# South Somerset District Council

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at **the Council Chamber B, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 5 September 2017.**

(10.00 am - 1.20 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

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| Jason Baker | David Norris |
| Dave Bulmer | Alan Smith |
| John Clark | Martin Wale |
| John Field | Colin Winder |
| Carol Goodall | |

**Also Present:**

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| Ric Pallister | Sylvia Seal |
| Jo Roundell Greene | Val Keitch |

**Officers**

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| Alex Parmley | Chief Executive |
| David Chubb | Technology implementation Manager |
| Andrew Gillespie | Performance Manager |
| Sharon Jones | Revenues Team Leader |
| Ashley Smalley | Business Rates Officer |
| Jo Gale | Scrutiny Manager |
| Becky Sanders | Democratic Services Officer |

## 42. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

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

## 43. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rob Stickland and Gerard Tucker.

## 44. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

## 45. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

**47.    Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman informed members that she and Councillor Gerard Tucker had recently attended a meeting of the Somerset Rivers Authority Scrutiny Panel. She provided some feedback including that no complaints had been received about collection of the precept.

She also noted, in her role as a governor, that Taunton Park Musgrove Hospital had recently had an unexpected inspection by the Care Quality Commission, and the inspection report was awaited.

**48.    Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 3 August 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.

**49.    Technology Implementation Update (Agenda Item 8)**

The Chairman welcomed Dave Chubb (Technology Implementation Manager) and Darren Cole (Consultant) to the meeting, who were present to answer questions from members about implementation of the technology required to support the Transformation programme.

During discussion members asked questions and requested more information about several elements including:
- Were the officers (Technology Implementation Manager and Consultant) happy with progress, and were enough staff and resources assigned to the work at this stage?
- Had there been any feedback from customers to date, or planned in the future to inform the programme?
- Civica system – clarity about whether it's an upgrade to something already in use or a new system.
- What's happening about a portal for members?
- How were systems tested before going live?
- Would live web chat be implemented?

The officers responded to comments made and explained some aspects in more detail, including:
- The projects required to implement the vision for Transformation were grouped into six workstreams, and leads for each workstream were working together to ensure all IT was integrated.
- There were always lessons to be learned from authorities who have gone, or are going, through similar processes. What is important is that the project progresses through each stage smoothly.

- Need to make sure solutions are well planned and much time has been taken doing this.
- Implementation of the technology is exactly where it was expected to be at this stage in the programme.
- Upgrade of the Civica software in preparation for use by Support Services had gone well. There had been no negative feedback from customers or staff as a result of implementing the software.
- A further explanation of the Civica software was provided and it was explained that it was an upgrade to what is already in use by Revenues and Benefits. Other services hadn't commenced use of the software as yet, but the platform was now available.
- In future, use of online forms would speed up processes for the customer by automating parts of the process and so making some service requests accessible 24/7.
- Regarding a portal for members – it was envisaged members could track progress and analyse information at ward level. However this would not be fully operational until all services are brought online through Transformation, so would be a gradual process.
- Test systems were trialled initially before going live.
- Use of live web chat was being explored, and also possibilities of integrating with Facebook and other social media.
- There were adequate resources at the current time for implementing the technology aspect of the Transformation programme.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed that a future update report would be made to Scrutiny Committee when there were specific points of interest to inform members, whether good or bad, or milestones reached.

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## 50.   Non Domestic Rate (Business Rates) Revaluation Support Relief Policy - Report of the Task and Finish Group (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman welcomed the Revenues Team Leader and Business Rates Officer to the meeting, who had worked with members on the Task and Finish Group and were present to respond to any questions.

The Chairman noted the work had been undertaken in a short timeframe and had been an intensive and interesting Task and Finish Group. She hoped Scrutiny members would agree with the outcome and endorse the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

Officers noted all information was in the report and they had no further comments to add.

There was no further discussion and members were content to endorse the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

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## 51.   Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 September 2017 (Agenda Item 10)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 7 September 2017 and made the following comments:

**Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18 – 1st Quarter (Agenda item 6)**

- Para 8 - Scrutiny noted that there was still no reference to performance monitoring from a customer perspective. There is a need to know when changes are implemented if and how it is affecting the public.
- It was acknowledged during the transition through Transformation it would be difficult to produce statistics at 'in between' stages. Members sought reassurance that there would be more Performance Indicators in the future, and that indicators should be easily understood.
- It was felt the indicators need to be reviewed and perhaps using the Council Plan as a starting point. Outputs, especially regarding customer service, need to be monitored.
- Members were pleased that baseline measures will be maintained to be able to monitor trends.

**Westlands Entertainment and Conference Centre Refurbishment Project (Agenda item 7)**

- Scrutiny sought clarification that Westlands is projected to be cost neutral or better, and queried the timeframes envisaged until the facility breaks even or makes a surplus.
- It was noted this report was the first statement of actual overspend and members commented it would be useful to see a full reconciliation to indicate how the overspend affects the overall SSDC accounts.
- Members sought clarity about whether the following were included in the project spend as detailed in para 41:
  o Dealing with aspects of vandalism which had not been possible to claim under insurance
  o Work to the first floor to enable office space to be let to a tenant.
  o Work to the sports hall and fitness suite
  o Artists Walkway
- Members sought reassurance that the risk management is up to date.
- Members express disappointment that Bingo groups were still awaiting a licence to use Westlands.

**Business Rates Relief – New Local Discretionary relief (Agenda item 8)**

- Scrutiny endorsed the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. No further comments were made.

**Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (Agenda item 9)**

- Para 15 – the table refers to service prioritisation as TBC. Scrutiny queried that as there is a wish to not cut services, how are the savings going to be identified?
- Referring to a recent LGA Enterprising Councils document, members noted that key learning points from other authorities in particular Sevenoaks that had gone through similar transformation processes, had been to talk and engage with the public. This didn't seem to have been done yet here, and it was queried if there was intention to consult with the public, and if so how and when?

- Regarding an increase in fees and charges, members queried what would happen regarding fees where there is less opportunity to make changes due to legislation?
- Scrutiny sought reassurance that Transformation is on target to deliver the projected savings.
- Members raised concern that changes to car parking fees were being considered at a time when many 'pay and display' spaces in Yeovil seemed to be under-used during peak weekday lunch break hours.

**District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 10)**

- Members queried the report due to October regarding 'Consideration of Local Plan Review Issues and Options Document for Consultation'. Scrutiny members were unclear about the purpose of the report and requested that all members be kept informed about reports due to come forward regarding the Local Plan.

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## 52. 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 or commencing in the near future.

**Council Tax Support** – there were no updates since the last meeting.

**Homefinder Somerset** – there were no updates since the last meeting.

**Car Parking** – the Scrutiny Manager had met with the Engineering & Property Services Manager to draft a One Page Strategy for the proposed Task and Finish review for car parking, and the Chief Executive had also viewed the document. Members were asked to review the document and they suggested some amendments. Councillor Carol Goodall also expressed an interest to be involved with the Task and Finish Group.

**Locality Working** – the Scrutiny Manager noted no further information had come forward about timescales or, how and when, Scrutiny would be involved in the process.

There was a short discussion about locality working during which members expressed mixed opinions about how they felt locality working would, or could, be in the future. Due to the 'unknowns' about locality working, it was suggested and agreed, that the Communities Lead be invited to have an informal discussion with Scrutiny Committee following a Committee meeting.

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## 53. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 12)

There were no updates on matters of interest.

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## 54. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 13)

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that at the previous meeting they had agreed that a report about phase 2 at the Yeovil Innovation Centre should be requested and added to the Work Programme. She asked members to highlight the scope and detail required in the report, and this was agreed during discussion. Members also felt an

update on Lufton 2000 was needed, and suggested that the report should be requested for the November meeting. The Scrutiny Manager noted she would draft a report request and circulate to members for comment.

Members noted the Scrutiny Work Programme as detailed in the agenda.

## 55.    Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on 3 October 2017, in the Main Committee Room.

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Chairman

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