

SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee - 2 November 2022

Present:

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, John Hassall, Nicole Hawkins, Janet Lloyd, Nick Thwaites (Vice Chair in the Chair), Brenda Weston and Loretta Whetlor

Officers: Chris Hall, Amy Tregellas, Sam Murrell, Lisa Tuck, Joe Wharton, Tim Bacon, Alison Blom Cooper, Graeme Thompson, Kate Murdoch and Jenny Clifford

Alison North (via zoom)

Also Present: Gordon Hollins (CEO of the SCCC) Malcolm Derry (Finance Director of the SCCC) and Jon Bendle (Managing Director of the Somerset Cricket Federation).

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

52. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sue Buller (subs Janet Lloyd), Libby Lisgo (subs Brenda Weston), Gwil Wren (who joined via zoom) and Simon Nicholls.

Cllr Sarah Wakefield joined via zoom to give a brief update under Item 9, with officer support provided by Alison North.

Cllrs Dave Mansell and Vivienne Stock-Williams attended via zoom.

53. **Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record.

Prop: Coles / Sec Lloyd Unanimous

54. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr I Aldridge	All Items	Williton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	SCC & West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr H Farbahi	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoked and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllrs Simon Coles and Janet Lloyd declared a personal interest in Item 8 – as both are members of the Somerset County Cricket Club.

55. **Public Participation**

There were no items of public participation.

56. **Update on the Local Government Review**

Cllr Wakefield provided an update via zoom and was supported by Alison North.

Now that Duncan Sharkey was in post, work was moving at pace to implement Tier 2/3 management level appointments. Some vacancies would be filled internally where there was a natural fit and some slotting in could take place.

Any changes to the organisational or staffing structure would involve consultation with staff and the relevant unions.

There were many workstreams ongoing with masses of work taking place, all looking towards being safe, legal and functioning on vesting day.

The LCN Consultation has now finished, and the team were working through the responses. It was likely that although LCNs would be set up for April 1, they would evolve as there were still questions to be worked through around the regulatory functions such as planning.

6.30pm Alison North left the meeting.

57. **Update on Somerset County Cricket Club (SCCC)**

Corporate Scrutiny welcomed Gordon Hollins (CEO of the SCCC), Malcolm Derry (Finance Director of the SCCC) and Jon Bendle, Managing Director of the Somerset Cricket Foundation to the Committee.

A short presentation took place in which Jon Bendle detailed the community outreach work that is being undertaken to enhance the lives of Somerset residents through participation in cricket. The slides can be viewed [here](#).

Malcolm Derry then provided an overview on the financial status of the SCCC, and the challenges it faces going forward into 2023 and beyond. These slides are available to view [here](#).

Gordon Hollins wrapped up the presentation by saying that the goal of the SCCC was to inspire communities and invest in facilities. The SCCC benefitted from a progressive and experienced Leader of the Board, with a capable team of Directors supporting him. They were currently writing their development strategy which would be looking towards delivery up until 2028.

Comments and questions from the Committee included: -

- Williton Pavilion, (managed by Williton Parish Council) would be a good indoor venue for accommodating cricket outreach work. Likewise, Minehead Eye would be a good point of liaison because the staff there co-ordinate all the youth clubs in the West Somerset area. They also have access to a large indoor space in Minehead.
- Cllr Firmin asked why the 2020-21 accounts had not been published on the SCCC website? Malcolm Derry explained this was an oversight, and he would be following this up to ensure they were displayed ASAP. The 2021-22 accounts would be available from the end of this calendar year.
- It was acknowledged that lack of social mobility was a huge barrier to participating in cricket and other sports in West Somerset. The SCCC were trying to tackle this, but lack of venues and transport was a prohibiting factor.
- The Cricket Federation through their work with the Lord Taverners ECB were looking to expand their SEN delivery across the wider Somerset area, which would include towns such as Wellington.
- It was asked whether the capacity of the SCCC would be increased to accommodate the T20 games, which were always sold out? Gordon Hollins said that the ground development strategy was examining all the options and increasing the stadium space was one avenue to explore. At the present time, all profits were being ploughed back into the development of the club.
- Interest rates and the cost-of-living crisis were going to prove challenging going forward. General utilities were increasing and the projected electricity costs for the spotlights alone were going to eat into the profit margins.
- Outreach work placed a heavy emphasis on being inclusive and making cricket accessible to everyone. It was recognised that upskilling coaching staff, familiarisation and consistency were key components when dealing with SEN and vulnerable players. A lot of the work was about making these participants feel safe in their environment so that it could be extended into their own cricketing communities.

The committee thanked the SCCC for an entertaining and informative presentation.

58. **Firepool Design Guidance and Masterplan**

Cllr Rigby introduced the report which was a consultation document and not a planning application. It provides an overview of the plans, centred around a mixed-use residential scheme and multi-purpose venue including a cinema and bowling alley.

Comments from the Committee included: -

- It was asked whether there would be consultation undertaken with the existing businesses already in Station Road? *There would be an online consultation set up, as well as drop-in sessions for views to be shared. It was recognised that a large part of the consultation work would be around relationship building.*
- The timescales around delivery were very tight – is this likely to be achieved? *It will be delivered in phases, and some work such as the drainage has already started. Most of the future work will be taken forward by the new Somerset Council.*

The Committee moved to note the recommendations to the Executive.

Prop: Thwaites / Sec: Firmin Unanimous

7.30pm Cllr John Hassell, Joe Wharton and Tim Bacon left the meeting.

59. **Governance for Taunton Garden Town**

Cllr Mike Rigby introduced the Governance for Taunton Garden Town, and Jenny Clifford explained what the report was designed to achieve.

Homes England has recommended that a governance arrangement is put in place to formally manage the process. It will provide a clearer structure on how policies and procedures interact.

Comments from the committee included: -

- Cllr Coles welcomed the introduction of an Implementation Board
- Cllr Aldridge had concerns around the level of staffing resource required and whether SWT could accommodate this?
- Cllr Cavill stated it was important that any measures implemented by the Board were enforced. As a planning authority SWT needs to exercise due care to ensure that developers conserve the natural environment.
- Cllrs Whetlor/Lloyd stated that the new Shadow Taunton Town Council had not been included as a consultee/stakeholder and this should be recognised and rectified as soon as possible.
- Cllr Farbahi said that SWT was behind on the new homes target. 10k homes still unbuilt from a predicted 17K to be completed by 2028. Phosphates is not helping this situation either.

- Cllr Rigby said that there was a constant rolling programme of bidding for available funding, and very often the timescales were extremely tight. (Sometimes it would literally only be a matter of days!) It was important therefore that bids were prepared so that they could be “oven-ready” and provide a skeleton framework to be worked up and delivered quickly.

The Committee moved to note the recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Prop: Coles / Sec Whetlor Unanimous

7.48pm Cllr Mike Rigby and Graeme Thompson left the meeting.

60. **Corporate Scrutiny Request/Recommendation Trackers**

Cllr Lloyd raised that a response had been received by her personally from the SRA, with regard to her query about flooding in Wellington. She was waiting for a further update but was aware that this had not been shared with the wider committee.

It was requested that Cllr Lloyd forward her email to the committee clerk so that the tracker could be updated, and that the other Cllrs awaiting responses do the same.

Cllr Whetlor supported this suggestion, and the Committee agreed.

61. **Corporate Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

Cllr Mansell made a request that Corporate Scrutiny review the performance of the planning department in light of recent challenges. He was asked to complete a work request form detailing the requirements of the report he wanted undertaken, so that this could be reviewed at the next Coordinating Scrutiny meeting. If the Chairs of the committees were in agreement, this would be followed up with officers and it could be timetabled into the Forward Plan.

Lisa Tuck confirmed that there would be an update on the Innovation Exchange brought to the December Corporate Scrutiny Committee. (Already noted in the Forward Plan).

No other comments were forthcoming.

The committee noted the Forward Plan.

62. **Executive and Full Council Forward Plan**

The Committee agreed to note the Forward plans. No comments were forthcoming.

Prop: Coles / Sec: Cavill (Unanimous).

(The Meeting ended at 8.03 pm)

