

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2012 at 4.30 pm

Present:

Councillor K J Ross.....Chairman
Councillor R P LillisVice Chairman

Councillor A M Chick
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor P N Grierson

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor J Freeman
Councillor D D Ross

Members in Attendance:

Councillor B Heywood
Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor T Taylor
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor E May
Councillor M A Smith
Councillor K H Turner

Officers in Attendance:

Corporate Director (B Lang)
Group Manager – Resources and Central Support (G Carne)
Group Manager – Housing and Community (I Timms)
Group Manager – Environment and Services (S Watts)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

SC90 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillors M O A Dewdney.

SC91 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 February 2012

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 February 2012 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

SC92 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	Action Taken
Cllr P Grierson	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All Items	Brompton Ralph	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D J Westcott	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke

In addition, Councillor D Ross declared a personal interest in Item 9, Update on the Proposed Withdrawal of the Youth Service by SCC – his wife was a director of Minehead Youth Theatre.

SC93 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

SC94 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points

The Leader reported on the decisions made at the Cabinet meeting held on 7 March 2012.

RESOLVED that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points for 7 March 2012, be noted and that the document be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee.

SC95 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of Cabinet Forward Plan No. 10, April 2012 – April 2013, circulated with the Agenda).

Members noted that at the meeting of Cabinet held on 7 March 2012, reports relating to CPE and Continuing Maintenance of SCC Owned Land would be presented to Special Council in April 2012.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Plan No. 10, April 2012 – April 2013, be noted.

SC96 Community Safety Scrutiny Review

(Copy of Report No. WSC 48/12, circulated after the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to present to the Scrutiny Committee the final report of the Community Safety Task & Finish Group.

Councillor R Lillis proposed that the report of the Community Safety Scrutiny Review be withdrawn from this meeting in order that further work be undertaken to complete the task, this was duly seconded by Councillor D Ross.

Councillor J Freeman was in agreement of the proposal and advised that the scope of the review was wide ranging. The subject was far bigger than perhaps was at first anticipated and would take an enormous amount of effort to conduct a complete review.

The Chairman noted the Leader's suggestions that the flow chart in the report provide more clarity.

A South West Audit report issued recently had commented positively on the Council's role within the community safety partnership.

RESOLVED that consideration of this matter be deferred to a later meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to enable the Community Safety Scrutiny Review Task & Finish Group to undertake further work before completing its report.

SC97 Fraud Task & Finish Group – Terms of Reference and Membership

The Chairman reported that concerns had been raised regarding an apparent under performance of the fraud service within the Council and consideration was given to draft terms of reference for undertaking a review of this service.

During the course of the discussion the following points were raised:

- To include under Terms of Reference, 'prevention of benefit fraud'.
- If any other areas were identified where potential fraud could occur perhaps they too could be reviewed through a different task and finish group.

The Section 151 Officer suggested that under 'outcomes' perhaps work could be undertaken to compare costs.

RESOLVED (1) that, subject to including prevention of benefit fraud to the terms of reference and to compare costs under outcomes, the terms of reference as circulated with the agenda, be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the membership of the Fraud Task & Finish Group to comprise Councillors Grierson, Dowding, Chilcott, D Ross, Lillis and K Ross.

SC98 Update on the Proposed Withdrawal of the Youth Service by SCC

Councillor R Lillis reported that he had attended a meeting hosted by Sedgemoor District Council, which had highlighted Somerset County Council's (SCC) proposal to withdraw the majority of the Youth Service funding by April 2014. A key decision to the changes of the Youth & Community Service would be made by SCC on 16 April 2012. Prior to that meeting the following options would be consulted upon:

- A. SCC permanently retains some youth centers and staff to provide services in the most disadvantaged communities,
- B. By April 2013 SCC stops direct delivery and focuses on funding voluntary and community organisations to provide youth work
- C. By June 2012 SCC stops direct delivery and focuses on funding voluntary and community organisations to provide youth work
- D. By April 2014 SCC stops direct delivery and focuses on funding voluntary and community organisations to provide youth work, and continues to deliver in the most disadvantaged communities until then.

Councillor Lillis believed that option D was the preferred option, which would allow three years for voluntary groups to get established before funding was

withdrawn. He reported that he had attended a meeting with Tony Clarke, Youth & Communities Services Manager, SCC, the previous week to discuss ways that could mitigate the potential problems from a West Somerset perspective arising from the probable withdrawal of funding. A further meeting would be held, in the next couple of weeks, to work through a programme on how to best drive forward a changed service.

The Chairman expressed concern that, as Trustee of a charity that manages a youth club, he believed that the many problems that would result from the cuts to funding could be too great to overcome over an extended period of time.

During the course of the discussion the following points were raised:

- SCC had allocated £250k this year and the following year towards voluntary groups.
- Concern of the impact in withdrawing vital support from voluntary groups.
- Many people already ran youth groups and should be continued to be supported and encouraged.
- Generally the youth clubs delivered services that parents could not.
- Using volunteers could lead to a loss of continuity: there could be different volunteers each week with different levels of training etc.
- Important that payment, CRB checks etc., were carried out by someone who had been trained.
- If money had to be raised locally, how long would local enthusiasm last?

Councillor R Lillis requested that should members have any suggestions or issues that they would like him to raise at the next meeting with SCC regarding the withdrawal of direct services for the youth service, to please let him know.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further update be reported to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 16 April 2012.

SC99 **Scrutiny Committee Workplan Review**

(Scrutiny Committee Workplan, circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED (1) that the Workplan be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that a further update on the proposed withdrawal of the youth service provision by Somerset County Council be presented to the Scrutiny Committee to be held on 16 April 2012.

RESOLVED (3) that a final report of Community Safety Task & Finish Group be scheduled to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee to be held on 9 May 2012.

RESOLVED (4) that Steve Read of the Somerset Waste Partnership and a representative from May Gurney be invited to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to report on the waste partnership.

The meeting closed at 6.53 pm.