

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee (Informal)** held as a **Virtual Meeting using Zoom meeting software on Tuesday 7 June 2022.**

(10.30 - 11.30 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Osborne (in the Chair)

Robin Bastable	Tim Kerley
Ray Buckler	Paul Maxwell
Brian Hamilton	Robin Pailthorpe
Andy Kendall	



Also Present:

Peter Seib (part of meeting)

Officers

Robert Orrett	Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager
Stephanie Gold	Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 May 2022 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Louise Clarke, Karl Gill, Charlie Hull, Oliver Patrick and Gerard Tucker.

3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Robin Pailthorpe declared a personal interest for item 6 on the District Executive agenda - Milers Garage Car Park, as he is a ward member and also a member of Crewkerne Town Council.

4. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

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

The Chairman reminded members that a member of the public had made representation at the previous meeting. She noted that the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) would follow up regarding a response. The Chairman felt the member of the public should receive a written response to her statement and she understood a response was in progress and would involve the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Chairmen of Audit and Scrutiny Committees.

On hearing the Chairman's comments, a member requested that the response also be copied to members of the Scrutiny Committee.

6. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

7. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 12 May 2022 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman noted she had not been present at the meeting of District Executive held on 12 May 2022, however she understood all the comments of Scrutiny Committee had been acknowledged.

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 9 June 2022 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 9 June 2022 (Informal Consultative Meeting) and raised comments as detailed below. Responses to questions and comments were provided at Scrutiny Committee (Informal Meeting) by the relevant officer.

Millers Garage Car Park, Crewkerne

(Note - At the start of the District Executive meeting on 9 June 2022 - it was announced item 6 - Millers Garage Car Park - was being withdrawn from the agenda.)

- A member queried if the remuneration to SSDC was a fair value given that the developer would not be able to proceed without this access? Do officers feel this is a fair price?
- It the scheme goes ahead as detailed in the report, will the same number of parking spaces be created as originally envisaged, albeit in a slightly different location?
- A local member raised some concerns about if the car parking would ever happen if there are further delays. The community had been promised parking for years. Crewkerne Town Council don't seem to have been consulted. Fear this is delaying something that is wanted due to possibly something that isn't.
- SSDC have allocated a budget for the car parking, so surprised it's not been delivered.
- What will stop a developer potentially blocking off access to the car park?

- A member recalled that when the original planning application for a car park had been considered there had been issues regarding access, as a two-way traffic scheme was not possible at the time. What had changed now?
- A member asked what assurances there were that a developer would deliver such a scheme if the recommendations in the report are approved? Were there any agreements in place with Wyvern?
- Members expressed concerns about timescales and associated risks for delivery of the scheme.
- Some members noted that concerns had been raised previously with the car park application that the access from East Street and exit through Henhayes Car Park would become a rat-run to avoid the town centre.
- A member expressed concern that the increasing construction costs could become a stumbling factor. If further funding required it could cause additional delays. It was also queried when the current costings had been done?
- A member queried why the area would be controversial for housing?

District Executive Forward Plan

- Page 15 - Members queried what the report was about coming forward in July titled 'Discretionary Energy Support Scheme'?
(Prior to the meeting of District Executive the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) provided more information)

Yeovil Refresh Public Realm Change of Scope Request (Urgent Item)

(This report was brought forward as an urgent item under Part 4 of the Council's Constitution: Access to Information Procedure Rules, Point 15: General Exception, and Point 16: Special Urgency.)

This report was received after Scrutiny Committee met on 7 June 2022. Comments and questions raised by members of Scrutiny Committee were therefore submitted by email.)

- What impact will delaying or not continuing with the Wyndham Street part of the scheme have on achieving the overall objectives of the scheme?
- What form will these 'other funding sources' take and how readily available are they?
- What is the risk that you will need more funds to complete parts 1 - 4 given that costs are escalating so quickly?
- What steps have been taken to minimise the risk of another contractor failure?
- What is the likelihood of further funding requests from the other projects and how will this be minimised.?
- One member expressed deep frustration and concern with the request, but concluded that "the sensible option would seem to be what is suggested and finish as much of the refresh as possible within the current budget and contingency so would support the signing of contracts asap as long as that will stabilise the costs"

9. Appointment of Scrutiny Committee Members to Joint Scrutiny Panels (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman introduced the item and asked if the existing appointed members were happy to continue with the roles on the Joint Scrutiny Panels.

Councillors Paul Maxwell, Robin Pailthorpe, Robin Bastable and Brian Hamilton all noted they were happy to continue on their respective Joint Scrutiny Panels.

There being no further discussion, members were content to agree the appointments to the two Joint Scrutiny Panels

Joint Scrutiny Panel	Members Appointed
Somerset Waste Board Joint Scrutiny Panel	Robin Bastable Brian Hamilton
Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel	Paul Maxwell Robin Pailthorpe.

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

The Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) provided a brief verbal update on the progress of Task and Finish groups including:

Flooding in South Somerset - the draft Section 19 flooding investigation report for Chard had now been published and was due to be considered by Area West Committee at their meeting in June. She would discuss the possible Task and Finish work with the Scrutiny Chairman after Area West Committee. The Ilminster Section 19 report was still awaited.

Productivity Analysis - the Local Government Reorganisation had overtaken this work. The Task and Finish was still on hold and it was likely it may need to end. She would try to get a definitive answer from appropriate officers.

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

A member briefly highlighted some issues in his ward regarding gully clearing and concerns about frequency and timescales of clearance along some highways. In response some members shared their experiences and possible contacts to try and progress a resolution.

Another member raised a concern about an unexpected change in car parking charges at a specific location. In response the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) offered to follow up on the query.

12. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

Regarding the item for Section 106 - the Chairman asked the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) to follow up on when a report would be forthcoming to update members on Section 106 obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy monitoring.

A member referred to the District Executive Forward Plan and noted it was looking busy with a number of reports expected for the July meeting of District Executive. He made a plea for reports to be circulated to Scrutiny members early if it was possible, to give more time for reading for the reports.

Members were content to note the work programme.

13. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 5 July at 10.30am, as a virtual meeting using Zoom.

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Chairman