

Scrutiny Committee

This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Committee since 20 July 2017

The committee met on 1st August 2017 and considered the items on the District Executive for the 4th August Agenda and provided the comments as listed below:

Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision – Huish Episcopi Academy Swimming Pool Project (Agenda item 6)

- Members raised concern that the project scope had kept changing
- Members noted at the Scrutiny Committee meeting that the Leader referred to the lessons learned from the project. Will the lessons be shared more widely for future reference?
- SSDC funding support to the project is now approx. 33% but it was only 20% at the start of the project. Scrutiny queried if SSDC had had 33% input into the project design etc.
- Members sought clarification about the percentage use that will be available to the community.

2017/18 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30 June 2017 (Agenda item 7)

Page 9 – Para 7 – regarding overspend for Westlands Project – Scrutiny noted that the comment referred to a project report being made to August District Executive but was not on the agenda. When would the report be due? Scrutiny queried what assurance was there that there wouldn't be further overspends in future years.

Page 15 – Transformation - Members sought clarification about the detail of the Transformation Reserve.

2017/18 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30 June 2017 (Agenda item 8)

Scrutiny noted the report and were content that the recommendations go forward.

Corporate Grants Report 2016 - 2017 (Agenda item 9)

Scrutiny made no comments.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 10)

Scrutiny made no comments.

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).

Commercial Land and Property Review and Strategy (Confidential) (Agenda item 13)

Members made a number of comments in confidential session.

Task and Finish work

Council Tax Support - Revenues Officers have been notified that the software provider could supply an add-on to help calculate the impact and costs of moving to a discount based scheme. The software should make the exploration of moving to a discount scheme much easier. A new Task and Finish Group would commence in November and an email requesting volunteers would be circulated in the near future.

Homefinder Somerset – Recommendations made by the last Task and Finish Group regarding layout and structure of the policy had been well received. A new revised version was being worked up for the Task and Finish Group to consider.

Local Discretionary (Business Rates) Revaluation Relief Scheme – The Task and Finish group had discussed at length and made some conclusions. The final report was currently being drafted and checks being made with the software provider that they could deliver the required changes.

Car Park Charges - Scrutiny Committee suggested when looking at the peer review that the matter of Car Park Charges could be the subject of a Task and Finish Review. District Executive welcomed this last month. Volunteers representing each area will be sought to form the Task and Finish Group. Councillors John Clark, Carol Goodall, David Norris, and David Bulmer have already expressed an interest in being part of the group.

Locality Working - District Executive have indicated they would be interested in Scrutiny involvement with the development of the Locality aspect of the Future Model and there was an appetite from Scrutiny members. However, there are no timescales at the moment and involvement would be informed by the Ignite programme.

Cllr Sue Steele
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee