

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 February 2014 at 3.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillor K J Ross .....Chairman

Councillor M O A Dewdney  
Councillor B Heywood

Councillor P N Grierson

**Members in Attendance:**

Councillor K V Kravis  
Councillor K M Mills  
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew  
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor E May  
Councillor T Taylor  
Councillor K H Turner

**Officers in Attendance:**

Executive Director (Interim) (A Dyer)  
Monitoring Officer (B Lang)  
Assistant Director Resources (P Fitzgerald)  
Section 151 Officer (S Campbell)  
Principal Accountant (S Plenty)  
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)  
Performance and Efficiencies Manager (K Batchelor)  
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman welcomed the Assistant Director Resources to his first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Further, on behalf of the Committee he expressed his thanks to the Section 151 Officer for all her work at West Somerset Council and who would be returning to Somerset County Council full time.

**SC101 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M J Chilcott, J Freeman, R P Lillis and PH Murphy.

**SC102 Minutes**

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 January 2014 – circulated with the Agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 January 2014, be confirmed as a correct record.

**SC103 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:

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL  
Scrutiny Committee 17.02.14

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary	Action Taken
Cllr P N Grierson	All Items	Alcombe	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 the following declaration of interest was declared:

Cllr K H Turner declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 - SC108 Corporate Performance Report 2014/15, as he was a landlord.

**SC104 Public Participation**

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

**SC105 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 5 February 2014, be noted.

**SC106 Cabinet Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 6 February 2014, circulated with the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Forward Plan published 6 February 2014, be noted.

**SC107 Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

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

On consideration of the Work Plan the following points were raised:

- The Performance and Scrutiny Officer advised of the request to include a report from Building Control regarding joint arrangements for going forward. Further, she requested whether the Committee wished to receive an update on the Family Focus Project, and suggested that the format of future Work Plans map out future meetings only.
- The scheduled Annual Report from Minehead Eye would not be necessary at this point.
- Cllr M O A Dewdney suggested that the Committee receive an update from the Minehead Visioning Manager on his activities as he was due to complete his secondment April/May 2014.
- The Executive Director (Interim) requested that a report of the draft Capital Programme be included for the meeting to be held in March 2014.

**RESOLVED (1)** that a report on the Shared Services Business Case for Building Control be added to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 14 April 2014;

**RESOLVED (2)** that an update report on the Family Focus Project be added to a suitable future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee;

**RESOLVED (3)** that an update report be requested from the Minehead Visioning Manager be added to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 14 April 2014;

**RESOLVED (4)** that a report of the draft Capital Programme be added to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 17 March 2014;

**RESOLVED (5)** that the Annual Report from Minehead Eye scheduled for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 April 2014, be deleted from the Work Plan;

**RESOLVED (6)** that the format of the Work Plan be amended to show future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee only;

**RESOLVED (7)** that the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan, as amended, be noted.

**SC108 Corporate Performance Report April – December 2013/14**

(Report No. WSC 28/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering the corporate priorities, performance of council services including customer satisfaction covering the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013.

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

- It was suggested that perhaps the milestones relating to the new nuclear development at Hinkley Point should be set aside/not included until the project had recommenced.
- In response to concern the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing reported on the background to the delivery of 20 additional affordable homes in Townsend Farm, Carhampton and advised that he was quite confident that the project would progress.
- Key Action 2.2.4 – Delivery of 19 additional affordable homes at Seaward Way, Minehead. It was confirmed that the Council's solicitors had been instructed to take legal action. The impact to the budget would be minimal as the sale of other sites would realise sufficient capital receipts to repay the loan.
- It was confirmed that the deadline for applications to the Coastal Communities fund had not yet passed.
- Concern was raised regarding issues relating to consulting on the future use of the Cuckoo Meadow Play Area. It was suggested that perhaps the Ward/Lead Members might wish to be more involved. Further, the Committee might consider that the play area was important enough to

recommend that it be included in the capital programme when the draft is reported to the Committee in the future.

- KPI 51 – the total number of properties made decent in the private sector through informal or formal action. Concern was raised regarding the delivery of the indicator and the Committee requested that the annual indicator be changed to a quarterly indicator.
- The Committee requested that the following information be provided after the meeting:
  - Revenues and Benefits: regarding overpayment recovery, why and how was there a record level of overpayments being created?
  - Environmental Health: clarification was requested regarding the criteria/procedure of how a star rating was awarded to a premises by the Council and whether it could be carried over to a new proprietor.
  - Key Actions 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 – Deliver 25/10 empty properties back into use within the Quantock/Exmoor panel areas. Confirmation would be provided as to the criteria for an empty home and more details as to the properties involved.
  - Key Action 5.3.2 – Delivering 40 disabled facility grants. Concern that there were 22 clients waiting on the register due to budgetary constraints. Confirmation would be sought as to whether there were any issues providing the grants.
  - Key Action 5.3.3 – Improving 50 privately rented properties to the minimum standard. Concern was raised that some tenants were not aware of the Council's scheme and might need protection. How could the scheme be better promoted and support to the tenant be provided?
  - To provide an update of ongoing work regarding CCTV in Minehead.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the progress in delivering the corporate priorities for 2013/14 be noted;

**RESOLVED (2)** that the performance against Group and Service Indicators be noted;

**RESOLVED (3)** that Cabinet be advised of the points raised by the Committee as set out above.

## **SC109 Financial Monitoring Report April – December 2013/14**

(Report No. WSC 29/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to provide updated in year financial information on a range of issues including budgetary monitoring and business rate retention.

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

- It was confirmed that the budget had been affected by the changes regarding joint working. The new Joint Management Structure would increase employment costs for West Somerset Council as set out in the approved business case. Savings for the council would be provided by the implementation of shared services. Confirmation was sought as to what the increased salary costs would be.

- It was confirmed that the Council's current legal working arrangements with Mendip District Council would continue to roll forward after they were due to expire at end of March until a decision regarding the possibility of a larger partnership was resolved.
- Details regarding the 'Elections – overspend on canvasser fees' would be provided after the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the current financial standing of the Council together with the estimated position at the end of the financial year be noted.

The meeting closed at 17.01 pm.