

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room - Council Offices** on **Tuesday 5 March 2019.**

(10.05 am - 12.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Dave Bulmer	Mike Lock
John Clark	Tony Lock (from 10.20am)
John Field	David Norris
Carol Goodall	Rob Stickland



Also Present:

Jason Baker	Jo Roundell Greene
Henry Hobhouse	Sylvia Seal
Val Keitch	Angie Singleton

Officers

Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Support Services)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Jan Gamon	Lead Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Lynda Pincombe	Specialist (Strategic Planning)
David Crisfield	Third Sector and Equalities Co-ordinator
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Chris Cooper	Environment Services Manager
James Divall	Income Opportunity Development Manager
Stephen Fox	Principal Horticultural Officer
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Specialist
Becky Sanders	Case Services Officer (Support Services)

113. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

114. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gerard Tucker, Martin Wale and Colin Winder. Councillor Tony Lock tendered his apologies for a late arrival for the meeting.

115. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

116. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

118. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman reminded Scrutiny members that she had forwarded, by email, a survey regarding the Somerset Rivers Authority, and encouraged members to provide an individual response.

She also noted that regarding Transformation, the latest updates had been provided in an all member briefing prior to full Council in February.

The Chairman noted this was probably the last Scrutiny Committee meeting for this Council year, and hence the last meeting she would be chairing. She wished to convey her gratitude to all those who had been involved with Scrutiny over the years and the work that had been achieved.

The Vice-Chairman, on behalf of the rest of the Committee, thanked the Chairman for her chairmanship.

119. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 7 February 2019 (Agenda Item 7)

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

120. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 March 2019 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 7 March 2019 and made comments as detailed below. Responses to comments were provided at the Scrutiny Committee by the relevant officers or Portfolio Holder.

Adoption of the South Somerset Leisure Facility Strategy (Agenda item 6)

- Regarding agenda pages 12 and 13 – some members felt it would useful if there was an additional column/category for 'other' sports. It was acknowledged not every sport could be in the strategy but some members felt it was important unmentioned sports were not forgotten e.g. badminton.
- Some members felt the next steps / actions should provide a little more detail and indicate more specific timescales.

- A non-member of Scrutiny noted that Donyatt Bowls Club was being marketed and queried if inclusion of the facility in the strategy needed to be reviewed.
- Members queried the synergy between this strategy and the Local Plan?
- A member queried the latest situation regarding the Yeovil North and Eastern corridor cycle path links, and how the project would link with the strategy.
- Acknowledge the Needs Assessment has been completed and is correct at the current time. If elements or popularity of individual sports change over the lifetime of the strategy, is there an option to review the documents?
- Some members queried if any projects identified within the strategy were specifically aimed at delivering facilities for the Wyndham Park and Bunford areas?
- It was queried if the work to compile the strategy could have been undertaken internally, and how much finance had been required for the consultants.

Equality and Diversity Policy 2019 (Agenda item 7)

- Agenda page 22 – section 9 – bullet points (i) to (v).
 - Members queried if there was a reason for the Gypsy and Traveller community being specifically highlighted from any other identified community?
 - Members noted that if bullet point (i) was being complied with that it would encompass point (iii), and hence queried the need for both bullet points.
- Members were content that the recommendations go forward

SSDC Local Authority Trading Company (Agenda item 8)

Members raised a number of comments regarding this item, some of which are included in the bullet points below. *(6 members of the Executive were present for much of the meeting and listened to the discussion.)*

- Is the amount of the loan requested (rec 3) adequate?
- The first line of para 2 refers to seeking approval in principle however recommendation (a) at para 8 seems to suggest that the Executive approve with no mention of principle. Members sought clarity as to whether the decision would be 'in principle' or not.
- Some members felt there was not enough time between publishing of the District Executive agenda and the Scrutiny Committee meeting, for members to read and digest the report fully. It was felt due to the nature of the subject matter that a separate briefing should have been arranged specifically for Scrutiny members.
- Page 44, para 11.4a – refers to the shareholder agreement be altered / changed as the company develops – members queried what the process would be for doing this.
- Page 79 – refers to a Shareholder Cabinet Committee – members queried if the 5 members suggested would be all District Executive members and whether they would be appointed in political balance?

- Members acknowledged the suggestion by the Director that two Scrutiny members could possibly be involved with the Portfolio Holder meetings regarding the shareholder agreement, if it was felt appropriate.
- The shareholders agreement is an important document and should be considered by Scrutiny before it is agreed.
- The due diligence referred to in recommendation 8a is not quantified. Who will carry out the due diligence and determine when it is satisfactory?
- In addition to the comments above one councillor had forwarded a number of detailed queries to the Director shortly before the meeting, and verbal responses were provided at the Scrutiny meeting. Some of the comments and queries included:
 - Para 9.8 refers to other authorities who have set up trading companies but there is no reference to how successful they have been or any problems they may have encountered.
 - Para 12.4 refers to best practice but no further detail or references are provided in order to see such information.
 - The main advantage of setting up a separate trading company should be clearly stated near the front of the report.
 - The report should explain clearly that detailed external advice has been sought and the nature of the advice.
 - What are the intentions regarding Scrutiny of the company?
 - Para 9.13 – annual levy – who will determine and agree the amount?
 - Para 14.3a – disagree with the wording and feel there is also a reputational risk to SSDC should the company fail.
 - Appx 4, page 81 – new terminology of ‘smart client’ without an obvious explanation regarding the term ‘smart’.
 - How and where will the resource come from to carry out the operational duties of the new company?
- 8 of the 9 Scrutiny members present at the meeting agreed to recommend to District Executive that:
 - i. The wording of recommendation 8a is revised to make it clear that it is an ‘in principle’ decision/approval.
 - ii. That District Executive consider all of the concerns raised at the Scrutiny Committee with a view to including additional information within the report for clarity, and for the Executive to reconsider the next steps to setting up an LATC.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 9)

- No comments.
-

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

Members noted the updates provided by the Scrutiny Specialist on each of the Task and Finish Groups currently in progress.

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

Customer Accessibility – Some members had been involved in testing of the website and had provided feedback to the appropriate officers. Some refinement of the website was current being undertaken.

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

The Scrutiny Specialist informed members that she would shortly be attending a meeting with representatives from the Centre for Public Scrutiny to hear the expectations relating to the new regulations around Scrutiny.

123. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Specialist reminded members that information had been circulated regarding the Troubled Families Programme and the Yeovil Refresh. She checked if members wished to specifically progress anything relating to the two projects.

During a brief discussion, it was suggested that no further update was currently required regarding the Yeovil Refresh in general. However some members felt that an update regarding the markets would be of interest and was something that the new Scrutiny Committee should look at, and this was agreed by members. Regarding the Troubled Families Programme it was agreed that a general update was no longer appropriate, but the Scrutiny Committee should consider the response from Somerset County Council when available, following their recent consultation on the Get Set services.

ACTION: Scrutiny Specialist to update the Work Programme.

124. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 2 April 2019 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

(Post meeting note – the Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 2 April 2019 has since been cancelled. There is no meeting in May due to the elections. Therefore the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is for 10.00am on Tuesday 4 June 2019.)

.....
Chairman

