

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 September 2015 at 3.30 pm

Present:

Councillor P H MurphyChairman
Councillor R LillisVice Chairman

Councillor D Archer
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor J Parbrook

Councillor R Clifford
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor B Maitland-Walker

Members in Attendance:

Councillor M Dewdney (from 4pm)

Councillor A Trollope-Bellew

Officers in Attendance:

Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer – (B Lang)
Democratic Services Coordinator (E McGuinness)
Director – Director of Growth and Development (B Cleere)
Assistant Director – Operational Delivery (C Hall)
Asset Data Manager (M Hill)
Administrative Support (A Randell)

SC102 Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Councillor R Woods.

Councillor B Heywood attended as a substitute.

SC103 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 6 August 2015 –
circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 6 August 2015
be confirmed as a correct record.

SC104 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in
their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary	Action Taken
Cllr P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D Archer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted

SC105 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points

(Copy of Notes of Cabinet Decisions/Action Points, circulated with the agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points from the meeting held on 2 September 2015, be noted.

SC106 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 2 September 2015, circulated with the agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Plan published on 2 September 2015, be noted.

SC107 The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) and Flood Action Plan.

Considered report, WSC 131/15 previously circulated.

The purpose of the report was to update the Council on the development of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) since the report to Corporate PAG and Cabinet in November / December 2014. The report set out progress since that date along with the ongoing discussions for future funding and governance. It sought approval for a recommendation to Full Council, relating to WSC's preferred long term funding option for the SRA.

During the course of discussion the following points were made:-

- It was questioned if the action plan was restricting itself to river flooding or if coastal flooding could be included in the Flood Action Plan.
- It was stated that there were other areas where the Rivers Authority boundaries included the areas around the coast. The Environment Agency still remained responsible for coastal protection.
- It was stated that coastal protection had been included in the Lincolnshire Model and requested this to be revisited.
- Concerns were expressed in instances where properties, due to flood risk, were proving difficult to insure.
- The fairness of an increase in Council Tax was questioned.
- As West Somerset did not meet the criteria of more urban areas it was questioned if they were at a disadvantage in terms of priority from the Environment Agency formula.
- If a land levy option was introduced then it was deemed WSC would pay a disproportionate sum.
- The option of precepting businesses had been raised previously but it was thought that this would not be pursued.

- Discussion took place around flood protection in redesigning Porlock Weir.
- The favoured option was believed to be the creation of a precepting body, represented by all local authorities within Somerset.

Resolved that:-

- (i) The Scrutiny Committee noted the progress to date in the development of the Somerset Rivers Authority and West Somerset Council's position on the way forward, as set out in the report.
- (ii) Progress in the delivery of the Levels and Moors 20 Year Flood Action Plan (2014) be noted.
- (iii) The formal approval of Full Council is sought on 16 September 2015, for the creation of a separate precepting body as WSC's preferred funding option, noting that the Council's position will be confirmed to the Somerset Rivers Authority Board meeting in late September.

SC108 Introduction of Charges for the Street Naming and Numbering Administration Function

Considered report, WSC 132/15 previously circulated.

The purpose of the report was to support the introduction of a scale of charges for the administration of the Street Naming and Numbering service in accordance with the details set out in this report. It was intended that the introduction of charging would be a Portfolio Holder decision.

During the course of discussion the following points were made:-

- Reported that projected income was calculated by estimating from figures received in the last three years.
- House names registered before 1st October would still be processed with no charge. This was being introduced to meet the administrative costs of the service due to no charges being calculated at present.
- Land Registry notification was done through a separate process. This updated the address databases for the banks, utilities and emergency services.
- Confirmed that addresses would still need to re-register through the Post Office and Royal Mail.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The introduction of a scale of charges for the administration of the Street Naming and Numbering service in accordance with the details set out in this report be supported; and
- (2) The appropriate Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the introduction of the proposed scale of charges.

SC109 Harbour Operations

Considered report, WSC 133/15 previously circulated.

The purpose of the report was to raise Member's awareness of the statutory Harbour responsibilities, to request that a Harbour Board be created and request appropriate resources be provided to deliver the statutory requirements.

During the course of discussion the following points were made:-

- Discussion took place relating to tourist attractions that required harbour operations services and instances where vessels would be required to dock at Minehead.
- The regulatory work around harbour operations was something that had to be done.
- Councillors requested that the question of charging be brought back to Members for consideration.
- Details of the job role were discussed. It was not anticipated for any additional funding to be required. Furthermore it was requested that any harbour improvements relating to the new role be cost effective.
- A request was made for moorings to be resourced adequately to ensure that income was collected.
- The Scrutiny Committee was in agreement for this to be taken to Council as an urgent item and commended the work that had been undertaken.

Resolved that the Committee supports that this matter be considered at the September meeting of the Council as an emergency item in the interests of public safety and endorses the following recommendations:-

- (a) The creation of the Harbour Board with Membership as set out in section 6.16 of the report to include the following:-
 - The Harbour Board would welcome as non-voting representatives, one elected Member from Watchet Town Council and one elected Member from Minehead Town Council.
 - The Board would welcome as non-voting Members representatives from the Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee.
- (b) The approval of the roles set out within the report to be identified as accountable in respect of the conditions set out in the Port Marine Safety Code.
- (c) The following increases in funding be approved (revenue funding to be pro-rata for 2015/16):-
 - i) £26,000 pa increase in the Harbours budget to support the Harbour Master role; and
 - ii) A £5,000 one off sum to update West Somerset Council Port Marine Safety Code.

SC110 **Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

(Copy of the Forward Plan for 2014/15, circulated with the agenda.)

Requested that the future staffing levels in Licensing would be considered at the October Committee.

It was questioned if an Asset Management Task and Finish report could be revisited to establish how the recommendations have progressed. Members were informed by the Portfolio Holder for Environment that due to a significant workload within this service, there was little capacity to undertake this work at present.

The Democratic Services Co-ordinator undertook to progress this matter outside of the meeting and report back to Members.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Forward Plan published on 2 September 2015, be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.05 pm.