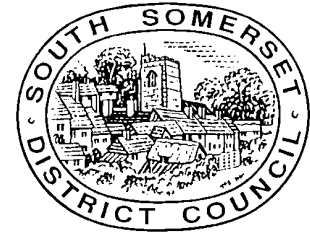


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 1st September 2015

10.00 am

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

(disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Becky Sanders, Democratic Services Officer 01935 462596**, website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 19 August 2015.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Scrutiny Committee Membership

The following members are requested to attend the meeting:

Chairman: Sue Steele
Vice-chairmen: Dave Bulmer and John Clark

Clare Aparicio Paul
Jason Baker
Gye Dibben
Val Keitch

Tony Lock
Sue Osborne
Tiffany Osborne
David Recardo

Garry Shortland
Rob Stickland
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.

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.

South Somerset District Council – Council Plan

Our focuses are: (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong economy 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

Ordnance Survey mapping/map data included within this publication is provided by South Somerset District Council under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function to undertake its statutory functions on behalf of the district. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping/map data for their own use. South Somerset District Council - LA100019471 - 2015.

This page is intentionally blank

Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 1 September 2015

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 7 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 August 2015.

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

7. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 August 2015 (Page 13)

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 September 2015 (Page 14)

9. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Page 15)

10. Update on matters of interest (Page 16)

11. **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 17 - 18)
12. **Date of next meeting** (Page 19)

Agenda Item 1

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 4 August 2015.**

(10.00 am - 12.25 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Tony Lock
John Clark	Sue Osborne
Gye Dibben	Garry Shortland
Val Keitch	Rob Stickland

Also Present:

Mike Beech	Tim Inglefield
Neil Bloomfield	Ric Pallister
Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton

Officers

Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)
Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus) / Interim Chief Executive
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Roger Brown	ICT Manager
Jason Toogood	Customer Focus Support Manager
Paul Wheatley	Principal Spatial Planner
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

26. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clare Aparicio Paul, Dave Bulmer, Tiffany Osborne, David Recardo and Martin Wale.

28. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interests.

29. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

30. Issues arising from previous meetings (Agenda Item 5)

There were no issues raised.

31. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that she had attended the Somerset Rivers Authority Stakeholder event – the results of which would be discussed later in the agenda.

32. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 2 July 2015 (Agenda Item 7)

In relation to the special District Executive meeting held to discuss the Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband, the Chairman commented that Scrutiny hoped that SSDC was now actively involved in the re-tendering of the project bearing in mind the authority has now signed the Non-Disclosure Agreement.

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Committee that in response to Councillor Andrew Turpin's Motion - Reinstating Member representation on the South West Home Safety Partnership at Full Council on 16 July 2015, officers confirmed this did not form part of the detailed Outside Body Review and therefore have sought an update on the latest position and will report progress back to the Committee in due course.

33. SSDC Telephony Response (Agenda Item 8)

The Customer Focus Support Manager introduced the report to members. He informed the Committee that in preparing the report, officers had addressed each of the points raised by Scrutiny in their report request. He explained that his team not only answered the telephones in the Contact Centre but also had to staff the Brympton Way Reception.

He explained that the service is characterised by peaks and troughs in demand and was not staffed to cope with the peaks in demand. He commented that recently there always seemed to be 'peaks' such as Council Tax Summonses and Electoral Registration. These peaks in demand combined with technical issues had resulted in lower performance than usual within the service.

Some work has already been done with services to minimise the impact on the Contact Centre by providing direct dial numbers where appropriate, all staff and Councillors are asked where possible to avoid using the 462462 number as a switchboard.

The ICT Manager told the Committee that the current dip in performance was a complex combination of capacity and technical issues. He assured members that the major technical issues had been addressed but there was still some work to do. Recent testing had identified only 2 problems calls for one adviser over three days. This was during a

quieter period on the phones but still reflected an improvement in the reduction of instances.

The Interim CEO (and Strategic Director for Operations & Customer Focus) said that it had been a very difficult time for staff within the Contact Centre as they were having to deal with some very upset customers but she commended the way the Customer Focus and IT teams had worked together to try and move forward and improve the situation.

Following comments raised during discussion, responses provided by officers and a portfolio holder included:

- The lack of performance data made it difficult to 'manage' the service and it was hoped that the new software to enable this would be installed by September.
- The Service Manager was having to balance the need to provide high call quality to customers with the need for an effective Call centre system but that the new software would facilitate both whilst also providing performance management information.
- The temporary additional resource was now starting to have an impact.
- A full and detailed procurement system had been gone through prior to purchasing any software.
- Once all phones and related systems are working completely reliably, we will review the project and seek lessons learnt for the future. It is a corporate priority to encourage more customers to 'self-serve' via the website.

Action: That an update report be presented to Scrutiny in December 2015, covering the impact of the new software due for installation in September.

34. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 August 2015 (Agenda Item 9)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive Agenda for 6 August 2015. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration:

The Somerset Rivers Authority and Flood Action Plan (item 6)

- Scrutiny Committee members support the recommendation that creating a separate precepting body is the preferred option for sustainable funding of the SRA.
- Members sought clarification as to how the SRA would be funded in the interim, whilst a long term solution is formulated. The current funding is only in place for 2015/16 and it anticipated that at least 2 years' funding will need to be identified.
- Members questioned the impact of creating a new precepting body on SSDC's Council Tax Support scheme? Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) kindly clarified if the requirement was to raise 2.7 million the cost to SSDC would be approximately £270,000.
- The report states that progress against delivery of the 20 Year Levels and Moors Action Plan is currently being reviewed – Scrutiny members requested that the findings of this review be reported to SSDC Members.

Approval of Local Development Scheme (2015 – 2018) – (item 7)

- Members noted that the funding for the external resources identified in the report would be coming from the Local Plan Reserve and that it was most cost effective to use consultants.

Draft Asset Management Plan 2015-16 (item 8)

- Scrutiny members endorsed the inclusion of the cemetery within the Asset Management Strategy and noted the improved layout and format of the report.
- Members would like clarity on the current position of the Car Parking Strategy, in particular, when does the current strategy run out and what plans are in place to draw up the successive strategy?

2015/2016 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30 June 2015 (item 9)

- Members questioned the position regarding Broadway Farm in Merriott and why the £240k had been moved back to reserves?

2015-2016 Revenue budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30 June 2015 (item 10)

- No Comments.

Commercial Property Disposals – Land at Lakefields, West Coker (item 11)

- Members asked if the residents would be charged for the permit parking proposed in the report and suggested that the legal agreement should specify how any profit made would be allocated.

Commercial Property Disposals 1 – 4 St Johns Cottages, Charlton Musgrove (item 12)

- Again, members questioned if there were to be any charges applied by the Parish Council to allotment holders, and if so, the legal agreement made reference to how any profits would be allocated.

Monthly News Snapshot (item 13)

- Members would like to commend the Development Management Service for the improved performance relating to number of planning decisions overturned at appeal.

Disposal of the former Grove Alley Public Conveniences in Bruton (Confidential) (item 17)

- Members had no comments.

35. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 10)

The Scrutiny Managers updated members on the progress of the two current Task and Finish Reviews:

Council Tax Reduction – the proposed Scheme is currently out for consultation and there been a positive response rate so far.

Licensing Fees and Charges – The first meeting of this Task and Finish Group had gone well with the review Terms of Reference now agreed – the next meeting will be held on 16th September.

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

A report to July Council outlined the broad parameters of exploring potential joint management arrangements with Mendip District Council and others. Members discussed this and felt that this was a significant matter for the authority and felt that Scrutiny had an important and valuable role to play in establishing a shared understanding of SSDC's aims and objectives in moving forward.

