

THE MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 14 February 2023 in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT, commencing at 6.30 pm.

SCRUTINY BOARD COUNCILLORS:

Councillors Alison Barkshire (substitute for Michael Dunk), Chris Inchley (Chair), Lindsay MacDougal (substituting for Barbi Lund), and Alan Townsend

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT (online):

Councillors Michael Dunk, Liz Leyshon, Richard Pinnock, Ros Wyke

OFFICERS PRESENT:

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| Julie Jackson | Performance and Improvement Officer and Scrutiny Assistant |
| Kelly Knight | Principal Sustainable Travel and Tourism Officer and Scrutiny Lead Officer |
| Nick Ryder | Democratic Services Officer |
| Debbie Widdows | Democratic Services Officer |

| Agenda Item | Subject | Actioned by |
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| 1 | <p>Chair's Announcements</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out the procedures the meeting would follow.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Members to switch their devices to silent and reminded those present that the proceedings were being live streamed.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the members of the Scrutiny Board. He mentioned they performed a good function and they had done their best to represent their community. He mentioned the good works of the previous Chair, Philip Ham, as he had left a good legacy as well as the previous Vice Chair, Garfield Kennedy.</p> <p>The Chair further thanked the Vice Chair for being a critical friend and making sure members' views were taken on board.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Chair thanked the members of the public and mentioned that if it was not for their voice, the Scrutiny Board may have seemed to be in a vacuum.</p> <p>The Vice Chair thanked the Chair for everything he had done for the Board and mentioned that she</p> | |

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| | <p>enjoyed being Vice Chair and a member of the Board. She further mentioned that the Chair chaired the meetings with great care and patience.</p> <p>She also thanked Tracy Aarons, Julie Jackson and Kelly Knight.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Councillors Eve Berry; Adam Boyden, Michael Dunk, Damon Hooton, Terry Napper and Janine Nash</p> <p>Councillor Lindsay MacDougall substituted for Michael Dunk.</p> <p>Councillor Alison Barkshire substituted for Barbi Lund.</p> | |
| 3 | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Public Participation</p> <p>a) Items on the agenda:</p> <p>None</p> <p>b) Items not on the agenda:</p> <p>Mr Nick Hall had requested to speak following on from the discussions at the 22 November 2022 meeting, about licensing issues associated with Glastonbury Festival, in particular the noise.</p> <p>Mr Hall went on to say that he was speaking in a personal capacity.</p> <p>He made reference to the fact that at the previous Scrutiny meeting on 22 November 2022, Ms Griffiths and himself expressed several concerns about the control of noise under the Premises License for Glastonbury Festival.</p> <p>He further pointed out that the Scrutiny Board did provide detailed answers to their questions and the outstanding freedom of information request.</p> <p>Furthermore, on 6 February 2023 they presented their conclusions directly to Cabinet but they felt</p> | |

that it was appropriate to bring those conclusions back to the Scrutiny Board as, he maintained that:

- A. There were problems with the License itself:
 - a. The noise limits after midnight on Friday/Saturday/Sunday, and on Wednesday and Thursday, were not specific enough.
 - b. There was a loophole. Under condition PN1d, Glastonbury Festival Events Limited simply requested from the Licensing Authority, without the need for a License variation, the use after midnight of a sound system greater than 12kW.
 - c. There were no limits on low frequency ('bass') noise. The so called dBC limits needed to be implemented without delay.

- B. There needed to be a more robust approach from the Council:
 - a. The noise condition PN2, which was there to protect residents from any audible and discernible sound had been unofficially downgraded – it just needed to be an “unreasonable” sound (which by the Licence Authority’s own omission could not be enforced).
 - b. Continuous monitoring of sound needed to be extended and needed to be independent of the License holder.

- C. Reporting needed to be more transparent:
 - a. At the 2022 Festival there were 43 noise complaints from 29 residents and Mendip District Council officers evidenced at least six actual breaches of the License. Mr Hall enquired as to why these were not reported to the Scrutiny Board in the de-brief report?

Mr Hall then declared that it was heartening to know that there was now some recognition that something was wrong.

Mr Hall stated that, in the absence of any other suggestion, it was his intention to write directly to the new Unitary Authority and seek assurances that these issues will be addressed in the months ahead.

