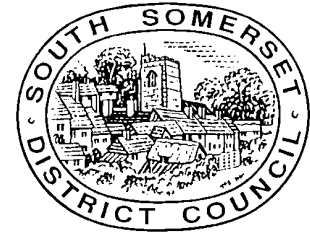


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 4th October 2016

10.00 am

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

(disabled access and a hearing loop are 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 Monday 26 September 2016.

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

Jason Baker
Mike Beech
Neil Bloomfield
Amanda Broom

Val Keitch
Tony Lock
Sue Osborne
Tiffany Osborne

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 Aims

South Somerset will be a confident, resilient and flexible organisation, protecting and improving core services, delivering public priorities and acting in the best long-term interests of the district. We will:

- Protect core services to the public by reducing costs and seeking income generation.
- Increase the focus on Jobs and Economic Development.
- Protect and enhance the quality of our environment.
- Enable housing to meet all needs.
- Improve health and reduce health inequalities.

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

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Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 4 October 2016

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 7 - 13)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 August 2016.

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 1 September 2016 (Page 14)

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 October 2016 (Page 15)

9. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Page 16)

10. Update on matters of interest (Page 17)

11. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 18 - 19)

12. Date of next meeting (Page 20)

Agenda Item 1

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT** on **Tuesday 30 August 2016**.

(10.00 am - 1.05 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Val Keitch
Mike Beech	Rob Stickland
Dave Bulmer	Martin Wales
John Clark	

Also Present:

Ric Pallister	Tim Inglefield
Clare Aparicio Paul	Angie Singleton

Officers

Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

40. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 August 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Amanda Broom, Tony Lock, Tiffany Osborne, Garry Shortland and Neil Bloomfield.

42. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

43. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions raised by members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

45. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman explained that the notes of the last Transformation Board meeting on July 6th were sent out via e-mail to all members; she invited any feedback and questions so she could present them at the next meeting on 6th September.

46. Right To Buy Clawback Agreement - Request from Yarlington Housing Group (Agenda Item 7)

Garry Orr (Yarlington Homes Chief Executive Officer) provided an overview of:

- The history and creation of Yarlington Homes and the work they have done to date within South Somerset to provide affordable housing.
- The impact of the decrease and removal of funding and financing for the provision of affordable housing on Yarlington Homes.
- The numbers of Affordable housing units that could be provided across South Somerset if SSDC were to agree to forgo the Right To Buy (RTB) Clawback.

During discussion the following points were made:

- Since 1999, 889 properties have been sold under 'preserved' RTB in SSDC.
- Gary Orr explained South Somerset Homes/Yarlington homes have built 1211 new homes.
- Home ownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable.
- It is vital that SSDC has the flexibility to invest Capital where it gets the greatest return.
- It's not just about the total numbers of properties being built, the properties provided need to match the needs of those on the Housing Register and in the locations where there is the highest demand.
- There is a need to consider balance of communities also.
- Currently SSDC has approximately £18 million in Capital receipts that are not committed; however there is evidence that SSDC requires approximately £21million over the next five years.

Scrutiny Committee acknowledged the real need for additional affordable housing in South Somerset and appreciates the very different financial climate Yarlington Homes are now operating in.

Scrutiny Committee suggested that the Council first look to consider if the Right To Buy clawback monies should be ring fenced as a principle. This should take account of the impact on the Capital Programme in terms of the other significant projects that this Council wants or needs to deliver on behalf of the community.

Scrutiny members recommended only if this principle is agreed should Council consider how best to allocate the clawback monies to best meet those in housing need on the Housing Register.

47. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 4 August 2016 (Agenda Item 8)

Members noted the update given by the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

48. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1 September 2016 (Agenda Item 9)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the reports contained in the District Executive Agenda for the 1 September 2016 and made the following comments:

SSDC / Yarlington Homes Right to Buy (RTB) Clawback Agreement (Agenda item 6)

This item was discussed as a separate item on the Scrutiny Agenda

SSDC Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan (Agenda item 7)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) introduced the report and explained that the report was being brought before members a month early to consider the Rate Support Grant (RSG) offer by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Regarding the four year settlement and the potential negative RSG in year 4, Scrutiny members asked how many other authorities nationally are in a similar position and to what extent a co-ordinated approach with such authorities is being pursued?

Some members queried recommendation 8 and suggested that the decision should in fact be made by Full Council and to accommodate this, a meeting could be arranged for 13th October.

Members questioned whether there should be a more explicit reference in the report to the risk (and appropriate mitigating actions) should the Transformation Programme not deliver the anticipated savings? The Committee noted the Leader's comments that there is in effect no risk as if the Transformation savings are not achieved, services will be cut to balance the budget.

Scrutiny Committee asked if the explanation in paragraph 22 could be amended to reflect that the savings are all over the 5 year period and are in addition to the potential savings attributed to Transformation.

Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda item 8)

The Corporate Strategic Housing Manger introduced the report and provided the headlines of the report, he emphasised that SSDC will need to increase the amount of money available to ensure a supply of affordable homes remain available for rent.

Members thanked the officer for a very comprehensive report and noted that the outcome of the ongoing Task and Finish Group looking at the issue of the disposal of affordable housing in rural communities will have an impact on this report going forward.

