

Meeting: SC01M 14/15
Date: 03.06.14

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 3 June 2014 in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(10.00am – 11.25am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (in the Chair)

David Bulmer
Pauline Clarke

Tony Lock
Graham Middleton

Sue Osborne

Substitutes:

Councillor Marcus Fysh (to 11.00am) for Councillor Martin Wale
Councillor Kim Turner for Councillor Pauline Lock.

Also present:

Councillors Tim Carroll and Gina Seaton

Officers:

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| Kirsty Larkins | Housing and Welfare Manager |
| Jon Batty | Housing Policy & Performance Officer |
| Catherine Hodson | Performance Officer |
| Charlotte Jones | Performance Manager |
| Rina Singh | Strategic Director (Place and Performance) |
| Martin Woods | Assistant Director (Economy) |
| Donna Parham | Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) |
| Ian Clarke | Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) |
| Becky Sanders | Democratic Services Officer |

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 29 April 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Colbert, Carol Goodall, Tim Inglefield, Pauline Lock, Paul Maxwell, Nigel Mermagen, David Recardo and Martin Wale.

3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues arising from previous minutes.

6. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman welcomed the substitute members to the meeting, and informed members that she had recently attended an interesting Construction Summit in Taunton with Councillor Jo Roundell Greene, organised by the LEP.

7. Gypsy Site Management (Agenda Item 7)

The Housing and Welfare Manager presented the report as shown in the agenda, and highlighted to members key points within the report. She commented that that the park homes were still in good condition and expected to reach their 30 year life expectancy.

In response to comments made the Housing and Welfare Manager and Housing Policy and Performance Officer responded:

- Money spent on Void turnaround works was mainly for dealing with repairs caused by general wear and tear.
- The two sites had normal waste collections like any other household in South Somerset. However there was an area of land at the Ilton site where rubbish was frequently dumped - The area could be fenced however experience had showed this to be ineffective.
- There appeared to have been less problems at the Ilton site since the barrier had not been in use.
- Residents at the Ilton site were content that the streetlighting was not working on site and would not be repaired in the near future.
- Twisted Willow, Ilton was intended to be a flexible site. The need for the existing type of pitch had changed so the siting of a static home could be investigated, however at the moment there was not a big waiting list for park homes.
- Police were continuing to visit the sites.
- Some residents had been impacted by the bedroom tax, and were receiving a discretionary housing payment (DHP) as no one-bedroom park homes are available. The payment was initially issued for six months, but due to the particular resident's circumstances and the lack of availability of suitable alternative accommodation, officers would be looking to do something more long term regarding a DHP.

Members thanked the officers for their informative report.

ACTION: Members to note the report.

Kirsty Larkins, Housing & Welfare Manager and Jon Batty, Housing Policy & Performance Officer
kirsty.larkins@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462744
jon.batty@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462749

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

9. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 June 2014 (Agenda item 9)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 5 June 2014. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

Annual performance report 2013/14 – item 6

- Scrutiny commended the officer for her easy to understand report and presentation.

Defining a Five-Year Housing land Supply in South Somerset – item 7

- With reference to National Planning Policy Guidance para 30, clarification was sought as to the local evidence used to inform the housing requirement. It was also queried why the council had identified some key sites as not being developable within five years; and clarification was sought that the council hadn't double counted some windfall sites.
- Members asked how often the Developer Panel met?
- Members welcomed the recommendation that SSDC now considered it had a five year land supply.

2013/14 Capital Budget Outturn Report – item 8

- Members asked if any of S.106 contributions were nearing the time limit whereby they would need to be returned to the developer?
- Members were content that the recommendations go forward.

2013/14 Revenue Budget Outturn Report – item 9

- Members were content that the recommendations go forward.

Proposed Amendment to the Westfield Academy Artificial Grass Pitch Project within the Capital programme – item 10

- Point 15 – members would like to have known the reason why the bid to the Academies Maintenance Fund had been unsuccessful.
- Point 12 – members sought reassurance that conditions regarding SSDC/106 funding would be tied up in a legal agreement. One member also suggested it would be good if members could have sight of the draft agreement to also see the conditions regarding community use.
- Point 9 and 13 on page 43 of the DX agenda – members noted the costs and asked how confident officers were that the £330k quoted was the final cost. A question was raised about if the costs increased further who would fund the shortfall?

- Some concern was raised about whether this would set a precedent for other Academies with similar facilities.

New Pension Discretions – item 11

- Members were content that the recommendations go forward.

Notification of an urgent Executive Decision Taken – The Somerset Levels and Moors Flood Action Plan – item 12

- No comments.

District Executive Forward Plan – item 13

- No comments.

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

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

Discretionary Rate Relief

The group are meeting with the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) shortly to look at the responses to the recent internal consultation.

Somerset Strategic Housing Framework

The group had met with the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager and were due to meet with him again shortly.

Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband

Officers had met with representatives from the CDS project team and a meeting of the Task and Finish Group would be held later in June to finalise the review recommendations.

Civil Contingencies

Members had come forward for the Task and Finish Group and an initial meeting was being arranged for the last week in June.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

11. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman informed members that the Flooding Steering Group was being reconvened for 9th July.

She also asked if members had any suggestions or interest in any training or development to which there were no responses. Members were also requested to send any suggestions for items to be added to the Work Programme to the Scrutiny Manager.

ACTION: Members to note the updates.

12. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

The Democratic Services Officers advised members that it was possible some of the reports scheduled for July would be moved to a later date.

Councillor Tony Lock commented that his report on the Police and Crime Panel would be a verbal report as the Panel had only met once since his last report.

ACTION: Members to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

13. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 1 July 2014 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman