

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 2 January 2013 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.02 a.m. – 11.44am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Cathy Bakewell	Peter Gubbins	Graham Middleton
Dave Bulmer	Pauline Lock	Sue Osborne
John Calvert (sub)	Tony Lock	Wes Read
Nigel Gage	Paul Maxwell	Nick Weeks
Carol Goodall		

Also present:

Councillors Tim Carroll (from 10.40am), Ric Pallister and Gina Seaton

Officers:

Lynda Pincombe	Community Health & Leisure Manager
Donna Parham	Assistant Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

94. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 4 December 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin Wale (Councillor John Calvert was his substitute).

96. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

97. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

99. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

There were no Chairman's announcements.

100. Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (Agenda Item 7)

(In error, the agenda referred to a meeting of the 10 January 2013 – this should have read the 10 December 2012).

Councillor Tony Lock, as the SSDC representative on the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel gave a brief verbal update to members on the current situation which included:

- Situation was constantly changing and evolving, with the Panel working to tight timescales for the first year.
- Budget was subject to capping and damping regarding government grants
- Working arrangements stated that substitution at meetings was not permitted
- The Police Commissioner had outlined her priorities and aspirations
- For now there would not be a deputy commissioner, but this would be reviewed in March
- There were six plans across the constabulary area
- The Panel would be involved in the interviews for the new Chief Constable

Members thanked the councillor for his report and requested that similar update reports be made twice a year to the Scrutiny Committee.

ACTION:

- Members to note the report
- Future update reports to be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme by the Democratic Services Officer

101. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 December 2012 (Agenda item 8)

The Chairman commented that many of the Scrutiny comments were included in the minutes that had been circulated. With reference to District Executive minute 96 she requested that the 'circulated further information' referred to be forwarded to all Scrutiny members for information. One member requested that the presentation by South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) also be circulated.

ACTION: The presentation made to District Executive by the SSVCA and the further information circulated at District Executive on the value of the South Somerset Together Partnership be forwarded to all Scrutiny members by the Scrutiny Manager/ Democratic Services Officer.

102. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 January 2013 (Agenda item 9)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 3 January 2013. It was agreed that the following comments and questions would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

SSDC Debt Recovery Policy

- Members did not raise any comments – they were content that the report had been through Audit.

Delegation for Authorising NNDR1 Returns

- Members did not raise any comments about the report apart from the acronym NNDR needed to be more clearly stated at the start of the report.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- Members sought clarification that parishes would still receive their monies at the start of April
- Members of the Task and Finish group wished to make it clear that a cost neutral scheme was an ambition of the group but was not a principle of the review
- Views were expressed by some members that a 20% option would represent as close to cost neutral position as possible.

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 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).

Transfer of the Community Resource Service – Selection of the Preferred Bidder

- Members raised several comments that were answered by the Leader and officers present at the Scrutiny meeting. However Scrutiny Committee suggest an amendment to the second bullet point of the recommendation – to request that a final report be made to District Executive prior to contracts being signed, in order to ensure that comments raised by members have been adequately addressed.

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103. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 10)

Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme

The Scrutiny Manager and Councillor Cathy Bakewell as Chair of the Health Inequalities Task and Finish Group would be going to London on 25th January to report back on the

review process and outline the key learning points with representatives from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Department of Health.

Council Tax Benefit Changes

The Scrutiny Manager commented that a recommendation of the Task and Finish Group was that the group continue until the scheme is in place, and then to take on a monitoring role.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

104. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Manager gave updates regarding:

Joint review of flooding

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that in response to the request at the previous meeting about a joint review of flooding, she would be leading on a countywide review of flooding which was supported by all the Somerset District Authorities and the County Council. The review would not be about apportioning blame but would be more about seeking to identify what had gone well and to learn what could be done better in the future. If members were content to go ahead with the review, it was suggested that two members from each authority's Scrutiny Committee be nominated to form a Steering Group which would then lead the joint review process.

In response, members were positive about a review and it was agreed that Councillors Dave Bulmer and Paul Maxwell would be the representatives for the SSDC Scrutiny Committee.

Joint Waste Scrutiny

Members were reminded that the next Joint Waste Scrutiny meeting would take place on 18 January 2013 and would discuss future delivery proposals and the budget.

Health Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that Somerset had no dedicated Health Scrutiny programme and Somerset was the only authority nationally not to have one. A recommendation of the Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme would include a report on best practice. A full report for discussion would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION:

- Members to note the updates.
- That Councillors Dave Bulmer and Paul Maxwell be the representatives for the SSDC Scrutiny Committee on the steering group for the countywide review of flooding.

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105. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

The Scrutiny Manager noted that she would seek clarification as to when the car parking report would come to Scrutiny Committee.

- ACTION:**
- Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.
 - The Scrutiny Manager to clarify when the car parking report will come to Scrutiny Committee.

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106. Somerset Waste Board – Forward Plan (Agenda item 13)

ACTION: Members to note the Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan.

107. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 5 February 2013 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman