

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2014 at 3.30 pm

Present:

Councillor K J RossChairman
Councillor R P LillisVice Chairman

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor P N Grierson

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor J Freeman
Councillor P H Murphy

Members in Attendance:

Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor E May
Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor K H Turner

Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor K M Mills
Councillor T Taylor
Councillor D J Westcott

Officers in Attendance:

Monitoring Officer (B Lang)
Assistant Director Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Assistant Director Operational Delivery (C Hall)
Parking Services Officer (M Lewis)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Community Safety Officer (P Hughes) – Item 8
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)
Administrative Support (H Dobson)

Also in Attendance:

Inspector Shane Carey, Avon and Somerset Constabulary – Item 8

SC110 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Heywood.

SC111 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 February 2014 – circulated with the Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17 February 2014, be confirmed as a correct record.

SC112 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	Alcombe	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	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 declarations of interest were declared relating to Agenda Item 12 - SC121 Minehead Events Plan:

Cllr P N Grierson declared a personal interest, he was the West Somerset Council nominee to the Minehead Events Group.

Cllr R P Lillis declared a personal interest, he was Chairman of the Minehead Events Group and involved with the Minehead Visioning Group.

Cllr M J Chilcott declared a personal interest, she was Chairman of the Minehead Visioning Group.

SC113 Public Participation

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

SC114 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 March 2014, be noted.

SC115 Cabinet Forward Plan

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 26 February 2014, circulated with the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Plan published 26 February 2014, be noted.

SC116 Scrutiny Committee Work Plan

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

Councillor M J Chilcott advised of the temporary closure of the Minor Injuries Unit in Minehead and requested that appropriate NHS Somerset staff be invited to a meeting of the Committee.

Councillor M O A Dewdney requested information being brought to the committee regarding spending relating to ICT between November 2013 and March 2014.

Members noted the progress relating to the Assets Management Review and that a report would be presented to Scrutiny Committee in due course.

Members further noted the concerns regarding the rhyes and waterways in Minehead and that the Assistant Director Operational Delivery would locate and examine the latest report to review the said rhyes and waterways.

RESOLVED (1) that appropriate NHS Somerset staff be invited to attend the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 14 April 2014, to address concerns regarding the temporary closure of the Minor Injuries Unit in Minehead;

RESOLVED (2) that a report be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 14 April 2014, to provide information regarding spending relating to ICT between November 2013 and March 2014;

RESOLVED (3) that with the addition of the resolutions above, the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan be noted.

SC117 Community Safety Report

The Inspector commenced by thanking the local multi-agency groups for their assistance to the constabulary and for the help of the Community Safety Officer without whom it would not have been possible to achieve the work undertaken/completed to date.

The Inspector distributed copies of his presentation and the Community Safety Officer collected them afterwards. He reported that crime was falling in the area year on year with the exception of 2011/12. He provided the Committee with statistics including the number of crimes which were down in the area by 119, and rural crime was down by 112 compared to the previous year. Overall, approximately, 1300 crimes were committed in the area during 2013. Partnership engagement meetings were held regularly with Butlins and they continued to fund officers at prime times.

He invited members to a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner to be held on 25 March 2013.

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

- Opening hours for the stations in West Somerset were being reviewed and the Inspector was not aware of any closure plans for the station in Minehead.
- The Inspector noted the request that the custody suites in Minehead remain open.
- Cybercrime was to be tackled by a new initiative 'action fraud', training was being rolled out.
- The Inspector confirmed that he would provide figures regarding anti-social behavior prior to the last 18 months, after the meeting.
- The Inspector was keen to set up an Independent Advisory Group made up of members from the community to act as a critical friend and who would scrutinise police procedures.

The Chairman and Committee congratulated and thanked the Inspector on behalf of the community for their work in being awarded the Ray Robinson award.

The Community Safety Officer reported that each district council had a statutory duty to scrutinise the community partnership and this committee was therefore were fulfilling this duty on behalf of the authority. He proceeded to report on the following:

- A report would be presented to a future meeting of full Council regarding a designated public place order seeking to extend the areas.
- Work to progress CCTV for Watchet was ongoing.
- Two cameras for Minehead Harbour would be available in the future; one of them was likely to be a webcam which could be self-financed through advertising.
- He confirmed that a mobile CCTV trial for fly-tipping had been undertaken. The Somerset Waste Partnership board had made available funding to address the connected rise in fly-tipping. The Community Safety Officer was the lead in the countywide project and it was believed that there was a correlation in using the mobile CCTV and the resulting increased sanctions.
- The County Community Safety Partnership which had been in place for 18 months, the Family Focus Project and the Probation Service.
- There were changes to the delivery of services regarding domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Forum had reconvened and he Chaired the Hate Crime Forum.

RESOLVED that the Community Safety report be noted.

SC118 Car Parking Services – Proposed Agency Agreement for Car Parks

(Report No. WSC 48/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek authority to enter into an agency agreement whereby Somerset County Council would provide enforcement and some of the management services for West Somerset Council (WSC) car parks.

The Assistant Director Operational Delivery presented the report. The proposed agreement was a WSC project and was not associated with Taunton Deane Borough Council. Therefore WSC would reap the benefits; the savings were estimated at approximately £35,000 per annum. This agreement would address the current resilience issues of the service and would enable the council to buy hours of enforcement.

In response to questions the Assistant Director advised that the report before Committee was different to the report presented to this Committee two years previously. He confirmed that once a proposal from NSL had been received it would go out to consultation for one month. The car parks and pricing structure would remain the responsibility of WSC along with the management and maintenance of its associated assets. Further, he was confident that relevant staff would be successfully transferred under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations arrangements.

The Lead Member advised that the reason for the fall in revenue was mainly due to the poor resilience of the service whereby the service had been unable to operate to full capacity.

RESOLVED (1) that the business case for entering an agency agreement with Somerset County Council, be noted;

RESOLVED (2) that some functions carried out by West Somerset Council staff would transfer and that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations would apply to relevant staff, be noted;

RESOLVED (3) that the Scrutiny Committee recommend that Cabinet authorise the Chief Executive to enter into an agency agreement for parking enforcement and management services with Somerset County Council.

Note: With the agreement of the Chairman this item was brought forward on the Agenda.

SC119 Capital Strategy and Programme 2014-15

(Report No. WSC 46/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the temporary interim strategy used to influence the drafting of the capital programme for 2014/15 and the subsequent results.

The Assistant Director Resources presented the report and highlighted the capital bids listed in table 1 of the report, attached to the agenda.

In response to concerns raised regarding the cost of street cleaning vehicles the Assistant Director Operational Delivery advised that the road sweeper was currently out of action. On the whole the vehicles tended not to last longer than 5 years due to the nature of the work. The council had spent more than double the money trying to maintain it and it was therefore decided not to spend any more on the maintenance.

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

- The need to look very carefully at all aspects of street sweeping.
- The interest rate of the six month loan would be relatively low at 0.4%. Interest on the previous loan had been at 1.1%.
- Concern about how the council would finance essential capital bids for the future. In response the Assistant Director Resources advised that the council would need to identify what the need was and how finances could be raised in the most effective way. The Council still had some significant sales in the pipeline.
- Disposal of assets had taken longer than originally expected in order for negotiations to broker a better deal.

Members requested that their concerns regarding the possible issues associated should the Council borrow to meet its future capital obligations, be referred to full Council.

RESOLVED that the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, above, on the temporary interim strategy used to draft the capital programme for 2014/15, be referred to Council for consideration on 26 March 2014.

The Chairmen left the meeting at this point, whereby the Vice Chairman took the Chair.

SC120 Section106/Planning Obligations Review – Update on Recommendations

(Report No. WSC 50/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from Scrutiny review of the Section 106 and Planning Obligations review.

The Scrutiny and Performance Officer presented the report advising that good progress had been made regarding the implementation of recommendations. There were a few outstanding actions and they were going through the process of being implemented.

Members expressed their disappointment that relevant Members/staff were not present at the Committee to answer detailed technical questions regarding the recommendations contained in Appendix A, to the report.

RESOLVED that this item be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 14 April 2014 and that the Committee compile a list of questions prior to the meeting.

SC121 Minehead Events Plan

(Report No. WSC 49/14, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the progress of delivering the Minehead Events Programme during 2013 looking forward to 2014.

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth presented the report and advised that it was important to keep working to improve the delivery of the events programme. The Minehead Visioning Group (MVG) were committed to not repeating the same challenges as set out in the report.

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

- A request to see a breakdown of income and expenditure for each event.
- The number of different organisations involved with the calendar of major Minehead events was quite an achievement.

The Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager addressed concerns advising that every item of expenditure had been actioned for and set against each event. The accounts were shared with the Council's Principal Accountant who was satisfied with the clear and transparent figures. The accounts were provided to members of the events group including some district council councillors. The MVG were progressing as expected and were on target

regarding the business plan. With support from staff the MVG were working on developing some really good 4/5 key events that other people may want to take on in the future.

Councillor P N Grierson reported that the implementation of the events programme had highlighted issues. The programme was reviewed at the end of November at a meeting of the Lead Member, the Treasurer for Minehead Development Trust and himself. A new sub group of the MVG was formed to take responsibility for the 'back office' functions including providing a breakdown of accounts for every event and reporting back to the visioning group. The MVG were still learning and with the support of officers and input of the Lead Member they continued to work in order to improve on the following year. He confirmed that he was happy with the accounts.

Councillor M J Chilcott believed that some very good work had been undertaken. She was comfortable that the reporting line had been strengthened, and confident that the challenges would be overcome.

The Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager confirmed that she would forward a copy of the accounts to Councillor M O A Dewdney after the meeting.

RESOLVED that the process and progress made in delivering the programme, be noted.

Note: With the agreement of the Chairman this item was put back on the Agenda.

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm.