

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 April 2012 at 5.30 pm

Present:

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

Councillor A M Chick
Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor J Freeman

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor G S Dowding

Members in Attendance:

Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor T Taylor

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 – Environment and Services (S Watts)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Legal Advisor (R Pinney)
Administrative Support (E Day)

SC100 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P N Grierson and D D Ross.

SC101 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2012

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2012 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

SC102 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

SC103 Public Participation

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

SC104 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points

(Copy of Notes of Cabinet Decisions/Action Point, circulated at the meeting)

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the procedure for call-ins.

RESOLVED that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points for 4 April 2012, be noted.

SC105 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of Cabinet Forward Plan No. 10, May 2012 – May 2013, circulated at the meeting).

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

SC106 Scrutiny Review of Street Cleansing Service

(Copy of Report No. WSC 64/12, circulated with the Agenda).

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

Councillor Lillis introduced the item and read out the Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group, formally thanked the Scrutiny and Performance Officer, the Group Manager – Environment and Services, and the Veolia Manager and her team for their help and support in the process.

Councillor Dowding advised the Committee that the Council needed to consider and evaluate options for future delivery of street cleaning and prepare for the implementation of the chosen service delivery method prior to September 2012.

He advised that the Task and Finish Group had concentrated mainly on street sweeping, as this was a high priority. Sand clearing was also a high priority in Minehead.

He confirmed that Veolia currently operates a variety of sweeping vehicles and the ownership of these was a mix of West Somerset Council and Veolia owned.

A powerpoint was shown to the Committee of the variety of vehicles currently used as well as the new sweeper that the Task and Finish Group had considered and Councillor Dowding made the following points:

- Operatives experience a variety of problems with the sweeping operations, such as, sweeping around parked cars, narrow rural roads and weed growth in gutters.

- The clearing of leaves in the autumn was a lot of work and made a huge financial impact because of the necessity to return to the depot to offload the arisings
- All vehicles have a tracking device fitted allowing the Veolia Team Manager to know where each vehicle had been and when.
- Weed spraying – there was option for this on the new sweeper and this would reduce the risk of drain blocking. This was a key element to consider since Somerset County Council had stopped this service .

Councillor Chilcott gave a brief outline to the Committee on how the Zoning and Grading worked and presented a slide illustrating pictorial examples the cleanliness grades. She advised that a Grade B standard was the typical level of cleanliness in West Somerset and that the Task & Finish Group felt this was an adequate standard to be aiming for.

Councillor Dewdney advised the Committee of the five main options for future delivery of the service:

1. Operate the services 'in-house'
2. A new contract
3. Share service delivery with another local authority
4. Return the service to the waste collection contract
5. Extension of the current contact

Councillor Dewdney advised that the overall conclusion from the Task and Finish Group was that Veolia Ltd was accountable and delivered good value for money. In general terms, from the information available, there were no worrying trends in terms of customer satisfaction. They were aware of their obligations and were always willing to work with the Council and the community.

Councillor Chilcott presented a slide to the Committee showing a graph illustrating the value for money of the arrangements with Veolia in terms of costs over recent years.

Steve Watts, Group Manager – Environment and Services advised the Committee that the depot was on a 15-year lease and this was working well. He advised that the Council and Veolia had developed a good working partnership and this had been evident with the flexibility shown by Veolia during the recent changes to the recycling scheme and the extra work it had generated.

The Committee considered the following points:

- What were the current amount of sweeper arisings – similar figures year on year
- How viable is the option for giving three months notice? - If this were a two-way agreement it would be difficult for West Somerset Council.
- Was it viable to bring the service 'in-house'? – This would be difficult because of the financial uncertainty and workload.

The Chairman requested through the Leader that Cabinet give consideration to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group continuing. The Leader advised that the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group had been taken very seriously and it should continue.

Councillor Turner raised concerns regarding the proposed 6-8 week sweeping schedule in rural areas as he felt the public could see this as a waste of money. Steve Watts advised that he would look at reducing the the regularity of sweeping in the most rural areas in the contract as much as possible.

RESOLVED (1) that the Council works with partners and stakeholders to facilitate a sustainable solution for the future provision of a weed spraying service.

RESOLVED (2) that the Group Manager – Environment and Services continues to monitor data and provide periodic updates to the Environment PAG and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED (3) that the street cleansing service standards, zoning information and cleansing frequencies be published on the Council website.

RESOLVED (4) that, where practicable, the requests from Parish and Town Councils are aligned to the current schedules.

RESOLVED (5) that customer satisfaction with the service is assessed from analysis of feedback from the 2012 customer satisfaction form.

RESOLVED (6) that the five options listed be taken into account when considering the arrangements to be put in place for the future delivery of the service.

RESOLVED (7) that the option of extending the existing arrangements with Veolia for a further three years with effect from 1 October 2012 under a Service Level Agreement be progressed with the Task and Finish Group continuing its work with a view to developing a detailed proposal in this respect for consideration by Cabinet in August 2012.

RESOLVED (8) that the Task and Finish Group also continue to support Officers to assist with the development of a long-term strategy for the provision of the service.

SC107 SCC Youth Service Provision Update

Councillor R Lillis reported to the Committee on the proposed reduced direct provision of Youth Services by Somerset County Council. He advised that the cuts proposed were radical and he would be working with Somerset County Council to look at ways to facilitate maximum mitigation of the potential impact which these changes could have on the youth of West Somerset..

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

SC108 Scrutiny Committee Workplan Review

(Scrutiny Committee Workplan, circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED (1) that the Workplan be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that a verbal update of the Fraud Task and Finish Group be scheduled to be presented to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED (3) that Steve Read of the Somerset Waste Partnership together with representatives from May Gurney and Viridor be invited to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to report on the Waste Partnership.

RESOLVED (4) that a verbal update on the Localised Council Tax Scheme be presented to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED (5) that the Group Manager – Resources and Central Support to present his findings on the new financial system to the Scrutiny Committee to be held on 18 June 2012.

The meeting closed at 6.31 pm.