

Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITIES

Wednesday, 21 June 2023 at 10.00 am

Wyndham Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY

To: The members of the Scrutiny Committee - Communities

Chair: Councillor Gwil Wren
Vice-chair: Councillor Dawn Johnson

Councillor Simon Coles	Councillor Dawn Denton
Councillor Andy Dingwall	Councillor Lance Duddridge
Councillor Pauline Ham	Councillor Susannah Hart
Councillor Edric Hobbs	Councillor Andy Kendall
Councillor Kathy Pearce	Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey
Councillor Wes Read	

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Democratic Services democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk by **5pm on Thursday, 15 June 2023**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

The meeting will be webcast and an audio recording made.

Issued by (the Proper Officer) on Tuesday, 13 June 2023

AGENDA

Scrutiny Committee - Communities - 10.00 am Wednesday, 21 June 2023

Public Guidance Notes contained in Agenda Annexe (Pages 5 - 6)

Click here to join the online meeting (Pages 7 - 8)

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest (Pages 9 - 10)

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

3 Public Question Time

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, please see details under 'click here to join online meeting'.

4 Committee briefing from the Scrutiny Manager, Somerset Council (Pages 11 - 20)

Members are asked to consider and comment on the presentation from the Scrutiny Manager.

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

Members are asked to consider and comment on the briefing from the Executive Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture.

6 Communities, Housing and Culture Service Directors introductions

To introduce the Scrutiny committee to the four Service Directors in the new Somerset Council Communities, Housing and Culture directorate.

7 Scrutiny Communities committee work programme

Members are invited to suggest items for the new Scrutiny Communities work programme.

To aid discussion the Executive Forward Plan of decisions can be found [here](#).

8 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Communities committee will be held on Wednesday 9th August, 10am in The Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY.

Guidance notes for the meeting

Council Public Meetings

The legislation that governs Council meetings requires that committee meetings are held face-to-face. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers (report authors and statutory officers) to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on [Committee structure - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

Public Question Time

If you wish to speak or ask a question about any matter on the Committee's agenda please contact Democratic Services by 5pm providing 3 clear working days before the meeting. (for example, for a meeting being held on a Wednesday, the deadline will be 5pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting) Email democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out, or alternatively can attend the meeting online.

A 20-minute time slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to address the committee.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

Meeting Etiquette for participants

Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.

Mute your microphone when you are not talking.

Switch off video if you are not speaking.

Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

Exclusion of Press & Public

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

Recording of meetings

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.

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SOMERSET COUNCIL

**COUNCILLORS WHO ARE ALSO CITY, TOWN AND/OR
PARISH COUNCILLORS**

SOMERSET COUNCILLOR	CITY, TOWN AND/OR PARISH COUNCIL
Steve Ashton	Crewkerne Town Council / Hinton St George Parish Council
Suria Aujla	Bridgwater Town Council
Jason Baker	Chard Town Council
Lee Baker	Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council
Marcus Barr	Wellington Town Council
Mike Best	Crewkerne Town Council
Alan Bradford	North Petherton Town Council
Theo Butt Philip	Wells City Council
Simon Carswell	Street Parish Council
Norman Cavill	West Monkton Parish Council
Peter Clayton	Burnham Highbridge Town Council
Nick Cottle	Glastonbury Town Council / St Edmunds Parish Council
Adam Dance	South Petherton Parish Council
Tom Deakin	Taunton Town Council
Caroline Ellis	Taunton Town Council
Ben Ferguson	Axbridge Town Council
Bob Filmer	Brent Knoll Parish Council
Andrew Govier	Wellington Town Council
Pauline Ham	Axbridge Town Council
Philip Ham	Coleford Parish Council
Ross Henley	Wellington Town Council
Edric Hobbs	Shepton Mallet Town Council
John Hunt	Bishop's Hull Parish Council
Val Keitch	Ilminster Town Council
Andy Kendall	Yeovil Town Council
Jenny Kenton	Chard Town Council
Tim Kerley	Somerton Town Council
Marcus Kravis	Minehead Town Council
Tony Lock	Yeovil Town Council
Martin Lovell	Shepton Mallet Town Council
Mike Murphy	Burnham Highbridge Town Council
Graham Oakes	Yeovil Town Council / Yeovil Without Parish Council
Sue Osborne	Ilminster Town Council
Kathy Pearce	Bridgwater Town Council
Emily Pearlstone	Ilchester Parish Council
Evie Potts-Jones	Yeovil Town Council

Wes Read	Yeovil Town Council
Leigh Redman	Bridgwater Town Council
Mike Rigby	Bishop's Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council
Tony Robbins	Wells City Council
Dean Ruddle	Somerton Town Council
Peter Seib	Brympton Parish Council / Chilthorne Domer Parish Council
Heather Shearer	Street Parish Council
Gill Slocombe	Bridgwater Town Council
Brian Smedley	Bridgwater Town Council
Federica Smith-Roberts	Taunton Town Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council / Brympton Parish Council
Andy Soughton	Yeovil Town Council
Richard Wilkins	Curry Rivel Parish Council
Dave Woan	Yeovil Town Council
Ros Wyke	Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

The memberships of City, Parish or Town Councils will be taken as being declared by these Councillors to be other registerable interests in the business of the Somerset Council meeting and need not be declared verbally.

Monitoring Officer of Somerset Council

Scrutiny Committee Briefing

21st June 2023

Jamie Jackson – Scrutiny Manager



Somerset
Council

Introduction

Background

Every Council with an executive management structure has to have a scrutiny function. Somerset Council has appointed 5 scrutiny committees to perform this function:

- Adults and Health
 - Children and Families
 - Climate and Place
 - Communities
 - Corporate and Resources
-
- Each of the scrutiny committees have a responsibility to fulfil a check and challenge function for decisions and policies made by the Executive.
 - Each committee is also expected to contribute towards policy development when appropriate in order to influence.

Background cont.

Principles of scrutiny

The scrutiny committees have no decision-making powers but have responsibilities delegated by Council. Committees can appoint a Task and Finish Group to undertake specific scrutiny review and recommendations back to it.

Scrutiny Committees are committed to developing a respectful relationship between themselves, the Executive and external partners.

The work of the Scrutiny Committees is underpinned by the following six principles:-

- Contribute to sound decision-making by holding councillors and key partners to account as a 'critical friend'.
- Contribute to and reflect the vision and priorities of the Council.
- Enable the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision-making process.
- Engage in policy development at an appropriate time to be able to influence the development of policy.
- Be agile and able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.
- For scrutiny to be a councillor led and owned function which seeks to continuously improve through self-reflection and development.

Background cont.

Communities Scrutiny areas of responsibilities

Functional areas that are the responsibility of this Committee are as follows:

Housing:

- Strategy and HRA Business Plan
- Arms Length Management Organisation
- Homelessness - Rough Sleepers pathway
- Housing Options & Allocations – Homefinder Somerset
- Housing and Leaseholder Management
- Housing Maintenance - Responsive and Planned (capital programme), compliance, void management
- Housing Development & Regeneration
- Tenant Services –Worklessness & Tenancy Management (new tenancies, income, debt and benefit support, rent setting, service charges tenancy compliance)
- Sheltered and Extra Care
- Housing Property Service
- Registered Providers and Partnerships
- Gypsy, Traveller and Van Dweller Services
- People Displacement Schemes and Services

Background cont.

Customer Services:

- Customer Service Strategy and Standards
- Corporate Customer Services
- Compliments & Complaints, Ombudsman cases
- Local Service Centres
- Customer Engagement and Access

Cultural Services:

- Libraries, Museums, Theatres
- Leisure Centres, Facilities and Services (contract and direct)
- Sports Development Partnership
- Heritage Assets
- Arts Centres, Facilities, Services and Development
- Culture Facilities, Services and Development
- Tourism Facilities, Services and Development
- Community Facilities

Background cont.

Regulatory and Operational Services:

- Environmental Health and Licensing
- Registrars
- Coroners
- Environmental Protection and Enviro-crime
- Building Control
- Port Health Authority
- CCTV and anti-social behaviour
- Safety Advisory Group
 - Private Sector Housing
 - Street Cleansing
 - Grounds Maintenance
 - Unauthorised encampments
 - Parks and Play Areas
 - Public Toilets
 - Dog Wardens
 - Bereavement Services
 - Fairs and Markets

Background cont.

Methods of Scrutiny

In conducting its' business a Scrutiny Committee may:

- Undertake in depth analysis of a policy issue;
- Receive briefings and presentations on issues under consideration;
- Undertake research, community and other public engagement, particularly in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- Hold inquiries, workshops, public meetings and conduct public surveys;
- Invite advisors and assessors to assist them;
- Question Lead Members, Associate Lead Members and seek their views on issues and proposals affecting the Council's area;
- Question senior officers, and where appropriate suppliers and seek their professional views on issues, and / or their decisions and performance either in relation to service plans or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or project;
- Liaise with national, regional or local external organisations operating in the Council's area so as to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- Question and collect evidence from any other person (with their consent) and invite witnesses to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings, proceedings or events

Background cont.

Forward Work Programme

With regards the Committee's forward work programme, which will be an agenda item on every meeting agenda, the following can include items on scrutiny agendas:

- The Committee itself;
- Full Council;
- The Leader;
- The Executive collectively;
- Any Member of the Committee;
- Any other Member, for an issue affecting their division and where all other methods of resolution have been exhausted may request a matter is considered as part of a Committee work programme;
- The Monitoring Officer, the County Solicitor or the Scrutiny Officer
- Any Officer from the Senior Leadership Team;

Background cont.

Use of Scrutiny time and support

- Initial discussions regarding the forward work programme have taken place between the Chair, Vice Chair and the Executive Director team.
- The Committee are currently scheduled to meet on a bi-monthly basis and with such a comprehensive portfolio of responsibilities the opportunity to continue scrutiny through other mechanisms, in between formal meetings, becomes essential. This can be achieved through Task and Finish Groups, informal workshop/development sessions and Committee/member briefings.
- The Committee will also receive the budget monitoring reports and corporate performance reports covering the finances and activity of the whole Council on a quarterly basis.
- This Committee will be supported by myself and colleagues Leila Nicholson, Steph Gold and Rose Stokes.

Time for Questions

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Contact email