South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report (September 2016) (Agenda item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) and the Assistant Director (Economy) gave an overview of the report and gave examples of the work being undertaken to address the issues identified.

Members noted that there is no explicit reference to 'Tourism' within the report and felt that this was a significant omission given the important contribution Tourism makes to the local economy. The Committee were pleased to note that the team would look at this point.

Members thanked the officers for a very detailed and accessible report produced during a very busy time for the team.

The Committee also noted that it is important strong links are maintained between this monitoring report and the emerging Economic Development Strategy.

Quarterly Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 1st Quarter 2016/17 (Agenda item 10)

The Performance Officer provided an overview of the report.

Scrutiny members suggested that in the officer comments for PI 003 (% of Planning Appeals decisions allowed) it would be useful to also include the amount of any costs awarded against the authority. Members were pleased to note that officers said this information is readily available and is already being monitored at the request of the Portfolio Holder.

PI 019 - Average number of days in Temporary Accommodation, Scrutiny Committee members requested their appreciation and thanks are passed to the Housing Staff who very effectively and efficiently managed a very complex and serious incident earlier this year whilst maintaining the usual service.

PI 031 (% of calls to contact centre resolved in the contact centre)

Last time the Performance monitoring report was discussed, Scrutiny Committee members noted that whilst it is not currently possible to collect the data for this **specific** indicator, there is a significant amount of useful performance information that is available and could be reported to members.

Scrutiny members felt that continually reporting that the data is not available could be damaging in a public report and whilst members recognise the value to the Transformation Programme of this particular indicator, they would recommend that additional indicators are included to provide as full a performance picture as possible. In particular, Scrutiny Members would suggest that additional indicators to monitor the length of time taken to answer calls to the contact centre and levels of customer satisfaction that are already collected are included.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 11)

Scrutiny Committee made no comments.

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

Members were updated as follows on the progress of the Task and Finish Groups currently underway:

Council Tax Support Review 2017

The Scrutiny Manager explained that a consultation on the potential amendments to the Council Tax Support scheme was currently running and if members wished to refer people to it, it is accessible via the Councils home webpage.

The next meeting is scheduled for 23rd September where members will be considering the consultation comments to date, external evidence, Council Tax arrears analysis, Risks and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Discretionary Housing Payments

This Scrutiny Manager explained the next meeting is scheduled for 16th September and would be primarily looking at the issue of rural isolation and the ensuing impacts on mental health.

Consent to Dispose of Housing Stock / Local Connections Allocation Policy

A report is currently being prepared for consideration by the HomeFinder Somerset Board outlining members suggestions for ensuring sustainable local communities are supported through providing appropriate local housing for local people.

Further work is being done to fully understand the impact of the decisions by the various Housing Providers to dispose of stock within South Somerset. The evidence gathered by the Task and Finish Group to date indicates that South Somerset has very limited ability to influence their decisions so the focus of the group is now on ensuring the risk of such disposals is fully understood and reflected in SSDC policies and procedures. A further meeting will be held in September to progress this.

National Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary relief policy

The Scrutiny Manager explained that an invitation had been sent out to all members to participate and there is a meeting scheduled for Monday 12th September to review:

- If the scheme is proving to be fit for purpose.
- If there are any unforeseen issues or consequences for SSDC, business, organisations charities etc.
- If there have been any external changes which have an impact on the policy and should now be taken into account.
- The process that applicants need to go through and the methods of administering the policy.
- The NNDR collection rates and arrears data in relation to the changes that have been introduced.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

The Task and Finish group met with Keeley Rudd the Chief Executive of CCS on 8th August, the purpose of the meeting was to identify if SSDC and CCS could work more closely to achieve better outcomes for the community.

A presentation had been provided giving an overview of CCS, the role of the Village Agent and examples of work that have been carried out across South Somerset.

After discussion it was agreed that:

- Communication across the organisations could be improved particularly when it came to identifying and helping those who are vulnerable.
- There are a couple of area of overlap that may need to be further explored with the new Community Involvement Officer at CCS.

It was recognised that there would be a need for a data sharing protocol before the organisations may be able to establish systems to refer individuals or households for specific advice or assistance.

Street Trading

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that this work was a continuation of the work of the previous Licensing fees and charges Task and Finish group and would be focusing on refreshing the Council's policies and procedures in relation to Street Trading. The first meeting is scheduled to take place on 28th September at 10.00 a.m.

The following members indicated that they wished to take part in this review:

Cllrs Martin Wale, Jason Baker, Neil Bloomfield, Val Keitch and Rob Stickland and Tony Lock.

Devolution

The Scrutiny Manager updated members on the Task and Finish Group that had been established at the request of the Leader (and subsequently agreed by Scrutiny Committee) with the aim of supporting members in understanding the implications of moving towards a Combined Authority.

Within the Strategic Alliance with Sedgemoor District Council, two of their elected members would be joining this review;

Cllr Mick Lerry, Leader of Labour Group

Cllr Kathy Pearce, Chair of Community Scrutiny

Cllrs John Clark and Sue Osborne will be the SSDC representatives on this Task and Finish Group. An initial meeting will be arranged for September.

