

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area South Committee** held at the **Council Chamber Council Offices Brympton Way on Wednesday 4 November 2015.**

(2.00 - 4.25 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Peter Gubbins (Chairman)

John Clark	Tony Lock
John Field	Wes Read
Nigel Gage	David Recardo
Kaysar Hussain	Gina Seaton
Andy Kendall	Alan Smith
Sarah Lindsay	Rob Stickland
Mike Lock	

**Officers:**

Jo Boucher	Democratic Services Officer
Simon Fox	Area Lead (South)
Helen Rutter	Assistant Director Communities
Marie Ainsworth	Neighbourhood Development Officer (South)
Andrew Collins	Planning Officer
Lisa Davis	Community Office Support Manager
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager

*NB: Where an executive or key decision is made, a reason will be noted immediately beneath the Committee's resolution.*

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**64. Minutes of previous meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the Area South meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015 copies of which had been circulated, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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**65. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cathy Bakewell, Graham Oakes, Gye Dibben, Sam McAllister and Peter Seib.

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**66. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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**67. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no questions from members of the public.

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**68. Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

The Chairman informed members that:

- Assessment of demand for hub style office space provided little suggestion that Foundry House would be favoured as a future location for a Hub, however there is fresh interest for the possibility to purchase and renovate Foundry House. The Chairman hoped to update member's with further information in the New Year.
- Councillor Peter Gubbins, Chairman of Area South and Kim Close , Area South Development Manager will attend the new Work Hub opened in Bristol on Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 and for that reason will not be in attendance at the Area South Committee.

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**69. Reports from representatives on outside organisations (Agenda Item 6)**

There were no Reports from Councillors on outside organisations.

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**70. Update on the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme (Agenda Item 7)**

The Neighbourhood Development Officer presented the report as detailed in the agenda. She gave an update on progress to date and invited questions from members.

In response the Neighbourhood Development Officer informed members that:

- Happy to provide members with a comprehensive breakdown of the work carried out by the Ranger Scheme in relation to that of the Streetscene team including costs.
- Highlighted areas of work outside the remit or appropriate for the Ranger Scheme due to certain regulations i.e. Health & Safety guidance for use of equipment.
- Noted members' comments and the prioritising of maintenance work within the town centre.
- Advised members of the responsibility of shop owners in relation to the location of A boards within the town centre believing any concerns should be reported to SCC Highways Authority.

Members thanked the Neighbourhood Development Officer for her report.

**NOTED**

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**71. Community Offices Update Report (Agenda Item 8)**

The Community Office Support Manager presented the report as detailed in the agenda. She highlighted to members:

- Highest proportion of work undertaken at Petters public reception related to Benefit enquiries.
- Housing Advice Centre also located at Petters House received 6791 customers during 2014-15.

- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) located at Petters House have their own public reception.
- Customer Satisfaction survey once again received a 99% satisfaction score.

In conclusion the Community Office Support Manager referred members to the enquiry examples as detailed in the agenda report highlighting the satisfying and excellent value of the service.

In response to questions, the Community Office Support Manager and Assistant Director Communities informed members that:

- Customer Satisfaction survey was undertaken every year with a breakdown of responses received as detailed in the agenda report.
- Most housing and homelessness enquiries are taken directly by the Housing Enquiries public reception.
- No longer a Police presence at Petters House mainly due to lack of capacity and resource.
- Withdrawal of SCC funding from supported housing is expected to have an impact on demand for our support services and this is presently being assessed. It was noted that the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager could provide an update under his report.

Members thanked the Community Office Support Manager for her comprehensive report.

## **72. Forward Plan (Agenda Item 9)**

*(Please note this item was taken after Item 7 of the agenda).*

Councillor David Recardo requested a report regarding Community Protection Notices to inform members of changes to prohibited drinking zones within Yeovil Town Centre.

Councillor John Clark requested a further update from the Economic Development Team on their service and work involved with Yeovil Vision. The Assistant Director Communities noted this request informing members of recent staff appointments within the Economic Development team which will mean more capacity to progress priority economic infrastructure.

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed to members that the Conservation Service Update report and a confidential Historic Buildings as Risk report was scheduled for Area South Committee in February 2016.

During a short discussion it was confirmed to members that at the September Area South Committee members agreed that the start time for Area South Committee meetings remain at 2.00 pm and that for a trial period of 3 months planning applications be determined last on the agenda and not least before 3pm.

## **73. Appeals (For Information Only) (Agenda Item 10)**

Members noted the Planning Appeals.

**74. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined by Committee (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications.

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**75. Planning Application 15/03862/FUL - 83 Hendford Hill Yeovil Somerset (Agenda Item 12)**

The Planning Officer presented the report and with the aid of a power point presentation showed the site and proposed plans. He informed members that:

- A dwelling can be used for up to six residents as a House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) without any planning permission with no control over the level of parking.
- That 'Policies ST5 and ST6' as referred to in Condition 5 be replaced with 'Policies TA5 and TA6'.
- Considered the boundary front wall be retained to existing height as located within the Conservation area.
- Highlighted to members various uses of current properties in the area.

He referred to the key considerations which included:

- Impact upon parking/highway safety
- Impact upon residential amenity
- Impact upon visual amenity
- Impact upon character or appearance of the Conservation Area

In conclusion the Planning Officer considered the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highways or adversely affect visual or residential amenity and would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. His recommendation was to approve the application as set out in the agenda report.

In response to questions the Planning Officer and Area Lead South explained to members that:

- Considered the visibility display from the property onto Hendford Hill to be adequate and not obscured by the existing boundary wall. Likewise there was sufficient turning on site to allow vehicles to enter and exit the site in forward gear.
- It had been suggested that the existing boundary wall could be reduced in height. However front boundary walls are an important feature within the Conservation Area and any alterations could be detrimental to the area.

Following a short discussion, the Area Lead South suggested to members that should they be minded to approve the application a condition could be imposed to reduce the height of the existing boundary wall subject to agreement with the applicant, however members did not agree to this proposal.

Hilary Unsworth spoke in objection to the application. She referred to a petition signed by forty nine local residents objecting to the application believing the proposal would exacerbate the existing parking problems within the neighbouring streets. She felt the parking and turning area only had sufficient space for 4 vehicles with restricted visibility

out on to Hendford Hill which was already an extremely busy A road and would only get worse should the new proposed out of town housing developments be built. She believed a 10 bed HMO would warrant the use of 10 cars and that the area is already fraught with parking difficulties due to various usages of the properties within the area.

Mr B Oozageer, the applicant then addressed the committee. He confirmed that he had worked with the relevant parties to ensure an acceptable proposal wishing to attract professional people working in the area. He referred to HMO's located elsewhere within Yeovil which had a lesser amount of parking provision and that this scheme complies with policy guidance. He confirmed the property would be suitably licenced and highly regulated.

The Planning Officer explained to members that Condition 3 restricts the use of the HMO to no more than 10 people and should this be unheeded and detailed to the Planning Department enforcement investigations would commence.

Councillor Nigel Gage, Ward member voiced his concerns regarding the application. He believed the existing 5 parking spaces to already be in full use, that the car parking requirements would result in further parking problems within the neighbouring streets and therefore the scheme fails to provide sufficient onsite parking provision. He felt the area has already resulted in many changes from separate houses to various other uses and the addition of another HMO would result in further change to the neighbourhood.

Councillor John Field, Ward member felt the area had gone through considerable change and the addition of another 10 bed HMO would alter the neighbourhood which was now of conservation area status. He believed at present the 6 bed property with parking to be adequate however anymore would tip the balance.

During members discussion, several points were raised including the following:

- Already parking problems within the area and this proposal would only exacerbate the issue.
- Safety concerns regarding the visibility splay onto Hendford Hill which was already a busy main road leading into the town centre.
- Believed residents parking would relieve the parking problems within the area.
- Concerned the proposed 10 rooms could become occupied by more than 10 people each with their own vehicles.
- Concern over future traffic in the area should the new proposed out of town housing developments be built.
- Noted the development was located close to the town centre where guidance considers other parking available locally.
- Appreciated HMO's located elsewhere within Yeovil had a lower level of parking provision than this proposal.

In response to members, the Planning Officer and Area Lead South explained that:

- Existing boundary wall could be lowered in consultation with the Highways Authority and Heritage & Conservation but considered it best kept in existing state. It has only recently been approved as a conservation area and therefore members need to consider whether any change would have an adverse effect on the area.
- Access to property already being used at present so that any highway risk is already there.

- Standing advice applies to this scheme with no clear specific details in the Somerset Parking Strategy relation to HMO's.
- Clarified the South Somerset Local Plan refers to Somerset Parking Strategy. This allows a distinction to be made that some sites are more sustainable than others and that there is a justified case for fewer parking spaces.
- Informed members of similar refused applications which had been overturned at appeal due to a perceived lack of parking. However insufficient parking provision can be a consideration in severe cases.

The officer's recommendation was proposed, seconded and put to the vote. This was rejected with 3 in favour, 8 against and no abstentions.

During a short debate, members, led by the Planning Officer and Area Lead South discussed the comments raised by the Members and on this basis suggested two reasons for refusal:

- Insufficient parking provision.
- Highway safety and lack of visibility onto highway.

The Area Lead South reiterated to members should the application be approved, a condition could be imposed to reduce the height of the existing boundary wall subject to agreement with the applicant. Members did not agree to this proposal.

The Area Lead South also reiterated to members that a level of harm had to be attributable to the lack on-site parking and any perception of that parking being displaced to Southwoods. Roadside parking in Southwoods (subject to compliance with traffic regulations) was not considered a problem per se by the Area Lead South and was not considered a strong reason to refuse this application alone without that harm being precisely identified and suitably evidenced.

It was then proposed and subsequently seconded that planning permission be refused, contrary to the officer's recommendation for the following reasons as read out by the Planning Officer.

1. The proposal fails to provide sufficient on site car parking which would result in parking in neighbouring streets which cumulatively creates harm to the amenities of residents in those areas contrary to Policies TA6 and EQ2 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.
2. The access due to its lack of visibility onto the A30 would prejudice highway safety contrary to Policy TA5 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

On being put to the vote this was carried by 8 votes in favour, 3 against and 0 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:**

Refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposal fails to provide sufficient on site car parking which would result in parking in neighbouring streets which cumulatively creates harm to the amenities of residents in those areas contrary to Policies TA6 and EQ2 of the adopted

South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

2. The access due to its lack of visibility onto the A30 would prejudice highway safety contrary to Policy TA5 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

*(voting; 8 in favour, 3 against, 0 abstentions)*

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## 76. Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda Item 13)

*(Please note this item was taken after Item 10 on the agenda)*

The Corporate Strategic Housing Manager presented the report and proceeded to go through the agenda report highlighting to members the anticipated likely delivery of more affordable homes being constructed in the future.

He explained the fluctuation of lack of delivery of housing due to slippage of a 59-unit scheme at Lufton Key Site which should have been completed by March 2015, had it done so then just under 30% of last year's completions would have been in Yeovil.

He also informed members that:

- Councillor Tony Lock referred to the decision made that morning by the County Council cabinet confirming the proposed reduction in funding for the 'P4A' contract but also setting some funding aside for a project in Taunton. The Corporate Strategic Housing Manager confirmed that this decision does not affect the 'roof over head' for housing applicants which this Council is responsible for, but does remove essential support which enables some vulnerable people to maintain their tenancy. He also confirmed that various agencies are being brought together on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> to consider how to respond in the light of the reduction in services funded by the County.
- Currently around 2000 households on homefinder register with approximately a quarter within gold band. These figures are for South Somerset only.
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Explained the current position regarding 'Right to Buy' and the possibility Government may extend this option to Housing Associations on a voluntary basis. However further guidance would be required from the HCA regarding value of such properties and future investment of monies received.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager for his excellent report.

**NOTED**

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Chairman

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Date