

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 October 2014 at 3.30 pm

Present:

Councillor P H MurphyChairman
Councillor R LillisVice Chairman

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor K J Ross
Councillor B Heywood

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor J Freeman
Councillor D J Sanders

Members in Attendance:

Councillor H Davies
Councillor E May
Councillor D Ross

Councillor M Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (B Lang)
Assistant Director – Property and Development (K Ibeze)
Housing and Communities Project Lead (A Summers)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Administrative Support (A Randell)

Also Present:

Engage West Somerset Manager (K Midgeley)

SC26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors K Mills, K Kravis, K H Turner and T Taylor.

SC27 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2014 – circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that, subject to amendment to SC23, the third bullet to read, 'It was debated when a review would be undertaken on terms and conditions for them to deliver additional savings', the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2014, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record.

SC28 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 K J Ross | All Items | Dulverton | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr P H Murphy | All Items | Watchet | Personal | Spoke and voted |

Additional interests were declared by Councillor R Lillis as a board member of Engage West Somerset and Councillor K Ross whose wife was an employee of Engage.

SC29 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points

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

Further information was requested concerning Agenda Item 7, Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding, Agreed (5).

The Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the information would be circulated.

RESOLVED that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points from the meeting held on 1 October 2014, be noted.

SC30 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 3 October 2014, circulated with the agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Plan published on 3 October 2014, be noted.

SC31 Presentation from Engage West Somerset

(A Handout of the presentation was circulated at the meeting.)

The purpose of the presentation was to provide Members with an update on the Engage West Somerset service.

Katrina Midgeley gave an overview of the service, together with detailed updates project activity in the last 12 months, the current funding position and future opportunities in relation to supporting applicants to the Communities Infrastructure Mitigation (CIM) Fund.

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

- Discussion took place on the support and development for volunteers and the opportunities that were available. Organisations uploaded their own opportunities and were proactive in supporting groups along with the West Somerset Voluntary Sector Forum.
- The previous year's income was set out at £55,000 furniture sales with £5,000 gift aid income.
- The current 6 month figures were slightly down on the previous year with £25,000 furniture sales with £1,537 gift aid income. The decrease in gift aid income was attributed to fewer people paying tax.
- Assistance was also being given supporting applications to the Hinkley C CIM fund.
- Further reductions in funding were questioned and considered. In response to a question concerning the impacts on the service should grant funding be reduced, it was advised that the loss of development work and the voluntary sector forum would be a consequence.
- Councillors recognised the community benefits gained from the service and welcomed the work currently being done around the area.
- In terms of the re-use of white goods it was advised that this was not considered viable because of the cost involved in rigorous safety testing of the item coupled with the reputational issue should the item be delivered and soon after breaks down.
- Members acknowledged the work done and the value the service provided. A recommendation was proposed that the funding provided to Engage West Somerset should be continued. It was agreed that this would be fed into the draft budget for 2015/2016.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

SC32 Community Asset Transfer Policy

(Report No WSC 141/14, circulated with the agenda.)

The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Kene Ibezi, the Assistant Director - Property and Development presented the report which detailed the proposed policy along with key milestones in the process, the consultation undertaken to date and its future implementation. The intention was to review the results of the consultation and to re-draft the policy in light of the consultation feedback.

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

- The governance arrangements of the policy were questioned and clarity was requested on whether Cabinet or Full Council would take the decision on the transfer of an asset.
- Discussion took place in relation to the asset transfer criteria. Concern was raised that assets would be disposed of with no consideration of

current or potential commercial value and that there was a perception that the authority would be off loading poor performing assets.

- It was clarified that it was not the case that the policy was for offloading poor performing assets. There would be a transfer process where all aspects of an asset would be considered. Members had no obligation to transfer assets, with the outcome being a Council decision.
- Consultation with community groups would be done with any assets that were looking to be transferred. All assets would be considered on equal terms.
- The new version of the policy would reflect responses from Scrutiny and the consultation. The responses from the original document would be used to form the new policy and content around this.
- Concern was expressed that the policy had gone out for public consultation before being considered at the appropriate Policy Advisory Group.
- Members felt that they were unable to contribute to the development of the policy without seeing the results of the consultation and having sight of the new draft of the policy.
- Members requested a new timeline be provided for the policy as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The continuing development of the draft Community Asset Transfer Policy be supported, which would be subject to further consultations once it had been signed off as 'fit for purpose' by the Corporate Policy Advisory Group; and
2. The proposal for a revised joint Community Asset Transfer Policy be agreed in principle.

SC33 **Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

(The Scrutiny Committee Work Plan, circulated with the agenda was considered.)

The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider the meeting timetable for 2014/2015.

Councillors were requested to consider and comment on the proposed Work Plan submitted.

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

- Meeting dates of the 1 and 18 December were to remain subject to confirmation and officer availability.
- The shared Legal Services Business Case would be brought to the meeting scheduled for 1 December 2014.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be adopted

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL
Scrutiny Committee 16.10.14

Councillors H Davies, E May, D Ross, R Lillis and S Dowding all left the meeting at 5.05 p.m.

The meeting closed at 5.25 pm.