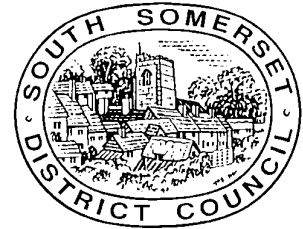


**South Somerset District Council**

*Notice of Meeting*



# Scrutiny Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Tuesday 3 June 2014**

**10.00am**

**Main Committee Room  
Council Offices  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
Somerset BA20 2HT**

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The public and press are welcome to attend.

Disabled Access is available at this meeting venue.



If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, Becky Sanders on Yeovil (01935) 462462  
email: [becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk), website: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 21 May 2014.

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*

**This information is also available on our  
website: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## Scrutiny Committee Membership

**Chairman**  
**Vice Chairmen**

Sue Steele  
David Bulmer  
Nigel Mermagen

Pauline Clarke  
Nick Colbert  
Carol Goodall  
Tim Inglefield

Pauline Lock  
Tony Lock  
Paul Maxwell  
Graham Middleton

Sue Osborne  
David Recardo  
Martin Wale

## Information for the Public

### What is Scrutiny?

The Local Government Act 2000 requires all councils in England and Wales to introduce new political structures which provide a clear role for the Council, the Executive and non-executive councillors.

One of the key roles for non-executive councillors is to undertake an overview and scrutiny role for the council. In this Council the overview and scrutiny role involves reviewing and developing, scrutinising organisations external to the council and holding the executive to account

Scrutiny also has an important role to play in organisational performance management.

The Scrutiny Committee is made up of 14 non-executive members and meets monthly to consider items where executive decisions need to be reviewed before or after their implementation, and to commission reviews of policy or other public interest.

Members of the public are able to:

- attend meetings of the Scrutiny Committee except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings; and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Committee are held monthly on the Tuesday prior to meetings of the District Executive at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Agendas and minutes of these meetings are published on the Council's website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk).

The Council's Constitution is also on the website and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

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**South Somerset District Council – Council Plan**

**Our focuses are:** (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong community, which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- Environment – We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- Homes – We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other

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## 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.
-

### **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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## Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday 3 June 2014****Agenda***Preliminary Items*

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 April 2014**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9. In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under any relevant code of conduct.

4. **Public Question Time**
5. **Issues Arising from Previous Meetings**

This is an opportunity for Members to question the progress on issues arising from previous meetings. However, this does not allow for the re-opening of a debate on any item not forming part of this agenda.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

*Items for Discussion**Page Number*

- |     |                                                                                     |           |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 7.  | <b>Gypsy Site Management .....</b>                                                  | <b>1</b>  |
| 8.  | <b>Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 May 2014.....</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| 9.  | <b>Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 June 2014.....</b>           | <b>6</b>  |
| 10. | <b>Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews.....</b>                                | <b>7</b>  |
| 11. | <b>Update on matters of interest .....</b>                                          | <b>8</b>  |
| 12. | <b>Scrutiny Work Programme.....</b>                                                 | <b>9</b>  |
| 13. | <b>Date of next meeting.....</b>                                                    | <b>11</b> |
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Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

## 7. Gypsy Site Management

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Cllr Ric Pallister (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Environmental Health & Inclusion)  
*Assistant Director:* Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being)  
*Service Manager:* Kirsty Larkins, Housing and Welfare Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Jon Batty, Housing Policy and Performance Officer  
*Contact Details:* jon.batty@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935-462749)

### Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the site management arrangements for the Council's Gypsy Sites.

### Forward Plan

2. This report has been part of the Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan following the District Executives September 2009 decision to approve the purchase of park homes and associated site refurbishment works for the families residing at the Chubbards Cross and Marsh Lane sites.

### Public Interest

3. The Council has a statutory duty to provide Gypsy and Traveller residential and transit pitches.
4. There is a need to monitor the site management arrangements to ensure the sites are managed in the best way and at the lowest possible cost to the Council.

### Recommendation

5. That members note the site management arrangements.

### Background

6. In 2002 The Council took over the management of Chubbards Cross, Ilton and Marsh Lane, Tintinhull from Somerset County Council. The Council then successfully bid for central government money to help us bring the sites up to a decent standard.
7. After receiving the money from central government in 2009 the District Executive approved the purchase of up to 18 park homes and the associated site refurbishment.
8. The Scrutiny Committee requested annual updates, and last considered the site management arrangements in May 2013.

