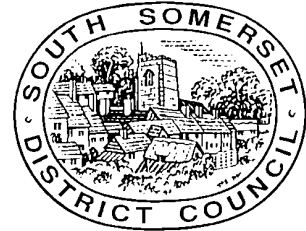


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 1st August 2017

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)



The following members are requested to attend this meeting.

Chairman: Sue Steele
Vice-chairmen: Dave Bulmer and John Clark

Jason Baker
John Field
Carol Goodall
Tony Lock

Paul Maxwell
David Norris
Alan Smith
Rob Stickland

Gerard Tucker
Martin Wale
Colin Winder

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Officer on 01935 462596 or democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Friday 21 July 2017.

Ian Clarke, Director (Support Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk and via the mod.govapp



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 (limited to up to 3 minutes per person and at the Chairman's discretion usually no more than a total of 15 minutes is allocated for public speaking); 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.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

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. 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>

Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 1 August 2017

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 4 - 9)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 July 2017.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), 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.

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 July 2017 (Page 10)

8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 August 2017 (Page 11)

9. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Page 12)

10. Update on matters of interest (Page 13)

11. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 14 - 16)

12. Date of next meeting (Page 17)

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 July 2017.**

(10.00 am - 1.25 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Dave Bulmer	David Norris
John Clark	Alan Smith
John Field	Rob Stickland
Carol Goodall	Colin Winder

Also Present:

Ric Pallister	Henry Hobhouse
Jo Roundell Greene	Angie Singleton
Sylvia Seal	

Officers

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Catherine Hood	Finance Manager
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Anna-Maria Lenz	Performance Officer
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

16. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jason Baker, Tony Local, Paul Maxwell, Gerard Tucker and Martin Wale.

18. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

19. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

21. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman welcomed Councillor John Field to the Scrutiny Committee.

22. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 June 2017 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman noted that the Scrutiny comments had been considered and were included in the District Executive minutes which had been circulated. She confirmed that a report on the Boundary Commission Review would be made to Council in July and quarterly update reports on Transformation had been added to the District Executive Forward Plan.

23. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 July 2017 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 6 July 2017 and made the following comments:

Westlands Leisure Complex (Agenda item 6)

- Members requested clarification as to who would be the point of contact in the future for updates on the Westlands Leisure Complex.
- Scrutiny noted that the overspend is not quantified and queried if there was an adequate project contingency to cover the amount. An indication of the overspend figure as a percentage would be useful to context.
- Members were concerned that the overspend may have an impact on other projects across the district or even prevent them.
- Some members were concerned by the list of items causing the overspend (para 15) as it was felt most should have been predicted/anticipated or included within the contingency.
- Scrutiny felt the 'requirement creeps' should have been better managed. Several members noted that in the early stages members had been assured that costings had been based on worst case scenarios and professional advice had been sought. Members wished to make it clear they were not critical of the project outcome but had concerns about the management of the project and felt lessons should be learnt.

SSDC Corporate Peer Challenge and Review (Agenda item 7)

- Scrutiny agreed that the activity had been worthwhile and comments of the Peer team were encouraging.
- It was queried if the costs associated with the resourcing and recruitment referred to in the Action Plan were already reflected in future financial planning?
- Members sought reassurance that timeframes for completion of actions in the Action Plan were on target, and if there was any option to bring forward the review of capacity in Economic Development (bottom of page 36).
- Scrutiny asked if there was a need for a Task and Finish Group to look at car parking charges.
- Members were content that the recommendations go forward.

SSDC Transformation Programme – Progress Report (Agenda item 8)

- Members commented that it was good to see a brief, rather than a lengthy report. Clarification was sought about the purpose of the appendix. Members requested that future reports include detailed monitoring of timescales and savings against the table and programme milestones. Another line at the bottom of the table was requested to clearly show the current position in comparison to targets.
- Scrutiny requested reassurance that any slippage could be picked up.
- Members noted the comments made by the Performance Manager including that:
 - The programme is based on a baseline as at June 2016.
 - A detailed assessment of the skills and knowledge required to deliver Council services and identifying areas where these could be lost was conducted as part of the transformation process to prevent and minimise risk to service delivery.

Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda item 9)

- Members noted the updates to the report provided by the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager at the Scrutiny meeting, including progress with regard to rural proofing as recommended in the Scrutiny Disposal of properties Task and Finish Review.
- With reference to recommendation (e) Scrutiny noted the costs for the cookers and raised concern if it may set a precedence for other schemes. It was also queried if there was a policy or minimum specification of what should be provided or expected in properties for which SSDC provides financial assistance.

2016/17 Capital Budget Outturn Report (Agenda item 10)

- Members noted updates to the report provided by the Finance Manager.
- Page 80 – it was queried in the funding allocated for bus shelters would be returned to balances?

2016/17 Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda item 11)

- Members noted updates to the report provided by the Finance Manager.
- Page 91 – table in para 6 – Scrutiny asked for a little more detail regarding the adverse variance for Development Control.
- Page 103 – Fraud and Data – some members were concerned about the comment and asked what was being done to address the resourcing issue.

Prevention Charter for Somerset (Agenda item 12)

- Scrutiny queried who would be responsible for raising awareness of the Charter across SSDC?

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 items 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).

Property Investment Acquisition for Income Generation (Confidential) (Agenda item 16)

Members made a number of comments in confidential session.

24. Performance Management and Reporting (Agenda Item 9)

The Performance Manager provided a short presentation about performance and key points included:

- A reminder of the five themes in the Council Plan 2016 – 2021
- A list of the current key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Priority projects in the Council Plan
- The structure of the Senior Leadership Team
- The annual cycle for performance monitoring and reporting
- Performance indicators for the Transformation programme to monitor financial and non-financial benefits.

Members were asked to consider the data they would like to see collected and in what form. During discussion several comments were made including:

- Need to monitor customers who choose not to access services online and ascertain why.
- Clarification that the existing 39 indicators would be carried forward.
- Need indicators to monitor meeting of delivery objectives, efficiency objectives and customer satisfaction.
- Needs to be some consistency with previous data to show comparison as the authority progresses through Transformation.

In response to comments made by members and the Scrutiny Manager, the Performance Manger clarified that:

- Channel shift would be monitored
- There were challenges in collecting some of the data for the existing indicators
- There needed to be a periodic review of the indicators and they would evolve over time
- Would be unusual to monitor internal customer satisfaction
- There was no timeframe for setting up new indicators but as soon as possible would enable more data to be collected.
- No customer consultation to establish what aspects of Council business customers felt were important had been undertaken.

On hearing comments made, the Scrutiny Manager suggested a separate informal meeting for members to discuss possible performance indicators might be useful and several members agreed.

The Chairman thanked the Performance Manager for his presentation.

ACTION: Informal meeting to be arranged for Scrutiny members with the Scrutiny Manager to discuss possible future performance indicators. A copy of the presentation to be circulated to members as a prompt.

25. **Appointment of Members to Somerset Waste Board Informal Joint Scrutiny Panel (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that the report had initially been discussed at the previous meeting where Councillor Martin Wale had tentatively volunteered to be a member on the Somerset Waste Board Informal Joint Scrutiny Panel. It was noted that the date of the next meeting was unknown and the Panel had only met once over the past year.

It was agreed that Councillors Carol Goodall, Martin Wale and Jason Baker be appointed to the Somerset Waste Board Informal Joint Scrutiny Panel. Members did not identify who would be the substitute member, but in the event of a meeting it would be agreed between the three members which two would attend that particular meeting of the Panel.

ACTION: The Scrutiny Manager to inform SCC of the members appointed from SSDC Scrutiny Committee to the Somerset Waste Board Informal Joint Scrutiny Panel.

26. **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted the updates provided by the Scrutiny Manager on each of the Task and Finish groups currently in progress:

Council Tax Support – The Revenues and Benefits Manager had agreed with the Portfolio Holder to identify savings in administration costs rather than changing the scheme for 2018-19. The Task and Finish group would meet to review the monitoring information by the autumn. There would be less work for the group to do than in previous years.

Local Discretionary (Business Rates) Relief Scheme - The first meeting took place on 22nd June 2017, and another meeting was scheduled for 6 July.

Homefinder Somerset – There had been no further progress and a response was still awaited from the Housing Team about recommendations made previously.

27. **Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 12)**

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that the Task and Finish report regarding Street Trading Policy had been agreed by Licensing Committee. The report would now be considered at Council in July.

28. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 13)

There was a brief discussion about the work programme and the Chairman suggested a report regarding progress towards a new Economic Development Strategy would be of interest, but also acknowledged arranging a report might be difficult due to current staff availability within the team.

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that a member of the public had addressed the last meeting of Council and invited SSDC to become a Fairtrade Authority, and had offered to provide a presentation to an appropriate committee. In response the Portfolio Holder for procurement, said the Council already had a local purchasing policy and he suggested that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group could look at the wider implications of becoming a Fairtrade Authority.

