

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2011 at 4.30 pm

Present:

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

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor P N Grierson

Councillor J Freeman
Councillor D D Ross

Members in Attendance:

Councillor A F Knight
Councillor K H Turner

Councillor E May
Councillor D J Westcott

Officers in Attendance:

Corporate Director (B Lang)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
HR Consultant (M Griffin)
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

SC31 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A M Chick, M J Chilcott and G S Dowding.

SC32 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 August 2011

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 22 August 2011 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 22 August 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

SC33 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 |

SC34 Public Participation

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

SC35 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points

RESOLVED that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points for 7 September be circulated to members of the Committee.

SC36 Cabinet Forward Plan and Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan

(Copy of Cabinet Forward Plan No. 4, - October 2011 to October 2012 and the Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan, September 2011 – December 2011 - circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Plan No. 4, - October 2011 to October 2012 and the Somerset Waste Board Forward Plan, September 2011 – December 2011, be noted.

SC37 Equal Opportunities Policy - Employment

(Copy of Report No. WSC 111/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to allow the Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to comment on the revised Equal Opportunities Policy.

The HR Consultant presented the report and advised that the policy related to employment and service delivery. The policy was rewritten in consultation with the Council's officer responsible for equalities. The Unison West Somerset branch and regional office had been consulted and no comments were received.

The HR Consultant noted the minor changes to the 'context' section of the document.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the draft Equal Opportunities Policy with an amendment at part 4, bullet point 4, to the effect that, where internal and external stakeholders, community members including where members of West Somerset Council represent the authority on an outside body, the outside body, partnership or community organisation uphold the same values as expressed in this policy.

SC38 Local Government Pension Scheme – Employers Discretions

(Copy of Report No. WSC 99/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to allow the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the attached Written Statement on LGPS Employers Discretions and key pension Policy before it was considered by Cabinet.

The HR Consultant presented the report and advised that Somerset County Council were the administering authority and West Somerset

Council were an employing authority. As a result of the review of employers discretions some working practices will need to be put in place which will be done as and when required.

In response to a question he advised that there were 96 employer discretions most of which were very minor. Most of the discretions had not been used by this authority or in other authorities.

RESOLVED that the Written Statement on LGPS Employers Discretions and Key Pension Policy be noted.

SC39 Somerset Waste Board – Joint Scrutiny Arrangements

(Copy of Report No. WSC 114/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek nominations from the Scrutiny Committee to a Joint Scrutiny Waste Panel for Somerset.

The Scrutiny and Performance Officer advised that the aim of forming a Joint Scrutiny Waste Panel would be to improve the current scrutiny arrangements of the Somerset Waste Board. Under such arrangements it was explained that recommendations of the Panel would have to be ratified by each individual authority's Scrutiny Committee.

During the course of the debate the following was discussed:

- Members welcomed the idea of improved scrutiny arrangements of the board and partnership.
- Concern was expressed that the Panel would have no authority and the proposed two meetings per year would not be sufficient.
- A letter could be written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting the enactment of regulations to enable the establishment of a fully empowered Joint Scrutiny Committee and the Local Government Association be copied in.
- If all Scrutiny Committee members of all the Somerset authorities involved were invited to attend the meetings instead of representatives, it would dispense with the need to report back to individual Scrutiny Committees for ratification.

The Corporate Director confirmed that the proposed establishment of joint Scrutiny Panel meetings would not take away the right of 'call-in' from the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED (1) that a letter be written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting the enactment of formation of a fully empowered Joint Scrutiny Committee for Somerset.

RESOLVED (2) that it be proposed that all the Scrutiny Committees in Somerset meet in December 2011 and July 2012 so that decisions can be made.

RESOLVED (3) that should resolution (2), above, not be agreed or that a meeting of the proposed Joint Panel be convened before the matter has been considered, Councillors J Freeman and R P Lillis be appointed from

the Scrutiny Committee to represent West Somerset, with Councillor M O A Dewdney as the nominated substitute.

SC40 **Scrutiny Committee Workplan Review**

(Scrutiny Committee Workplan, circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED (1) that reports on progress so far by the Street Cleansing Task & Finish Group and an update on actions taken regarding the Somerset Waste Board joint scrutiny arrangements be presented to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED (2) that an update regarding the use of consultants be provided to Councillor M O A Dewdney and the Chairman who will agree whether to propose that this matter be included in the Committee Workplan.

The meeting closed at 17.22 pm.