## Areas of Scrutiny

9. 10 areas were previously identified by members of the Scrutiny Committee in 2012 and these have been used to inform the preparation of this report. The position on each area is set out below.

Management Issue	Position
(1) Have all tenants signed their tenancy agreements?	Yes. Before moving into a Park Home or onto a pitch a tenancy agreement must be signed. The current tenancy agreement is very long and difficult to understand. We are working with the legal team to produce a new, clear English agreement.
(2) Are rent charges still in-line with Local Housing Allowance rates?	Yes, and rent charges are reviewed annually in February, with changes applying from 1 <sup>st</sup> April.  However, several residents have been impacted by the “bedroom tax”, this has meant the Welfare Benefits Team working with residents to apply for discretionary housing payment. Unfortunately we do not have any one bedroom park homes for residents to downsize into.
(3) Are the tenants paying their rent liability?	Yes, residents are paying their rent liability. Rent accounts are monitored regularly and residents invoiced for any amount not covered by Housing Benefit.
(4) Are the tenants continuing to pay their water and utility charges?	All tenants are aware that their water is metered. The site management team monitors usage and residents are invoiced. We have given all residents practical advice on the economic use of water and we are encouraging all residents to pay for their water using direct debit. Residents procure and pay suppliers directly for electricity and gas.
(5) Are the sites fully occupied?	The Tintinhull site is fully occupied. The Ilton site currently has two pitch-only vacancies.
(6) Previously it was reported that there were good relationships with the PCSO. Is this still the case?	Yes. The site management team continues to benefit from the support of the Police. The Police attend site management team meetings and there is regular dialogue between us regarding site management issues. The Police assisted the Council in the January 2014 district-wide Gypsy and Traveller caravan count.

Management Issue	Position
<p>(7) What have the total maintenance costs been, has this been met within the agreed budget?</p>	<p>For the year 2013/14, maintenance costs totalled £42,609 however; overall the sites delivered an operating surplus of £32,400 which has been moved to the park home reserve fund.</p> <p>Main areas of spend are:-</p> <p>£4682.78 on routine pump maintenance  £3271.10 on rubbish removal.  £5585.22 on plastic shower splash backs due to a fault with water running behind tiles and causing damaged to the wall behind.  £7605.29 on Void turnaround works to Park Homes</p> <p>Maintenance costs included repairs to the barriers, water leaks, electric sockets, leaking toilets and dripping taps.</p> <p>We also recharge all residents for any responsive work on communal areas for which no individual resident appears responsible.</p>
<p>(8) Are there any on-going costs to the Council? If there are please detail these.</p>	<p>Yes, there is a need for the Council to plan for the future replacement of the Park Homes. To achieve this, the service will transfer a sum of £32,400 from rent charges into a specific Gypsy Site Reserve. This sum transferred is adjusted in take account of inflation and condition assessments.</p>
<p>(9) What is the current condition of the sites? Are there any issues with vandalism or Anti-social behaviour?</p>	<p>Both the Tintinhull and Ilton sites are in good condition.</p> <p>The site management team served a 'Notice to Remedy A Breach of Agreement' on one resident on the Tintinhull site. The resident has largely complied with the Notice.</p> <p>The team also served a 'Notice to Remedy a Breach of Agreement' on one resident on the Ilton site, and Court action is proceeding.</p> <p>Members should be assured that the site management team works closely with our partner agencies to ensure our residents have a safe and pleasant place to live, and that authorised visitors have easy and safe access at all times. Our actions include:</p> <p>(1) Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC). Working with the Police, we successfully used an ABC to stop antisocial behaviour being caused by a family.</p> <p>(2) Regular site visits by the Gypsy Site and Liaison Officer and by the Police.</p> <p>(3) Good working relationships with other emergency</p>

Management Issue	Position
	<p>services and Social Services and Traveller Education.</p> <p>(4) Working closely with the RSPCA to act on any animal welfare concerns, and to improve use and management of land adjacent to the Tintinhull site.</p> <p>(5) Providing positive feedback to residents. The site management team will always acknowledge and encourage good behaviour on our sites.</p> <p>(6) Residents' Handbook. Tailored to the individual sites, the handbooks contain useful practical information about site safety, repairs and the importance of the tenancy agreement. The handbooks, along with a blank copy of the tenancy agreement, will also be sent to prospective applicants to ensure they are aware of what the Council expects from them as tenants.</p>
<p>(10) What is the current condition of the Park Homes are they still expected to meet the original projected life expectancy?</p>	<p>The majority of the Park Homes are in good condition and are expected to meet the original 30 year projected life expectancy. One property is in a poor condition but the tenant is subject to a Notice to Remedy A Breach of Agreement. Work has been carried out to protect the Park Home.</p>

In conclusion, members can be re-assured that the sites are being managed well. Key risks and issues are monitored frequently and are under control.

