

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee (Informal)** held as a **Virtual Meeting** using **Zoom meeting software** on **Tuesday 5 July 2022**.

(10.30 am - 12.02 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Gerard Tucker (Chairman)

Robin Bastable (from 10.45am)	Tim Kerley
Ray Buckler	Sue Osborne
Karl Gill	Robin Pailthorpe
Brian Hamilton	Oliver Patrick
Andy Kendall	



Also Present:

John Clark (from 11.20am) Tony Lock

Officers

Natalie Fortt	Regeneration Programme Manager
Robert Orrett	Commercial Property, Land & Development Manager
Karen Watling	Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)
Jill Byron	Monitoring Officer
Stephanie Gold	Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)

14. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

15. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Maxwell, and an apology for late attendance was received from Councillor Robin Bastable.

16. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

17. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

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

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

The Chairman briefly reminded members that the Committee had been addressed by a member of the public at the meeting in May. He advised that he was following up on the comments as he felt there needed to be a response.

19. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman noted there had been a meeting between himself, the Vice-Chairman of Audit Committee, and senior officers to discuss the work programmes of Audit and Scrutiny. From the discussion there had been an agreement to hold a joint workshop for members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committees, and the intention was to hold the workshop before the end of July.

20. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 9 June 2022 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman reminded members that the report regarding Millers Garage in Crewkerne had been withdrawn from the District Executive agenda at the start of the meeting on 9 June 2022.

21. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 July 2022 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 7 July 2022 (Informal Consultative Meeting) and raised comments as detailed below. Responses to most questions and comments were provided at Scrutiny Committee (Informal Meeting) by the relevant officers – except those marked by an asterisk:

Leisure Operator Introduction and Presentation. (Agenda item 6)

- There were no comments or questions raised on this item.

Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme Policy (Agenda item 7)

- *A member asked how will this scheme fit with the £3.2m that was allocated to County for the emergency household scheme? Will applying for one scheme impact on applying for another?
- *Para 9 -A member was intrigued as to why SSDC is offering the top up of £27, we appear to be offering more than the other districts?

Review of 2022/23 Capital Programme (Agenda item 8)

- A member asked what might happen if corporate contingency is no longer sufficient? At what point would there need to be discussions about the affordability of a project?

Item 9. 2021/22 Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda item 9)

- One member asked a question about the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and capital finance charge raised relating to SSDC Opium Ltd and linked to information within the confidential appendix for item 12 – it was agreed that this question would be raised again in confidential session.

2021/22 Capital Budget Outturn Report (Agenda item 10)

- *Page 51 - Deletti EV Charger project - why has the project not started yet. What have been the difficulties with the legal documents and why had they not been foreseen?
- *Page 51 - One member asked if EV chargers currently being installed in Chard and Crewkerne are Deletti or something else?
- Page 51 - Huish Pool - concern that SSDC no longer represented on the Board due to changes in operator. Need to be cautious to ensure community use continues - needs to be monitored.
- Chard Regeneration - seem to be some elements which have not be reported to Area West Committee e.g updates regarding access to the A358 and extension to the car park. What is the likelihood of these projects actually being delivered?
- Page 58 - Table in appendix A - details a lot of capital expenditure for our investment properties. Was this spending foreseen / planned?
- Page 59 - Crematorium - Understand there is still only one cremator in operation. Is the project going to be delivered according to plan and on time? A member thought the new cremator might have been operational by now.

Wincanton Regeneration Budget – Change of Scope (Agenda item 11)

- A member asked if these are the final cost figures to complete the project? How close are we to securing these costs to avoid further increases due to inflationary market pressures?
- Para 6 mentions property grants – a member asked if it would be possible for members to have details of who or which properties have received grants and the amounts please?
- Para 8 - seeking the necessary consents due to transition to unitary – a member asked if there is any risk of the funds not getting endorsed by Somerset County Council?

North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda item 13)

- The Chairman of Scrutiny endorsed the comments made by the examiner. He felt this is a very comprehensive document that addresses many aspects of neighbourhood planning such as housing, employment, travel and many more.
- *A member asked how do the environmental aspects of this plan align with SSDC's environment strategy?

Establishment of an Implementation Board in Somerset for the Implementation of Local Government Reorganisation (Agenda item 14)

- One member asked if and how this is different to the LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee that was set up earlier in the year?
- One member asked how the outcomes of this board are going to be relayed to the district authorities?

District Executive forward plan (Agenda item 15)

- There were no comments made on this item

CONFIDENTIAL – Exclusion of the Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1

of Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Investment Asset Update Report (Agenda item 12)

- Members made some comments in confidential session regarding information within the confidential appendix. Some of the questions also linked to items 9 and 10 on the District Executive agenda.
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22. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman provided a brief verbal update on progress of Task and Finish groups including:

Flooding in South Somerset - the draft Section 19 flooding investigation report had been considered by Area West Committee at their meeting in June. Scrutiny Committee members were asked to attend the workshop after this committee meeting (Scrutiny Committee) to also review the Chard Section 19 report and provide feedback.

Productivity Analysis - Members noted this was still on hold.

Remote meetings – an urgent, single Task and Finish meeting had taken place to support senior officers with a report to Full Council about the future of remote meetings. The work was now complete and he thanked those who assisted with this.

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

During a brief discussion the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) and the Chairman responded to comments made and also advised that:

- The Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) would follow up further with officers regarding a query raised at the previous meeting about car parking charges in Chard.
 - A discussion had taken place between the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee, Vice-Chairman of Audit Committee, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer to discuss the roles of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees. A workshop would be arranged for members of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees before the end of July.
 - Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee had both received representation from a member of the public, and both Chairmen of those meetings were of the opinion a reply needed to be made.
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24. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

A member noted that the anticipated reports for CIL and Section 106 funding did not have a confirmed date and this had been the case for a number of months. In response, the Chairman asked the Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) to follow up again with officers to ascertain a date when the reports may be available.

Some members believed a report regarding Section 106 funding was due to be circulated to Area Committees around September, and a request was made for Scrutiny

Committee to receive the report prior to it being considered by the Area Committees. The Specialist (Scrutiny & Member Development) was requested to follow up with the appropriate officers to ask for the report to be made to Scrutiny Committee in September.

Members were content to note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

25. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next meeting of Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 2 August at 10.30am. with meeting arrangements to be confirmed nearer the time.

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Chairman