

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee - Communities held in the Wyndham Room
- County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, on Wednesday, 21 June 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Gwil Wren (Chair)
Cllr Dawn Johnson (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Dawn Denton
Cllr Andy Kendall
Cllr Wes Read

Cllr Andy Dingwall
Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey

In attendance:

Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Marcus Kravis
Cllr Alan Bradford

Cllr Sarah Wakefield
Cllr John Hunt

1 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from councillors Cllr Susannah Hart (attended online), Cllr Kathy Pearce, Cllr Pauline Ham, Cllr Edric Hobbs (Cr Martin Lovell as sub) and Cllr Lance Duddridge (attended online)

2 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 3

There were no members of the public in attendance either in person or online.

4 Committee briefing from the Scrutiny Manager, Somerset Council - Agenda Item 4

The committee received a presentation from Jamie Jackson, Governance Manager Scrutiny on the role and function of the new Scrutiny Communities committee.

The following comments and questions were received and discussed with members–

- The resources currently available for Scrutiny at Somerset Council, and resource planning for the future.
- The need to ensure ALL policies are scrutinised before they go to the Executive for decision.
- Are we scrutinising the work of the previous district councils?
- What savings have been achieved in bringing the Communities services together into the unitary authority.
- Will this scrutiny committee be involved in the bringing together of the service areas across the five legacy councils in Somerset.

5 Committee briefing from the Executive Lead Member Communities, Housing and Culture - Agenda Item 5

The Chair welcomed Chris Hall, Executive Director for the new Communities, Housing and Culture directorate who introduced himself and shared a presentation detailing the senior leadership structure for the new directorate.

The following comments and questions were received and discussed with members -

- The list of functions in the Executive Directors slides don't match the Governance Managers slides in item 4 – *Democratic Services to check*
- Regarding the Chatbot online and KPI's, measures and monitoring, can this committee receive reports on this? - *The Executive Director advised that this would come back to the committee next month under the Customer Services item.*
- One member felt that as a Community Scrutiny committee, visits to Communities in Somerset would be extremely beneficial.
- How do Local Community Networks fit in with this portfolio?
- Markets and the problem with centralising market charter to Taunton.
- Regarding CCTV operators – how is this going to be managed for the unitary authority? – *The Executive Director advised that an update would be brought back to this committee*
- Regarding Local Community Networks - what sorts of issues should parish and town councils take to their LCN, and what issues need to come straight to Somerset Council customer services?

6 Communities, Housing and Culture Service Directors introductions - Agenda Item 6

The Executive Director then welcomed Christopher Brown, Service Director of Housing to the committee who introduced himself and gave a brief introduction to the Housing service at Somerset Council.

7 Scrutiny Communities committee work programme - Agenda Item 7

The Chair informed members that he, along with the Vice-chair Cllr Dawn Johnson had attended a meeting with officers to consider items for the work programme of the Scrutiny Communities committee for the coming year. He explained that there had been discussions about the need to balance the work programme between committee formal meetings and member briefings/workshops and/or smaller Task and Finish groups. He suggested that the work of the committee would need to be managed in this way given that the frequency of meetings for the formal committee meetings would be 6-8 weekly. He invited members of the committee to suggest items for the work programme and the following suggestions were received -

- Leisure provision
- CCTV provision across Somerset
- Future model for housing provision
- Customer service KPI's, customer satisfaction etc...
- Libraries, museums and theatres.
- Gypsy traveller communities
- Parking at leisure centres
- Tourism
- Heritage
- Fairs and markets in decline
- Neighbourhood policing (could the Police attend this committee on a regular basis?)
- Strategic planning around housing
- Park provision and maintenance

8 Date of the next meeting - Agenda Item 8

The Chair advised members that the next meeting of this committee will be held on the 9th August 2023, at 10am in the Luttrell Room at County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY.

(The meeting ended at 12.12 pm)

.....
CHAIR