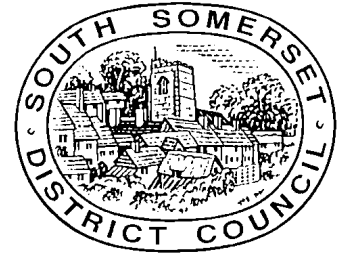


**South Somerset District Council**

*Notice of Meeting*



# Area South Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Wednesday 5th November 2014**

**2.00 pm**

**Council Chamber  
Council Offices,  
Brympton Way,  
Yeovil  
BA20 2HT**

(disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



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Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Jo Boucher 01935 462011**, website: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 28 October 2014.

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*

This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

# Area South Committee Membership

Peter Gubbins  
Pauline Lock  
Cathy Bakewell  
Tim Carroll  
John Vincent Chainey  
Tony Fife  
Marcus Fysh

Nigel Gage  
Jon Gleeson  
Dave Greene  
Andy Kendall  
Tony Lock  
Ian Martin  
Graham Oakes

Wes Read  
David Recardo  
John Richardson  
Gina Seaton  
Peter Seib

## South Somerset District Council – Council Plan

Our focuses are: (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses.
- Environment – We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use.
- Homes – We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income.
- Health & Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

## Scrutiny procedure rules

Please note that decisions taken by Area Committees may be "called in" for scrutiny by the council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

## Consideration of planning applications

Members of the public are requested to note that consideration of the planning applications will commence immediately after Item 6 at approximately 2.15pm. The public and representatives of Parish/Town Councils will be invited to speak on the individual planning applications at the time they are considered. Anyone wishing to raise matters in relation to other items on the agenda may do so at the time the item is considered.

## Highways

A representative from the Area Highways Office will attend Area South Committee quarterly in February, May, August and November from 1.30 pm to answer questions and take comments from Members of the Committee. Alternatively, they can be contacted direct through Somerset Highways direct control centre on 0845 345 9155.

## Members questions on reports prior to the meeting

Members of the committee are requested to contact report authors on points of clarification prior to the committee meeting.

# Information for the Public

The Council has a well-established area committee system and through four area committees seeks to strengthen links between the Council and its local communities, allowing planning and other local issues to be decided at a local level (planning recommendations outside council policy are referred to the district wide Regulation Committee).

Decisions made by Area Committees, which include financial or policy implications are generally classed as executive decisions. Where these financial or policy decisions have a significant impact on council budgets or the local community, agendas will record these decisions as "key decisions". Members of the public can view the council's Executive Forward Plan, either online or at any SSSC council office, to see what executive/key decisions are scheduled to be taken in the coming months. Non-executive decisions taken by area committees include planning, and other quasi-judicial decisions.

At area committee meetings members of the public are able to:

- attend and make verbal or written representations, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- at the area committee chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to up to 3 minutes on agenda items; and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Area South Committee are normally held monthly at 2.00pm on the first Wednesday of the month at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Agendas and minutes of Area Committees are published on the Council's website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/meetings-and-decisions](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/meetings-and-decisions)

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information about this Committee can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

## Public Participation at Committees

This is a summary of the Protocol adopted by the Council and set out in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution.

## Public Question Time

The period allowed for participation in this session shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the chairman of the committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

## **Planning Applications**

Comments and questions about planning applications will be dealt with at the time those applications are considered, when planning officers will be in attendance, rather than during the Public Question Time session.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer's report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the Planning Officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The Planning Officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the committee chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

- Town or Parish Council Spokesperson
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicant/Agent
- District Council Ward Member

If a member of the public wishes to speak they must inform the committee administrator before the meeting begins of their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections and who they are representing. This must be done by completing one of the public participation slips available at the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

The same rules in terms of public participation will apply in respect of other agenda items where people wish to speak on that particular item.

### **If a Councillor has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or a personal and prejudicial interest**

In relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, a Councillor is prohibited by law from participating in the discussion about the business on the agenda that relates to this interest and is also required to leave the room whilst the relevant agenda item is being discussed.

Under the new Code of Conduct adopted by this Council in July 2012, a Councillor with a personal and prejudicial interest (which is not also a DPI) will be afforded the same right as a member of the public to speak in relation to the relevant business and may also answer any questions, except that once the Councillor has addressed the Committee the Councillor will leave the room and not return until after the decision has been made.

# Area South Committee

**Wednesday 5 November 2014**

## Agenda

### *Preliminary Items*

- 1. Minutes of previous meeting**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. As a result of the change made to the Code of Conduct by this Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014, where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council. If you have a prejudicial interest you must comply with paragraphs 2.9(b) and 2.9(c) of the Code.

In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under any relevant code of conduct.

### **Planning Applications Referred to the District Council's Regulation Committee**

The following members of this Committee are also members of the Council's Regulation Committee:

Councillors Tim Carroll, Tony Fife, Peter Gubbins, Ian Martin and Gina Seaton

Where planning applications are referred by this Committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice on Planning, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the Council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as Members of that Committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

#### **4. Public question time**

This is a chance for members of the public and representatives of Parish/Town Councils to participate in the meeting by asking questions, making comments and raising matters of concern. Parish/Town Council representatives may also wish to use this opportunity to ask for the District Council's support on any matter of particular concern to their Parish/Town. The public and representatives of Parish/Town Councils will be invited to speak on individual planning applications at the time the applications are considered.

#### **5. Chairman's announcements**

#### **6. Reports from representatives on outside organisations**

This is an opportunity for Members who represent the Council on outside organisations to report items of interest to the Committee.

#### *Items for discussion*

- 7. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined by Committee** (Pages 1 - 2)
- 8. Planning Application 13/01791/OUT - Land East of Holywell, West Coker Road, Yeovil** (Pages 3 - 21)
- 9. Planning Application - 14/03904/OUT - 24 Ashford Grove, Yeovil** (Pages 22 - 28)
- 10. Planning Application 14/03437/FUL - Land Adjacent 2 Monmouth Road, Yeovil** (Pages 29 - 34)
- 11. Presentation by South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA)** (Page 35)
- 12. Local Housing Needs in Area South** (Pages 36 - 40)
- 13. Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership Presentation** (Page 41)
- 14. Community Offices Update** (Pages 42 - 50)
- 15. A30 Yeovil Eastern Corridor Improvements Update** (Page 51)
- 16. Area South Committee Forward Plan** (Pages 52 - 54)
- 17. Appeals (For Information)** (Page 55)

**Please note that the decisions taken by Area Committees may be called in for scrutiny by the Council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation.**

**This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.**

# Agenda Item 7

## Schedule of Planning Applications to be determined by Committee

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, Place and Performance  
*Assistant Director:* Martin Woods, Economy  
*Service Manager:* David Norris, Development Control Manager  
*Contact Details:* david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462382

### Purpose of the Report

The schedule of planning applications sets out the applications to be determined by Area South Committee at this meeting.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the schedule of planning applications.

***Planning Applications will be considered at 2.00pm.***

Members of the public who wish to speak about a particular planning item are recommended to arrive for 1.45pm.

SCHEDULE					
Agenda Number	Ward	Application	Brief Summary of Proposal	Site Address	Applicant
8	COKER	13/01791/OUT	Residential development with associated access, landscape and public open space	Land East of Holywell, West Coker Road, Yeovil	Mr John T Cullen
9	YEOVIL CENTRAL	14/03904/OUT	Outline application for the erection of a pair of semi-detached houses and alterations to the existing access drive	24 Ashford Grove, Yeovil	Bunny Construction Ltd
10	YEOVIL EAST	14/03437/FUL	Proposed dwelling house and garage	Land Adjacent 2 Monmouth Road, Yeovil	Mr F Harris

Further information about planning applications is shown on the following page and at the beginning of the main agenda document.

The Committee will consider the applications set out in the schedule. The Planning Officer will give further information at the meeting and, where appropriate, advise members of letters received as a result of consultations since the agenda had been prepared.

## **Referral to the Regulation Committee**

The inclusion of two stars (\*\*) as part of the Development Manager's recommendation indicates that the application will need to be referred to the District Council's Regulation Committee if the Area Committee is unwilling to accept that recommendation.

The Lead Planning Officer, at the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Solicitor, will also be able to recommend that an application should be referred to District Council's Regulation Committee even if it has not been two starred on the Agenda.

## **Human Rights Act Statement**

The Human Rights Act 1998 makes it unlawful, subject to certain expectations, for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention Right. However when a planning decision is to be made there is further provision that a public authority must take into account the public interest. Existing planning law has for many years demanded a balancing exercise between private rights and public interest and this authority's decision making takes into account this balance. If there are exceptional circumstances which demand more careful and sensitive consideration of Human Rights issues then these will be referred to in the relevant report.

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# Agenda Item 8

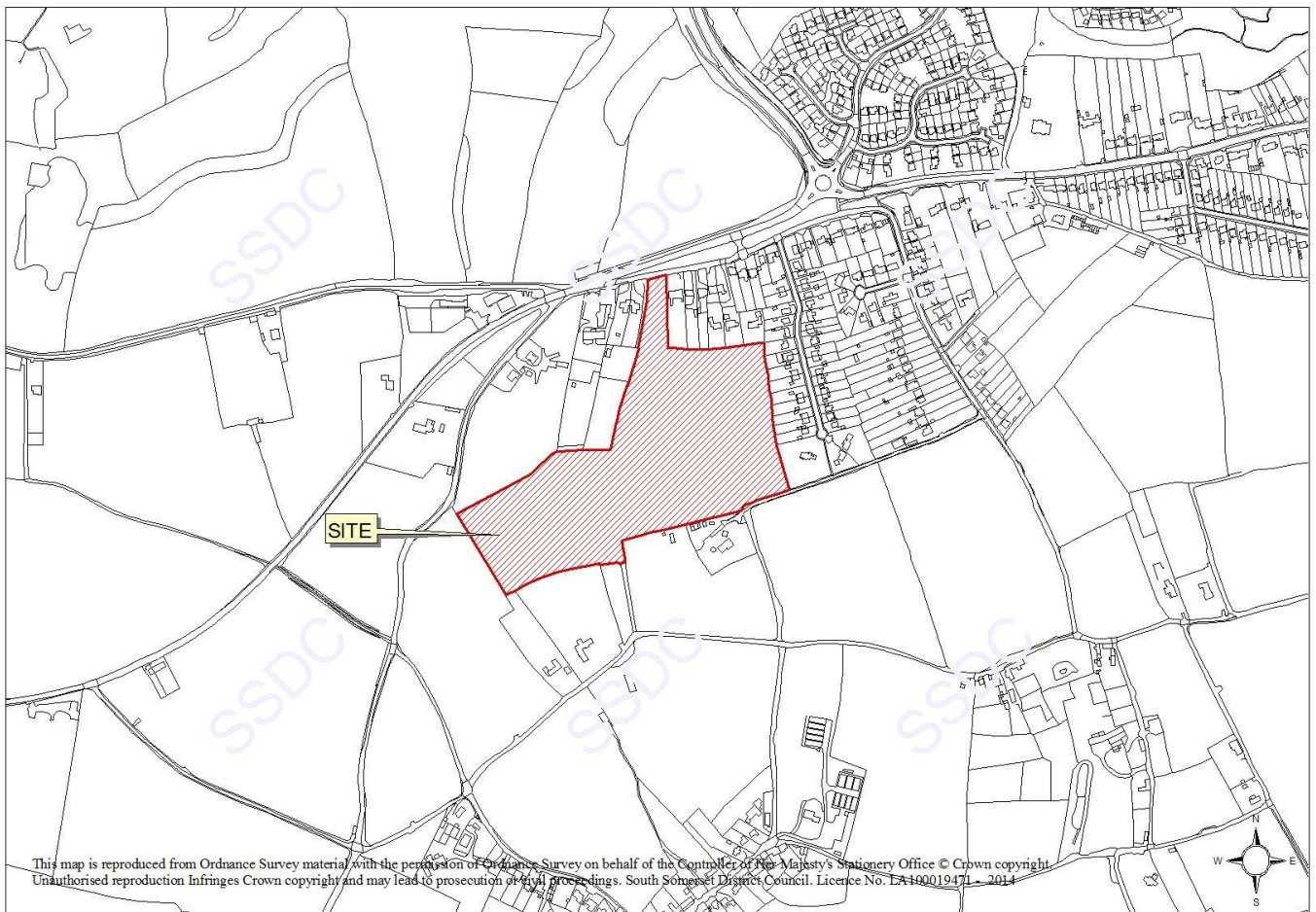
## **Officer Report On Planning Application: 13/01791/OUT**

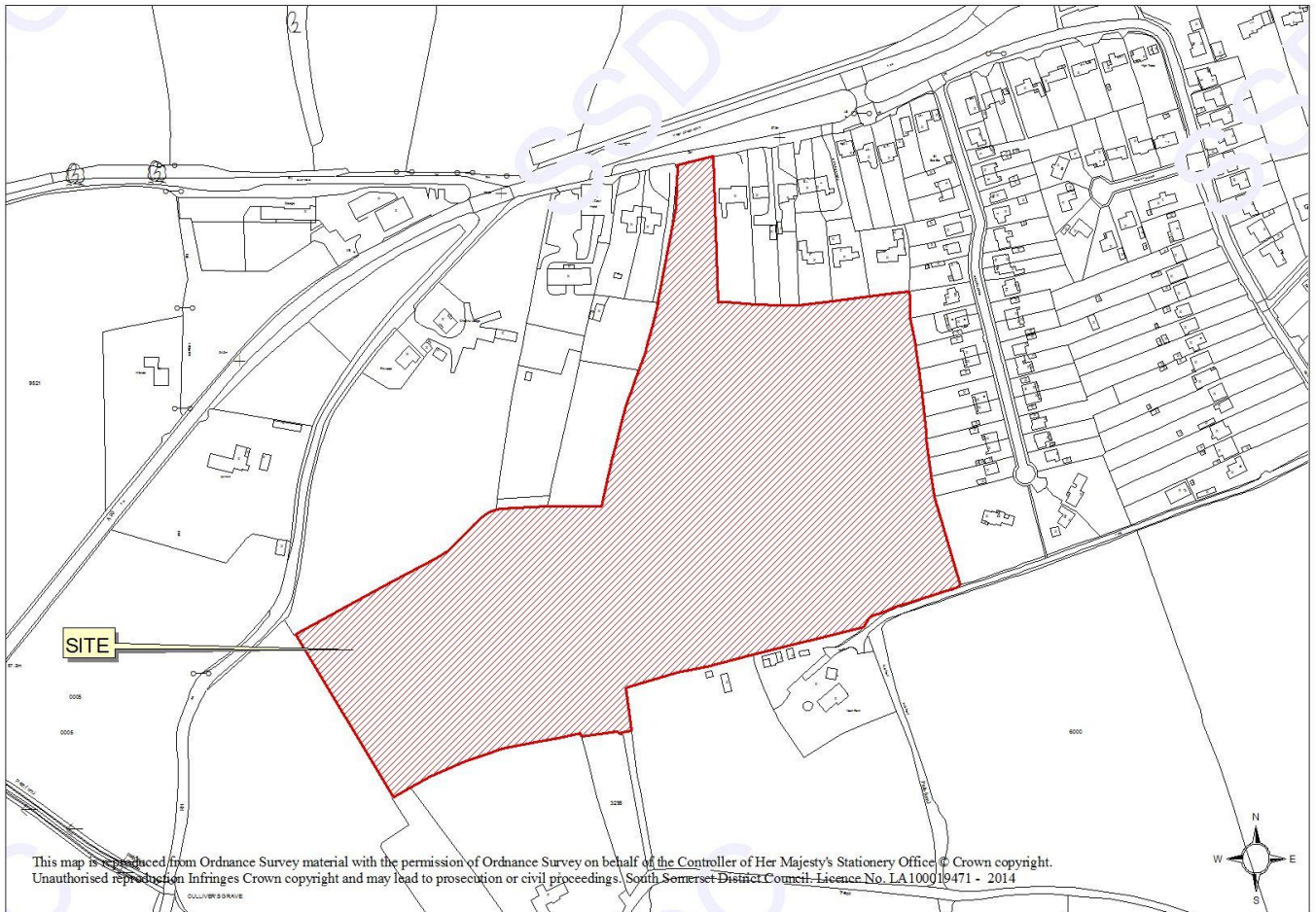
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land East Of Holywell, West Coker Road, Yeovil
<b>Ward :</b>	COKER
<b>Proposal :</b>	Residential development with associated access, landscape and public open space (GR 353369/114123)
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Simon Fox, Area Lead Officer (South)
<b>Target date :</b>	12th August 2013
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr John T Cullen
<b>Type : 01</b>	Major Dwlg's 10 or more or site 0.5ha+

### **Reason for Referral to Committee**

This application has been referred for Committee consideration at the request of the Development Manager in accordance with the scheme of delegation and with the agreement of the Chairman due to the fact the application constitutes a major development and a departure from the local plan.

### **Site Description and Proposal**





The application site lies within East Coker parish and comprises an agricultural field dog-legged in shape bordered by residential development at West Coker Road to the north and Helena Road to the east, Nash Farm and a couple of properties set in large grounds to the south on Nash Lane and Kingspring Lane (both restricted highways) and by Inglemount (White Post Turf) and the Yeovil Court Hotel to the west. Beyond the immediate environs to the south east is Naish Priory, a Grade I listed building and Naish Cottage, a Grade II listed building.

Amounting to 7.6ha, the site gently falls consistently from north to south. The southern and western boundaries comprise mature hedgerows with a number of trees; the northern and east boundaries are largely shared with residential properties and are more varied with hedging and fencing.

Whilst the site is currently outside the development limit as defined in the 2006 Local Plan the emerging Local Plan identifies Yeovil as the prime focus for development in South Somerset. In order to develop 7,441 new homes in the town, the plan proposes an expansion of the urban area to the south and northwest via two urban extensions.

Although this site is not one of those urban extensions this application, made in outline with all matters reserved for later approval except means of access, seeks to develop the site for residential purposes in the region of 144 dwellings. The application includes an illustrative masterplan.

In detail the scheme seeks:

- to provide 35% affordable housing,

- to form a vehicular access into the site from the dead-end part of West Coker Road (the spur-road), by the demolition of No. 169, including the change of priority where this part of West Coker Rd meets Nash Lane,
- to provide a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP),
- to provide areas of public open space,
- create cycle/pedestrian link to Nash Lane in south west corner,
- create shelter belt in the southwest corner, and
- retain prominent mature trees including the TPO in the grounds of No.169.

The applicant has also submitted the following documentation in support of the application:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Residential Travel Plan
- Landscape Assessment
- Heritage Desk-Based Assessment
- Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation
- Archaeological Evaluation Report
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, Issue 3
- Grade 1 Agricultural Land Note
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report
- Bat Survey and Addendum (June 2013)
- Tree Survey
- Utilities Appraisal

A small convenience store is located within the nearby service station to the east and this proposal includes improving general pedestrian/cycle access to this local facility. The same links will also improve access to the bus stop located on the north side of West Coker Road near the Camp Hill/Holywell junction serving buses heading towards the town centre. A new bus-stop layby will be created on the southern side of West Coker Road, serving westbound travellers. These works should be viewed in tandem with those works secured via the Bunford Heights application (13/01869/OUT).

## **HISTORY**

13/01795/EIASS: Request for a screening opinion concerning proposed development: No EIA required: 03/05/2013

No.169 West Coker Rd-

13/02051/FUL: Application for a new planning permission to replace extant approval 10/02010/FUL for the demolition of existing dwelling and the construction of 2 No. detached dwellings with garages and the construction of vehicular access: Application permitted with conditions: 18/07/2013

10/02010/FUL: The demolition of existing dwelling and the construction of 2 No. detached dwellings with garages and the construction of vehicular access: Application permitted with conditions: 27/07/2010

07/01067/FUL: The demolition of existing dwelling and the construction of 2 No. detached dwellings with garages (Re-Submission): Application permitted with conditions: 26/04/2007

Other relevant applications:

Bunford Heights - on northern side of West Coker Rd opposite site access -

13/01869/OUT: Residential development, associated landscaping, open space and new vehicular access: Committee resolution to approve 7th August 2013, pending completion of

planning obligation.

## **POLICY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In March 2012 the existing national Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes (PPS's and PPG's) were superseded by the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012

Core Planning Principles

Chapter 4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

Chapter 10 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Chapter 11 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Chapter 12 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Annex 1 - Implementation

The development plan comprises the saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan.

The policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

### South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):

ST3 - Development Areas

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

ST8 - Sustainable Construction

ST10 - Planning Obligations

EC1 - Protecting the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

EC3 - Landscape Character

EC8 - Protected Species

EC12 - Archaeology

EH8 - Historic Parks and Gardens

EP1 - Pollution and Noise

EU4 - Water Services

TP1 - New Development and Pedestrian Provision

TP2 - Travel Plans

TP5 - Public Transport

HG4 - Housing Densities

HG7 - Site Targets and Thresholds

CR2 - Provision for Outdoor Playing Space and Amenity Space in New Development

CR3 - Off-Site Provision

CR4 - Amenity Open Space

CR9 - Public Rights of Way and Recreation Routes

### Other

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012)

## **CONSULTATIONS**

East Coker Parish Council (in response to amended plans July 14:

We believe this application should be refused for the following reasons:

- Incremental loss of grade 1 agricultural land
- Outside development limits
- SSDC has a five year land supply
- This direction of growth is not part of SSDC's Local Plan
- Increased traffic on an already potentially dangerous stretch of road bearing in mind there will be 80 new homes already approved accessing this section of road.
- Localism dictates that the residents and the parish Council's views should have weight in planning decisions. In the emerging East Coker Neighbourhood Plan it is unlikely that it would have identified this site both on situation and quantity of dwellings. Housing needs for East Coker were recently identified as 11 dwellings.

West Coker Parish Council (neighbouring parish) (in response to amended plans July 14:

The Parish Council objects for the following reasons:

- Highways - This development has not taken into consideration the already approved development to the North, almost opposite in West Coker Parish. The three to four Junctions in this area are too close to each other and has great potential to increase traffic congestion on an already overstretched section of the A30.
  - Housing density is too great in this area as this application has not been considered in the Eastern Corridor Scheme.
  - 5 year Plan - This development has not been include in the 5 year plan.
  - Grade 1 Agricultural Land - The report provided did not take into account the considerable importance of Grade 1 Agricultural Land. MAFF definition of Grade 1 Land, "Land with NO or very MINOR limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of horticultural and agricultural crops can be grown. Yields are high and less variable than land of lower grading "
- Historically this land produced the best flax for the sailcloth industry and was of national importance. We will need to produce at least 35% more food for growing populations. Even 1 acre of land of this quality lost to the future should not be contemplated.

Odcombe (neighbouring parish) (in response to amended plans July 14:

Concern regarding how this proposal will impact on the access onto the A30 from Camp Road which is a major route to the village.

Highways Authority (Somerset CC):

"I refer to the above application which was originally received by the Highway Authority on the 27th May 2013 and my initial response to the LPA on the 9th September 2013, as well as amendments that have taken place with regard to the technical aspects of the application, culminating in amended plans / proposals being formally received by the Highway Authority on the 14th July 2014.

By way of an update, you may recall from my original comments made in September 2013 that the Highway Authority originally had a number of concerns with this proposal and that the applicant was advised of these concerns by the LPA, which related primarily to a substandard access arrangement and lack of a suitable Travel Plan to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport.

Following on from this, the LPA may be aware that the Highway Authority was approached during the latter part of 2013 independently of the application with a fresh set of proposals, which included an acceptable ghost island right turn arrangement on the A30 (as shown generally in accordance with TTC drawing Proposed Access Option 1C) and an updated Travel Plan which passed successfully through the appropriate checks and confirmation was given to the developers highway consultants that this was the case at the end of January 2014, although there appeared to be some confusion after this date as to whether or not the application was ever formally amended with a number of unanswered emails being sent to the LPA on this subject.



As mentioned above however, these amended proposals have now been formally received by the Highway Authority and I can therefore confirm to the LPA firstly that the access arrangement is now considered satisfactory (Option 1C - subject to a negative planning condition requiring all highway works to be complete before any work commences on any dwelling approved on the site) and secondly that the revised Residential Travel Plan is incorporated into a suitable worded S106 Agreement, with other details such as parking provision and drainage being dealt with by suitably worded conditions.

In addition to the access works on the A30 described above, I am also aware that the applicants may have recently submitted draft proposals to the LPA for a proposed cycle link between the site and Plackett Lane (within existing public highway limits) and I can confirm that the Highway Authority has considered these proposals and would be generally supportive of such a proposal being incorporated into the application submission (subject to detailed design being approved) with Option 1 being the preferred option, although funding for such a scheme would need to be met entirely by the developer in this case. Such a proposal would then create a shared footway and cycleway on the north side of the A30 West Coker Road and it's technically possible for these works to be incorporated into the S278 Agreement necessary for the ghost island right turn lane access further to the west (also covered by a suitably worded negatively worded planning condition).

As such and in light of the above, I can confirm that the Highway Authority has no objection in principle to the development, subject to the inclusion of the revised Residential Travel Plan in an approved S106 Agreement, and that the following conditions are attached to any consent (conditions include consolidated accesses, estate roads, turning and parking, a condition survey of the highway, a construction management plan, surface water, and detailed drawings of the access arrangements).

#### SSDC Planning Policy:

"Given the progress the emerging Local Plan over the last year and the latest housing land supply position, these comments supersede my comments of 10th July 2013:

The proposal is located outside (albeit adjacent) the development area, and is therefore not in accordance with 'saved' Policy ST3 in the adopted Local Plan. However, the policy framework provided by the extant Local Plan (1991 - 2011) is time-expired and becoming increasingly out-of-date, with certain policies not fully consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In this context the application must be considered in light of the NPPF, 'saved policies' in the adopted Local Plan, and the emerging Local Plan (eLP).

The Council considers that it has a five-year supply of housing land, plus the appropriate buffer (of 20%), although it should be noted that this is currently being challenged at planning appeals. Therefore, the Local Plan housing supply policies are not automatically rendered out-of-date (NPPF, para 49), and the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision-taking is not automatically invoked (NPPF, para 14). Nevertheless, although saved Policy ST3 has sustainability aspects which are in line with the general thrust of the NPPF, given the age of this policy it is considered to be overly restrictive in relation to plan-making to meet development needs unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole; or
- specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted (NPPF, para 14).

The NPPF states (para 216) that the more advanced the stage of preparation, the greater the weight that may be given to emerging plans. The emerging Local Plan is at an advanced stage, and is currently the subject of consultation on Main Modifications following resumed hearing sessions in June 2014. Yeovil is identified as a 'strategically significant town' having by far the widest range of jobs, community facilities and services in the District. Accordingly, the eLP proposes significant housing growth at Yeovil (7,441 dwellings over the period 2006-28). The eLP is clear that this development should be located within the existing urban framework, and at two sustainable urban extensions to the south and north east of the town,

as set out in Policies SS5, YV1, YV2 in the eLP. The proposal is outside the urban framework and is not within the two urban extensions, and is therefore not in accordance with the emerging Local Plan.

However, the refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity is unlikely unless (a) the development is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of development; and (b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally adopted (Planning Practice Guidance Ref. ID 21b-014-20140306). Although criterion (b) is applicable, I do not consider that the proposal would invoke (a), and therefore I do not consider that refusal solely on grounds of prematurity is appropriate.

I am aware there are site specific issues relating to landscape impact and effect on the character and appearance of the area, and local concerns on the highways impact. In addition, the proposal is located on grade 1 agricultural land - areas of poorer quality land should be used in preference to that of higher quality (NPPF, para 112). One of the eLP Yeovil sustainable urban extensions is located entirely on grade 1 agricultural land; however, this was prepared within a different context of considering strategic options for growth as part of the Local Plan and clear, credible reasons for this proposal were given through the Local Plan Examination.

Overall, the proposal is not in accordance with policies in both the adopted Local Plan, and the emerging Local Plan. However, as highlighted, the NPPF is an important material consideration, and the various planning issues should be weighed up in considering whether the proposal is consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF, para 14)".

#### SSC Archaeologist:

"Following our conversation this email is to clarify the potential settings issues on the Scheduled Monument "Chessels Roman Villa" that lies to the south-west of the proposal site. The proposal site lies on high ground above the villa in a field surrounded by mixed hedgerows and trees. The setting of the villa is that it lies in a generally open landscape on a slight south facing slope with long distance views south and south-east to the chalk downland of North Dorset. It is bounded on all sides by hedgerows and roads, the A30 on the west and rural lanes on north, east and south. It is difficult to assess if the villas modern agricultural field setting relates to its original Roman period landscape but it's clear that the setting would be severely impacted by development to the south and south east of the villa. The northerly aspect of the villa is bounded by a sunken lane with the development field further separated from the villa by hedgerows and a road. Views from the site to the north and north-east are restricted compared to the southerly aspect. The development limit lies 160m to the north-east of the field boundary closest to the villa field and so does not encroach on the villas rural setting and lies at a great enough distance north-east from the villa to have none, or only limited effect on the villas' setting.

I have requested advice from English Heritage and received an email that confirms the proposal site was visited by a member of EH staff and that subsequent advice to SSDC was that there would not be significant impacts to the Listed Buildings or other designated assets. Therefore, the buried archaeological assets on the site remain the only issue to be resolved and as previously advised, these can be dealt with through the imposition of the condition contained in my last email quoted below:

The archaeological evaluation has been carried out and show that there are archaeological; remains in part of the site reflecting prehistoric activity. These remains can be dealt with through further investigations prior to development.

For this reason I recommend that the developer be required to archaeologically excavate the heritage asset and provide a report on any discoveries made as indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 141). This should be secured by the use of model condition 55 attached to any permission granted".

SSDC Conservation Manager:

"The principal concerns are not with the impact upon heritage assets but with some urban design issues such as the (undesirable) formation of an enclosed enclave which does not connect through anywhere except by the access to West Coker Road. There are probably opportunities to make more connections".

English Heritage:

"I can confirm that in our view the proposals would not present 'substantial harm' (NPPF 132-134) to designated assets forming part of the historic environment and thus we do not wish to raise any objection on this occasion".

SSDC Landscape Architect:

"The Yeovil peripheral landscape study (YPLS) was undertaken in September 2008, with a brief to identify land at the edge of the settlement that might have a capacity for development without undue impact upon its surrounds. This study was undertaken against the backdrop of a district-wide need to allocate development sites in its LDF, later revised as 'directions of growth'. The outcome of that study indicated that this site lays within an area that has a moderate-high capacity to accommodate development. Consequently it would appear that it is a logical site with which to progress development proposals. Conversely, it has to be stated that the YPLS was undertaken to complement other evidence-based work that was to inform the site allocation/area of growth selection process. That process is now complete, with an outcome that this site was not selected for development. As such, it remains agricultural land, laying beyond the settlement edge.

The landscape position does not support the development of agricultural land outside the urban edge, unless there is a clear local policy in favour of development. If the council is in the position that additional residential sites are needed, then I recognise - as did the YPLS - that much of the site, i.e; the larger, easterly portion, is well related to the built form of Helena and West Coker Roads, and potentially could accommodate built form without too great an impact upon the wider countryside. However, if there is no planning need for additional housing sites, then there is a landscape case to conserve the countryside for its own sake, noting there is no intrinsic enhancement in supplanting open fields with built form and hard surfacings. Consequently, given the local plan policy position, there is no landscape support for development of the site before us.

A note on the layout. The arrangement of roads and housing shows little respect for context. The majority of the housing backs onto bounding hedges, and open fields beyond, with the subsequent potential for erosion of the hedges/visual intrusion of domestic paraphernalia. Open space is dis-aggregated, and has little coherence, whilst little consideration appears to have been given to the settings of local historic assets, which would redefine the masterplan. The housing arrangement appears very retro, and its capacity to accommodate parking standards would appear limited. Whilst the proposal is relatively low density, it appears crowded against the current urban edge, and consequently unsympathetic to local urban character. Whilst I recognise that the layout is indicative, in the form presented it does not offer good urban design. Consequently there is no landscape support for the proposal as presented to us".

In response to representations made by the agent:

"The peripheral landscape study - addendum (PLSA) found much of this application site to have a potential for development. Whilst an area is indicated (figure 1.9 within the PLSA) I would advise;

(a) The PLSA is a strategic study. It is the nature of such studies that more detailed investigation will refine the findings of such a broad-level document, as has proven to be the case with both of our proposed UEs. Similarly, the PLSA does not present the area shown on figure 1.9 as definitive.

(b) It is rightly noted that PLSA included an assessment of 'settings', in seeking to establish



limits to potential development areas. However, (i) the PLSA states these to be assumptions only and (ii) stressed the need for more detailed work to clarify setting extent, which can change outcomes.

(c) Part of the PLSA's findings were the identification of potential development sites. I would re-iterate an emphasis on 'potential', for (i) it cannot anticipate the findings of a detailed appraisal of any specific site, nor (ii) does it envisage the whole of a potential site being taken up by built form.

(d) Clearly an individual proposal will present specifics that cannot be anticipated by a strategic level document (such as the PLSA) and thus my response to this proposal will not necessarily reflect the outcome of the earlier, strategic, document.

Returning to the application currently before us;

(1) My response of June 2013 was given knowing that this edge of town was not within the direction(s) of growth proposed by the Submission Local Plan. If that is still the Policy position, then that response remains valid.

(2) If however, the Policy position enables the possibility of development in this location, then consistent with the findings of the PLS and PLSA, I acknowledge that there is a potential for some form of development here. However, reviewing the proposal before us, whilst I consider the east side of the site as having a credible relationship with the existing town edge (as represented by Helena and West Coker Road's housing) I view the westward extension of the site (broadly plots 16-58) which projects housing into open countryside with no credible tie with the urban edge, to be at variance with local character, and thus fail to satisfy local plan policy ST5 para 4. Consequently the landscape objection to the extent of the current proposal stands".

#### Strategic Housing:

"Regarding the affordable housing element of the scheme - current policy requires 35% affordable housing split 67:33, social rent: shared ownership or other intermediate solutions.

I would expect 50 affordable units - based on 144 dwellings.

The 50 affordable units would be split 67:33; 34 social rent and 16 shared ownership or other intermediate solutions.

In addition to a housing mix of one, two, three and four bedroom properties we have an expressed need for one bedroom houses and two and three bedroom bungalows in Yeovil. Further dialogue is necessary to determine the numbers and the tenure of such properties.

I would expect the affordable units to be pepper potted throughout this site. I would suggest that the units are developed to blend in with the proposed housing styles".

#### SSDC Ecologist:

Initial response - July 2013:

"I'm satisfied with the scope of the surveys undertaken and I'm in broad agreement with the reports' conclusions (Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey-Aug 2012, Interim Bat Survey-Apr 2013 and Bat Survey Report Addendum-June 2013, all by Charlotte Peacock Associates). These haven't identified any significant ecological issues or constraints to the proposed development".

Biodiversity enhancement should be encouraged by condition along with conditions for a badger survey and reptile survey.

Second response - August 2014 after neighbour representation critically appraising bat surveys:

"A letter has been received (Mrs.L.Harwood, 18/07/2014) that provides very detailed criticisms of the bat survey reports submitted with this application, and regards the information to be inadequate".

Detailed consideration of those points is made, "I conclude this site is unlikely to be more than minimal importance for bats. Consequently I don't consider there is strong justification to require a further bat survey".

A further Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Bat Survey Report was submitted in August 2014. The Ecologist commented that there did not appear to be anything new or updated and he had no further comments to make.

#### Somerset Wildlife Trust

Noting the Habitat Survey Report and the Bat Survey the recommendations should be carried though inclusive of bird boxes. Also further surveys for badger, bird and tree before final approval is given.

"Green Corridors" are said to be included but the proposed layout does not seem to present the opportunity. Enhancement for wildlife should be reflected in the design.

#### SSDC Tree Officer:

If consent is granted a tree protection condition is requested.

#### SSDC Community, Health and Leisure Service:

An on-site outdoor play area is shown on the indicative plan albeit it is too small. 646qm of space is required which would form part of the planning obligation.

A financial contribution to equip this area is sought:

- equipped play space contribution of £123,555 with a commuted sum of £71,368; Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 25% of total dwellings,

Youth facilities are also desired for the site; as such a contribution is sought:

- youth facilities contribution of £24,261 with a commuted sum of £8,970; Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 25% of dwellings,

In the case of other categories of provision financial sums to cater for off-site provision (new provisions or enhancements of existing facilities) are sought.

Categories of provision and levels of contribution include:

- playing pitches contribution of £56,995 with a commuted sum of £40,669 (dedicated to the enhancement of existing pitches or the provision of new pitches at East Coker Recreation Ground or in Yeovil); Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 50% of total dwellings,
- changing room contribution of £115,717 with a commuted sum of £9,309 (dedicated to the enhancement of the existing changing rooms at East Coker Recreation Ground or the provision of new changing rooms as part of a project to develop a new community hall/changing room facility at West Coker Recreation Ground); Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 50% of total dwellings,
- community hall contribution of £221,509 (dedicated to the enhancement of East Coker Village Hall or the community hall element of the project to develop a new community hall/changing room facility at West Coker Recreation Ground); Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 50% of total dwellings,
- strategic off-site provisions in Yeovil; Trigger Point for contribution = Occupation of 75% of total dwellings:
  - swimming pool - £53,116
  - sports hall - £87,072
  - indoor tennis courts - £34,044
  - synthetic turf pitches - £11,549
  - theatre and arts centre-Octagon Theatre - £44,963

Commuted sums relate to a 10-yr maintenance period for the facility.

Should the corresponding infrastructure not be provided within:

- a 5 year period (equipped play space, youth facilities and community halls provision);
- or
- a 10 year period (all other categories of provision),

the individual contribution may be reclaimed.

The figures relate to a net increase of 143 dwellings. Figures will have to be set to relate to the final number of dwellings approved at the Approval of Reserved Matters stage. Based on 143 dwellings the overall contribution would total £912,127 (or £6,379 per dwelling). This will be index linked. This total also includes a 1% Community, Health and Leisure Service Administration fee (£9,031). An additional Legal Services fee and separate S106 Monitoring fee will also be applicable.

SSDC Open Spaces Officer:

No objections to this proposal but the developer needs to be mindful of policy CR2 and the Design Guide Addendum which will need to be adhered to at the reserved matters stage.

SCC Education:

"A development of 144 dwellings would require 29 primary school places, but the local schools are all already at or over capacity and are forecast to remain so for the foreseeable future, without taking new development into account. Financial contributions will therefore need to be secured in order to mitigate this additional pressure if planning permission is granted for the scheme. The cost of each place is £12,257, so a total of £355,453 would need to be sought for this purpose.

Similarly, the development would require 20 secondary school places and, whilst there are a few currently available places at the nearest school, Preston, these are forecast to be required for a rising roll, particularly given the cumulative impact of other developments in this part of Yeovil. The cost of each secondary school place is £18,469, so a contribution totalling £369,380 should also be sought.

Finally, four pre-school places would need to be funded, with a cost of £12, 257 per place, so an additional contribution of £49,028 will be required".

Environment Agency:

No objection following submission of the revised flood risk assessment by Complete Design Partnership Ltd reference 13-5508-FRA dated 09/029/2013, subject to conditions and informatives relating to:

- A scheme for surface water run-off and maintenance of drainage system
- Contaminated land
- Sustainable construction
- Pollution prevention during construction
- Waste management

Comment is made regarding the proposed Surface Water/Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):

"Surface water run-off should be controlled as near to its source as possible with sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). This reduces flood risk through the use of soakaways, infiltration trenches, permeable pavements, grassed swales, ponds etc. SuDS can also increase groundwater recharge, improve water quality and provide amenity opportunities. A SuDS approach is encouraged by Approved Document Part H of the Building Regulations 2000".

Wessex Water:

"Our recent advice regarding drainage contained with Appendix C of the FRA and Drainage Strategy 13-5508 Issue 1 29/04/2013 submitted with the application is still current".  
Modelling being undertaken to assess capacity of the existing water supply network.

SSDC Technical Services:

Details of surface water attenuation to be submitted for approval.

No comments have been received from the Rights of Way Officer, Garden History Society, Somerset Waste Partnership, Yeovil Chamber of Trade and NHS Primary Care Trust.

## REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbouring properties to the site have been notified. A press advert has been placed and a site notice has also been displayed (major development and departure from local plan).

1 letter of support has been received, it states:

- "We are for the development. There seems to be a lot of Nimbyism regarding this application. Yeovil has to grow to move forward and people have to have somewhere to live".

55 couples/individuals have provided representations on this application as too have the East Coker preservation Trust; one petition was received. A summary of comments:

- This application is premature and prejudicial to the Local Plan process.
- The south side of Yeovil now appears to be receiving more than its fair share of development very much to Yeovil's detriment.
- The proposal is contrary to the South Somerset Proposed Submission Plan 2006-2028. This site was considered by the SSDC Project Management Board on 26 November 2012 and rejected. Notes from that meeting recall - 'PMB re-considered the proposed inclusion of land to the rear of Yeovil Court and agreed that it would not be included as part of the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension due to the potential for it to compromise/encroach on the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone and the fact it is identified as having a low capacity to accommodate built development with the Historic Environment Assessment'.
- The site has archaeological importance. The proposal would impact on the setting of the Roman Villa site at Chessels and Dunnock's Lane.
- The proposal would impact on Naish Priory contrary to Policy EH5.
- "The proposed site is within the East Coker parish boundary. East Coker Parish Council has begun the formal process to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which, inter alia, will include planning for appropriate and proportionate development of housing within the defined area boundary. This planning application will prejudice the proper consideration of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan by the community of East Coker".
- The buffer zone should be respected. East Coker, Nash, Holywell, Burton and West Coker do not want to be swallowed up as so many hamlets and villages surrounding Yeovil already have been.
- There is no need for more homes, where necessary use brownfield sites.
- This area has always been sought after because it is surrounded by open countryside; as such people have paid a premium on the house price.
- The peace and quiet and the countryside will be destroyed.
- Loss of Grade 1 agricultural land.
  - o NPPF - "Protecting the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land"
  - o The growing of food is becoming a serious issue.
  - o Other developments are also threatening the loss of high quality farmland.
- Highways/Pedestrians and Cycling.
  - o The single point of access will cause traffic issues.
  - o The slip road is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass and will not be suitable for construction lorries etc.
  - o Children use this stretch of quiet road to reach the bus stop.
  - o Cyclists also short cut here to avoid the A30.
  - o Cyclists are put off Bunford Hollow because of its steepness.
  - o There are no crossing facilities on West Coker Rd.
  - o There is already consent for another access on the other side of West Coker Rd so chaos will ensue.
  - o Local residents will face very serious problems accessing and exiting the A30 especially at peak times.

- o Traffic would increase on the Holywell road.
- o The southern cycle/pedestrian link accesses a lane that is not made up and barely one car wide.
- The bus only runs every hour and so is not practical for people working in Yeovil or Crewkerne.
- Extra strain on local services.
- Where are the jobs to cater for new people?
- Wildlife impacts - frogs, toads, grass snakes, hedgehogs, hares, deer, birds (barn owls, green woodpecker, dormice, buzzards, sparrow, hawks, kestrels, skylarks, swallows), bats, stoats, slow worms, foxes, badgers, newts, butterflies (fratilleries, white admirals)
- No statement regarding sustainable energy production.
- Light pollution.
- The site has a tendency to flood.
- Most parents will drive to the primary school and there is no free transport to secondary schools in this area so children will have to be driven there.
- The layout appears too dense and the plots too small, it lacks any creativity or innovation.
- The comparative site in Wincanton is cramped due to on street parking.
- Construction access and noise, working hours.
- The access road would impact upon No.171 West Coker Rd and two bedroom windows in the side elevation.
- The proposal would impinge on the ability of a local resident to follow their hobby as an astronomer.
- "It is disappointing that the applicant has failed to engage with the community prior to submitting this application, despite the clear encouragement to do so in paragraph 66 and 189 of the NPPF".
- Loss of view.
- Impact on property values.

Since consultation on amended plans, primarily the alteration of the highway access, in June 2014 the following further points in objection to the proposal have been made:

- The council now has a five-year land supply with 20% buffer and so there is no presumption in favour of development.
- The site is not within the planned urban extensions.
- A number of homes have an established right of way onto the site gained under prescription since the houses were constructed in the period circa 1930-1980.
- The travel plan includes unrealistic targets and initiatives.
- "Priority is planned to be given to the residents of the 144 new dwellings, over those living in Helena Road and Nash Lane, when seeking to gain access to the highway network at West Coker Road. The increase in traffic, especially at peak times, together with this change in priority will seriously disadvantage existing, long standing residents, as well as adding to current serious difficulties in gaining access onto West Coker Road".
- The bat survey is not adequate.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

The application raises numerous issues, each will be considered here in turn. This is an outline application for 144 dwellings will all matters, except means of vehicular access, reserved for future approval via an application for the approval of Reserved Matters. As such many matters of detail including design, specific layout and residential amenity are those issues not able to be examined at this stage.

### Principle of Development

The proposal is located outside (albeit adjacent) the development area, and is therefore not in accordance with 'saved' Policy ST3 in the adopted Local Plan. However, the policy framework provided by the extant Local Plan is time-expired and becoming increasingly out-of-date, with certain policies not fully consistent with the NPPF). In this context the application must be considered in light of the NPPF, 'saved policies' in the adopted Local Plan, and the emerging Local Plan.

Although the Council is of the view that it currently has a five-year housing supply with appropriate buffer this view is being currently challenged. On the basis that the necessary housing supply can be demonstrated the NPPF instructs approving development in accordance with the development plan which as stated above it does not. Elsewhere the NPPF states that policies in emerging plans can be given increased weight as the plan advanced. The emerging local Plan is at an advanced stage and outlines that Yeovil should accommodate significant growth over the plan period of, primarily through the strategic allocation of the sustainable urban extensions and otherwise in the urban framework (current built limits) of the town. The proposal is also therefore contrary to the emerging plan.

