

## South Somerset District Council

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

(10.00 a.m. –11.12am)

Present:

**Members:** Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Cathy Bakewell	Peter Gubbins	Sue Osborne
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Martin Wale
Nigel Gage	Paul Maxwell	Nick Weeks
Carol Goodall	Graham Middleton	

**Also present:**

Councillor Tim Carroll

**Officers:**

Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

### 135. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 5 March 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 136. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pauline Lock and Wes Read.

### 137. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Peter Gubbins declared a personal interest in item 6 of District Executive agenda.

Councillor Nick Weeks declared a personal interest in item 11 of District Executive agenda as he was Chairman of the project group.

### 138. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

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

The Chairman informed members that:

- She and the Scrutiny Manager had recently attended a meeting at Taunton organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.
  - Attended the South West Scrutiny Network meeting in Chippenham with the Scrutiny Manager.
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### **141. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 7 March 2013 (Agenda item 7)**

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

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### **142. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 April 2013 (Agenda item 8)**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 4 April 2013. It was agreed that the following comments and questions would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

#### **Community Right to Bid – Nominations Received for Assets of Community Value – item 6**

- Members commented that Kingsdon Parish Council had ambitious plans and felt their aspirations should be supported.
- Members sought clarification about any financial liabilities for SSDC and what would happen if SSDC declined to put the school and playing field on the SSDC Register of Assets of Community Value.

#### **Report from Yeovil District Hospital NHS Trust - item 7**

- Scrutiny were content to note the report

#### **Annual Housing Monitoring report 2011/12 – item 8**

- Scrutiny queried the relevance of some of the data in the report as it was a year in arrears. Whilst it was acknowledged it would have been accurate at the time it did not reflect the current situation. Members felt this was a particular problem when reviewing the homelessness figures and felt this would need to be meticulously monitored in the current economic climate so SSDC could manage its homeless duty effectively by ensuring there is adequate provision of temporary accommodation.

#### **District Executive Forward Plan – item 9**

- Scrutiny sought clarification on timeframes for the reports on Homefinder (scheduled for May), Countywide Homelessness Strategy (scheduled for June) and Countywide
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Housing Strategy (scheduled for July) – as each report was reliant on another and Scrutiny had been informed that the Homefinder report and Homelessness Strategy dates were likely to slip.

#### **CONFIDENTIAL - 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).

#### **Castle Cary Market House – item 11**

- Scrutiny were positive about the project and content for the recommendations to go forward.

#### **Current Legal Proceedings – item 12**

- Scrutiny felt it was inappropriate to discuss the item further, and were content that the recommendations go forward.

### **143. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 9)**

#### **Review of Member Representation on Outside Organisations**

The Chairman of the review group advised that the final report would be considered by Scrutiny Committee in May.

#### **Council Tax Benefit Changes**

The Scrutiny Manager commented that negotiations were underway to organise some training events about providing nutritious meals on a limited budget.

#### **Countywide Review of Homelessness Strategy**

The Scrutiny Manager informed the committee that SSDC were now likely to do their own task and Finish review which would then be circulated to the other Somerset authorities for comment.

#### **Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme**

The Chairman of the review group advised that the final report would be completed shortly.

#### **Business Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief**

There was no update since the last meeting.

There was a short discussion about task and finish reviews in general including resources, limited officer capacity and the availability of members. It was agreed that the future review for the Market Towns Investment Group be delayed until at least September 2013.

**ACTION:** Members to note the updates.

**144. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny Managers gave updates regarding:

**District-Wide Review of Flooding**

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that the Flood Summit had been well attended with many positive and practical outcomes, and good discussions about community resilience. The Steering Group would be meeting shortly to discuss the way forward. A full report would be made to the Steering Group and then to each local authority in Somerset.

Scrutiny Committee wished to formally thank the Scrutiny Manager for her work arranging the Flood Summit.

**Joint Waste Scrutiny**

Discussions at a meeting on 23 March had established there was no longer any officer capacity across Somerset to support the meetings. There was also a need to review the purpose of the group as there was little demonstrable value to continuing with it.

**Health Scrutiny**

As part of the Health Inequalities Scrutiny programme, the group had considered the fact that Somerset County Council (SCC) were the only local authority nationally not to have a dedicated Health Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Manager and Chairman had recently attended a meeting where SCC had agreed they would look at the feasibility of establishing a Health Scrutiny following the local elections in May.

**ACTION:**     • Members to note the updates.

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**145. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that the report about High Street Innovation Funding would come to the July meeting.

**ACTION:**     • Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

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

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

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**147. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 143)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 7 May 2013 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman