

Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 10th May and considered the following items:

Equality Objectives Report

Members were pleased to note the progress in this important area and the ongoing work to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Members recommended that existing standards of accountability and transparency are maintained as our decision making processes continue to evolve.

Superfast Broadband Report

Members were grateful to the officers who attended Scrutiny at short notice to discuss the important local issue with members of the Scrutiny Committee. This report is included elsewhere in this agenda and the comments of the Scrutiny Committee have been circulated to all members in advance so as to inform debate.

Reports to be considered by District Executive

The Scrutiny Committee considered the reports included in the May District Executive Agenda and made the following comments:

Intelligent Enforcement Proposal for Car Parks

- Members requested that any potential SMS charges are made very clear in all communications – especially those relating to receiving confirmation text messages.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- Members noted the modifications to the scheme as noted in the report and that the viability of the proposed levy would be thoroughly assessed by the Independent Examiner.
- Members were pleased to note that the charging schedule will be reviewed in 2-3 years to take account of market changes.

Monthly news Snap shot

No comments

District Executive Forward Plan

- Members noted that at the last Full Council meeting it was agreed that monthly updates would be submitted to District Executive outlining progress in the CEO

recruitment process – this has not been factored into the Forward Plan and no update has been included in this agenda.

- Members also note that on occasion significant reports (such as the Superfast Broadband, Strategic Alliance, Management Arrangements) are going straight to Council and so are not included in the Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is an essential document for Scrutiny, allowing us to plan our work programme and fulfil our function of holding the Executive to account, and if key reports are not included, this can make our role difficult. We would like to suggest that reports that are destined to go straight to Full Council are incorporated into the Forward Plan or that a Forward Plan for Council reports is created.
- As our decision making structures evolve with the creation of various themed Boards, there will be a need for regular updates on their progress to enable effective Scrutiny. Scrutiny Committee requests that District Executive give some thought to this and would like to suggest at least monthly updates.

Confidential Items

Dunster House - Covenant removal

No comments

Provision and Maintenance of Bus Shelters

Members supported the recommendations as the best solution at this current time.

Task and Finish Reviews

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

Council Tax Reduction Review 2017

The first meeting of this Group has been held to agree the review parameters – it would be beneficial to increase the membership of this group to ensure a cross section of views and experiences are fed into the review. If any member wishes to join the group please contact either of the Scrutiny Managers.

Discretionary Housing Payments

This group was due have an initial meeting on 13th May where they planned to set the review Terms of Reference and scope.

Consent to Dispose of Housing Stock / Local Connections Allocation Policy

These two Task and Finish Groups have combined for the purpose of meeting with senior officers from South Somerset's 5 key Housing Association Partners. This evidence gathering session was scheduled for 11th May and has been designed as an opportunity for members to meet directly with the Housing Providers and discuss the various issues associated with this topic.

National Non Domestic Rate (NDR) discretionary relief policy review

The changes from the revised policy have taken affect from 1st 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.

Councillor Sue Steele
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee