

## South Somerset District Council

**Draft minutes** of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 30 July 2013 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.00am –11.35pm)

Present:

**Members:** Councillor Dave Bulmer (in the Chair)

Cathy Bakewell

Pauline Lock

Graham Middleton

Pauline Clarke

Tony Lock

David Recardo

Marcus Fysh (sub)

Paul Maxwell

Martin Wale

Nigel Gage

**Also present:**

Councillors Tim Carroll and Ric Pallister

**Officers:**

Donna Parham

Assistant Director, Finance and Corporate Services

Emily McGuinness

Scrutiny Manager

Jo Gale

Scrutiny Manager

Becky Sanders

Democratic Services Officer

### 29. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Tony Lock requested an amendment to the minute regarding the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (PCP), so that it indicated the minutes of the PCP meetings would be incorporated in to the future written reports.

Councillor Pauline Lock requested an amendment to minute 14 to indicate she had tendered her apologies.

Members were content that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman, subject to the amendments being made to minute 14 and the minute regarding the PCP (numbered minute 22 instead of 23 in error in the draft minutes circulated).

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Colbert, Carol Goodall, Sue Osborne and Sue Steele. (Councillor Marcus Fysh was substitute for Councillor Sue Osborne).

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman for the meeting. With the agreement of members, Councillor Cathy Bakewell took the position for the duration of the meeting.

**31. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

Councillor Cathy Bakewell declared a personal interest in item 7 of the District Executive agenda (Revenue Budget Monitoring Report) as she was Chairman of South Somerset Together which was mentioned in the report.

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**32. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

In response to a question from a member regarding the rationale for the Outside Bodies review, the Scrutiny Manager explained the process.

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

There were no Chairman's announcements.

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**35. Countywide Homelessness Strategy (Agenda item 7)**

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda. The Scrutiny Manager advised that an update would be given when agenda item 10 was considered.

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**36. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 4 July 2013 (Agenda item 8)**

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

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**37. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1 August 2013 (Agenda item 9)**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 1 August 2013. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

**Affordable Housing Development programme – item 6**

- Members thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the Scrutiny meeting to answer questions about policy issues and clarifying the statutory roles and responsibilities of SSDC.
  - Members were also pleased to note that for the first time in many years there are no families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the district.
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### **2013/14 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 30 June 2013 – item 7**

- Members questioned the figures relating to Building Control but were content to note the comments of the Assistant Director – Finance about managing this budget.

### **2013/14 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 30 June 2013 – item 8**

- Members suggested that it would be beneficial if the start dates for capital projects were included in the main body of the report to allow for more effective monitoring of slippage.

### **Report of Joint Scrutiny review of Flooding – item 9**

- Scrutiny did not raise any further comments for consideration by District Executive.

### **Community Right to Bid – Nomination received for Assets of Community Value and review of Procedures for Considering Nominations – item 10**

- Scrutiny raised no comments

### **District Executive Forward Plan – item 11**

- Scrutiny made no comments

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

### **Council Tax Benefit Changes**

The Scrutiny Manager commented that the group were meeting with officers in August to look at statistics about collection rates and non-payment to check if the policy was working.

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

The Scrutiny Manager commented that the group had completed their work with the strategy and equalities analysis. She suggested that to speed up the process that the draft strategy was circulated to the other Somerset Scrutiny committees for comment and then to bring back for discussion in October before making a recommendation to District Executive, to which members agreed.

### **National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) – Discretionary Rate Relief**

The Scrutiny Manager informed the committee that the group had received an overview of NNDR and mandatory and discretionary relief, including how the reliefs have been funded historically and would be funded in the future. The group had a further meeting scheduled to look at some case studies and were planning to speak to internal and external experts throughout the coming months. During a short discussion several members raised comments that issues regarding charity shops needed careful consideration.

### **County Wide Review of Flooding**

The Scrutiny Manager, in response to comments made, informed members about:

- the progress of the flooding report being considered by the other Somerset Scrutiny and Executive committees.
- Actions from the flooding report would continue and were not pending discussions by any of the committees.
- The opinion of Somerset County Council was that a single website was not necessary as the appropriate information was already in the public domain
- The issue surrounding providing insurance for flood risk properties was being addressed at a national level.
- The next meeting of the steering group would discuss when the flooding issues would be raised with the LEP.

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

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

The Scrutiny Manager provided two updates:

- Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband – the Scrutiny Manager informed members that she had done some initial background research and the pertinent issue for South Somerset / East Devon was the fact that 10% of homes would not be covered by the project and the focus should now be on identifying this 10%. It was agreed that a joint Scrutiny meeting should be arranged for September.

During a brief discussion, one member indicated that an interactive map detailing when areas would get connected had recently been published.

- Health Scrutiny – a report had recently gone to the Health and Wellbeing Board about health Scrutiny. The county Scrutiny Committee (Policy and People) would have responsibility for discharging the County Council's statutory health scrutiny duties and there is potential for district councils to undertake more local level proactive health scrutiny.

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

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### **40. Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)**

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the report as shown in the agenda and commented that the report was not for in depth discussion but as a reminder to members to raise any suggestions for future items for the Scrutiny Work Programme. Suggestions received so far included:

- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – is it meeting its criteria, what are its priorities for the future
- Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant – one year on, is it meeting expectations

During discussion the following item was also suggested:

- Streetscene – are enough resources being put into the service as this is such a high profile service.

The Scrutiny Manager commented that she would 'work up' and score the suggested items, and research if the topics would be best addressed by a task and finish exercise or by a report and/or presentation to the Committee.

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**ACTION:** Members to note the suggested items for the Scrutiny Work Programme.

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**41. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 13)**

In response to a comment, the Scrutiny Manager confirmed that the item on the programme for October regarding a Task and Finish outline report for Somerset and Devon Broadband would be deleted.

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

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**42. Somerset Waste Board – Forward Plan (Agenda item 14)**

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

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**43. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 3 September 2013 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman