

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 September 2013 at 3.30 pm

Present:

Councillor K J RossChairman
Councillor R P Lillis..... Vice-Chairman

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor B Heywood

Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor P N Grierson
Councillor P H Murphy

Members in Attendance:

Councillor K V Kravis

Councillor E May

Officers in Attendance:

Deputy Monitoring Officer (I Timms)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Corporate Manager – Environment, Customer & Community (S Watts)
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

Also in Attendance:

Steve Read, Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

SC46 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Freeman.

SC47 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19 August 2013 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that, subject to an amendment to SC42 Corporate Performance Report, 4th paragraph, last line to read "...funding of posts, and that the Council is currently employing staff whose external funding is yet to be received.", the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19 August 2013, be confirmed as a correct record.

SC48 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 N Grierson | All Items | Minehead | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr P H Murphy | All Items | Watchet | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr K J Ross | All Items | Dulverton | Personal | Spoke and voted |

SC49 Public Participation

No members of the public requested to speak on any items on the agenda.

SC50 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 for 4 September 2013, be noted.

SC51 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward published 5 September 2013, circulated with the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward published 5 September 2013, be noted.

SC52 Waste Partnership Update

The Corporate Manager – Environment, Customer & Community advised that the Managing Director, South West Partnership, was in attendance to provide an update on the Business Plan to be presented to the Board at their meeting scheduled for 27 September 2013.

The Managing Director for Somerset Waste Partnership, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide an update. He reported the mid-year position and confirmed that a monthly bulletin advising of updates was available and sent to members accordingly.

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

- The development of the anaerobic digester at Walpole, between Bridgwater and Highbridge had been delayed because of difficult conditions and had now begun operating on 20 August 2013. When fully operational the plant would produce gas and 'digestate' which can be used by farmers. The official opening was likely to be held in the spring of next year. The Managing Director advised that he could arrange a visit to the plant for later in the year should anyone be interested. He confirmed that once the gas yields exceeded a certain point, as agreed with Viridor, the partners would share the remaining income.
- The Managing Director confirmed that the amount of food waste collected was down due to many reasons. The collection would be publicised and its potential to generate income for local councils. The best way to tackle

waste was not to produce waste in the first place and the next best thing was to recover it and get value from it. The SWP website has schemes that encourage the public to participate and get more involved with recycling different types of material.

- It was difficult to arrange recycling for multiple occupancy housing as it would only take a small amount of waste in the wrong bin to cause problems. However SWP were looking at tailoring facilities to different housing and one of them was food waste bins to flats in Bridgwater with some success.
- A review of the contract that the Somerset County Council has with Viridor regarding the disposal of black bag waste has highlighted the need to move from landfill as a final way of disposing waste.
- Kier MG had taken over the collections formerly carried out by May Gurney and the SWP were still regarded as a flag ship on their portfolio. Also two days a week of his time have been sold to the Gloucestershire partnership since April 2013 which has helped to off-set the cost to clients such as this authority.
- The Board of the SWP submitted a bid to DCLG for Transformation Funding, an update of the outcome will be included in one of the monthly update bulletins.
- The recycling rates were under pressure and had plateaued nationally. The Board were looking at solutions that might include rolling out a trial that would entail a different configuration of vehicles in order to collect more materials.
- The Managing Director confirmed that a huge amount of waste consisted of other plastics. Currently, there was no end market and it wasn't economic to collect and recycle the many different plastics, although that picture was likely to change some time in the future
- The Managing Director noted members concerns that at one time it was possible to dispose of street sweepings on farmers' land with their consent and should that action be an option today it could help to provide savings. The Managing Director confirmed that this was an issue for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and that he would make relevant enquiries.
- The Managing Director provided an update on the current discussions regarding the Board's budget for the following year and possible increase in fees to clients. Members considered how it might be possible to save more than the 'uplift' and perhaps keep the costs the same as the current year. In response the Managing Director advised that West Somerset gets good value in the partnership, but as a result of reduced recycling levels the Council will receive less than it had budgeted for. Members agreed that it would be worth setting up a task and finish group to look at how to promote recycling. The Committee responded positively to the Managing Director's enquiry as to whether West Somerset could be included in a trial to improve collection rates. It was important to keep the message simple and perhaps it could be linked to the Council's financial position. The Managing Director confirmed that he would report back to a later meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to consult on relevant ideas.

The members thanked the Managing Director for the useful and informative report and for the opportunity to continue to share ideas.

RESOLVED (1) that a Task and Finish Group be set up at an appropriate time in the future to look at how to promote and increase recycling rates in West Somerset;

RESOLVED (2) that the Somerset Waste Partnership report be noted.

SC53 **Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

(Scrutiny Committee Work Plan, circulated with the Agenda).

The Scrutiny and Performance Officer advised of the suggestion to look at any revisions to the Supplementary Planning Document and associated issues regarding developer contributions, bin provision, the impact on other community priorities and affordable housing.

The Committee noted the updates with regard to the work 'to be scheduled':

- The government would be changing and renewing GP contracts therefore the review of the GP out of hours provision was on hold until it was clear what those changes would be.
- To amend the date of the East Quay Project to 'review post October/November'.
- Information was being gathered regarding the update on Rhynes and it was envisaged that the said information might be ready for the beginning of 2014.

RESOLVED (1) that the current Section 106 Task and Finish Group be requested to conduct an additional piece of work to consider revisions to the Supplementary Planning Document;

RESOLVED (2) that the Managing Director for Somerset Waste Partnership be scheduled to report to the Committee regarding the improvement of recycling rates in West Somerset, at a suitable date in the future.

RESOLVED (3) that the Task and Finish Group to look at how to promote and increase recycling rates in West Somerset, be comprised of the whole of the Scrutiny Committee;

RESOLVED (4) that the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm.