

## South Somerset District Council

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

(10.02 a.m. – 12.25am)

Present:

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

Cathy Bakewell	Pauline Lock	Sue Osborne
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Wes Read
Nigel Gage	Paul Maxwell	Martin Wale
Carol Goodall		

**Also present:**

Councillors Tim Carroll, Tony Fife and Gina Seaton

**Officers:**

Saveria Moss	Programme Manager, Family Support Programme
Steve Joel	Assistant Director, Health & Well-Being
Kim Close	Assistant Director, Communities
Steve Brewer	Community Safety Co-ordinator
Catherine Hodsman	Performance Officer
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

### 121. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Gubbins and Nick Weeks.

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

Councillor Cathy Bakewell, as lead councillor for the South Somerset Family Focus Programme, declared a personal interest in item 6 of the District Executive agenda.

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

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

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

There were no announcements.

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**127. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 February 2013 (Agenda item 7)**

The Chairman commented that the question raised by members about clinical waste being turned into briquettes had been answered and the response from the appointed representative would be forwarded to members.

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**128. 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 March 2013. It was agreed that the following comments and questions would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

**Update Report on the South Somerset Family Focus Programme – item 6**

- Members acknowledged that it was very difficult situations that were being addressed
- Members sought reassurance that any specifically identified families that were not in the areas suggested for year 2 could also possibly be included in the programme.
- Members were very supportive of the work done to date
- Members acknowledged that the work for the volunteer mentors might be stressful and sought reassurances that they were able to cope.

**Revised Governance Arrangements for SWAP - item 7**

- Members were content to support all the recommendations and commented that the proposals were a natural progression.

**Corporate Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 – item 8**

- Members requested if in future P1032 sickness absence could be split to indicate long and short term sickness separately as long term sickness was skewing the figures.
- Members sought assurance that the Somerset Waste Partnership will be looking to address the increased cost of Flytipping in due course.

**Neighbourhood Planning – item 9**

- Members commended the work of development planning officers in explaining neighbourhood plans to parishes.
- Members were concerned if parishes/neighbourhoods would fully understand the equalities implications as mentioned on page 34

**Designation of Neighbourhood Area – Queen Camel Parish – item 10**

- No comments

**Statutory Pay Policy Statement for Chief Officers – item 11**

- No comments

**New Pension Discretion – item 12**

- No comments

**Appointment of an Empty Property Officer – item 13**

- No comments

**Forward Plan – item 14**

- Scrutiny commented that it was their understanding that the car parking report was likely to go to District Executive in May not April as indicated.

**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).

**Request to Extend Cleaning Contracts for Council Offices and Public Conveniences – item 16**

- No comments

**129. Somerset Community Safety Partnership (Agenda Item 9)**

The Assistant Director (Communities), Portfolio Holder (Community Safety), and the Community Safety Co-ordinator provided members with an update on the current situation of the Safer Somerset Partnership which included:

- The new structure of the partnership which was now banded:
  - Gold – strategic direction
  - Silver- commissioning activities
  - Bronze – work on the ground
- Funding for initiatives, including the funding available for the whole partnership and what may be allocated to South Somerset
- It was generally felt among the partnership that funding for Community Justice Panels should come through the justice system rather than funding for community safety initiatives.
- Domestic abuse was high on the agenda.
- Police and Crime Commissioner would be visiting Yeovil on 23 April and all councillors would be invited.
- There were now three plans that had to be referred to regarding community safety, and the partnership needed to address the best way forward for all three to work together – discussions were currently taking place.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee raised several comments including:

- Disappointment at possible proportion of funding for South Somerset and the lack of additional funding for rural crime
- Hope there would be discussions with the Family Focus Programme as there appeared to be some cross over
- Having three plans to comply with legislation appeared to be very messy

Scrutiny Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for the informative update, and requested an update report after 12 months.

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

*Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)  
kim.close@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462708*

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## **130. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 10)**

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

The Chairman of the review group advised that the final report was near completion and it was hoped the report would be made to the April meeting for endorsement.

### **Council Tax Benefit Changes**

The Scrutiny Manager commented that - Work was slowly progressing to work with outside agencies across the district to look to introduce some budgeting training and purchasing and preparing food on a small budget. It was hoped this would help mitigate some people from becoming vulnerable as a result of the changes introduced within the Council Tax Reduction scheme alongside other Welfare Reform changes.

### **Health Inequalities Scrutiny Programme**

The Scrutiny Manager commented that the report had been delayed pending a meeting at County Hall arranged for 12 March by South West Councils about Health Scrutiny. The Chairman and Scrutiny Manager would be attending the meeting.

### **Review of the Market Towns Investment Group (MTIG)**

The Scrutiny Manager informed members it was uncertain when the review would commence due to work commitments, but that following a report to Scrutiny in July on MTIG and Yeovil Vision, the need for a Task and Finish Group would be revisited.

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

The Scrutiny Manager commented that it was hoped the review would commence in May and needed to be completed by September.

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

The Scrutiny Manager informed the committee that she had contacted all the Somerset Councils who would be covered by the countywide strategy. A couple of authorities had confirmed they would like to participate, others had not yet responded. She was currently awaiting the final draft before commencing the review.

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

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## **131. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Managers gave updates regarding:

### **District-Wide Review of Flooding**

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that the Flood Summit had been arranged for 15 March at the County Cricket Ground in Taunton. There were currently around 150 people expected to attend.

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**Joint Waste Scrutiny**

A meeting for officers had been arranged for 23 March to discuss future support for Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel meetings.

**Health Scrutiny**

As mentioned earlier in the agenda, the Scrutiny Manager reminded members that a meeting at County Hall on 12 March had been arranged by South West Councils to discuss Health Scrutiny. The Chairman and Scrutiny Manager would be attending the meeting.

**Update on use or proposed use of the High Street Innovation Funding**

The Scrutiny Manager advised members that according to the work programme it was now appropriate to compile and agree a report request for the Yeovil Vision and Market Towns Investment Group to monitor the use of the High Street Innovation Funding that SSDC allocated to them last year.

The committee considered the purpose of the funding and its requirements and detailed specific questions they required answering, and the information and evidence they wished to be included in the reports.

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

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**132. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)**

There were no updates to the Work Programme

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

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

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

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**134. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 2 April 2013 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman