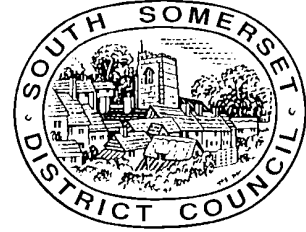


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 2nd October 2018

10.00 am

**Chamber B, 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

Neil Bloomfield
John Field
Carol Goodall
Mike Lock

Tony Lock
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 Case Services Officer (Support Services) on 01935 462596 or democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Friday 21 September 2018.

Alex Parmley, *Chief Executive Officer*

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 2 October 2018

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 7)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 September 2018.

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 September 2018**
(Page 8)

8. **Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 October 2018** (Page 9)

9. **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews** (Page 10)

10. **Update on matters of interest** (Page 11)

11. **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 12 - 13)

12. **Date of next meeting** (Page 14)

Agenda Item 1

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in **Council Chamber B, Council Offices, Brympton Way on Tuesday 4 September 2018.**

(10.00 am - 12.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock
John Clark	Alan Smith
John Field	Rob Stickland
Carol Goodall	Gerard Tucker
Mike Lock	Martin Wales

Also Present:

Jason Baker	Peter Seib
Jo Roundell Greene	

Officers

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Commissioning)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Peter Paddon	Lead Specialist (Economy)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Helen Morris	Revenues Team Leader
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Specialist
Becky Sanders	Case Services Officer (Support Services)

39. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

40. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Norris and Colin Winder.

41. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

No issues were raised from previous meetings.

44. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that she would be attending a Transformation Board meeting the following day, and if anyone had any issues they wished her to raise to send details through via email.

45. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 2 August 2018 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman noted that the Scrutiny comments had been noted and were included in the District Executive minutes which had been circulated.

46. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 6 September 2018 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 6 September 2018 and made comments as detailed below. Responses to most comments and questions were provided at the Scrutiny Committee by the relevant officer, director or Portfolio Holder.

Proposed Designation of Herne Hill, Ilminster as a Local Nature Reserve (Agenda item 6)

- Scrutiny supported the recommendations
- Members queried if status as a Local Nature Reserve would have any weight in terms of planning.

Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement in Respect of Neighbourhood Plans (Agenda item 7)

- Scrutiny sought clarity as to how many Neighbourhood Plans are currently underway.
- Members queried if there was a breakdown of the costs to SSDC for supporting each Plan, and if there were expenses to SSDC above the grant funding available.
- Page 11, para 2.38, second bullet point – Members asked if officers were aware of any groups who had applied for the additional grant of £8,000.
- Members sought clarity about revisions to Neighbourhood Plans and whether there is a requirement for them to be updated when the Local Plan is revised.

The 'Making' of the South Petherton Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda item 8)

- Members asked how much weight the Neighbourhood Plan carried until it is 'made' – and at what point does it become a material consideration for planning?

The East Coker Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (Agenda item 9)

- No comments.

Update on Superfast Broadband for Rural Businesses (Agenda item 10)

- Members queried if phase 2 of the programme had a set end date?
- Members acknowledged that Superfast Broadband speeds are still low in some rural areas.
- Scrutiny commented that the delivery and availability of Superfast Broadband across the district is patchy. There is a need to map and identify poor broadband areas to see what we may be able to do.
- Some members queried if the state aid criteria was for a fixed timeframe.

Financial Strategy and Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 (Agenda item 11)

- Members asked for further information regarding some technical points in the report, and thanked the Section 151 officer for his explanations.
- Page 106, table 6b – ‘Other Earmarked Reserves’ – members asked from where the figure of 1216 had been derived as it wasn’t clear in the report. *(Post Meeting Note: the required information was circulated shortly after the meeting to Scrutiny and District Executive Members)*

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 12)

- Scrutiny noted the item scheduled for December – Local Plan Review – and sought reassurance that all members will have some involvement prior to the report.

SSDC Operational Office Accommodation – Update on Review of Options for Brympton Way and Petters House (Confidential) (Agenda item 15)

- Scrutiny made several comments in closed session.

47. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)

Members noted the updates provided by the Case Services Officer on each of the Task and Finish Groups currently in progress.

Customer Accessibility – some members have trialled using the new website which is under development, and comments have been made about the design and ease of use.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019 – the public consultation ended on 2 September 2018, and responses were now being analysed by officers.

Homefinder Somerset Plain English – no updates since the last meeting.

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

Members noted the updates on matters of interest provided by the Case Services Officer:

- At a previous meeting it had been asked if the budget for Transformation could be collated together for ease of reference. The Lead Specialist (Finance) has looked into the matter, and the layout of the budget monitoring page for future Transformation update reports has been modified.
- At the last meeting, an update was requested regarding precepting for the Somerset Rivers Authority. The Rivers Authorities and Land Drainage Bill is due its second reading in the House of Commons in late October. Page 115 (section 5) of the Financial strategy report (on the District Executive agenda for 6 Sept 2018) explains that the assumption is the current arrangements for precepting remain in place for the foreseeable future.

49. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

Members discussed items on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

There was much disappointment expressed that the Economic Development Strategy had slipped to October. Members raised several comments and concerns about the process to inform the strategy, and the majority of members requested some information be provided to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee if possible

The Chairman reminded members that at a previous meeting it had been suggested that Scrutiny look at the impact Business Rates are having on Yeovil Town Centre and if there is anything that SSDC might be able to do. She noted that the Revenues Team Leader was present to answer questions on the matter.

During discussion, the Revenues Team Leader responded to points of detail regarding Business Rates re-valuation, the reliefs available, promotion and distribution of the reliefs. She noted that the team were not receiving feedback from businesses that Business Rates were a reason for vacating premises.

At the end of discussion, most members felt investigating the issue further at the current time might conflict with work of the Yeovil Refresh, Chard Regeneration and Wincanton Regeneration projects. It was agreed not to request a further report or undertake a Task and Finish Group but for the matter to be kept under consideration when any future reports regarding the Yeovil Refresh, Chard Regeneration and Wincanton Regeneration projects come forward.

50. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 2 October 2018 at 10.00am in Council Chamber B, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

.....
Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 6 September 2018

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 6 September 2018.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 6 September 2018 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 8

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 October 2018

Lead Officer: Jo Gale, Scrutiny Specialist
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 4 October 2018.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2 October 2018.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 4 October 2018.

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 Specialist will give a brief verbal update on progress made.

Current Task & Finish Reviews

- Customer Accessibility
- Council Tax Support Scheme 2019
- Homefinder Somerset Plain English

Agenda Item 10

Update on matters of interest

Lead Officers: Jo Gale, Scrutiny Specialist
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 Specialist.

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 Specialist to verbally update members on any ongoing matters.

Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
30 Oct '18	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.	Peter Paddon / Jan Gammon / Cllr Jo Roundell Greene.
Dec '18 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.	Simon Fox/ Nigel Marston/ Cllr Angie Singleton
TBC	Precepting for Somerset Rivers Authority	Scrutiny Committee requested at their 30 th January meeting a progress report on the precepting arrangements for the Somerset Rivers Authority.	
TBC	Overview of Yeovil Refresh	Following a report to District Executive with regard to Yeovil Market at the beginning of January 2018, Scrutiny Committee members raised questions with regard to Yeovil Vision and felt they needed a better understanding of it to effectively scrutinise the governance, investment and strategic impact/relationship with the Council.	Helen Rutter/ Natalie Fortt /Cllr Peter Gubbins
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
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 and Purpose	Members
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>	Cllrs Sue Steele, Carol Goodall
October 2017	Council Tax Support 2019/20 - Consider the merits/risks of moving towards a discount based policy.	Cllrs Sue Steele, Carol Goodall, David Norris, Rob Stickland, Anna Groskop, Sue Osborne
February 2018	Working with the Transformation Team to identify, and deliver, Best Practice to provide accessible on-line information and services for all.	Cllrs Dave Bulmer, David Norris, Colin Winder, Carol Goodall, Sue Steele.
TBC	Rural Allocations Policy - 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.	
TBC	Review of the rural economy and identifying business needs that SSDC could support or help facilitate to further growth and or diversification.	Agreed at 30 Jan Scrutiny Committee, no project scope has been developed at this stage.
<p>If you have any suggested topics for Scrutiny Committee to consider please contact Scrutiny Specialist – joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk</p>		
<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).</p>		

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 30 October at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
