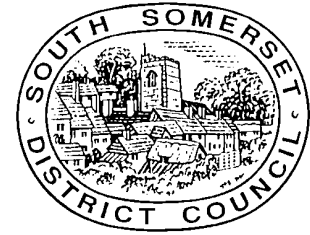


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 1st November 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 24 October 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
Amanda Broom
Val Keitch

Tony Lock
Sue Osborne
Tiffany Osborne
Garry Shortland

Rob Stickland
Martin Wale
Vacancy

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 1 November 2016

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 7 - 11)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 October 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 6 October 2016 (Page 12)

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 November 2016 (Page 13)

9. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Page 14)

10. Update on matters of interest (Page 15)

11. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 16 - 17)

12. Date of next meeting (Page 18)

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 4 October 2016.**

(10.00 am - 1.05 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Neil Bloomfield	John Clark
Amanda Broom	Rob Stickland
Dave Bulmer	Martin Wales

Also Present:

Clare Aparicio Paul	Angie Singleton
Ric Pallister	

Officers

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Rina Singh	Interim Chief Executive
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

53. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Jason Baker, Mike Beech, Val Keitch, Tony Lock, Sue Osborne, Tiffany Osborne, and Garry Shortland.

55. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

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

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

58. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman explained the Transformation Board meeting on 6th September was cancelled with only 24 hours' notice. She informed the committee that she wrote to the Leader of the Council to raise concerns regarding the decision making process, given that no board meeting had taken place since 6th July 2016, and that the Leader responded providing reassurance with regard to the process and had stated that no further developments had arisen since the last meeting of the Transformation Board that required a decision to be taken.

The Chairman welcomed and introduced the new Chief Executive Officer – Alex Parmley to Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that there was a session for all members the following morning where the new CEO- Alex Parmley would be providing an update with regards to Transformation including his proposal for the new management team. The Portfolio Holder for Transformation stated the Leader would be leading the briefing.

Vice Chairman - Cllr Dave Bulmer explained that the Strategic Alliance had met and that the message from the meeting was that the authorities are pursuing collaborative working. The minutes from the meeting had been circulated to all members for information.

59. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 September 2016 (Agenda Item 7)

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

60. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 October 2016 (Agenda Item 8)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the reports contained in the District Executive Agenda for the 4 October 2016 and made the following comments:

Report from Musgrove Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman introduced the report and requested members provide feedback on the style and content of the briefing note.

Community Right to Bid Quarterly Update Report July to September 2016 (Agenda item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning provided highlights of the report and proposed that updates are decreased to six monthly. Scrutiny Committee agreed six monthly updates would be appropriate going forward.

Somerset Armed Forces Covenant – Overview of Progress 2016 (Agenda item 8)

Members sought clarification on paragraph 16 of the report where it states that with the exception of three service areas, SSDC knows very little about the Armed Services community within the district. Members asked what specific actions are being taken to address this and how they could contribute suggestions or questions?

Members also queried where responsibility now lies for maintaining Commonwealth War Graves in the district?

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan – Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (Agenda item 9)

Members supported the recommendations in the report.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan – Four Year Settlement (Agenda item 10)

Members considered the report and an additional paper supplied by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services. Scrutiny members acknowledged the differing points of view expressed by the s151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder, noting that the authority is in a very difficult position, with neither option being particularly favourable. The Committee discussed the potential impact of accepting the 4 year settlement and not accepting it and noted the s151's confirmation that DCLG had reiterated that no authority would be better off if they did not accept the deal. Consideration was also given to the reputational risks of informing the public that the council had willingly accepting a negative RSG position versus informing them we had not accepted three years of certainty in defence of a principle.

Further discussion was about whether it would be possible to follow the example of Wokingham (and example provided by the Portfolio Holder) whereby the period of certainty offered within the deal is accepted but the negative RSG is not. Members concluded that this 'cherry picking' approach would not be appropriate and instead noted that in making our application to DCLG, SSDC should strongly reiterate our opposition to the principle of negative RSG.