The Planning Policy officer also gives commentary on prematurity and the issue of Grade 1 agricultural land. With regard to this matter the agent argues that the land has limited yield ability to provide high quality agricultural land that is economically or practical to farm extensively, due to drought, nutrient loss, the shape of the field, the lack of irrigation and restricted crop choice. Seemingly the Grade 1 status is therefore challenged. Whilst the Council is advocating the use of Grade 1 land for a strategic allocation this does not override the requirement for developers to promote poorer quality land in preference. Given the amount of Grade 1 land proposed to be used and the relevant benefits of the housing development it is not, on balance, a matter the LPA find objectionable enough to base a refusal upon.

It remains therefore an assessment as to whether the proposal before us represents sustainable development and whether any harm is outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. What follows is an assessment of potential impacts within this application, which seeks outline consent with all matters reserved except means of access.

### Layout, Landscape Impact

The application site is too extensive in area to be classed as a natural rounding off of the south west of Yeovil's urban area. The western leg protrudes in an ungainly fashion into open countryside with no credible landscape boundary or anchorage; the agent states the field is an odd shape for agriculture practices reinforcing this point.

A letter from agent dated 27th Nov 2012 seeks to justify the extent of development using work undertaken by the Council's Landscape Architect however the context in which that work was produced was for a wider Yeovil assessment, it was not produced with the aim of setting built development limits, as explained in the Landscape Architects recent comments.

With the built form of the development to be agreed via the reserved matters application there are no specific aspects to assess, however the Design and Access Statement does indicate the site would accommodate two to five bedroom dwellings. The indicative masterplan also shows areas of public open space and an equipped play area.

The application has been made on the basis that the site would accommodate approx. 144 dwellings at approx. 19 dwellings per hectare, the agent has also assessed this against Watercombe Heights (20), Helena Road/Nash Lane (10.70) and the Laburnum Way/Ashmead area (30). If Members are minded to approve it would be strongly suggested

to restrict the number of dwellings by condition to 144.

In terms of impact on the setting of heritage assets (archaeology is dealt with elsewhere) Chessels Roman villa (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and the Grade I and II listed buildings at Naish Priory the submitted Heritage Assessment has found there to be a slight impact arising from the proposal. The assessment cannot quantify precisely given the application is in outline but it is unlikely to be substantial it claims. This view has been validated by English Heritage.

The historic park of Brympton d'Evercy is just over 1km to the north-west of the site and a second Roman Villa, also a Scheduled Ancient Monument is just under 1km away to the south-east (Dunnocks Lane). The assessment concludes there would be no impact on these assets. By inference English Heritage has validated this view. As such it is considered the site can be developed in a manner to safeguard the setting of the identified heritage assets in accordance with the NPPF and Local Policies ST5, ST6, EC3 and EH8.

The application for reserved matters would give the opportunity to review sustainable construction through design, layout and solar orientation, in light of increasing requirements through building regulations.

Referring back to the Landscape Architect's comments the site has no credible tie with the urban edge and is at variance with local character contrary to criteria 4 of Policy ST5. In this case, given the strong view, it is not felt the relative benefits of the housing outweigh this particular issue when those same benefits could be met with a reduced development that preserves landscape character.

#### Archaeology

The primary archaeological issues are the potential setting issues on the Scheduled Monument 'Chessels Roman Villa' that lies to the south-west of the site, and the buried archaeological assets on the site. With regards to the setting issues the comments of the SCC Archaeologist are noted and this has been validated by English Heritage. In terms of buried archaeology there are suggestions that the site has remains reflecting prehistoric activity. The suggested way forward is via further investigation required via condition, prior to the commencement of any development.

This approach complies with Local Plan policy EC12 and para 141 of the NPPF.

#### Highway Implications

The application is supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. These documents and the latest plan 'Proposed Access Option 1C, dwg.11 Rev.A' are supported by the Highway Authority as confirmed in their comments of August 2014.

The originally submitted plan in May 2013 only and simply showed a give way junction access from the site boundary onto the dead-end spur road of West Coker Road. This attracted an objection from the Highway Authority in September 2013. The main conclusion stated, "A detailed analysis of the applicant's proposals has however highlighted a series of serious deficiencies with regard to both the Transport Assessment and detail of the proposed access arrangement". The lack of information to be able to determine the traffic impact, the failure to promote sustainable transport modes and achieve a safe access, and the lack of a travel plan were further reasons to object to the proposal as it stood. The technical and road safety audit undertaken by the HA also concluded the turning arrangements off the main A30 were insufficient to cope with the expected number of movements. A straightforward reason for refusal was offered.

Due to this and other deficiencies with the application the agent was strongly advised in

September 2013 to withdraw the application, undertake the much needed public consultation, redress the highway issues, taking into account other local issues and resubmit afresh. This advice was not taken and meetings were then held with the Highway Authority without the involvement of the LPA. The outcome of such meetings was an amended plan showing the now proposed rearrangement of the spur road and a change in priority to Nash Lane. This means those vehicles emerging from Nash Lane and Helena Road from the west would now have to give priority to those vehicles emerging from the proposed site and 13 other properties accessed off the spur road before reaching the A30 junction. The proposed plan takes into account the arrangement that has been agreed in principle for the Bunford Heights development, namely the provision of a left right staggered ghost island junction. That application also secures a footway on the northern side through the existing bus stop to the Camp Road junction with a dedicated crossing point to the White Post Garage. Another crossing point across the A30 to the spur road has also already been secured. It is important that this scheme also secures these improvements in case the Bunford Heights scheme stalls.

In addition to these alterations a new bus stop layby is proposed on the south side with footway link. By widening the spur road a new footway would also be constructed on the south side of the spur road from the site boundary to the point at which the spur road meets Nash Lane, presumably inclusive of vehicle crossovers for those existing properties.

The application now also includes the provision of improved cycling infrastructure from the site along West Coker Road, in particular from the roundabout at Bunford Hollow to Plackett Lane, opposite Balidon Place. As part of the southern sustainable urban extension routes to and from the site are being explored as to their potential for providing improved and safer cycling and pedestrian provision. Plackett Lane from Sandhurst Rd to West Coker Rd is one such route, if this were to be delivered then a short stretch from Plackett Lane to the roundabout would be the gap in a potential cycle route around the southern and eastern edge of the town. The agent's transport consultant has undertaken a feasibility study and offered two options, a cheaper southern side option and more expensive northern option with extra crossing. Whilst work on the sustainable urban extension continues it is felt, taking the £50,000 offered, if the application is approved, would be the more practical way forward. Such a sum would cover the full cost of the southern option costs but additional funding would be needed to undertake the northern option.

The proposed vehicular access arrangements were drawn up in consultation with the Highway Authority only, thereby removing the opportunity of the LPA to influence. The proposed arrangement has attracted significant objection with local residents pointing to long queuing times within Nash Lane particularly when waiting for an opportunity to pull-out and travel eastbound due to the existing weight of traffic on West Coker Road. This matter will not improve given the extra traffic trying to gain access to the A30 and the presence of a new central turn right lane for vehicles turning into Nash Lane from the west. Furthermore this arrangement would do little for pre-existing issues along this stretch of highway which local residents and Parish Councils highlight. These issues include general speeding and the safety issues raised by the juxtaposition of junctions around Camp Road, the exit to the White Post Garage and the road to Holywell/Hardington. The ability to improve existing issues whilst facilitating development and enabling a safer highway network was high on the priority list for officers, and so the support from the HA on the drawn scheme hampered any attempts to achieve such. Indeed a meeting was called with the agent, Ward Members and County Councillor to promote the feasibility of a new roundabout that would serve this site and Bunford Heights, having the effect of reducing vehicles speeds and balancing traffic flow priorities. In fairness to the agent a scheme was drawn up following that meeting and presented to the Highway Authority and some agreement was reached with the developer of Bunford Heights to amend the agreed access to that site but the HA favoured the scheme it



had negotiated with the agent and found issues with the roundabout scheme and so with that support the agent showed little willingness in pursuing the LPAs favoured way forward.

It is fair to say the Highway's Authority's acceptance of this scheme on the basis that the impact is not significant enough is understandable if somewhat frustrating. There is an aspiration shared by local councillors and officers to secure a highways scheme that will serve both this scheme and the development at Bunford Heights however the scheme before us has to be assessed on its own merits.

Policy ST5 of the Local Plan requires developments to have a satisfactory means of access and show traffic can be accommodated on the local transport network. The NPPF (para 32) requires decisions to take into account whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impact of the development. "Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe". It is on this basis that given the HA response officers feel they cannot progress a negative recommendation on highway grounds.

Given the view of the Highway Authority the risk of costs being awarded, if in the opinion of the Inspector an unreasonable case by the LPA is put forward, officers cannot strongly advise members to consider refusing the application on this matter. Members will be aware that the lack of an objection from the Highway Authority does make it difficult to substantiate a recommendation for refusal however Members can take into account the views of local people and their own knowledge of this area to reach a different conclusion.

The agent has submitted a revised Travel Plan during the course of the development. Whilst some benefits are embellished Members will recall that Bunford Heights has a resolution to approve and is in geographically the same area and would share the same linkages and be the same distance to key destinations as this site. It has been agreed by the Highway Authority and in any approval the travel plan will be tied by S106 and then monitored by the Highway Authority travel plan team. The Travel Plan highlights bus services assessed via the bus stops outside and opposite the Yeovil Court Hotel. In terms of access to the town centre there is an hourly service.

Despite severe reservations, on the basis of the input from the Highway Authority one reluctantly has to conclude the proposal is in accordance with the NPPF and local plan policies ST5, TP1, TP2 and TP5.

#### Affordable Housing

The comments of the Strategic Housing Team are noted and the requirement for 35% affordable housing is justified by policy HG7 of the Local Plan. The planning obligation will have to cater for various parameters including the securing of grant (public subsidy) and the overall dwelling numbers at the reserved matters stage. The specific location of affordable units will be assessed/determined during the reserved matters stage.

#### Trees

Whilst the majority of the site is an open field, it is bound by mature hedging and trees. Any approval of reserved matters would seek to retain and strengthen existing perimeter landscape features and the layout plan, albeit indicative, shows the opportunity for tree planting within the main body of the site within streets and open spaces. The Council's Tree Officer has sought a general condition to protect existing trees during the course of the development and this could be extended to hedgerows also.

### Wildlife

An extended phase 1 habitat and bat survey report has taken place and has identified limited badger activity and bat habitat. The impact is not considered to be significant. Foraging areas and commuting routes for bats aren't specifically protected by legislation (unlike their roosts). The Council's Ecologist has pointed out that the bat species recorded (Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Serotine) do have strong associations with urban areas. Indeed the predominant impact of the proposed development will be the loss of an arable field, a habitat type of low importance to bats.

Methods to mitigate potential impacts have been suggested. A condition would be required to seek biodiversity enhancement. The Council's Ecologist has also suggested conditions regarding reptiles and badgers. It is considered the proposal complies with the NPPF and policy EC8 of the Local Plan.

### Drainage

Even though the site and surrounding area is shown in Flood Zone 1 and so not at risk from fluvial flooding, the application has been supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy due to the size of the site.

No objections have been raised by the Council's Technical Engineer or the EA. With no evident issues at this stage it is felt appropriate to request a full scheme of surface water drainage based on SUDS principles to be submitted as part of the application for reserved matters. Ground conditions are favourable for soakaways and permeable surfaces. It is considered the proposal complies with the NPPF and policy EU4 of the Local Plan.

### Play, Sport and Open Space Provision

The current indicative plan shows the provision of a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), and provision of distinctive areas of public open space. The LEAP is to be provided in accordance with local plan policies CR2 and CR3.

Financial sums for various categories of off-site provision have been sought, in line with local plan policies ST10, CR2 and CR3, as detailed in the consultation response from SSDC Community, Health and Leisure. It is important to note contributions going towards East and West Coker villages to support projects there.

### Public Right of Way

A restricted byway currently runs to the south on the site from Nash Farm along the southern edge of Helena Gardens to Nash Lane. It is the width of a single carriageway and is twin-track along most of its length surfaced in tarmac of varying degrees of repair. There are no plans to alter this arrangement other than to achieve access from the site to the restricted byway via a footway link.

### Planning Obligations and Viability

As detailed elsewhere in this section if the application was approved planning obligations would be sought for the off-site cycle/pedestrian link to Plackett Lane, affordable housing, education and play, community and sporting facilities. These will be secured by a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Planning Act.

At the time of writing this report no indication had been made regarding the viability of the development given the levels of contribution sought.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposal falls within the scope of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. Accordingly, the Local Planning

Authority was asked to make a formal screening decision as to the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment because of the nature of the proposed development and the fact that the site area exceeds 0.5 hectares.

The basic test of the need for Environmental Impact Assessment in a particular case is the likelihood of significant environmental effects on the environment.

In response to the request from the agent the Local Planning Authority has not required the applicant to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment in support of this application. The application is however supported by a host of professional assessments, reports and surveys covering key environmental matters.

#### Public Consultation and Engagement

The NPPF encourages early engagement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system. It states 'good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community'. This application was submitted without any pre-application engagement and there has been no consultation with the local community since its submission (apart from one highways focused meeting with the Ward/County Members). This is very regrettable and not something the Local Planning Authority advocates, especially when the application raises significant issues as emphasised by the adverse public reaction. The application was requested to be withdrawn in September 2013 to allow proper public consultation but instead the agents pursued separate negotiations with the Highway Authority and the EA.

#### Other

There has been a claim of assumed private rights of way over the land from an adjacent householder. These claims have been passed to the agent but are not matters that would affect the determination of an outline application, as it would be possible to accommodate such rights in any application for reserved matters. This legal issue remains a civil matter.

#### Conclusion

Given the manner in which the application was submitted, the day before the local plan examination without pre-application discussions and with the five-year housing land supply in doubt, the level of development sought appears opportunistic when a smaller development may well have gained more favour from a landscape perspective.

The LPA recognise that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the number of reasons for refusal has been reduced over time through discussion with consultees however the long-standing landscape issue cannot be overcome without a significantly different application and as such the proposal does not represent sustainable development by reason of that overriding landscape impact and by consequence does not comply with the aims and aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

##### **Application refused for the following reason:**

01. The proposed extent and projection of the site into open countryside without a credible tie with the urban edge is considered to be at variance with the form and setting of the locality and would erode local character. This harm is not considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposal and as such does not represent sustainable development contrary to policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

# Agenda Item 9

## **Officer Report On Planning Application: 14/03904/OUT**

<b>Proposal :</b>	Outline application for the erection of a pair of semi-detached houses and alterations to the existing access drive (GR 355622/117474)
<b>Site Address:</b>	24 Ashford Grove Yeovil Somerset
<b>Parish:</b>	Yeovil
<b>Yeovil (Central) Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Cllr J Vincent Chainey Cllr A Kendall Cllr P Gubbins
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Andrew Collins Tel: 01935 462276 Email: andrew.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	23rd October 2014
<b>Applicant :</b>	Bunny Construction Ltd
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	Peter Smith Design Service Ltd Hollyfield Hewish Crewkerne Somerset TA18 8QR
<b>Application Type :</b>	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

### **Reason for Referral to Committee**

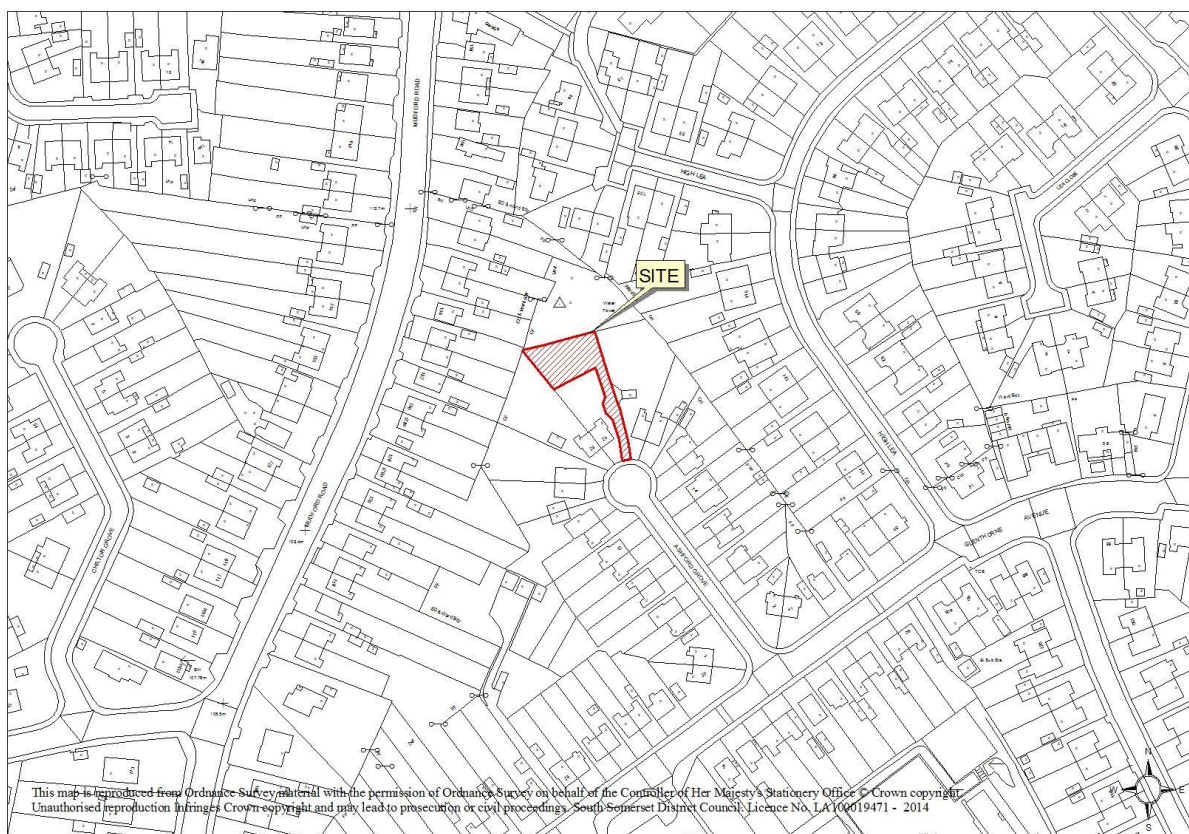
This application is referred to the committee at the request of the Ward Member(s) with the agreement of the Area Chairman to enable the comments of the neighbours and Yeovil Without Parish Council to be fully debated.

### **Site Description and Proposal**



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The application site is to the rear of a semi-detached property at the end of Ashford Grove. There is an existing track that accesses the garages of 22 and 24 Ashford Grove and the former water tower site where a block of flats is under construction.

Currently on site is a detached garage which serves the existing dwelling. A tree located in the centre of the site is to be removed but trees in the north-western corner are to be retained.

The applicants who are developing the water tower site are proposing a pair of semi-detached dwellings to the rear of 24 Ashford Grove. Access to the site is via the 46m long track (private road) to the water tower. Improvements to the track are proposed with it being widened from 3m to 3.5m and two passing areas created. Where the passing bays are proposed the track will be 5m in width.

This is an outline application with access and scale originally proposed to be considered at this stage. This shows 2 parking spaces for each of the new dwellings and a new garage and parking space to the rear for the existing dwelling. In addition an existing parking space to the front of 24 Ashford Grove is to be retained.

During the course of the application, further information in the form of a section through the proposed dwellings has been provided to show the proposed height of the dwellings. It has now been confirmed that access, layout and scale is for consideration at this time. In addition the redline has been amended to show the proposed new parking for the existing property.

## HISTORY

### 24 Ashford Grove

11/04723/FUL - The erection of a first floor rear extension to dwellinghouse (revised application) - Application permitted with conditions - 24/01/12

10/02558/FUL - The erection of a two storey rear extension to dwellinghouse - Application refused - 19/8/10 - Appeal allowed - 10/1/11

#### Former Water Tower site to rear

07/03208/REM - The erection of 4 no 2 bedroom flats - Application permitted with conditions - 07/09/2007

07/00566/REM -The erection of 5 no 2 bedroom flats - Application Refused - 28/06/2007 - Appeal dismissed - 03/12/07

05/00391/OUT - Residential development of land - Application permitted with conditions - 30/03/2005

### **POLICY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the relevant policy framework is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework and the saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012

Chapter 3 - Supporting a Prosperous Economy

Chapter 4 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)

Paragraph 32 states that "Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe."

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

Chapter 10 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Other

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012) and Standing Advice (June 2013).

### **CONSULTATIONS**

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL - Recommend approval.

YEOVIL WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL (Neighbouring Parish) - *"Recommend Refusal - This is overdevelopment. Also Ashford Grove is already full of parked cars (suggest the planning officer visits at 6pm - 7pm in an evening), and access is congested."*

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER - Has no comments to make.

TREE OFFICER - Verbally confirmed that he considers that the trees on site are not a constraint to development. There is no objection to the removal of the ornamental maple trees and suggests the trees on the application site in the Northwestern corner be coppiced.

HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY- Refers to standing advice.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

10 letters of objection has been received from residents mainly in Ashford Grove but also from Mudford Road.

They raise the following concerns;

- Building over a garden would be detrimental to the environment and wildlife.
- The increased hardstanding would increase water run-off.
- There are already a large number of cars in Ashford Grove, and parking provision is being created for more cars.
- The site is located near the local school and parents also park in the road.
- Could set an undesirable precedent.
- There is a lack of parking in the area and on-street spaces are limited. People already park within the turning circle and the additional housing and their visitors will add to this problem.
- Visitors and delivery vehicles will have to park in Ashford Grove.
- Problems with emergency vehicles using site.
- There is been a long period of construction traffic with the water tower site being developed and materials have been unloaded in the turning head. Widening the drive will not resolve this problem as it is still too narrow for larger vehicles.
- There is a lot of new development close to this site.
- Excessive continued development of an area is not suitable.
- Concerns about overlooking that would adversely affect privacy.
- Could be a need for further parking if dwellings are for families.
- This application is motivated by financial gain.
- There were problems when the flats were being developed on the water tower site with antisocial workmen.
- Increased pollution affecting the amenity of the Number 23.
- Impact upon light on properties in Mudford Road.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### Principle

The site is currently located within the development area. In addition the emerging Local Plan identifies Yeovil as the main area for growth within South Somerset. Also due to being the largest settlement in the district, Yeovil is the most sustainable as has the most shops and services. Therefore the principle of developing the site is accepted.

### Impact upon Amenity

By far the biggest impact upon amenity is upon the rear gardens of No 22 (located to the East of the track) and No 23 (the other half of the semi-detached property located to the West of the site).

As this is an outline application no elevation details have been provided, but the amended plan shows a traditionally designed property with a pitched roof. On this basis it has to be assumed that there would be windows facing the two properties mentioned above. The proposed dwellings are 9m from the boundary to the East with No 22 and the area adjacent to the track is used as a vegetable plot. No 22 experiences a relatively large garden area in a wedge shape as it is located at the top of the turning head. Therefore in considering all the above the proposal is not considered to demonstrably affect residential amenity to No 22.

The proposals in relation to No 23 are a minimum of 5m from the boundary. But again no elevation details are provided. There are currently significant mature trees along this boundary behind plot 2 and partially behind plot 1. But the tree officer considers that the trees on the application site should be coppiced. However if the layout of plot 1 was carefully considered this impact could be further minimised with the provision of a bathroom in the southwestern corner and obscure glazing imposed. It is also noted that No 23 enjoys a good sized garden. Furthermore, the dwellings would be located to the north east of the rear garden of No 23 and in these circumstances due to this orientation the dwellings would make little difference to the level of light currently enjoyed at the rear of no 23 and not result in demonstrable overshadowing. In these circumstances it is considered that the proposal would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupants of the neighbouring house.

A resident in Mudford Road has raised concerns over loss of light to her property. However, as the plans show the properties would be 25m from the site this is not considered to be an issue.

In addition, the remaining garden area for the existing dwelling is considered to be acceptable.

#### Access and Parking Provision

The main concerns in the letters of representation refer to existing parking and traffic issues problems within Ashford Grove. However an assessment is required as to whether this application for 2 additional dwellings result in demonstrable harm. In this respect reference is drawn to the Somerset Parking Strategy. Within Yeovil, 2 bed properties are required to provide 1 car parking space and 4 bedroom properties require 3 car parking spaces. In this instance, 2 car parking spaces are provided for each of the new dwellings, which exceeds the requirements and 3 car parking spaces would be provided for the existing property. This is all contained within the redline area and as such can be conditioned.

Concern has been raised that the dwellings could be family houses with additional car movements. However the submitted plans indicate that the proposals would be 2 bed properties.

During the previous application for the flats at the water tower (07/00566/FUL) the highway authority considered that at 3m in width the road was wide enough to accommodate delivery and removal vehicles. Also compensatory measures could be included to negate concerns from the Fire Service. These measures could also be utilised here.

In addition, this application proposes 2 passing bays along the existing access track to the water tower site. This can only be a benefit to highway safety in providing passing places in this road.

Also in considering Paragraph 32 of the NPPF it is not considered that the impact of the development would be severe. Therefore whilst the neighbour comments in this respect are acknowledged the proposal has to be considered on its own individual merits. As such the



proposal is considered to comply with Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

### Conclusion

In assessing the above comments, the proposals are considered to comply with Policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant permission

01. The proposals by reason of the layout, access and scale are not considered to adversely affect residential amenity or highway safety. As such the proposals are considered to comply with Policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

### **SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

01. Details of the appearance and landscaping (herein after called the "reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development begins and the development shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: As required by Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission and the development shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this permission or not later than 2 years from the approval of the last "reserved matters" to be approved.

Reason: As required by Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

03. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: amended plan 4298/14 received 15 September 2014.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

04. The application for approval of the reserved matters shall indicate:

- a) materials to be used for the external walls and roofs;
- b) materials to be used for rainwater goods;
- c) the design (including joinery details where appropriate), type of material, plus proposed colour and finish of all windows and doors plus recesses;
- d) details of eaves/verges;
- e) location and design details of all vents, flues and meter boxes;
- f) details of all internal and external boundary treatments; and
- g) the surfacing materials (and drainage details thereof) of all areas of hardstanding incl. private and shared driveways.

Reason: To maintain the character and appearance of the area to accord with policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

05. The application for approval of the reserved matters shall include a scheme for foul and surface water drainage. Such approved drainage details, which shall include provisions to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the public highway, shall be completed and become fully operational before the occupation of any dwelling. Following its installation such approved scheme shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development is adequately drained.

06. Construction works (including the operation of any machinery) and the delivery or dispatching of any construction materials, shall not take place outside 0830 hours to 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays, and 0830 hours to 1300 hours on Saturdays but not at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).

07. The parking areas indicated on the approved plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and used only for the intended purposes. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order) the garage hereby approved shall not be converted into habitable accommodation without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: To ensure the garage and parking areas are available for on-site parking in the interests of highway safety to accord with the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012) and policy TP7 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).

# Agenda Item 10

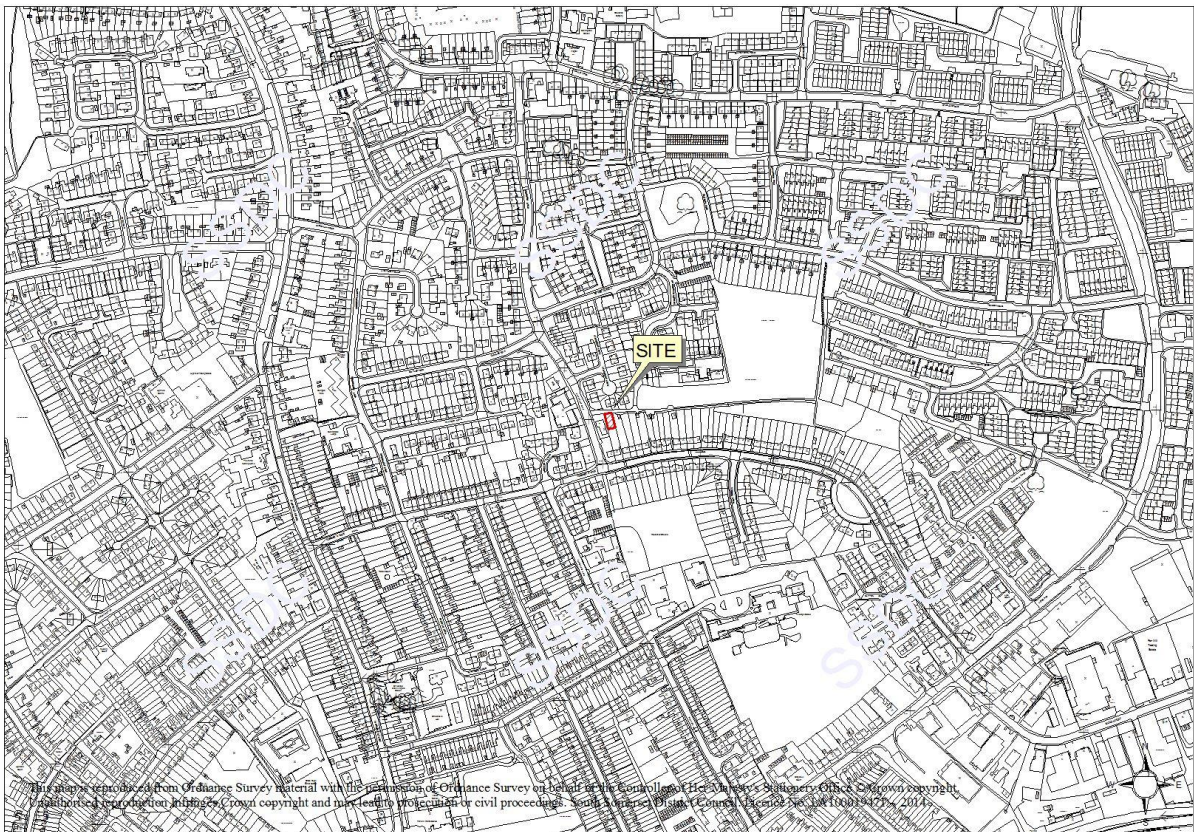
## **Officer Report On Planning Application: 14/03437/FUL**

<b>Proposal :</b>	Proposed dwelling house and garage (GR 356757 / 116935 )
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land Adj 2 Monmouth Road Yeovil Somerset
<b>Parish:</b>	Yeovil
<b>Yeovil (East) Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Cllr D Recardo Cllr T Fife Cllr T Lock
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Mrs Jennie Roberts Tel: (01935) 462441 Email: jennie.roberts@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	8th October 2014
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr F Harris
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	
<b>Application Type :</b>	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