The Head of Community Health Services thanked Mr Hall for his comments and confirmed that the Scrutiny Board in November did support the officer recommendations to explore measures or restrictions to help address excessive loudness and low frequency. She confirmed that this work was being undertaken.

In response to Mr Hall's query regarding why the 43 noise complaints from 29 residents were not reported to the Scrutiny Board in the debrief, the Head of Community Health Services responded that the report by its nature was a summary. The emphasis of the summary report drew attention to the fact that *.....the noise levels and loudness did not drop away after the main stages..... and the high contribution of music noise and risk of bass beat adverse effects in 2022, and previously, strengthens the Council's viewpoint that more consideration needs to be invested to control the music noise.*

She stipulated that the officers were not in any doubt, supported by the Scrutiny Board, of the need for GFEL to have undertaken improvements and why it was brought to the attention of Scrutiny in November. She assured Mr Hall that work was progressing as they sought to establish better outcomes.

The Head of Community Health Services assured Mr Hall that a written response would be supplied to his question along with a written response to Cabinet.

Mr Hall ended his speech by saying that he appreciated the Scrutiny Board having engaged with his concerns and he thought that it seemed to be a Board which did well. He wished the members well in their future endeavours.

The Chair thanked the members of the public for coming to the Scrutiny Board meetings in order for to it to take their views into account.

He further thanked them for speaking to the Board about it and assured them that the Council would respond to their points, and he would be copied into the response.

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| | <p>Councillor Alison Barkshire asked if there was a sound expert who gave advice to the council in setting the sound restrictions.</p> <p>In reply to this query it was decided to be included in the written response.</p> | |
| 5 | <p>Previous Scrutiny Board Minutes</p> <p>The Scrutiny Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022.</p> <p>Councillor Lindsay MacDougall had proposed the following amendment on page 5:</p> <p><i>“...She said how a friend of hers had been attacked when she cycled there and was horrified at the state of the lane ...”</i></p> <p>Councillor Alan Townsend referred to page 9 and asked whether there was an action which should have been responded to?</p> <p>This section related to a resolution to the Glastonbury Festival Council De-Brief where it was resolved to request a written response to the recommendations from the Licensee.</p> <p>Councillor Townsend asked whether the request was actioned?</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the action was to request a response from the Festival and this had been made. She further confirmed that they are about to submit it or have just submitted it. She mentioned that this is something which is requested and provided every year.</p> <p>Councillor MacDougall proposed that the minutes of the meeting be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Inchley. This was put to the vote and declared to be carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022 be approved.</p> | Debbie Widdows |
| 6 | <p>Performance Review for SPARK Somerset Voluntary Sector Partnership Funding 2022/23</p> | |

Jenny Harris from SPARK Somerset (a voluntary organisation which provided advice, guidance and training to the voluntary sector and community groups) made a presentation covering service performance for the year to date including the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

From April 2021, the Council entered into a 3-year funding agreement with SPARK Somerset to provide stability to their funding from the Council. This provided certainty over funding levels in the first year of the new Somerset Council who have agreed to honour this Service Level Agreement.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Projects' Assistant presented a report on core funding to SPARK Somerset of £31,500 for the financial year 2022/23 which provided an update on how the funds were used to provide support to the voluntary sector in Mendip, their residents, and communities.

This would provide certainty over funding in the first year of the new Somerset Council who had agreed to honour this Service Level Agreement.

It was pointed out that attendance on a couple of forums in Mendip were not well represented and the question was raised as to where the forums were held.

It was confirmed that they were online forums as well as in person forums the in-person forums were specifically in Chard, Taunton and Bridgwater. These were lottery funded. Which is the reason it looked as if the attendance was lower than in Mendip District Council (MDC).

The Volunteer Co-ordinator forum, which is a County wide forum, was held last year in Glastonbury. What SPARK would try to do for in-personal attendance was to share them and distribute them around the County on a regular basis. The forum will be held in Sedgemoor next time and then will come back around to Mendip.

SPARK tried to rotate this to ensure that the public did not miss out.

It was questioned whether SPARK would continue to take their work forward into the new Unitary Council

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| | <p>Jenny Harris replied that they do have guaranteed funding for the next 12 months and will continue as they do now. Karen will still be an adviser to Mendip and there will be advisors in each area. The following email addresses were shared in order to be contactable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.sparksomerset.org.uk, • www.sparkachange.org.uk, • karen.leave@sparksomerset.org.uk <p>It was confirmed that SPARK have supported Local Community Networks such as the Frome pilot and working group</p> <p>The Chair raised the question of what the funding provided goes towards.</p> <p>Jenny Harris replied that the type of work they did was what the funding went towards, and suggested that SPARK could provide a list of what amount of money had come into the district as a result of the type of work they had done</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>Note the report and presentation.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Performance Review for Citizens Advice Mendip Voluntary Sector Partnership Funding 2021/22</p> <p>The Project and Improvement Officer presented the report on Citizens Advice Mendip (a voluntary organisation comprised of services to provide additional support to some of Mendip’s most vulnerable residents and communities) on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who was unable to attend the meeting. She gave a presentation covering service performance for the year to date.</p> <p>The Project and Improvement Officer went on to say that she would take questions after the presentation and ask the CEO to provide an answer in writing before 1 April 2023.</p> <p>From April 2021, the Council entered into a 3-year funding agreement with CA Mendip which provided stability to their funding from the Council.</p> | |

This provided certainty over funding levels in the first year of the new Somerset Council, who agreed to honour this Service Level Agreement.

The Chair requested to see the presentation at some stage when the CEO was recovered, as the Board would like to know what was happening in terms of the cost of living crisis and whether their service was under more pressure. For example, whether the Board should be recommending to the new Authority their need for more funding. Then, he maintained, further questions could be asked to obtain further information if required.

The Project and Improvement Officer reported that in terms of the future, the level of funding provided certainty over funding levels in the first year of the new Somerset Council, who had agreed to honour this Service Level Agreement.

The CEO provided some information, which was circulated during the meeting, regarding the Somerset Citizens Advice Offices considering a merger.

The issue regarding the roll out of the new telephone kiosks taking away the intimate face to face contact with people was raised.

It was confirmed that this project had just gone live but there was still a drop in service provided where face to face is available.

The question was asked whether going to Citizens Advice was via referral. For example, could someone, such as GP surgery, refer a person or did a person have to go through a kiosk?

It was confirmed that it did not have to be via a drop in at a kiosk. There was a website and a telephone line where they could get support. If the case was more complex then there was the opportunity of face to face if there was a need for it.

It was suggested to have a live chat facility on the website? This would be answered by the CEO in writing.

It was further requested to see detail about the council tax support and whether a report could be given on how this was working and how much was

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| | <p>going to the service itself. This would also be answered by the CEO in writing.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that various Town Councils, for example, donate sizable amounts of money to Citizens Advice and it was questioned as to how much Local Government was giving. He made the point as to how that would fit in if there was a merger as those Authorities would need to know this information. A complete breakdown of the support was requested.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>To note the contents of the report and presentation.</p> | |
| <p>8</p> | <p>Outreach-Inreach Service Update</p> <p>The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer presented a report which provided an update on Mendip's newly established Outreach-Inreach service aligned with the National Rough Sleeper Strategy, which aimed at ending rough sleeping for good.</p> <p>She explained that the Outreach-Inreach service's mission was to find the rough sleepers, engage them and build trust in a gentle way, and slowly in order to get them off the street. She pointed out that they were keen to get them into accommodation as quickly as possible.</p> <p>She further stated that the sites were visited frequently and within 48 hours of a report being received.</p> <p>The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer expressed that thereafter there was ongoing support for the client to assure them that their human dignity was respected and that this was successful so far.</p> <p>She further explained that the homeless health team had increased its provision base and they now had a prescribing nurse and a part time GP, which helped them in terms of systems thinking around what was available and how it all worked together. If a person had gone through the trauma of homelessness, there were usually a number of factors which brought them to that position in the first place. They were likely to have had lots of underlying needs which also needed attention.</p> | |

One could not resolve one thing without ensuring you linked to the right support for those underlying needs whatever they were. This was often mental health, drug and alcohol related, or relationship breakdown such as divorce and job loss etc. They found themselves in a situation of not knowing what to do.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer reported that the total referrals received from April 2022 to January 2023 was 301 and the total rough sleeper verification was 86. She pointed out that some of the rough sleepers tried to stay under the radar and hid in places such as on the levels or in the woods and a fair amount of detective work was carried out to try and find people.

Questions were raised about how to contact Outreach-Inreach Services if someone was suspected of rough sleeping.

The Head of Service – Outreach-Inreach Services explained that there was a national service that linked directly through to the outreach service mailbox in Mendip (and every other outreach service in the country according to location) and which the service reported their follow up back to. The Department of Levelling up, Hosing Communities received monitoring reports on their [Streetlink](#) returns. [Streetlink](#) was provided by Homeless Link who also provided the quality control / audit around all street counts nationally.

The alternative to this was to email the outreach mailbox in Mendip, which was monitored daily, on outreach@mendip.gov.uk. Or to access this service, during office hours (8.30pm-5pm) call 01749 341666 and outside of office hours to call 0300 123 23 27.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer stated that they had published articles on the website and they highlighted how to get hold of the team. There were also signs in car parks of well known food providers.

It was pointed out that this could also be pushed through on Facebook and Messenger and the public in general were encourage to keep pushing the message to contact the team via Streetlink.

It was confirmed that there had been posts on Facebook giving out the contact details for Mendip.

It was pointed out that those who were helping were encouraging people to come to Mendip as they were a welcoming community. It was questioned whether there was any way that the housing team could encourage other communities to look after their own or to source alternative communities as Mendip were not the only community who might be welcoming.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer affirmed that this was a difficult balance between people who were highly at risk and prevention. Communities who were willing to help, and where there was help, attracted people. The Housing team were geared to moving rough sleepers forward from the position that they were in. She pointed out that they do encourage a more structured way of supporting people and particularly to involve the right service. She further requested that the public in general were the eyes and ears and to inform the Housing team straight away as the longer a person is left to fend for themselves on the streets the more they become entrenched in it.

It was questioned as to why the Housing team only provided a 5 day service.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer stated that the reason for this was the funding. She pointed out that the funding did not cover more than 5 days a week. She further pointed out that the Housing team would never send an individual member of staff out on their own. She stated that the government wanted to see more inreach and less outreach and the aim was to get people off the street quicker and prevent people being on the street and therefore staff would be able to spend more time in the office.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer further stated that they were a 365 day a week service and the out of office (OOO) duty team did cover it and if there was an emergency it was dealt with over the weekend. The Connect Centre (Elim) dealt with OOO emergencies and this has worked in practice. There is an excellent working relationship between the Connect Centre and the Housing team.

There was also the Dairy House project which was set up as a pilot project many years ago. They offered a much wider therapeutic environment, offering people something to do whilst they were there. There was added value at the farm as it could afford people time to take stock and see where next their path would lead. Most of the people they helped were living in the woods and this was why the team decided on a farm. The Dairy House was a Dutch owned farm. They had a vegetable project. Donations were through received through church donations but these had plummeted.

It was pointed out that there was a huge demand for accommodation. There was funding that the Housing team already had been given by Housing First which was provided by Connect Community Church. It was called Connected Housing. It had already expanded by 4 units this year and the aim was to keep on expanding it year on year. The team speculated that it would pick up the Housing First expansion elsewhere in Somerset. Housing First was for the people who were most entrenched with the most complex needs and there was no other solution whatsoever. It provided intensive support to an individual in a property that was generally provided by a registered provider, such as Social Housing. It puts the person first. If they were failing, the team keep trying. The service would always be there until the person no longer needed them. This has been highly successful.

The question was raised as to the service the Housing team was providing to the criminal justice scheme for people who are leaving prison and whether these people had an historic link to Mendip.

The Community Health Co-ordinator and Policy Officer confirm that it was for Mendip and for people who had a Mendip connection. However, it was pointed out that sometimes it was better if the funders were not in the location that they came from for reasons such as safety. This is not common but has been the case in the past.

Allison Barkshire proposed a recommendation that the Inreach-Outreach Service be made a permanent service rather than fixed term service and Lindsay MacDougall seconded it.

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| | <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p> <p>That the Somerset Council consider making the Inreach–Outreach Service a permanent service rather than a fixed term service.</p> | |
| <p>9</p> | <p>Updates from the Scrutiny Working Groups</p> <p>a) Climate and Ecological Working Group: Councillor Janine Nash (Lead)</p> <p>The Chair read out a statement from Councillor Janine Nash where she thanked everyone for allowing her to be part of this group.</p> <p>She also thanked the Councillors for their support, in particular Councillor Tom Ronan as well as the Officers, in particular, Hayley Warrens, Jacob Hall and Barbara Lakin.</p> <p>Councillor Nash further thanked Claire Malcolmson, Tracy Aarons, Andre Sestini and Jo Milling.</p> <p>The Climate and Ecological Working Group Officer gave an update on tree strategies and the Somerset energy plan. He mentioned that he would be presenting a final report to the group in March.</p> <p>A concern was raised as to whether a food strategy could be added to the new Council’s list of things to do to complement the National Food Strategy. It was suggested that having a food strategy at County level could help with that and this should absolutely be brought before the Scrutiny Board in the new County.</p> <p>b) Policies and Strategies Working Group:</p> <p>No update from the Policies and Strategies Working Group as the seat is vacant.</p> <p>c) Access Working Group: Councillor Phillip Ham (Lead) supported by Kelly Knight</p> | |

