

## South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 29 April 2014 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.05am – 11.35pm)

Present:

**Members:** Councillor Sue Steele (in the Chair)

David Bulmer  
Pauline Clarke  
Nick Colbert  
Carol Goodall

Pauline Lock  
Paul Maxwell  
Graham Middleton

Sue Osborne  
David Recardo  
Martin Wale

**Also present:**

Councillor Tim Carroll

**Officers:**

Tom Chown	Fraud and Data Intern
Lynda Creek	Fraud and Data Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager
Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place and Performance)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

### 154. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 1 April 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Gage, Nigel Mermagen and Tony Lock.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues arising from previous minutes.

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

The Chairman informed members that:

- This was Councillor Carol Goodall's last meeting as a member of the Scrutiny Committee, and highlighted that during her five years on the committee she had been involved with achieving three national Scrutiny awards.
  - The Board of Governors for Musgrove Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust would shortly be interviewing for a new Chairman.
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**160. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 3 April 2014 (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.

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**161. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1 May 2014 (Agenda item 8)**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 1 May 2014. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

**Contaminated Land Costs Recovery and Hardship Scheme – item 6**

- Scrutiny queried why the scheme was being brought forward now as it didn't seem to be as a result of new legislation – is this a replacement policy or a new one?

**Determination of Contaminated Land – item 7**

- Scrutiny sought clarification about potential costs to SSDC, and which budget any costs would be funded from, if it was found that costs could not be recovered.

**SSDC Counter Fraud, Theft and Bribery Strategy – item 8**

- Scrutiny congratulated the officers for an easy to read and understand report.
- Members endorsed the request for a modest sum to extend the contract for the Fraud & Data Intern and went on to raise concerns about the on-going resources that would need to be provided to ensure the sustainable delivery of the action plan. We were pleased to note that a further report would be brought forward as soon as government had confirmed arrangements for the transfer of staff to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- Scrutiny were content that the Audit Committee be the primary body for reviewing progress against the Action Plan.

**Draft Asset Management Strategy – item 9**

- Members acknowledged a similar report had been taken to each area for comment, and were content that the recommendations go forward.
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**Policy on the Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies – item 10**

- Members noted that the report as shown in the agenda did not include the Scrutiny Task and Finish recommendation that all appointments should be current serving SSDC councillors, and noted that the Democratic Services Manager had agreed to correct this administrative oversight.
- Members of the Task and Finish Group reiterated their recommendation that wherever possible member appointments were held with observer status.

**Urgent Executive Decision Taken – Guarantee to Castle Cary Town Council to Purchase Land at Castle Cary – item 11**

- Members questioned what would happen if the results of the consultation indicated that the people of Castle Cary did not want the land – where would that leave SSDC?

**Urgent Executive Decision Taken – Purchase of Caravan for Homeless Resident Affected by Flooding – item 12**

- Members sought clarification about what was intended to happen to the caravan after its current role, as during discussion at Scrutiny Committee it appeared to be unclear if it would be sold or relocated to Twisted Willow.
- Scrutiny queried if depreciation had been factored into the financial implications.

**Stepping Up Economic Development – item 13**

- Members queried the additional resource and initial cost coming from the revenue Infrastructure Fund, as there were recollections that when the report to establish the Infrastructure fund was initially considered it had been stated that there was sufficient capacity within the Economic Development team to meet the additional requirements.
- Page 32 – Scrutiny sought clarification about the term of the post as the report referred to a permanent fixed term contract.
- Members queried where the proposed new role would fit within the existing team structure and how this role would support internal succession planning and act as an incentive to retain existing, skilled staff.
- Page 34 – Scrutiny asked for a brief explanation of 'Bonds' under Corporate Projects.

**District Executive Forward Plan – item 14**

- 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 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)."

**Transfer of Responsibility for Public Toilet Provision to Bruton Town Council (Confidential) – item 16**

Members were content that the recommendations go forward.

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

The Scrutiny Manager updated members on the progress of current Task and Finish reviews.

**Somerset Strategic Housing Framework**

The Chairman noted that the group had recently had a progress meeting with the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager, and it was envisaged that the document to be produced would be an easy to understand and use strategy.

**Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband**

The Scrutiny Manager updated members that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) had made further funding available nationally but this had to be match funded. A meeting would take place later in the week between the CDS project team and Economic Development Officers from SSDC and EDDC to discuss a practical way forward under the terms of the non-disclosure agreement. Progress was being made and a further meeting was likely to place in June.

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

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

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that:

- Civil Contingencies Partnership– this would now be a South Somerset review only and not include the other member authorities of the partnership. The review would be quite intensive with at least monthly meetings and a final report being completed by September as Somerset County Council were asking for an increased contribution from each of the authorities. A Task and Finish review would evaluate about staying in the partnership or not.
- The Flooding Steering Group – the group would next meet after the European Election in May.

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

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

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

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**153. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 12)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 3 June 2014 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman

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