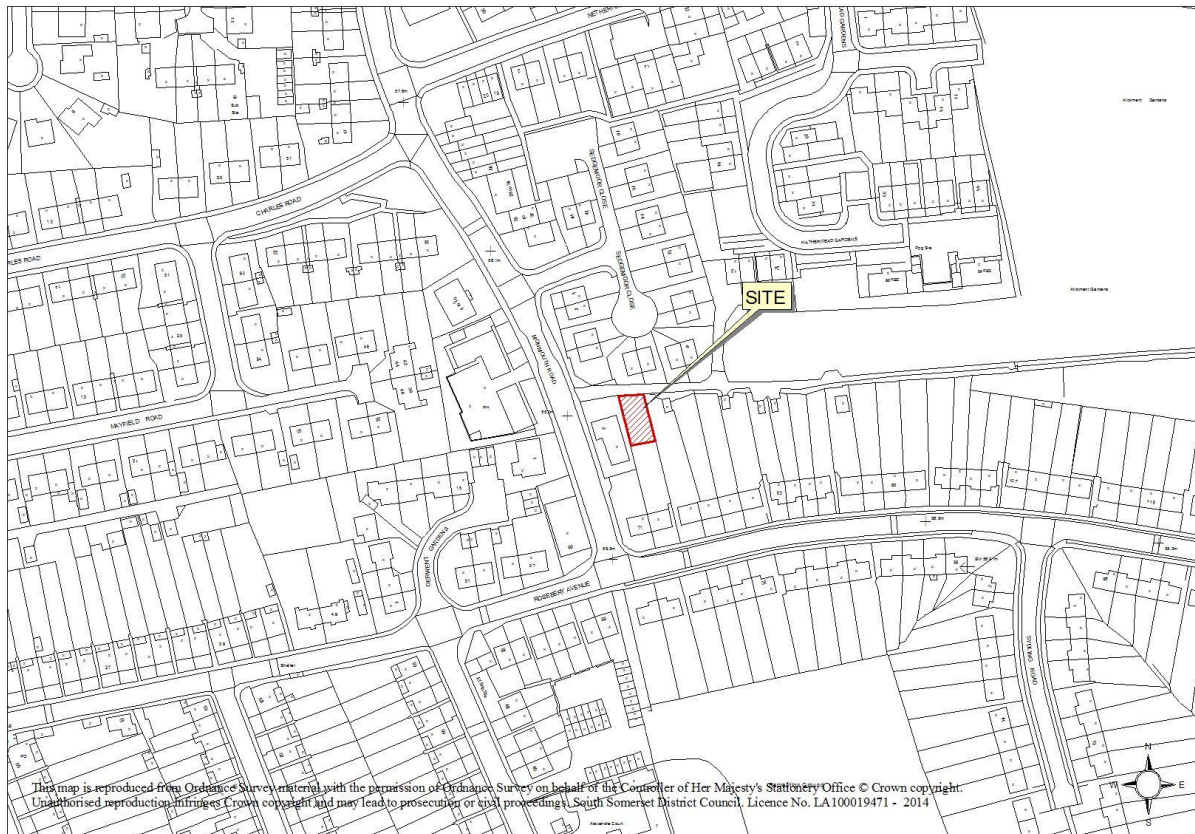
### **Reason for Referral to Committee**

This application is referred to the committee at the request of the Ward Member(s) with the agreement of the Area Chairman to enable the comments of neighbours and Yeovil Town Council to be fully debated.

### **Site Description and Proposal**







The site is located adjacent to 2 Monmouth Road, within the development area of Yeovil. The plot of land at one time formed part of the rear garden of 73 Rosebery Avenue. The application proposes the erection of a 2-bedroom detached chalet bungalow, and detached garage, to be constructed of brick under a tiled roof. On the ground floor, there will be 2no. reception rooms, a study, kitchen, utility room and WC. On the first floor will be 2no. bedrooms and a bathroom. The ground level is to be reduced so that the proposed dwelling has the same ridge height as the existing bungalow at 2 Monmouth Avenue. A set of steps will lead up to an enclosed private garden area to the side of the dwelling.

2 Monmouth Road currently has 2no. accesses off Monmouth Road. Access to the proposed dwelling will be via the northernmost access, whilst 2 Monmouth Road will only use the other access. Parking spaces for 3no. and 2no. cars will be available for each dwelling respectively.

### **HISTORY**

None available

### **POLICY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Following the recent revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review regard needs to be had to the development plan policies of the saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006)

ST5 (General Principles of Development)  
ST6 (Quality of Development)

Regard must also be had to:  
National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012  
Chapter 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes  
Chapter 7 - Requiring good design

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (March 2012) and Standing Advice (June 2013)

### **CONSULTATIONS**

TOWN COUNCIL - Objects: considers the proposal to be overdevelopment  
COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - Standing advice applies

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

Neighbours from 73 and 75 Rosebery Avenue have objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

- No. 75 say the proposed development will be too close to their boundary fence and will overlook them directly into their rear garden. They consider the area between their fence and the existing bungalow (no. 2 Monmouth Road) to be too small and that the access is unsuitable for a second dwelling.

- No. 73 say the proposal will directly overlook them. They consider the proposal to be out of character with surrounding development, overdevelopment and harmful to highway safety. They are also concerned that approval of the proposal would set a precedent for what they call 'garden grabbing' in Rosebery Avenue.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

None required

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Principle**

The site is located within a development area, as defined by the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006), and as such the principle of development is acceptable. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### **Residential amenity**

As previously stated, there have been objections from the occupiers of two neighbouring properties, both of which are concerned that the proposal would result in an unacceptable level of overlooking of their properties. A condition is recommended to secure details of boundary treatments and the fenestration arrangements are detailed below.

#### **West elevation**

This elevation faces towards the existing bungalow. 1no. rooflight will serve a first floor bedroom, whilst on the ground floor 2no. windows will serve the reception rooms. The properties are between 4 and 5m away from each other (the ground level on the application side will be lowered to ensure that the ridge lines are the same height as each other), and there will be a boundary fence between them. Whilst it is acknowledged that the properties are relatively close to each other, it is considered that given the difference in levels and the boundary fencing, there will be no unacceptable overlooking between the two properties. The proposed first floor rooflights would face the existing bungalow's roof. With the above in mind, it is considered that there would be an acceptable relationship between the existing

bungalow and proposed dwelling.

#### North elevation

This elevation faces towards the track that runs alongside the plot. A first floor window will serve bedroom 2 and 2no. ground floor windows will serve the kitchen and a reception room. This elevation is c.7m away from the site boundary, with the proposed detached garage in between. Behind the boundary line is a walkway/track, and beyond that are residential properties (- directly opposite the site is no. 5 Sedgemoor Close, a 2-storey semi-detached property, which is enclosed by a c1.8m high fence). The proposed first floor window is c.10m from the boundary fence of 5 Sedgemoor Close, and would not directly overlook the dwelling. As such, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would have an acceptable relationship with 5 Sedgemoor Close.

#### East elevation

The elevation faces towards the end of the rear garden of no. 75 Rosebery Avenue. 2no. rooflights will serve bedroom 1 and a bathroom, whilst 3no. ground floor windows will serve a utility, a WC and a study. The proposed dwelling will be c. 1.4m from the boundary with its neighbour. Boundary fencing is set to remain (as per drawing FH/1 sht 4) and can be secured by condition. With this in mind, it is considered that the ground floor windows of the proposed dwelling would not cause an unacceptable level of overlooking of the end of the rear garden of no. 75 Rosebery Avenue. The bottom of the 2no. proposed rooflights are c.1.7m above the internal first floor level, and as such it is considered that they also would not result in unacceptable overlooking of no. 75's garden.

#### South elevation

This elevation faces towards no. 73 Rosebery Avenue. A first floor window will serve bedroom 1, whilst on the ground floor a window will serve a study and a pair of patio doors will serve a reception room. The southern elevation is c. 15.4m from the boundary with no.73 Rosebery Avenue, and c.25m from the rear elevation of the property. It is therefore considered that the proposed first floor window would not cause an unacceptable level of overlooking of no.73. No.73 does have a 3rd floor/attic gable end window which faces towards the site, which may cause some overlooking of the proposed dwelling's side garden, although given the distances between the dwellings, it is considered that this would not be too great an issue.

#### Visual amenity

Two sets of neighbours and the Town Council are concerned that the proposal constitutes over development of the site. However, the proposed dwelling would benefit from a reasonable sized private garden to the side, and has a larger plot than many of the surrounding properties. One of the neighbours is also concerned that the property would be out of character with surrounding development. The proposed dwelling is to be dug into the ground, in order for its ridgeline to be no higher than the adjacent bungalow, and is to be constructed of brick under a tiled roof, as is the adjacent existing bungalow. There is a mix of dwelling designs in the surrounding area, with new and old housing alike, and various types of dwelling (eg flats, bungalows, semi-detached and terraced properties), and whilst the design of the proposed dwelling is not considered to be outstanding, it is also felt that it would not be harmful to the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

#### Highways/parking

The adjacent bungalow, no. 2 Monmouth Road, currently has 2no. vehicular accesses with parking: 1no. adjacent to the track that runs alongside the northern boundary and 1no. to the south of the property. This application proposes that the existing bungalow will use only the southern access/parking, whilst the northern access will be used solely by the occupants of the proposed property. The Highway Authority has stated that 'Standing Advice applies',

which requires that parking for 2no. cars is provided, along with a turning area to allow vehicles to enter and access the site in a forward gear. Whilst there is parking provision for at least 3no. cars, there is no available turning. However, given that the road has a 30mph limit and speed bumps, together with the fact that no net increase in vehicle movements to and from the access is expected (it is currently used by just one residential property and would continue to be used by one (albeit different) property), it would seem unreasonable to refuse the application because it has no turning.

### **Conclusion**

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed dwelling will have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties and an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area and highway safety.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve

01. Having regard to its location, scale, design, materials, fenestration, access and parking, the scheme has an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and on highway safety. As such, it accords with saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

### **SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans (except where directed otherwise by the conditions below):

FH/1 sht 1 rev B, date-stamped 20/08/2014;  
FH/1 sht 2 Rev B, date-stamped 13/08/2014;  
FH/1 sht 3 Rev B, date-stamped 20/08/2014;  
FH/1 sht 4, date-stamped 06/08/2014.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until particulars of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with saved policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006).

04. No work shall commence on site unless details of all boundary treatments, including type, height and materials, have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Before first occupation of the dwelling, the approved details shall be implemented and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity, in accordance with saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006).

05. The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan (FH/1 sht 1 Rev B) shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with saved policy ST5 of the South Somerset local Plan (adopted 2006).

06. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use, rooflights V1, V2 and V3 on the first floor, and windows W8 and W9 on the ground floor(as denoted on approved plan FH/1 sht 2 Rev B) shall be fitted with obscure glass and shall be permanently retained and maintained in this fashion thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity, in accordance with saved policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006)

07. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall be constructed.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity, in accordance with saved policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006).

08. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to this building without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity, in accordance with saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006).



# Agenda Item 11

## **Presentation by South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA)**

*Contact Details: Sam Best, Chief Executive Officer, SSVCA.  
Tel: 01935 475914 or SamBest@ssvca.org.uk*

Sam Best, SSVCA Chief Executive Officer, will attend the meeting to give a presentation providing an update on SSVCA, including Voluntary Sector Support, Furnicare, Community Transport and the Flood Recovery work.

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# Agenda Item 12

## Local Housing Needs in Area South

*Strategic Director:* Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus  
*Assistant Director:* Steve Joel, Health and Wellbeing  
*Service Manager:* Kirsty Larkins, Housing and Welfare Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Kirsty Larkins, Housing and Welfare Manager  
*Contact Details:* Kirsty.larkins@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462744

### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to give Councillors an update on housing need in Area South.

### Public Interest

The report gives an overview of numbers on the Housing Register (Homefinder Somerset) in Somerset and the demand for housing in Area South.

### Recommendation(s)

That:

1. Members discuss matters of interest to the local area arising from the reports and presentation
2. Members identify further or future information to be considered by the Area South Committee or other forum.

### Background

Homefinder Somerset (HFS) was launched in December 2008 in partnership with the other four Somerset Authorities. Since the introduction of HFS housing needs data is more readily available and the scheme is made the allocation of social housing transparent.

Increased provision of affordable, good quality, homes in South Somerset remains a high priority. This has been evidenced by the countywide Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026, and by South Somerset District Council's "Our Plan- Your Future" 2012-2015.

### Housing Need across Somerset

#### Information from the Somerset Housing Register

**Table 1** sets out the numbers of applicants on the Homefinder Somerset register as at 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 within each Local Authority area by band.

**Table 1**

Local Authority	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Grand Total
Mendip District Council	7	223	600	670	1500
Sedgemoor District Council	1	335	1079	2219	3635
South Somerset District Council	1	314	758	1315	2389
Taunton Deane Borough Council	4	355	638	1770	2767
West Somerset Council		101	230	526	857
Grand Total	13	1328	3305	6500	11146

Over the last year numbers of active applications on the housing register have decreased across the County. The decrease is largely due to each Local Authority carrying out the rolling reviews of applications on a regular basis. The review involves applicants confirming they still wish to remain on the register and updating their details.

### Housing Need in Area South

**Table 2** summarises the figures for households on the Homefinder Somerset Register expressing their first choice of location for Area South as at 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. If a parish does not appear in the list below it is because no-one has selected it as a first area of choice.

Parish Choice	First	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Grand Total
Barwick			6	4	5	15
Brympton					2	2
East Coker			3	3	5	11
Hardington Manderville					1	1
Odcombe			2		2	4
West Coker				7	9	16
Yeovil East			38	60	76	174
Yeovil North and Central	1		40	113	151	305
Yeovil Preston			23	36	53	112
Yeovil South			20	49	70	139
Yeovil West			24	39	86	149
Yeovil Without			21	55	73	149
Grand Total		1	177	366	533	1077

**Table 3** below shows the number of households and their bedroom requirements by band in Area South as at 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Members should note that this may include applicants not currently resident in Area South.

Max Bed Size Override	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Grand Total
1	1	113	137	295	546
2		50	173	175	398
3		11	32	54	97
4		2	22	9	33
5		1	1		2
7			1		1
Grand Total	1	177	366	533	1077

Demand for one and two bedroom properties remains high and a large number of social housing tenants are still in the process of trying to downsize due to the “bedroom tax”.

### Affordable Housing In Area South

Appendix B shows the affordable housing for 2014/15

## **Financial Implications**

None

## **Corporate Priority Implications**

### **Focus Three: Homes**

Minimise impact to our residents of the major changes to housing and council tax benefits proposed by Government

Minimise homelessness by providing advice, support and housing options




With Partners, enable additional new homes to meet the needs of the district, including mixed housing schemes to buy or rent that are affordable.

### **Background Papers:**

Affordable Housing Development Programme 03/09/14  
DX Report Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy 03/10/2013

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Appendix A

Gold Band – High need 	Silver Band – Medium Need 	Bronze Band – Low Need 
Tenants of Homefinder Somerset partner landlords who live within the Homefinder Somerset area and under occupy their home	Where the applicant lacks 1 bedroom in their current home.	Where an applicant is adequately housed.
Homeless households who are owed a main homeless duty by a Homefinder Somerset partner authority.	Applicants who can demonstrate a need to move for employment reasons or to give or receive support where significant harm would result if this was not provided.	Where applicants own their own property but whose home is not suitable for their needs but they have sufficient equity to address their housing needs.
Applicants who lack 2 or more bedrooms or have been confirmed as overcrowded by a Local Authority officer.	Where there is a medium medical/welfare need.	Applicants with a low medical/welfare need.
Current supported housing residents or care leaving applicants who are assessed as ready to move on to independent living.	Applicant who is pregnant or has children under the age of 10 living in a first floor flat or above and have no access to a lift.	Applicants with low disrepair needs living in private sector rented property.
High disrepair for people living in the private sector.	Medium disrepair for people living in the private sector.	Applicants living in short term supported housing or are care leavers prior to being ready to move at which stage they will move up to the gold band.
High medical need.	Applicants with dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities.	Applicants with no dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or in accommodation with shared living facilities.
Applicants awarded a 'medium' medical priority, combined with 'medium' disrepair award from the silver band.	Other homeless (where Homefinder Somerset partners do not owe an applicant a full homeless duty).	Applicants are assessed as having adequate financial resources to address their housing needs.
Victim of harassment or violence at their current property within the Homefinder Somerset area.	Applicants of split families who not by choice are living separately.	Applicant has no housing need.
Applicant awarded 4 or more silver band housing needs with the exception of applicants found to be intentionally homeless.		Applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances or made use of the under occupation band before, or has accepted an offer that doesn't meet their needs previously.
Social housing tenants whose homes are subject to major works for rebuilding/renovation or re-designation.		
Where the Local Authority receives written support from a Homefinder Somerset landlord that an applicant has no legal right to succession and the landlord will pursue possession.		