The Scrutiny Manager asked members if they wished to look at the Fairtrade idea in more detail. Members agreed that currently there was little availability for members to conduct another Task and Finish review. Members were of the opinion that the Fairtrade idea should not be given priority over existing work of the Scrutiny Committee and Task and Finish groups.

A recent meeting with the Leader, Chief Executive, Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Chairman and Vice-Chairmen had recently taken place to discuss the role of Scrutiny with the integration of Transformation and Commercialisation. The Scrutiny Manager provided a summary of the meeting and how it was envisaged Scrutiny would be involved in the Transformation process. She agreed to circulate information when available.

ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to make enquires about possibility of a future report regarding the progress of the Economic Development Strategy.

29. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held at 10.00am on 1 August 2017, in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

.....
Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 July 2017

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 6 July 2017.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 6 July 2017 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 8

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 3 August 2017

Lead Officer: Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 3 August 2017.

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 August 2017.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 3 August 2017.

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 2018/19 – no update since the July meeting of Scrutiny Committee
- Accessible Homefinder Common Lettings Policy
- Local Discretionary (Business Rate) Relief Scheme

Agenda Item 10

Update on matters of interest

Lead Officers: Jo Gale, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077

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
October 2017	Council Tax Penalties and Civil Penalties in Housing Benefit	✓		In April 2017 the council agreed to introduce penalties for those who have failed to notify the Council of change of circumstances that has resulted in them continuing to receive a Council Tax exemption, discount, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support award that they are not entitled. Scrutiny Committee agreed at their meeting on 4 th April 2017 for an item to be added to the forward plan for October to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. Figures with regard to the cost of issuing and collecting penalties have been specifically requested.	Ian Potter
Nov TBC	Discretionary Housing Payment policy monitoring	✓		An update report on the implementation and outcomes of the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy that came in to effect on 1 April 2017 following a Task and Finish review.	Ian Potter
Feb TBC	Monitoring of the implementation of Charges for Pre-Application Development Control Advice	✓		In April 2017 Scrutiny Committee supported the introduction of charging for Pre- Application Development Advice and requested a monitoring report is brought forward to establish the effectiveness of recouping costs and to consider the re-evaluation of fees.	David Norris
TBC	Troubled Families Programme	✓		Members requested an update report on the progress of the troubled families following a report covering the work of South Somerset Together, Local Strategic Partnership. A specific report request needs to be compiled.	Helen Rutter

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
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	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.	

The Somerset Waste Board and Somerset Waste Partnership Forward Plan of key decisions can be viewed at:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=196&RD=0>

Current Task & Finish Reviews

Date Commenced	Title	Members
February 2017	<p>Council Tax Support 2018/19</p> <p>Monitoring the effectiveness of the current scheme and how best to manage the reductions in the Administration grant as part of efficiency savings and as a consequence of the changes with Universal Credit</p>	<p>Cllrs Jason Baker, Val Keitch, Andy Kendall, David Norris, Sue Osborne, Sue Steele, Alan Smith, Rob Stickland, Derek Yeomans</p>
February 2017	<p>Accessible Homefinder Common Lettings Policy</p> <p>A review of the policy to ensure it is accessible for customers/the general public. Phase 1 completed with comments re style, layout and terminology fed back, phase 2 to commence June 2017 or later.</p>	<p>Cllrs Sue Steele, Carol Goodall</p>
June 2017	<p>Local Discretionary (Business Rate) Relief Scheme</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee members agreed at the meeting on 1st June to set up a Task and Finish review group to work with business rate officers to consider how best to allocate a limited amount of funding from Central Government to help businesses who as a result of the Business Rate (National Non Domestic Rate) Revaluation 2017 have been adversely affected (Rateable value has increased significantly with effect from 01 April 2017). The outcome of the review is to produce a Local Discretionary (Business Rate) Relief Scheme.</p>	<p>Cllrs Sue Steele, Carol Goodall, Gerard Tucker, Dave Bulmer</p>
TBC	<p>Rural Allocations Policy</p> <p>The Disposal of Third Party properties had highlighted issues with the Rural Allocations Policy and some work now needs to be done to review the policy, no start date has been agreed for this as yet.</p>	

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are committed to ensuring they have capacity to contribute to the Council's Transformation programme and therefore fewer Task and Finish reviews may be conducted during the Transformation period.

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 5 September 2017 at 10.00am in Council Chamber B, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
