

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 1 April 2014 in Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.00am – 11.25am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (in the Chair)

David Bulmer
Nick Colbert
Pauline Lock

Tony Lock
Nigel Mermagen
Graham Middleton (to 10.55)

Sue Osborne
David Recardo

Also present:

Councillors Tim Carroll and Ric Pallister

Officers:

Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

141. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 4 March 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

142. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pauline Clarke, Nigel Gage, Carol Goodall, Paul Maxwell and Martin Wale.

143. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

144. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues arising from previous minutes.

146. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that after today, Jo Gale, one of the Scrutiny Managers would be on maternity leave. All members present conveyed their best wishes.

147. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 March 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.

148. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 April 2014 (Agenda item 8)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 3 April 2014. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

Report from Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust – item 6

- Scrutiny referred to the recent review of Stroke services and sought reassurance that monitoring would be undertaken regarding the impact of changes.
- Scrutiny understood that hospitals had key indicators for infections/infection control, waiting lists/times and complaints – and it was suggested that circulation of such figures would be of general interest to the public.

South Somerset Together (SST Strategic Partnership – item 7)

- Scrutiny sought reassurance that all partners were contributing equally in terms of effort and responsibility.
- Members congratulated the work of the partnership and felt it was much improved and that SSDC were now 'getting more out than putting in'.
- Scrutiny enquired how secure partnership funding was for future years.

Community Right to Bid – Nominations Received for Assets of Community Value – item 8

- Scrutiny made no comments.

Creation of a Day Centre and Related Accommodation at 80 South Street, Yeovil – item 9

- It was noted recommendation (f) appeared to be bit of an unknown and Scrutiny queried how likely sourcing other capital funding would be and what were the implications should such capital funding not be secured?
 - P.27 Financial implications – members sought clarification that allocation of £100,000 would not impact upon the £355,000 set aside for rural housing schemes.
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Transparency – Land and Property Information – item 10

- Scrutiny requested that all members be notified when the information was live on the SSDC website.

Continuation of Shared CEO Arrangements with East Devon District Council – item 11

- Members queried if any other alternatives had been explored such as the possibilities of not retaining a Chief Executive Officer – as was the case in some other local authorities

South Somerset Mind Loan Request – item 12

- The good work done by Mind is acknowledged.
- Concerns were raised if the organisation was relying on funding streams that might not be there in the future.
- Members raised concerns about risks associated with providing a loan, and sought clarification regarding charges currently on the property.
- Members of the Scrutiny Committee were not happy to endorse the recommendation as currently worded as they did not feel that sufficient information was available about current charges associated with the Markwick Centre. They would support an amended recommendation stating that the loan be agreed subject to a clean charge being applied to the property.

District Executive Forward Plan – item 13

- Scrutiny made no comments.
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149. Verbal Update on Task & Finish Reviews (Agenda Item 9)

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

Council Tax Benefit Reduction

A request has been made to the Revenues and Benefits Manager for a monitoring report on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to come to the Scrutiny Committee in July.

Somerset Strategic Housing Framework

The task and finish group would meet with the SSDC Corporate Strategic Housing Manager in a few weeks to discuss the SSDC strategy following on from the framework and ahead of any consultation. It is envisaged that the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager will attend Scrutiny Committee in September to give a verbal report on the outcomes of consultation and to seek members views of a draft strategy ahead of it being considered by District Executive.

National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) – Discretionary Rate Relief

Impact of the potential draft policy was being considered by the group and it was hoped an internal consultation with all members and interested staff in the coming weeks. Due to Jo Gale being on maternity leave, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) would be the lead officer for finalising the policy with input from the task and finish group.

Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband

A further meeting was planned to discuss information that could be released to the wider public without a need to sign a non-disclosure document. Additional funding had also now been allocated for delivery to hard to reach areas.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

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

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that:

- The Flooding Steering Group would reconvene shortly and SSDC were leading the community resilience aspect of the 20 year plan. It had been suggested that there was a review of the Civil Contingencies Partnership (not unit), which would commence in May and probably involve monthly meetings until November. As Cllr Paul Maxwell had been unable to attend several of the Steering Group meetings to date she suggested another member was put forward. Councillor Sue Steele expressed an interest, and other members were content that she be the representative.
- Agreement regarding ongoing support arrangements for a Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel was still unresolved. The contract between Somerset Waste Partnership and Viridor was under review and a request had been made for a representative of the Joint Waste Scrutiny panel to be on the review group. As the panel in effect no longer existed, any interested member was invited to attend. No one present at the meeting expressed an interest in attending.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

151. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that she would send a report request, with the same questions as last year, to the relevant officers for an update on the management of Gypsy Park Homes, so that hopefully members could make a direct comparison with last years report.

ACTION: • Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

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

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

153. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 29 April 2014 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman
