

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 3.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillor P H Murphy .....Chairman  
Councillor N Thwaites .....Vice-Chairman

Councillor I Aldridge  
Councillor B Maitland-Walker  
Councillor R Woods

Councillor G S Dowding  
Councillor B Leaker  
Councillor J Parbrook

**Members in Attendance:**

Councillor M Chilcott  
Councillor A Hadley  
Councillor K J Mills  
Councillor D Westcott

Councillor M Dewdney  
Councillor R Lillis  
Councillor A Trollope-Bellew

**Officers in Attendance:**

Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager (P Harding)  
Assistant Director – Resources (P Fitzgerald)  
Assistant Director – Operational Delivery (C Hall)  
Finance Manager (J Nacey)  
Asset Manager (T Child)  
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)  
Media and Communications Officer (D Rundle)  
Democratic Services Co-ordinator (E McGuinness)  
Democratic Services Officer (M Prouse)  
Democratic Services Officer (A Randell)

**SC 37 Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received by Councillor R Clifford.

**SC 38 Minutes**

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 October 2016 – circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 13 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

**SC 39**    **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:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Description of Interest</b>	<b>Personal or Prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Cllr B Maitland - Walker	All Items	Carhampton	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted

Further declarations were stated by:-

Councillor Hadley – Item 9. Personal Interest and the Chairman of Minehead Events Group.

Councillor Lillis declared a personal interest relating to agenda Item 9, Minehead Events Group.

Councillor Mills declared a personal interest relating to agenda Item 9, Minehead Events Group.

Councillor Chilcott declared a personal interest relating to agenda Item 9, Minehead Events Group.

Councillor Maitland Walker declared a personal interest relating to agenda Item 9, Minehead Events Group and item 12. Recycle More, Domestic Waste Collection Services.

**SC 40**    **Public Participation**

The following members of the public made statements on the following agenda items:-

**Cessation of Funding for Public Conveniences**

- Cllr John Irven from Watchet Town Council.
- Geoff Williams, Chair of Old Cleeve Parish Council
- Margaret Smith of Old Cleeve Parish Council
- Cllr Leslie Smith from Minehead Town Council
- Alison Hart from Blue Anchor,
- Cllr Maureen Smith from Minehead Town Council

**Minehead Events Group**

- Mr Dave Jackson
- Cllr Andrew Parbrook from Minehead Town Council.

**SC 41 Notes of Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points**

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

**RESOLVED** that the Key Cabinet Decisions/Action Points from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 November 2016, be noted.

**SC 42 Cabinet Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 2 November 2016, circulated at the meeting)

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Forward Plan published on 2 November 2016, be noted.

**SC 43 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that the item relating to the Cessation of Funding for Public Conveniences was a report that had been written by the Chairman of The Scrutiny Committee.

**SC 44 Cessation of Funding for Public Conveniences – A Scrutiny Review of Progress with Agreed Policy**

The report WSC 130/16 was introduced by the Chairman, Councillor Murphy.

The Chairman reminded Members that as part of its Budget Setting for 2016/2017, the Council had agreed a saving of £107,000 from ceasing to fund the provision of public conveniences and a saving of £6,500 from converting the 20p coin slots to 50p coin slots in chargeable public conveniences. This report therefore sought to establish the progress to date with achieving these budget savings and the process that had been followed.

The purpose of the report was therefore to assess the likelihood of these budget savings being achieved within the agreed timescales.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Members of the public were thanked for their statements.
- A 'Heads of Terms' document had been provided to Members for them to comment on in relation to the proposed transfer of public conveniences to Town or Parish Council who had expressed an interest in retaining the facilities. The deadline for such submission to be made

was the 16 December 2016. This would enable the consideration of submissions to be made in the middle of January for the Council to provide a response.

- Concerns were expressed over an apparent lack of communication with Town/Parish Councils about the closure proposals, especially those toilets at Blue Anchor, and the impact this could cause on tourism.
- A suggestion was made that the cost of legal fees should not be picked up by Parish Councils.
- Parish Councils, in some cases, could not meet the timescale involved to make the asset transfer timetable.
- Members requested that Cabinet urgently review the saving proposals relating to public conveniences to Parish Councils

**RESOLVED** that: - The Scrutiny Committee recommends the Cabinet to urgently review the support offered to Parishes in respect of possible toilet transfers, review the achievability of the agreed Budget Savings and consider ways in which communications could be improved.

#### **SC 45 Minehead Events Group**

The report WSC 132/16 was introduced by Councillor Mills along with a presentation from Dave Jackson and Councillor Andrew Hadley, as a volunteer of Minehead Events Group

The purpose of the report was to set out the proposed governance arrangements for the Minehead Events Group.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors voiced broad support and commended the work of the group.
- It was acknowledged by the Minehead Events Group that consultation with Minehead Town Council should have been undertaken. Regular reports were provided where appropriate.
- The total membership was nine which included three officers.
- Suggestion was made that where possible, the knowledge of other community groups could be drawn upon when needed.
- The governance arrangements were considered. It was questioned if the annual accounts should be audited. Events insurance covered up to five events per year.
- The group was sustainable financially with a focus on income that could be generated through the events. There were sufficient safeguards in place in instances such as the signing of cheques.
- Some concerns were expressed as to a potential lack of accountability of the group. The group was accountable in the first instance following the award of the grant by the Coastal Community Team.
- The Events Group were commended for its recognition of the issues encountered over a lack of consultation in setting up the 'Events Wheel' during the summer.
- Councillors congratulated the work of the Minehead Events Group.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee

- 1) Note the report and endorse the constitution and governance arrangements for the Minehead Events Group.
- 2) Note that the residual funding held by the previously un-constituted Events Group was to be transferred to the new group
- 3) Recommend that the Minehead Events Group provide regular reports to the Council and, where relevant and appropriate, to work closely with the Minehead Coastal Community Team.

**SC 46** **Fees and Charges 2017/2018**

Councillor A Trollope-Bellew declared a prejudicial interest in private water supplies

The report WSC 133/16 was introduced by Councillor Chilcott

The purpose of this report was to set out the proposed fees and charges for 2017/2018, and provide comments on the proposals for consideration by Cabinet Members for their recommendations to Full Council.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was clarified that for services which provided a statutory service, charges should only be applied to cover the costs of delivering the service.
- Watchet and Minehead Harbours were responsible for collecting fees from commercial vessels. Recovery of such costs were reflected in their charges.
- It was currently left to the honesty of boat owners / users to pay the Slipway Fees at Watchet.
- Members requested if off street car park machines could be modified to process any slipway fees.
- There were no proposed changes to car park fees. Officers would clarify outside of the meeting if there was to be any realignment of the Dulverton Car Parks

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee supports the proposed fees and charges for 2017/2018.

**SC 47** **Budget Update and Savings Options 2017/2018**

The report WSC 134/16 was introduced by Councillor Chilcott

The purpose of this report was to provide Scrutiny with an update on the budget estimates for 2017/2018 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP forecasts), and to consult with Members on a range of savings options being

considered for the Budget.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- The budget savings reported back by service managers had been fed directly into the MTFP.
- A 0.5% tax would be imposed by Central Government on payroll which would provide a fund which could be drawn on to encourage the use of apprentices.
- Clarification was given that the contribution from Central Government would not cover an apprentice salary.
- Members were reassured that the 10% reduction in the Legal Services budget would not have an adverse impact on access to legal services.
- Councillors requested that an Equalities Impact Assessment be completed relating to the cutting to funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau. Members were reminded that there would still remain a considerable contribution following the reduction.
- Clarification was still awaited on funding for the New Homes Bonus. Proposed changes to the current scheme from Central Government were anticipated before February 2017

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee

- 1) Note the latest budget estimates and other budget adjustments being considered for the 2017/2018 Budget.
- 2) Support a recommendation to Cabinet and Council to transfer £75,000 of current year underspend to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve.
- 3) Support a recommendation for the Lead Member – Resources to ringfence £43,000 from the Capital Receipts Reserve to create a Sustainability Fund Capital Reserve.

#### **SC 48 Recycle More, Domestic Waste Collection Services**

The report WSC 135/16 was introduced by Councillor Dewdney and presented by Dave Mansell from the Somerset Waste Partnership and Chris Hall.

The purpose of the report was to provide an update of the business case to enhance the current services to the community provided by the SWP as well as identifying savings through the implementation of the scheme.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- It was suggested if caps could be put on recycling bins located in and around high streets to avoid waste being blown through the town centres. Covers could already be purchased from the service.
- There had been provision set aside for staff training on the new scheme, along with additional education planned and within the budget of the rollout.

- Campaigning had been proactive to encourage more residents to recycle more waste material.
- It was requested if a message could be left where materials could not be taken so that users of the service were made aware.
- Members congratulated the service on the future business model.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee support the Somerset Waste Partnership's Business Case for 'Recycle More' and that the Asset Management Group be requested to consider the future use of the Roughmoor Depot.

**SC 49**    **Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

(Copy of the Forward Plan for 2016, circulated with the agenda.)

- It was requested that an IT Monitoring report be considered at a future committee.

**RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Forward Plan published on 17 November be noted.

**SC 50**    **Local Memorandum of Understanding, Somerset Rivers Authority – Joint Scrutiny Panel.**

The purpose of the report was to nominate two Scrutiny members to sit on the Joint Scrutiny Panel.

**RESOLVED** that:- Councillors B Maitland-Walker and R Woods be nominated as West Somerset Council's representatives on the Somerset Rivers Authority - Joint Scrutiny Panel.

Councillors Lillis, Hadley, Leaker and Mills left at 5.45pm  
Councillor Dowding left at 6.10pm

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.