Rural Services Access to Health Scrutiny Exercise

Following the agreement of members to participate in this national project a meeting has been arranged for 21st September at the Deane House, Taunton. Somerset County Council are considering joining with SSDC, WSC and TDBC to carry out this review.

Councillor Sue Steele indicated that she would like to participate in this review and an invite would be sent out to all members seeking additional representatives.

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

There were no updates on matters on interest.

51. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

Following on from the productive meeting with the Community Council for Somerset, it was suggested that representatives from the successful One Team approach adopted in the Halcon Ward of Taunton Deane be invited to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Martin Wale, as SSDC's representative on the Police and Crime Panel asked that a report be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme looking at proposals for increased joint working between police forces across the South West. The date of the report has yet to be confirmed but Cllr Wale will bring it forward when appropriate.

52. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on 4 October 2016, on the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

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Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 September 2016

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 1 September 2016.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 1 September 2016 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 8

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 October 2016

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 6 October 2016.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4 October 2016.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 6 October 2016.

Please note:

The Press and Public will be excluded from the meeting when a report or appendix on the District Executive agenda has been classed as confidential, Scrutiny Committee will consider this in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under paragraph 3 (or for any other reason as stated in the District Executive agenda):

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).”

It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from the Access to Information Rules outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Agenda Item 9

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

- Council Tax Support Review 2017
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Consent to Dispose of Housing Stock / Local Connections Allocation Policy
- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Discretionary Relief Policy
- Community Council for Somerset
- Street Trading
- Devolution
- Rural Services Access to Health Scrutiny Exercise

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 including:

- Devolution – update presentation by Councillor John Clark
-

Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
TBC	How the Community Council for Somerset and South Somerset District Council could work better together to achieve more and better outcomes for the community.			Committee members have invited Community Council for Somerset to work with them to identify areas where closer working could be of benefit to each organisation.	
TBC	Review of Economic Development Strategy	✓		This Strategy is due for review and Scrutiny members have previously been involved in the review and development of this Policy. The Lead Officer has agreed that Scrutiny involvement will be factored in to the review process and we will be kept informed regarding the most appropriate point for effective Scrutiny engagement.	David Julian / Cllr Jo Roundell Greene.
TBC	Review of Performance Indicators	✓		Officers previously indicated to the Scrutiny Committee that work was planned to review the current suite of performance indicators. This work is dependent on the revision of the Council Plan and assurance has been given that provision will be made for effective Scrutiny engagement in this process.	Andrew Gillespie Charlotte Jones Cllr Ric Pallister
TBC	One Team of Halcon Ward in Taunton Deane			Following on from the Task and Finish Group meeting with the Community Council for Somerset it was suggested and agreed that Scrutiny Committee invite representatives from the successful One Team approach adopted in the Halcon Ward of Taunton Deane and now in Yeovil and Chard to provide a presentation.	Jo Gale
TBC	Increased Joint Working Between Police Forces			At the meeting of Scrutiny Committee on 30 August 2016, the SSDC representative on the Police and Crime Panel requested that there be a report looking at the proposals for increased joint working between police forces across the South West.	Emily McGuinness

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
January 2016	Consent for disposal of housing stock	Cllr Sue Steele (Chair) Cllrs Jason Baker, Val Keitch and Sue Osborne
25 Feb 2016.	Homefinder Somerset Allocations Policy	Cllrs Sue Steele, John Clark, Val Keitch, Jason Baker, Dave Bulmer, Sue Osborne, Nick Colbert, Gina Seaton
29 April 2016	CTR Review 2016/17	Cllrs Sue Steele, Sue Osborne, Amanda Broom, Rob Stickland, David Norris, Carol Goodall
13 May 2016	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy (DHP)	TBC – to be commenced only upon completion of the Journey of Exploration Task and Finish.
June 2016	Review of Street Trading Policy	Requested by Service Manager to look at reviewing current Street Trading Policy with a view to producing a report for November 2016 Council. Cllrs Jason Baker, Neil Bloomfield, Val Keitch, Rob Stickland and Martin Wale.
September 2016	NNDR discretionary relief policy review –	The changes from the revised policy have taken affect from 1 st of April, this has resulted in some more feedback from ratepayers, the Task and Finish group will review this and changes in legislation regarding mandatory relief to ensure the policy still achieves what it set out to do and that the impact of the changes to mandatory relief are taken into account.
8 August 2016	How the Community Council for Somerset and South Somerset District Council could work better together to achieve more and better outcomes for the community.	Committee members have invited Community Council for Somerset to work with them to identify areas where closer working could be of benefit to each organisation. Cllrs Clare Aparicio paul, Mike Beech, John Clarke, Tim Inglefield, Val Keitch, Mike Lewis and Alan Smith.
September 2016	Rural District Council Network – Scrutiny of Rural Access to Health joint review with other Somerset District Councils	
September 2016	Review of elements and proposals to establish a combined authority should members agree at Full Council to make an 'in principle' decision to create a Combined Authority.	Cllrs John Clark and Sue Osborne.

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 1 November 2016 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