## Appendix B Expected Combined HCA & SSDC Programme 2014/15

	HA	Scheme Name	Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership/ Intermediate	Net Gain New Homes	Total Homes for NI 155 purposes	Total Grant	Level of grant from SSDC	SDC land allocation value	Level of grant from HCA	Planning Obligation	Anticipated completion
Yeovil	Raglan	Larkhill Road	1	0	0	1	1	£137,600	£137,600	£70,000	£0		Jul-14
	Yarlington	Lufton Key Site	30	0	29	59	59	£0	£0	£0	£0	✓	Mar-15
	Raglan	Hathermead Gardens*	0	1	0	0	0	£59,000	£59,000	£0	£0		Jun-14
	Yarlington	Westfield Place*	1	0	0	0	0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£0		Dec-14
	Knightstone	Lyde Road** (Cunningham Rd)	1	8	0	9	9	£180,000	£30,000	£0	£0	✓	Oct-14
	<b>Yeovil Sub-total</b>			<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>£446,600</b>	<b>£296,000</b>	<b>£70,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>62</b>
West Coker	Raglan	Font Villas,	6	0	0	6	6	£99,200	£0	£100,000	£99,200		Oct-14
<b>Totals</b>			<b>39</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>£545,800</b>	<b>£296,000</b>	<b>£ 170,000</b>	<b>£99,200</b>	<b>62</b>	

# Agenda Item 13

## **Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership Presentation**

*Contact Details: Sarah Dyke-Bracher, Programme Manager, Heart of Wessex Local Action Group  
Tel: 07826 907361 or sarah@heartofwessex.co.uk*

Sarah Dyke-Bracher, Programme Manager Heart of Wessex Local Action Group, will attend the meeting to give a presentation providing an update on the work of the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership.

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# Agenda Item 14

## Community Offices Update

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, Place and Performance  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter / Kim Close, Communities  
*Service Manager:* Kim Close, Area Development Manager South  
*Lead Officer:* Lisa Davis, Community Office Support Manager  
*Contact Details:* lisa.davis@southsomerset.gov.uk 01935 462746

### Purpose of the Report

To update Councillors on the yearly footfall/enquiry figures across the district and the results of the recent customer satisfaction survey.

### Public Interest

South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has six community offices which enable the public to access a wide range of Council and related information and assistance. This supports the other ways of contacting SSDC, which is by phone or the website. This report gives an update of the number of customers who visit the offices and also includes results of the customer survey carried out in September 2014.

### Recommendation

That Area South Committee members note the contents of this report.

### Background

The community offices are located in Yeovil, Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster, Langport and Wincanton and are managed by the Community Office Support Manager and Deputy Community Office Support Manager. The Community Support Assistants also provide administrative and project support to the Area Development team.

### The Community Offices

The opening hours are as follows:

<b>Chard</b>	Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm, 1:30pm to 3:30pm
<b>Crewkerne</b>	Monday to Wednesday & Friday 9am to 1pm, 1:30pm to 3:30pm Thursday 9am to 1pm
<b>Ilminster</b>	Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am to 12pm
<b>Langport</b>	Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am to 2pm
<b>Wincanton</b>	Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm
<b>Petters House Yeovil</b>	Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm



The main SSDC services provided for our customers are for the following services:

Housing and Council Tax Benefits	Receipt, verification and scanning of applications forms and evidence, general advice and guidance
Council Tax	Advice and guidance on moving in/out of area, discounts and exemptions and instalment plans, processing of payments (debit cards)
Housing	Verification of evidence
Waste and Recycling	Advice on collection days, missed collection reports, ordering of new/replacement bins, payment of garden waste bins/bags
StreetScene	Report litter, fly tipping, dead animals, discarded needles, dangerous and stray dogs, dog fouling and graffiti
Community Protection	Report pest problems (rats, wasps, insects)
Horticulture	Report problems with shrub / tree / hedge maintenance
Planning and Building Control	Hand out application forms
Community Safety	Recording incidents

Not all offices have exactly the same facilities either because of location or number of customers.

- Chard and Petters House have the highest number of customers. Cash machines have been installed and are used mostly for the payments of council tax and parking fines.
- Petters House reception is co-located with the SSDC Tourist Information Centre. Visitors to Petters House can also access a range of other services including Housing, Welfare Benefits and South Somerset Voluntary Community Action (SSVCA and Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB).
- Langport reception is co-located with the Langport Local Information Centre and South Somerset Links Transport Service.
- The Wincanton community office is successfully co-located with the Police and Somerset County Council have two small offices that provide hot desk space for employees.
- All offices except Langport have a public computer.
- All front offices have a hearing loop
- Free phones to internal services are provided in Wincanton, Petters House and Chard.
- Chard has a Job point machine and phone run by Job Centre Plus which was installed when the Job Centre closed in the town centre and a reception facility is provided on the days that the Somerset County Council Registrar is available. Somerset County Council Social Services team also occupy space within the building.

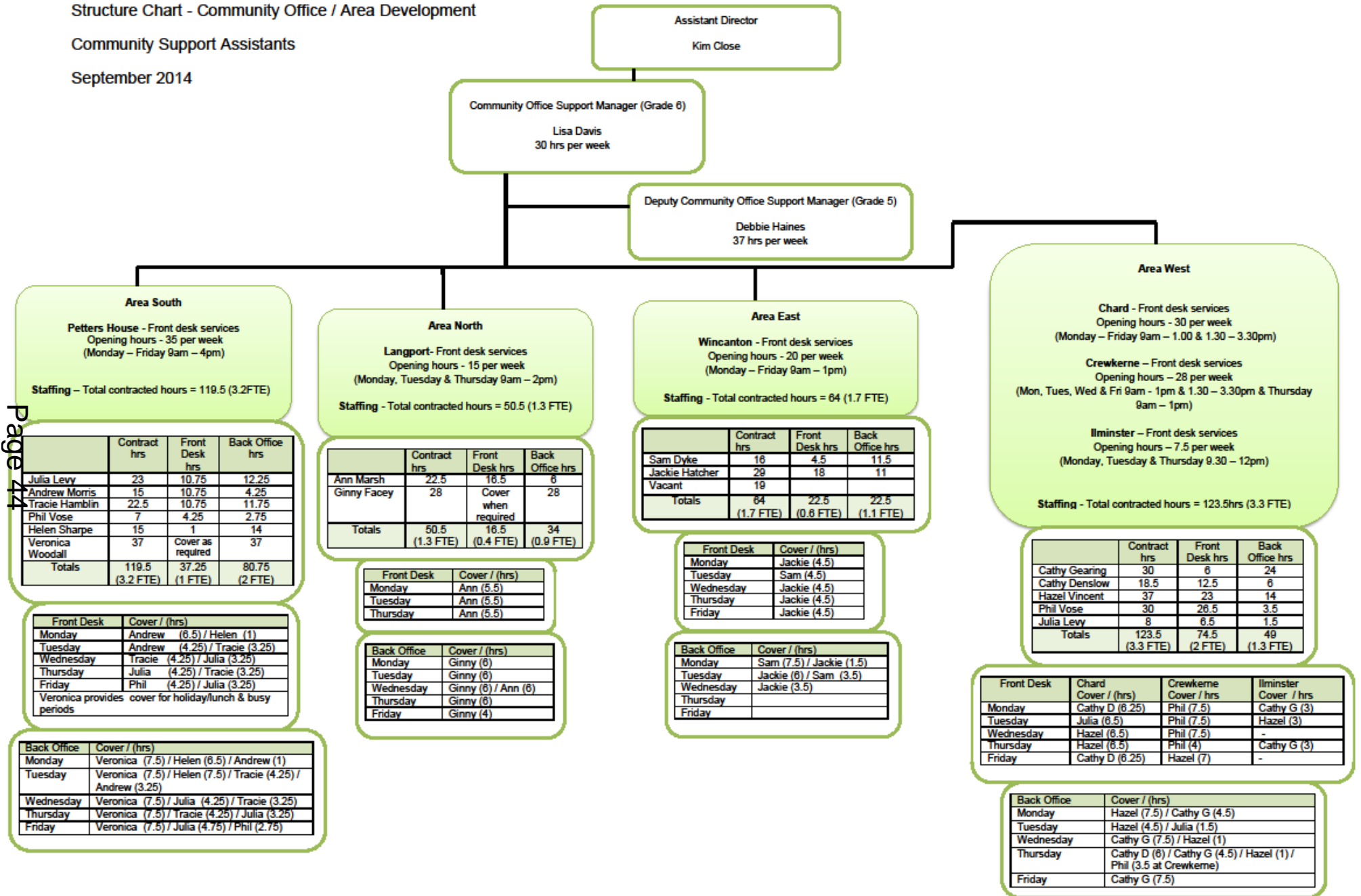
The community offices provide a face to face service which is particularly important to the more vulnerable members of the community. This enables customers to receive advice and assistance with many SSDC services. All community offices with the exception of Langport have a public computer which enables customers to access online services through self-service or assisted self-service. These computers are generally used to register for Homefinder or bid for Social Housing properties, apply for Benefits or view planning applications. During the last 12 months customers have been increasingly encouraged to submit online applications for benefits and Homefinder. An increased number of services have also been made available on the SSDC website enabling people to access more services from home.

The following structure chart shows the current level of staffing for each area

Structure Chart - Community Office / Area Development

Community Support Assistants

September 2014



During the past 12 months we have invested time to ensure that all Community Support Assistants are trained to deal with the wide range of front office enquiries and members of the team are now familiar with various front offices which ensures that planned and emergency cover can be provided. I am pleased to report that despite staffing levels being low at times we have been able to maintain full opening hours at all front offices since the new structure came into effect following the lean review. The community offices provide access to services for more vulnerable members of the community and also those who are unable or find it difficult to contact SSDC online or by phone.

All Community Support Assistants are now trained to provide phone cover for the Customer Service team. This has enabled support to be provided for their fortnightly team meetings and also enables calls to be taken in the event of increased call volumes/waiting times. These volumes and waiting times are monitored by the Community Office Support Manager/Deputy Community Office Support Manager alongside the Customer Services Manager so that the need for assistance can be identified promptly and resource provided as appropriate. Improved technology means that we are now able to take calls at any location providing a greater opportunity for support to be provided to the Customer Service team. During the period June – August 2014, the Community Support team spent 85 hours taking calls to assist the Customer Service team.

The Community Support team have access to the online referral system which enables them to refer customers as appropriate to the Welfare Benefits team and outside agencies such as CAB, SSVCA. The Welfare Benefits Advisors provide support and advice to many of the visitors to the front office and work closely with the Community Support team to raise awareness of the benefits that they may be entitled to.

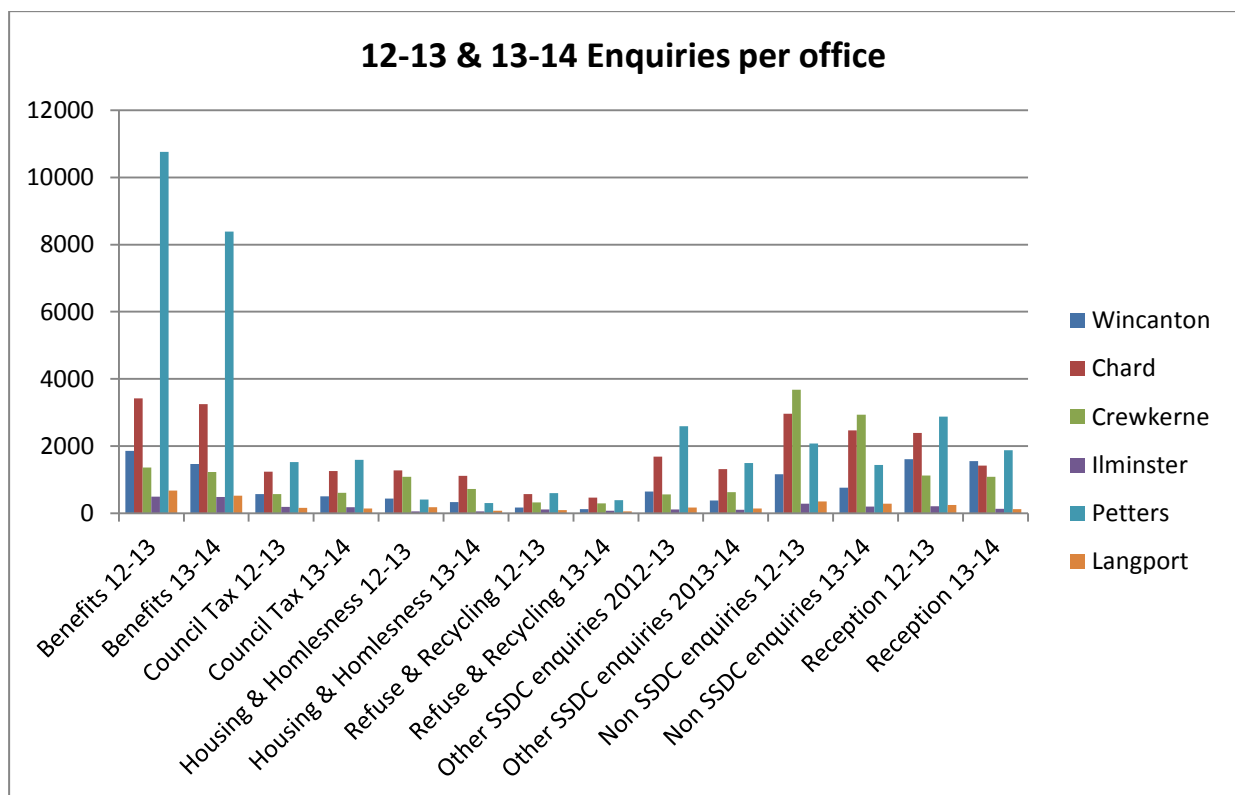
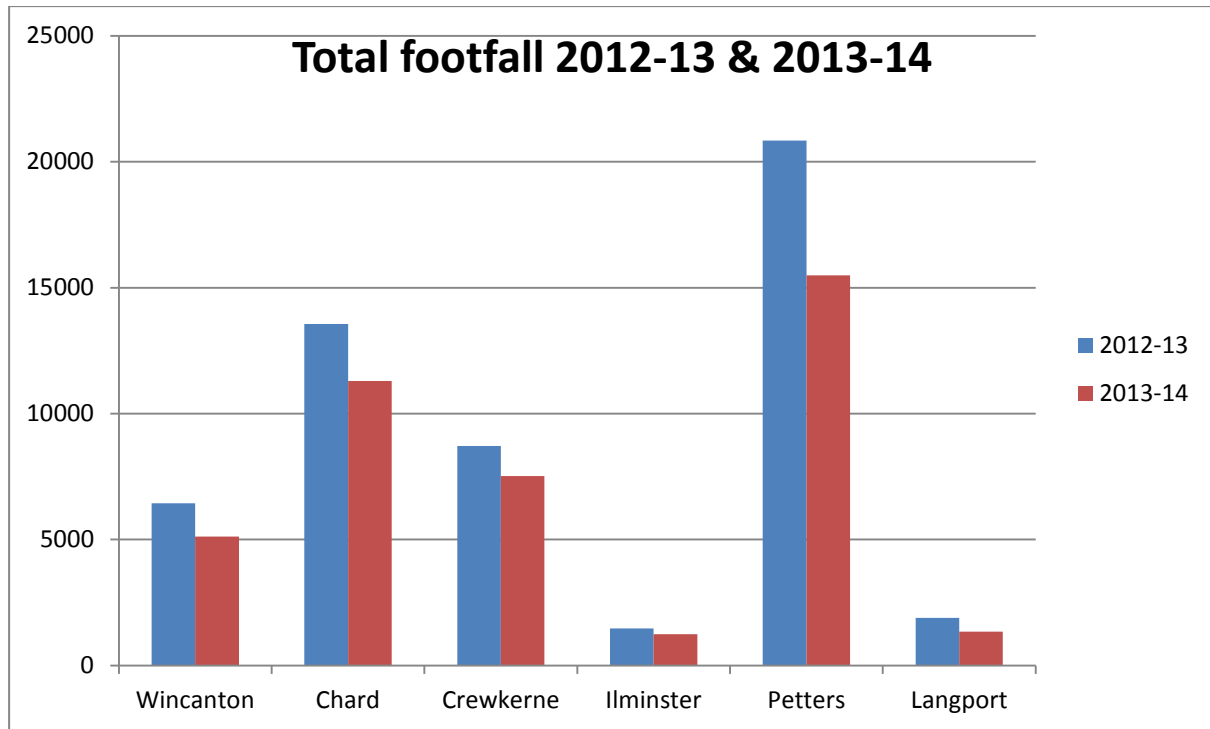
### Footfall figures

The following table shows the number of enquiries in the last year for every office, this highlights the differences between offices.