Scrutiny Committee members agreed that Scrutiny is not looking to comment on the substance of the proposals at this stage and will be focussing on the processes and methodology being applied to assess potential joint management arrangements, and as such requested that the Leader responds to the following points in order to enhance member engagement and understanding in this important matter.

- What criteria will a potential arrangement with Mendip, or others, be assessed against and how was this criteria arrived at?
- Scrutiny at SSDC has always adopted a strong evidence based approach to its work, in terms of this issue, what evidence will be gathered to underpin any recommendations for change and how will this evidence be reported to members **prior** to any final decision being taken?
- What measures have been put in place to ensure **all** potential options are considered and evaluated simultaneously (against the agreed rationale for change)?
- How are the risks associated with this kind of project being actively managed?
- What are the specific arrangements for the working group that Council agreed to establish to take this forward, i.e. membership of the group, terms of reference, reporting mechanisms, timescales, budgets to consultants etc?
- Are there any 'deal breakers'?
- What will the successful implementation of this project look and feel like for SSDC members, staff and residents?
- What is the decision making process from this point on? Scrutiny members strongly feel that there should be an opportunity for members to consider the report prior to being asked to take any final decisions at Council to allow for a more collaborative process.

Action: That the Leader be asked to address the points raised by Scrutiny.

37. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Lock proposed an item for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme looking at the process followed when considering awards for Area grants. He asked that the Assistant Director – Communities be asked to come to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting and outline for members the processes followed across the four Areas in preparing grant requests for consideration by Area Committees.

Action: That the Assistant Director (Communities) be asked to attend a future meeting to outline the grant application process across the Area Committees.

38. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 1 September 2015 in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

.....
Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 August 2015

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 6 August 2015.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 6 August 2015 date have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 8

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 September 2015

Lead Officer: Emily McGuinness & Jo Gale, Scrutiny Managers
Contact Details: emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566
joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 3 September 2015.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 September 2015.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 3 September 2015.

Agenda Item 9

Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews

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

Current Task & Finish Reviews

- Council Tax Reduction
- Fees within the Licensing Service

Agenda Item 10

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.

Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
29 Sept '15	Finance Awareness /Training	✓		As requested by members, a session led by the Finance Team to explain the fundamental elements of local government finance, and Scrutiny's role, prior to the Budget Setting process for 2016/17.	
29 Sept ' 15	Leader Plus Programme	✓		As requested at the June 30 th Meeting, Helen Rutter, Assistant Director – Communities will present a report outlining the Leader Plus programme within South Somerset	Helen Rutter – Assistant Director – Communities.
3 Nov '15	Area Grant Application Process	✓		This item was requested by Scrutiny Committee members at their meeting on 4 th August 2015	Kim Close – Assistant Director - Communities
3 Nov ' 15	Anti-Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	✓		At the Scrutiny Committee meeting 4 Nov 2014 members received a presentation about the Act. The committee requested an update report after 12 months about the impact in/for South Somerset.	Steve Brewer, Community Safety & Projects Officer and Vicki Dawson, Principal Environmental Health Protection Officer
3 Nov ' 15	Planning Scheme of Delegation	✓		This matter was referred to Scrutiny from Council in February 2015 - the scope has been agreed with the Committee, the Assistant Director and Development Management Manager	Martin Woods / Dave Norris
1 st Dec '15	Update on Telephony Issues	✓		At their August 2015 meeting, members requested an update report on this issue be brought to the December Meeting	Jason Toogood / Roger Brown.

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/>

Current Task & Finish Reviews

Date Commenced	Title	Members
July 2015	Fees within the Licensing Service	Martin Wale, Tony Lock, Gye Dibben, David Norris, Val Keitch, Mike Beech, Jason Baker
Ad-hoc monitoring	Council Tax Benefit Reduction	Sue Steele, Dave Bulmer, Sue Osborne, David Norris

Agenda Item 12

Date of next meeting

Members are requested to note that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