The Principal Sustainable Travel & Tourism Officer gave her update on this Group.

She explained that there was a lot of detail regarding the work of this entire group in the report which was given at the December Scrutiny meeting. Therefore this report was merely a summary.

There were certain key actions with updates, namely:

1) Funding for Active & In touch;

The legal agreement had been completed and the funding issued; the services are secured for 3 years.

2) Funding for Wells Trishaw Cycling With Age project;

The legal agreement has been completed and funding issued; the trishaw has been purchased and the scheme will start early in the new financial year

3) The Multi-User Path Project

5km of the Strawberry Line has been built. This means that access for over 60% of the route has been achieved. 3 crossings have been designed. Free bikeability courses have been made available across the district. 30 bespoke bike racks have been installed and improved access to the active travel infrastructure across Mendip is now in place

d) Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage Working Group: Councillor Chris Inchley (Lead)

The Chair thanked Jon Clarke, Francis Hayden and Adam Boyden. He acknowledged that together they had saved energy and money for Mendip.

The Deputy Chief Executive wanted to make special mention of Nigel Woolcombe Adams as he was generous, intelligent and pragmatic. He was very involved in the community outreach and agreed to the pilot of The Dairy House. He left this legacy.

There were 3 key areas which warranted updating, namely, place shaping, making places accessible and Mendip being a good and healthy place to live.

Stoke St Michael and good design coats work would now go forward into work and the new Council would carry this on.

Communities were enabled to support themselves. Holding street parties etc was now available on the website.

A lot of work had gone into the Local Community Networks. This would leave a legacy that would continue.

Another benefit from the District Council which would continue to support the community was Citizens Advice. The Council supported the people who give advice and the information that went out was streamlined.

There were a significant amount of volunteers giving specific people support.

These initiatives would all be lined together and brought as a package of sub workstreams to the Local Government Review (LGR) to feed into.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for her contribution to the working group.

e) Contracts Working Group: Councillor Barbi Lund (Lead)

The Principal Sustainable Travel & Tourism Officer presented the update on the Contracts Working Group.

She reported that the group had proactively reviewed a cohort of agreements, focusing on this with the largest remit and/or values. The Group had looked specifically at Waste services as well as the ground care and street scene functions within the IdVerde contract. In doing so, the working group had been able to satisfy that these contracts were working as the Council would expect and offered considerations for future contract reviews. During the latter phases of the Group, the focus returned to the Councils contracts register, where a far greater understanding of procurement was sought, as well

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| | <p>as the roles of the procurement panel within any purchase of service. A wider scrutiny of some of the smaller contracts were also looked at in order to ascertain whether these may have been able to be delivered differently.</p> <p>The Group was considered to have offered value to the processes of the Council and provided scrutiny to process and procures, which could be taken forward into the new Unitary Council for consideration.</p> <p>f) Glastonbury Town Deal:</p> <p>The Head of Service Planning and Growth presented her report on the Glastonbury Town Deal.</p> <p>She highlighted that the eleven projects within the Glastonbury Town Deal are making good progress following Government approval. The Scrutiny Task & Finish Group were instrumental in reviewing the business cases for all the projects. Planning permission has now been granted for the Sports Hub and Glastonbury Abbey projects.</p> <p>She further thanked the group.</p> <p>The Chair thanked The Head of Service Planning and Growth for all her hard work and staying with the project till the bitter end.</p> <p>Councillor Lindsay MacDougall, as a resident of Glastonbury, wanted to say a particular thanks to the Head of Service Planning and Growth because the Town Deal was all coming to fruition.</p> | |
| <p>10</p> | <p>Urgent Business</p> <p>None</p> | |

The meeting closed at approximately 20:45 pm.