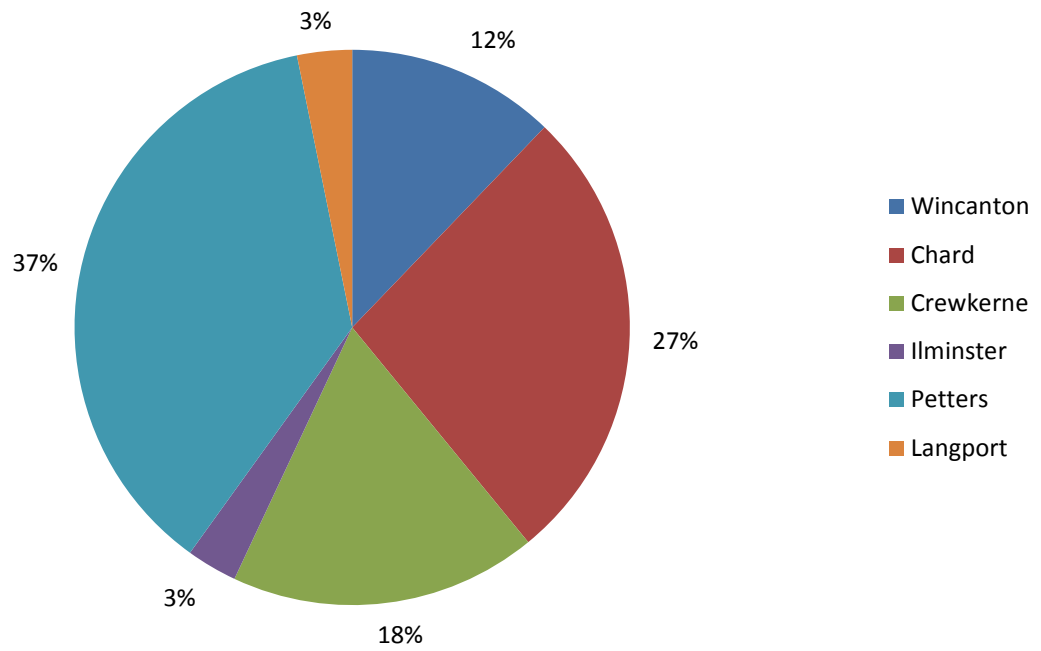
	Wincanton	Chard	Crewkerne	Iminster	Petters	Langport	Total
Benefits	1465	3253	1230	486	8388	523	<b>15345</b>
Council Tax	509	1255	611	177	1591	139	<b>4282</b>
Housing & Homelessness	335	1112	721	61	306	73	<b>2608</b>
Refuse & Recycling	122	466	299	78	389	57	<b>1411</b>
<b>Core service total *</b>	<b>2431</b>	<b>6086</b>	<b>2861</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>10674</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>23646</b>
Other SSDC enquiries	378	1317	633	102	1494	143	<b>4067</b>
Non SSDC enquiries	759	2473	2937	204	1442	287	<b>8102</b>
Reception duties	1549	1418	1089	135	1878	120	<b>6189</b>
<b>Total Footfall</b>	<b>5117</b>	<b>11294</b>	<b>7520</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>15488</b>	<b>1342</b>	<b>42004</b>

- Core services are Benefits, Council Tax, Housing & Homelessness and Refuse & Recycling

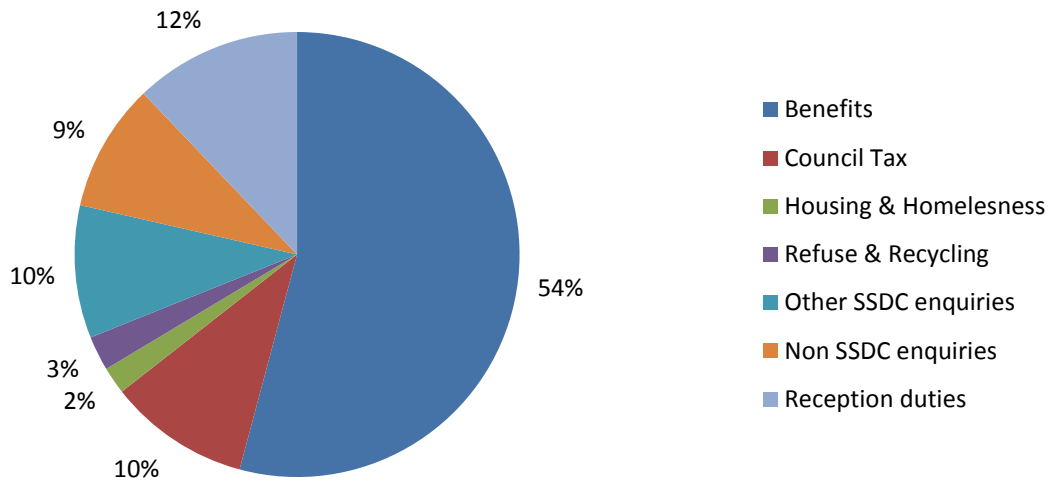
The charts below show a comparison of footfall and enquiries received at all offices in 2012-13 and 2013-14 and also a breakdown of enquiry types dealt with at Wincanton.



### Total enquiries per office 13/14



### Petters total enquiries for 13/14



It should be noted that the non SSDC enquiries include bus pass enquiries/issue of forms, visitors for Tax Office, Town Council and SCC enquiries and any other enquiries that fall outside of SSDC's remit.

The complexity of enquiries at the front office can vary, the following table gives an indication of the average time spent dealing with the more frequent enquiry types.

<b>Enquiry type</b>	<b>Average time spent dealing with enquiry</b>	<b>Enquiry type</b>	<b>Average time spent dealing with enquiry</b>
Car Parking enquiry	8 minutes	Request for waste containers	5 minutes
Council Tax bill/banding enquiry	5 minutes	Pest Control enquiry	5 minutes
Council Tax move	10 minutes	Garden bin renewals	5 minutes
Housing Benefit enquiry	10 minutes	Bulky collections	5 minutes
Housing Benefit application submission (assuming form fully completed by applicant)	20 minutes	Environmental Health/Streetscene enquiry (mapping)	10 minutes
Homefinder/Housing enquiry	10 minutes	Licensing enquiry	8 minutes
Planning/Building Control enquiry	2 minutes	Elections enquiry	5 minutes
Report missed waste collection	5 minutes	Reception service/issue form	1 minute

### **Petters House**

SSDC staff provide help for visitors with issues such as Housing and Welfare Benefits, together with general enquires relating to council services.

The total number of customers at the Area South reception (often referred to as footfall) for the 2013/14 financial year was 15,488 which is a decrease from 20,837 in 2012/13. This decrease is likely to be due to better access to web and telephone based services, it should also be noted that the opening hours for the office were reduced by 13% in February 2013. The highest proportion of work undertaken by the Community Support Assistant's in the front office relate to Benefits.

6,152 customers visited the Housing Advice Centre and 11,290 transactions were completed at the payment machine.

The Tourist Information desk, located in the building, provides help and advice for local residents and visitors to South Somerset.

Other services available at the HUB are the South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) and Somerset County Council's Pathway to Independence for the under 25s and Pathway for Adults. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) moved to Petters House at the end of September. They have their own front office and their opening hours vary from SSDC front office opening hours. This enhances the existing range of services available to visitors to the building.

**Customer Survey**

A customer satisfaction survey was carried out during two weeks of September 2014 in all of the community offices. 395 responses were received. The team received a 99% satisfaction score of Good or Very Good in questions 3 to 5 shown in Table 1 relating to their professionalism.

98% of our customers rated how welcoming our receptions are as Good or Very Good. Lastly, 96% said that the waiting time is Good or Very Good.

**Table 1 Comparison of customer responses between 2013 and 2014 for all offices**

		Very Poor	Poor	Neither	Good	Very Good
How welcoming did you find our reception area?	2014	0.2%	0.5%	1.2%	25%	73%
	2013	0%	1%	1%	21%	77%
How would you rate your waiting time before being seen?	2014	0%	0.5%	3.5%	21%	73%
	2013	0%	0.4%	2%	20%	78%
How welcoming were our staff?	2014	0%	0.2%	0.7%	18%	80%
	2013	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%
How would you rate the overall service you received?	2014	0%	0%	1%	17%	81%
	2013	0%	0%	0%	13%	87%
How knowledgeable were our staff?	2014	0%	0.2%	0.8%	18%	81%
	2013	0%	0%	0%	13%	87%

The following responses were received with regard to accessing SSDC services:

Do you use the SSDC website?	
Yes	22%
No	78%
If no, what is the reason?	
No internet access	27%
Prefer to visit community office	73%
Do you contact SSDC by phone?	
Yes	46%
No	54%
If no, what is the reason?	
No access to a phone	7%
Prefer to visit community office	93%
Was the Community Support Assistant able to give you the information or help that you needed?	
Yes	98%
No	2%

NB. these customers were referred to another agency

The results for Peters House show that 11% of customers completing the survey would find it very difficult to get to another office, 10% do not have access to a pc or website access on a phone and 5% find it easier to communicate face to face due to speech, hearing or language problems. This highlights the importance of local offices for the more vulnerable residents

who are unable or find it difficult to contact SSDC online or by phone or who would be unable to access a central office.

### **Financial Implications**

None arising directly from this report.

### **Council Plan Implications**

Focus on Health and Communities. Continue to provide Welfare Benefits support and advice to tackle poverty for our vulnerable residents.

### **Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications**

Reduce carbon emissions by increasing awareness of local offices and use of alternative methods of contact i.e. online transactions

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

All front desk services are accessible, except our Ilminster office, which can only be improved if suitable premises can be found.

### **Background Papers:**

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# Agenda Item 15

## **A30 Yeovil Eastern Corridor Improvements Update**

*Contact Details: Richard Needs, Somerset County Council  
RGNeeds@somerset.gov.uk*

Richard Needs from Somerset County Council will attend the meeting to give a presentation providing members with an update on the A30 Yeovil Eastern Corridor Improvements.

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# Agenda Item 16

## **Area South Committee Forward Plan**

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh, Strategic Director (Place & Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter/Kim Close, (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Kim Close, Area Development Manager - South  
*Agenda Co-ordinator:* Jo Boucher, Democratic Services Officer  
*Contact Details:* jo.boucher@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462011

### **Purpose of the Report**

This report informs Members of the agreed Area South Forward Plan.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:-

1. Comment upon and note the proposed Area South Forward Plan as attached at Appendix A.
2. Identify priorities for further reports to be added to the Area South Forward Plan, developed by the SSDC lead officers

### **Area South Committee Forward Plan**

The forward plan sets out items and issues to be discussed by the Area Committee over the coming few months.

The forward plan will be reviewed and updated each month, by the joint lead officers from SSDC, in consultation with the Area Committee Chairman. It is included each month with the Area Committee agenda, where members of the Area Committee may endorse or request amendments.

Members of the public, councillors, service managers, and partners may request an item is placed within the forward plan for a future meeting, by contacting the agenda co-ordinator.

**Background Papers:** None

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## Appendix A

### Notes

- (1) Items marked in *italics* are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives.
- (2) For further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area South Committee, please contact the Agenda Co-ordinator; Jo Boucher.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background/ Purpose	Lead Officer
<b>December 2014</b>	SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset		Catherine Hansford, Welfare Benefits Team Leader
	Somerset Highways – maintenance programme	An update report on the current and expected highways maintenance programme in Area South	Mike Fear, Assistant Highway Service Manager, South Somerset Highways
	Section 106 Monitoring Report * dependant on new agreement variation being signed	Update report on major schemes at Lyde Road, Lufton and Brimsmore Developments	Neil Waddleton, Section 106 Monitoring Officer
	LEADER Programme for Rural Economic Development – heart of Wessex LAG	Report regarding the outcome of applications for funding	Helen Rutter, Assistant Director Communities
<b>January 2015</b>		<i>Please note this meeting will only be held if there are planning applications to be determined</i>	
<b>February 2015</b>	Youth Project	Update Report	Natalie Ross, Neighbourhood Development Officer
	Community Health & Leisure Service Update	Update Report	Lynda Pincombe, Community Health & Leisure Manager
<b>March 2015</b>	Countryside Service	Update Report	Katy Menday, Countryside Manager

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Background/ Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
	Flooding, Drainage and Civil Contingencies	Update Report	Pam Harvey, Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager
<b>April 2015</b>	Western Corridor Improvements	Update Report	Richard Needs, SCC
	Streetscene Service	Report on the Performance of the Streetscene Service	Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager

# Agenda Item 17

## **Planning Appeals (For information)**

*Assistant Director:* Martin Woods, Assistant Director (Economy)  
*Lead Officer:* Martin Woods, Assistant Director (Economy)  
*Contact Details:* martin.woods@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462071

### **Purpose of the Report**

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

### **Recommendation**

That the report be noted.

### **Background**

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the committee.

### **Appeals Received**

Ward: Yeovil Central  
Proposal: The erection of a porch (GR 356203/116497)  
Appellant: Mr Barry Upshall  
Site: 21 Mount Pleasant Yeovil Somerset BA21 4JL

Ward: Yeovil Without  
Proposal: Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to dwelling house (GR 354976/118630)  
Appellant: Mr J Snell  
Site: Dutch Barn at Marsh Farm Yeovil Marsh Yeovil Somerset

### **Financial Implications**

None

### **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

None

### **Other Implications**

None

***Background Papers:*** Planning application file

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