

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 1 October 2013 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.00am –11.55pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (in the Chair)

David Bulmer
Pauline Clarke
Nick Colbert
Nigel Gage

Carol Goodall
Pauline Lock
Tony Lock
Nigel Mermagen

Graham Middleton
Sue Osborne
Martin Wale

Also present:

Councillors Tim Carroll and Sylvia Seal

Officers:

Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director, Operations and Customer Focus
Donna Parham	Assistant Director, Finance and Corporate Services
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

59. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 3 September 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Maxwell.

61. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Nick Colbert declared a personal interest in item 17 on the District Executive agenda – Wincanton Community Sports Centre – as he was a trustee.

62. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

64. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman made several announcements including:

- the report on the Somerset Homelessness Strategy had been delayed as it was still being considered by some of the other local authorities.
 - A welcome to Councillor Nigel Mermagen who had replaced Councillor Cathy Bakewell on Scrutiny Committee
 - A questioning skills workshop for councillors had been arranged for 8th November and Scrutiny members were encouraged to attend.
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65. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 September 2013 (Agenda item 7)

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

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that following on from comments made by the Scrutiny Committee last month, a report outlining our current approach to historical buildings and proposals for future service delivery would be considered by the November Scrutiny Committee. She also informed members that she had discussed some changes to the reporting of Performance information with the relevant officers.

66. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 October 2013 (Agenda item 8)

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

Report from Yeovil District hospital NHS Trust – item 6

- Page 1 – Scrutiny referred to the comments made by Paul Mears and were concerned that the focus of concern appeared to be about methodology of scoring rather than looking to address issues highlighted by the Net Promoter Score.
- Page 3 - Jo Howarth comment D about Liverpool Pathway – Scrutiny sought clarification on this point as many members understood that a couple of months ago the government had indicated that the Liverpool Pathway had, or would be scrapped in the near future.

Symphony Project – item 7

- Scrutiny was of the opinion it needed to be made clear in the report that SSDC were a non-funding partner.

Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy – SSDC Response – item 8

- Members thanked the Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) and the Portfolio Holder for providing an overview of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and work regarding clinical commissioning.
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- Members were pleased to hear that the views of South Somerset were being taken into account.
- Scrutiny commented that sight of a work programme or forward plan for the Health and Wellbeing Board would be useful so that members could provide targeted advice and support for our officers and members working through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Business Rates Software Replacement – item 9

- Scrutiny sought clarification that the procurement process had been robust enough to ensure everything that is required is in place
- How long would the migration period be and would it lead to downtime causing a backlog which could then require additional resources? If additional resources would be required what would the costs be?

Replacement Horticultural Equipment – item 10

- Members noted that the funding was coming from useable Capital Reserves and not ICT Reserves as stated in the agenda.
- Scrutiny were content with the recommendations and acknowledged it would facilitate more efficient working.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2018/19 – item 11

- Scrutiny sought clarification that there was confidence that the new way of 'leaning' would be effective.
- Clarification was sought on the risks to the MTFP if the Inspector refused the Local Plan next year.
- Rec B - Scrutiny queried if it was known when DCLG might confirm the grant
- Table on page 49 – Scrutiny queried the low and high figure for the additional payroll requirements for 15/16 and 16/17 (87.6 and 492.0)

Wessex Home Improvement Loans – Update report – item 12

- Scrutiny noted the good outcome of a recent audit by SWAP, but expressed their slight disappointment at the relatively low take up figures (page 54).

Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy - item 13

- Scrutiny had considered this item in detail at the September meeting and were content that their comments had been taken into consideration.

District Executive Forward Plan – item 14

- Scrutiny raised no comments

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 items 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).

The disposal of SSSC owned land in Chard comprising Boden Mill, former ACI factory site, Market Fields and Boden Street car parks – item 16 (Confidential)

- Scrutiny was pleased that the issue was at this stage and congratulated those involved with the scheme.
- Clarification was sought regarding the car parking element and how it would work
- Clarification was also sought about the use of the rest of the mill building

Wincanton Community Sports Centre – item 17 (Confidential)

- Scrutiny were content with the recommendations and thanked all the officers in getting the matter to this stage.
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67. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 9)**National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) – Discretionary Rate Relief**

The Scrutiny Manager commented that the group had met four times and considered comments from internal experts. The next stage would be to meet with some external parties and look in detail at equalities issues.

Inescapable Bids

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that a meeting would take place on 23 October to consider inescapable bids.

Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that the joint Scrutiny meeting had now been arranged for 16 October in Honiton. Part of the work of the group would include identifying areas that would not be covered by the national scheme for delivering broadband and to discuss how funding might be accessed to deliver a service to those areas.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

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

The Scrutiny Manager provided two updates:

- A reminder that the budget Scrutiny workshop had been arranged for 19 December. All SSSC councillors were invited to attend and discuss informally budgets and savings proposals with Portfolio Holders
- County Wide Review of Flooding – the steering group were due to meet on 9th October to monitor outcomes and consider potential sources of funding for dredging.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

69. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

There were no updates to the Scrutiny Work Programme. The Scrutiny Manager commented that the item on Localism was a broad topic and suggested an item only

came forward if members suggested an area of specific interest. Members suggested an item on the four 'Community Rights' would be beneficial.

ACTION: Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

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

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

71. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

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

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Chairman