### Other Implications

10. None.

#### **Background Papers:**

- SSDC Gypsy and Traveller Sites Brief
- DX Report - The purchase of Park Homes for Gypsy families residing on the sites at Chubbards Cross, Ilton and Marsh Lane, Tintinhull – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009
- DX Report – Park Home Progress Report – April 2010

Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

**8. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 May 2014**

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 1 May 2014.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 1 May 2014 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

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Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

## **9. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 June 2014**

*Lead Officer:*            *Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager*  
*Contact Details:*        *emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462566*

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 5 June 2014.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 June 2014.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 5 June 2014.

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Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

## **10. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews**

The Task and Finish Review Chairs or Scrutiny Manager will give a brief verbal update on progress made.

### **Current Task & Finish Reviews**

- Business Rates - Discretionary Rate Relief
  - Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband
  - Strategic Housing Framework
  - Civil Contingencies
-



Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

## **11. Update on matters of interest**

*Lead Officers:*            *Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager*  
*Contact Details:*        *emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462566*

### **Action Required**

That members of the Scrutiny Committee note the verbal updates as presented by the Scrutiny Manager.

### **Purpose of Report**

This report is submitted for information to update members of the committee on any recent information regarding matters of interest to the Scrutiny Committee, and for the Scrutiny Manager to verbally update members on any ongoing matters including:

- Flooding Steering Group
  - Scrutiny Committee Training
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Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

**12. Scrutiny Work Programme**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Background/Description</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Lead Member</b>
1 July '14	Council Tax Benefit Reduction Scheme – monitoring report.	✓		To receive a monitoring report following implementation of the Council Tax Benefit Reduction Scheme.	Ian Potter, Revenues & Benefits Manager
1 July '14	High Street Innovation Funding	✓		At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2 July 2013 members received a report from the Yeovil Vision Board and the Market Towns Investment Group regarding what has been done with their share of the DCLG High Street Innovation Funding. The committee requested an update report after 12 months.	Kim Close & Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Managers.  Tony Fife, Portfolio Holder for Yeovil Vision & Angie Singleton, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns.
1 July '14	Police and Crime Panel (PCP)	✓		Scrutiny Committee has agreed updates on the PCP will be provided twice a year. Cllr Tony Lock (SSDC representative on the Police and Crime Panel) will provide an update report.	Cllr Tony Lock
1 July '14	Update following Flood Summit of March 2013	✓		An update report and review of the action plan following the Flood Summit of 2013.	Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
TBC	Localism – relationship between tiers of local government (County / District / Town and Parish) to ensure effective working	✓		Initial presentation to full Scrutiny Committee on the relevant legislative changes and how SSDC are planning to implement them.	Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager

The Somerset Waste Board and Somerset Waste Partnership Forward Plan of key decisions can be viewed at:  
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/cabinet-forward-plan/>

### Task & Finish Reviews

Date Commenced	Title	Members
July 2013	Business Rates - Discretionary Rate Relief	Mike Lewis, Sue Osborne, Pauline Lock, Paul Maxwell, Carol Goodall, Patrick Palmer, Sue Steele, Colin Winder, David Norris, Jon Gleeson, Cathy Bakewell.
October 2013	Connecting Somerset and Devon Broadband.	David Recardo, Martin Wale, Dave Bulmer, Kim Turner and Ros Roderigo.
TBC	Choice Based Letting / Homefinder Somerset Follow Up	TBC
TBC	District specific document following adoption of the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (Countywide Strategy)	Members involved in the original Task and Finish Group for the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (Countywide Strategy) were: Sue Steele, Carol Goodall, Derek Yeomans, Graham Middleton.
Ad-hoc monitoring	Council Tax Benefit Reduction	Carol Goodall, Sue Steele, Dave Bulmer, Sue Osborne Jenny Kenton, David Norris, Colin Winder
On-going monitoring	Somerset Countywide Flooding Summit/ Flooding Steering Group	Dave Bulmer and Sue Steele

Scrutiny Committee – 3 June 2014

**13. Date of next meeting**

Members are requested to note that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 1 July 2014 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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