Members did not indicate a preferred option at this stage, but did feel that members had sufficient information upon which to base a decision at Council on 13th October.

Infrastructure Projects and Funding for Feasibility Studies (Agenda item 11)

The Assistant Director (Economy) introduced and talked the committee members through the report, and in response to members' questions confirmed:

- This will enable Area Committees to explore particular opportunities to develop infrastructure.
- Spending of capital will still go through the usual process – Capital Bid, Scrutiny and District Executive.
- Area Committees will be making bids for the remaining Infrastructure Reserve this supports/encourages wider member engagement.

Members accepted the need to ensure that internal decision making processes effectively balance timeliness and the principles of transparent and accountable decision making. They sought clarification that any Executive Decisions were being delegated to the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Strategic Regeneration Board (rather than to

the Regeneration Board itself) and that any decisions would be published and subject to Scrutiny in line with existing procedures.

Monthly News Snapshot

Scrutiny Committee made no comments.

District Executive Forward Plan

Scrutiny Committee made no comments.

61. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)

The following Task and Finish Groups are currently in progress:

- **Consent for Disposal of properties** – This group is now re-focusing on the impact of the disposal of properties by Housing Providers on SSDC's Rural Letting's Policy. Following evidence gathered by the Task and Finish Group it is clear that Yarlinton Homes in particular are committed to continue to dispose of rural properties and that SSDC must now seek to mitigate the impact of this as far as it possible.
- **Discretionary Housing Payments** – This group has collected a significant amount of evidence from key agencies and will be meeting on 4th November to review the data and comment on a draft policy.
- **Rural Services Network – Rural access to health project** – The Somerset CCG have provided a written response to the questions set which will be incorporated into a report for submission to the RSN national project.
- **Street Trading** - This group have now had their first meeting and have agreed the review Terms of Reference. Further meetings are scheduled for 4th and 29th November with the aim on producing a draft policy that will be sent to all interested parties for a 12 week consultation period at the end of November.
- **Devolution** – As referenced above, this review is held in abatement pending any announcements made in the Autumn Statement.
- **Council Tax Support** – This group has meant on several occasions reviewing extensive evidence. At the last meeting members took the decision to extend the consultation period regarding the options to amend the scheme going forward to try to encourage a better response and in particular for representatives of vulnerable and minority groups to participate.
- **National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief** – the group last met on the 12th of September with Revenue Officers to discuss the effectiveness of the current scheme. and considered if and how the scheme may need to be amended for the forthcoming year, the changes around Small Business Rate relief are key and the impact of this will be discussed at the next meeting on 31st October.
- **Right to Buy Clawback** - Following on from Garry Orr the CEO of Yarlinton Homes requesting members reconsider the approach taken with the monies

obtained through the Right to Buy Clawback Agreement, an invitation has been sent to all members to participate in a Task and finish group to consider:

- 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.
- How best to allocate the clawback monies to best meet those in housing need on the Housing Register.
- Other housing priorities and areas of spending such as Disabled Facility Grants and grants to Houses of Multiple Occupation.

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

Devolution presentation - Scrutiny Committee Vice Chair – Cllr John Clark gave a presentation on the subject of Devolution. He informed members that at the invitation of the Leader he had attended a Leaders and CEO’s meeting about Devolution and subsequently felt that a presentation to Scrutiny would aid the work of the Task and Finish Group established to look at this subject.

Members thanked Cllr Clark for his very detailed presentation which outlined the context of Devolution and the potential risks and benefits to South Somerset. Members noted that Devolution is currently paused awaiting any announcements in the Autumn statement and that the issue would be revisited by the Task and Finish Group following the statement.

63. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted the Scrutiny Work Programme.

64. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on 1 November 2016, in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

.....
Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 October 2016

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 6 October 2016.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 6 October 2016 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 8

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 November 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 3 November 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 1 November 2016.

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

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