

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 5 February 2013 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.02 a.m. – 11.55am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Cathy Bakewell	Pauline Lock	
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Sue Osborne
Nigel Gage	Paul Maxwell	Wes Read
Carol Goodall	Graham Middleton	Nick Weeks

Also present:

Councillors Tim Carroll, Ric Pallister and Gina Seaton

Officers:

Donna Parham	Assistant Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

108. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 2 January 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

109. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Martin Wale and Peter Gubbins.

110. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Tony Lock declared a personal interest for item 13 on the District Executive agenda – Transfer of responsibility for the Petters Way toilet provision to Yeovil Town Council – as he was Chairman of the Yeovil Town Council Committee responsible for the matter.

111. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

113. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that she, the Scrutiny Manager and Councillor Paul Maxwell had attended the Waste Scrutiny meeting the previous week.

She also noted that the Scrutiny Manager and Councillor Carol Goodall would be attending training with the Local Government Information Unit on Local Government Finance next week.

114. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 3 January 2013 (Agenda item 7)

The Chairman commented that the Scrutiny comments were included in the minutes that had been circulated.

115. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 February 2013 (Agenda item 8)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 7 February 2013. It was agreed that the following comments and questions would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

Report from Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – item 6

- Scrutiny Committee are doing a collective response to the consultation about proposals for improvement of acute stroke services in Somerset.
- Members asked for further information about infected clinical waste being made into briquettes and the level of take up and where they were sold. (p. 4)

Somerset Waste Partnership – item 7

- Scrutiny commented that any publicity needs to put an emphasis on recycling saves money.
 - Scrutiny supported the allocation of additional funding, to deliver an education programme promoting increased food recycling levels. This funding should be conditional on other partner authorities also allocating funding.
 - The teams are to be congratulated for catching up on collections following the recent adverse weather.
 - A suggestion to help reduce the amount of nappies going to landfill was to ensure literature is made available through NHS and NCT Ante Natal classes and at Sure Start centres about re-usable nappies, detailing what's involved and the money than can be saved compared to purchasing disposable nappies. Dorset County Council do road shows on this subject and provide materials and props for groups to borrow to share information/promote reusable nappies.
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Revenue Budget 2013/14 – Medium Term Financial Plan and Revised Capital programme - item 8

- Scrutiny queried the loss in car park income (p.43) and whether funding would remain allocated for new car parks even though land was not available.

2012/13 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 31 December 2012 - item 9

- Scrutiny raised concern regarding the variance with Revenues and Benefits (p.48).
- Members sought clarification that the 24k no longer required for capital works at the crematorium would be re-allocated (p.34 of appendix doc).
- Clarification was also sought regarding allocations for Youth Facilities Development (p. 37 of appendix doc) and if any underspend would be clawed back.

2012/13 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 31 December 2012 - item 10

- In relation to the various budget reports in the Agenda, the Scrutiny Committee would like to thank Donna Parham for attending their meeting and answering their questions.
- Scrutiny were content with the recommendations.

SSDC Policy for Awarding Private Sector Housing Grants/Loans and other Financial Assistance – item 11

- Scrutiny were content with the recommendations.

Transfer of responsibility for Castle Cary Toilet Provision to Castle Cary Town Council – item 12

- Scrutiny asked that the inference within the report on Castle Cary Town Council sought the transfer of the toilets be changed to reflect the fact that they were led to believe that if they did not take on the toilets, the town would lose the facility.
- Other than the above, Scrutiny were content with the recommendations.

Transfer of responsibility for Petters Way Toilet Provision to Yeovil Town Council – item 13

- Scrutiny were content with the recommendations.

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).

Confidential

Rationalising land ownership at Chard Business Park – item 16

- Scrutiny noted that the map with the report did not indicate orientation or plot 5 referred to in the report, but other than that were happy to support the recommendations.

116. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 9)

Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme

The Scrutiny Manager and Councillor Cathy Bakewell as Chair of the Health Inequalities Task and Finish Group had attended a workshop in 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 the proposals had been passed by Council, and the Task and Finish group would continue to be involved through the final stages prior to implementation, whilst notification letters were distributed to those affected. The group would continue in a monitoring role throughout the year following implementation.

Review of Member Representation on Outside Organisations

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the final report was near completion and it was hoped the report would be made to the March meeting for endorsement.

Business Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that several months previously the Committee had asked for further information relating to an overspend of Business Rates Discretionary Relief. The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) had provided the information and it was agreed that a review of Business Rates Discretionary Relief would commence in the new financial year, and that a Task and Finish exercise would help to inform and develop a new policy.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

117. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 10)

The Scrutiny Managers gave updates regarding:

District-Wide Review of Flooding

The Scrutiny Manager noted the initial steering group meeting had taken place the previous week, however a representative from SCC had not been present. The Flood Summit had been arranged for 15 March at the County Cricket Ground in Taunton, and several Somerset MPs had confirmed their attendance.

Joint Waste Scrutiny

The Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel had met recently to consider the Draft Business Plan – as considered earlier in this agenda. It was noted that a meeting of Scrutiny support officers from the Somerset authorities had been arranged to discuss on-going support for the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel. When the Panel was set up, it was agreed that SSDC would support the first cycle of meetings – SSDC continues to support the Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel over two years later and discussions would look to identify another authority to support future Joint Waste Scrutiny meetings.

Health Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Manager would be approaching Somerset County Council (SCC) about Health Scrutiny following the local elections in May.

Countywide Review of Homelessness

The Scrutiny Manager confirmed that the next Task and Finish review would be the Countywide Homelessness Strategy and asked that any interested members get in touch with her.

ACTION: • Members to note the updates.

118. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

There were no updates to the Work Programme

ACTION: • Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

119. Somerset Waste Board – Forward Plan (Agenda item 12)

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

120. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

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

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Chairman