggested for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work programme, as detailed in the agenda. The agreed scoring methodology was used to decide which items should go onto the work programme and the most appropriate way of addressing each topic. Members agreed that the following items be added to the Scrutiny Work programme.

Suggested Topic	Suggested way forward	Scoring
Yarlington's community initiatives, funding and debt work	Initially Scrutiny Committee to receive a paper for information. Then if necessary invite a representative from Yarlington to attend and give a presentation to members outlining the details of their Community Initiative and debt work - and how we can ensure an effective relationship.	87 – Band A <i>The issue should be included in the Scrutiny work programme and should be prioritised according to the score received and current workloads.</i>
Identifying additional income streams	Annually, a Task and Finish group is established to work on various aspects of the budget setting process (inescapable bids etc) – this year, the Task and Finish Group could be established slightly earlier and could work on this topic and feed their findings into the budget setting process.	89 – Band A <i>The issue should be included in the Scrutiny work programme and should be prioritised according to the score received and current workloads.</i>
Assessing the Community impact of the Lean Review of the Area System	Don't include on work programme, unable to identify where Scrutiny could add extra value.	
Website – Customer Experience	Don't include on work programme, monitored by District Executive -unable to identify where Scrutiny could add extra value.	
Function of the Local Strategic Partnership – South Somerset Together	Don't include on work programme, report/annual review due for consideration at District Executive in November 2012.	
Localism – relationship between tiers of local government (County / District / Town and Parish) to ensure effective working	Initial presentation to full Scrutiny Committee on all the relevant legislative changes and how SSCDC are planning to implement them.	103 – Band A <i>The issue should be included in the Scrutiny work programme and should be prioritised according to the score received and current workloads.</i>

Countryside Service	Initial Portfolio Holder presentation to Scrutiny to give an overview of the service, future plans and funding, so that members can identify any specific areas for potential further investigation from an informed position.	Not scored
Joint Working/shared services	An initial report to Scrutiny Committee from the Chief Executive / Management Board outlining the Council's current approach to joint working / shared services, and the benefits to date. Scrutiny Committee members would then be able to identify any areas for further investigation / information as appropriate.	Not scored
Innovation Centre – occupancy levels	Initial Portfolio Holder presentation to Scrutiny to give an overview of the service and whether ambitions of the centre are being met, so that members can identify any specific areas for potential further investigation from an informed position.	Not scored.
Core Strategy – the process used to inform the strategy	Don't include on work programme, unable to identify where Scrutiny could add extra value.	

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7th June 2012 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 7th June 2012. It was agreed that the following comments and questions would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration.

SSDC Partnerships

- members sought clarification as to why the Strategic Partnership Against Hate Crime needed to remain as a separate partnership and why it could not be under the 'umbrella' of Community Safety.
- Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership – concern that membership of committee(s) was top heavy, and that it's a large partnership to act as a conduit to funding

Car Parking Scoping Report

- Scrutiny Committee request sight of the draft report for full perusal at least one month before the report is made to District Executive.

- members felt that the car park strategy should make reference to the Portas report and should follow the emerging Economic Development Strategy to ensure the strategies compliment each other.
- Members seek clarification as to how the neighbourhood planning process will contribute to the Car Parking Strategy?
- Will the full potential of all payment methods (e.g. use of mobile phones) be explored as part of the Parking Strategy Review?

Capital Outturn Report

- Paragraph 14 in the agenda on page 29 – members noted that Area North had a higher uncommitted balances that the other areas
- Page 9 in appendix pack - £720k earmarked for new car parks – does this need to be reviewed due to land not being available
- Page 10 in appendix pack - £5k for replacement carpet in the Council Chambers – seems excessive.
- Page 10 in appendix pack – replacement boilers at Chard and Brympton Way – funding allocated for a number of years – should it be reviewed.
- Page 12 in appendix pack - members sought clarification on the £56k contingency / insurance reserve.
- Page 15 in appendix pack – Goldenstones – what are the other works that has led to the delay of the 3rd phase of works?

Revenue Outturn Report

- No comments

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 following items 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).

SSDC Workplace Nursery (Confidential)

Members supported the recommendations detailed in the report, and sought confirmation regarding monitoring arrangements.

9. Verbal Update on reports considered by District Executive on 3rd May 2012 (Agenda Item 9)

Members noted the draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 3rd May 2012 as outlined in the agenda. Comments raised by Scrutiny were noted in the minutes.

10. Social Housing Fraud Task and Finish Group – Final Report (Agenda item 10)

Chairman of the Social Housing Fraud Task and Finish Group, Councillor John Calvert, summarised the final report as detailed with the agenda. He explained the context to the issues considered by the group. He commented that all Registered Social Landlords who

had participated in the review were supportive of the recommendations detailed in the report.

Members were content to endorse the recommendations contained within the report, and that the report be made to the next Council meeting for full discussion, with a summary of any decisions arising to be submitted to District Executive.

11. Verbal Update on Task and Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 11)

Council Tax Support

The Task and Finish Review Group have three times. Progress was quite slow as the work was complex with a lot of information to understand and cross reference with several Acts. Options would be prioritised shortly.

Outside Organisations

Progress was slow, as still awaiting guidance on new regulations regarding members interests. Group would meet again at the end of June.

12. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

Members noted that following discussion of agenda item 7 that the following items would be added to the programme:

- Yarlington's community initiatives, funding and debt work.
- Identifying additional income streams
- Localism – relationship between tiers of local government
- Countryside Service
- Joint working / shared services
- Innovation Centre – occupancy levels

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted subject to the addition of the following items:

- Yarlington's community initiatives, funding and debt work.
- Identifying additional income streams
- Localism – relationship between tiers of local government
- Countryside Service
- Joint working / shared services
- Innovation Centre – occupancy levels

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13. Somerset Waste Board – Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED: That the Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan be noted as outlined in the agenda.

14. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 3rd July at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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

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Chairman