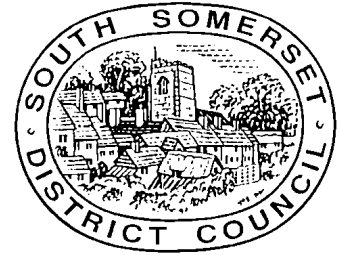


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Area South Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Wednesday 4th November 2015

2.00 pm

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

(disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



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

The public and press are welcome to attend.

Please note: Consideration of planning applications will commence no earlier than **3pm**.

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

This Agenda was issued on Monday 26 October 2015.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

**This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Area South Committee Membership

Cathy Bakewell
John Clark
Gye Dibben
John Field
Nigel Gage
Peter Gubbins
Kaysar Hussain

Andy Kendall
Sarah Lindsay
Mike Lock
Tony Lock
Sam McAllister
Graham Oakes
Wes Read

David Recardo
Gina Seaton
Peter Seib
Alan Smith
Rob Stickland

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 **10** at approximately **3pm**. 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 formal written report from the Area Highways Office should be included in the Agenda in May and November. Alternatively, they can be contacted direct through Somerset County Council on 0300 123 2224.

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

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 4 November 2015

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes of previous meeting

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th October 2015.

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 15th 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 Peter Gubbins, Graham Oakes, David Recardo 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. Update on the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme** (Pages 9 - 12)
- 8. Community Offices Update Report** (Pages 13 - 21)
- 9. Forward Plan** (Pages 22 - 24)
- 10. Appeals (For Information Only)** (Pages 25 - 28)
- 11. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined by Committee** (Pages 29 - 30)
- 12. Planning Application 15/03862/FUL - 83 Hendford Hill Yeovil Somerset** (Pages 31 - 37)
- 13. Affordable Housing Development Programme** (Pages 38 - 46)

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.

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

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Agenda Item 7

Update on the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Director Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Kim Close, Assistant Director Communities
Service Manager: Kim Close, Area Development Manager – South
Lead Officer: Marie Ainsworth, Neighbourhood Development Officer - South,
Contact Details: Kim.close@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462708

Purpose of the Report

To update and inform members on progress of the Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme

Public Interest

In April 2015 the Area South Development Team began a pilot of a Yeovil Town Centre Ranger Scheme. The 'Ranger' is similar to a parish Lengthsman. The Ranger has carried out a number of maintenance tasks not currently covered in any daily maintenance programmes run by South Somerset District Councils Street Scene team, Somerset County Highways team or any other official body. Funding was successfully sought and approved to pilot the first year of the scheme from South Somerset District Council, Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council. This report gives an update on progress to date.

Recommendation

That the report be noted

Background

The Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group (formerly known as the Yeovil Town Centre Audit Group) commenced in 2011, following a request made by South Somerset District Council members to 'get back to basics'. Over the last five years Marie Ainsworth, Neighbourhood Officer for South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has been working on making a number of improvements in the town centre focussing on items of street furniture, paving, flower and shrub beds, the bus station, bus shelters and replacing poor street furniture. All of these items were previously dealt with on an ad hoc basis.

The Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group decided to continue this good work by piloting a Ranger scheme in the town centre based on their knowledge and experience of the Parish Lengthsman scheme.

In June 2015 a report was taken to Yeovil's Town Councils Building and Civic Matters committee where they agreed to contribute funding for the first year of the Yeovil Ranger scheme effectively match funding South Somerset District Councils contribution. Yeovil Without Parish Council were also approached kindly agreed to make a financial contribution.

Members will recall that a brief update was given on the scheme at Area South Committee in October 2015 under the Area South Development Update Report.

Update

The Ranger Scheme commenced in May 2015 in accordance with a work schedule agreed by SSDC's Yeovil Town Centre Enhancement Group, these tasks can be found on the attached appendix A.

All the work included in the schedule for year one has been completed with the exception of repainting the bandstand railing's, this will be done once the hanging baskets have been removed.

There has been a small amendment on the schedule, one of the year two tasks has been swapped with a year one task, the slats on many of the benches were considered to be in a reasonable condition so this has been moved into next year's schedule therefore the painting of the bollards was moved into this year's work programme as their condition had deteriorated. The Ranger stripped the bollards back down to the metal and applied undercoat and a very tough black metal paint, he also applied reflective strips.

It is worth noting that the Ranger is currently shared with other parishes similar to a job share.

In addition to the work outlined in the schedule a number of tasks fell outside the remit of the Ranger including:

- Bubblegum removal x2 per year
- Street Cleaning using specialist chemical, weekly April – Oct and monthly Nov – March
- Cleaning bus station area x 2 per year
- Cleaning bus shelters (SSDC owned shelters) annually.
- Re-oiling Tim Fortune benches

Much of this work has been successfully completed by SSDC's Street Scene Team with the exception of re-oiling the Tim Fortune Benches.

The only task that has proved to be problematic is the Street cleaning with the specialist chemical, there are areas of paving that the street cleaning machine cannot access due to the vehicles weight, so the Street Scene Team are having to clean some of these areas by hand.

Whilst the Ranger scheme has successfully contributed to the general cleanliness and appearance of the town centre there is still room for improvement, some of the paved areas have proved to be more time consuming with the removal of stubborn stains especially around litter bins. Once the first year is complete a more thorough review will take place to look at what has worked well and what may need adjusting and another report will be bought back to the Area South Committee in the spring of 2016 once this has been done.

Appendices

Appendix A outlining the Rangers schedule.

Financial Implications

Within existing revenue budgets

Council Plan Implications

This project contributes towards the council plan focus on the Environment and enhancing the appearance of local areas.

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Background Papers

None

Item	Type	no of units	Location	Maintenance Description	Preferred Frequency	Labour per operation (Hours)	Labour (*18.00) Year 1	Labour (*18.50) year 2	Labour (*18.90) year 3
Benches	All benches	31	Princes St & Middle St, the Borough	Clean seating with damp cloth	Quarterly	7.4	£532.80	£547.60	£559.44
Benches	Streetmaster	26	Town Centre - Middle Street - Hendford - King George Street	Rub down & revarnish wooden slats & wipe down metalwork with damp cloth	Annual	66.6	£1,198.80	£1,232.10	£1,258.74
Bollards	Metal Manchester	80	Throughout Yeovil Town Centre	Repaint	Biennially	59.2		£1,095.20	
Finger Pointers	"	3	Throughout Yeovil Town Centre	Repaint	Biennially	33.3		£616.05	
Railings	Metal bespoke		South Western Terrace	Repaint	5 Yearly	37			£699.30
Railings	"		Bandstand	Repaint	Annual	37	£666.00	£684.50	£699.30
Cycle Racks	Black painted metal	25	Throughout Yeovil Town Centre	Repaint	Annual	37	£666.00	£684.50	£699.30
Junction Boxes	SSDC owned		Throughout Yeovil Town Centre (location plan available)	Repaint	Every 3-5 years	37			£699.30
Benches	Ollerton	3no	Glovers Walk & Borough	Re paint 's' shaped bench and circular benches in Borough	Annually	55.5	£999.00	£1,026.75	£1,048.95
Litter Bins	Brunel	29	Throughout Yeovil Town Centre	Clean	Monthly from April - Sept x2 Oct - March	133.2	£2,397.60	£2,464.20	£2,517.48
Art feature		1	King George Street	Cleaning	Annual	3.7	£66.60	£68.45	£69.93
Weed killing	Highway footpaths and Carriageways		Throughout Yeovil Town Centre	Street weeds, kerbs/back edges & paving	x 5 year	22.2	£1,998.00	£2,053.50	£2,097.90
						529.1	£8,524.80	£10,472.85	£10,349.64
APPENDIX A						Hours	362.6	455.1	436.6
							49 days	61.5 days	59 days

Agenda Item 8

Community Offices Update

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Kim Close, Communities
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 6 community offices which enable the public to access a wide range of Council related information and other 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 2015.

Recommendation

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

Background

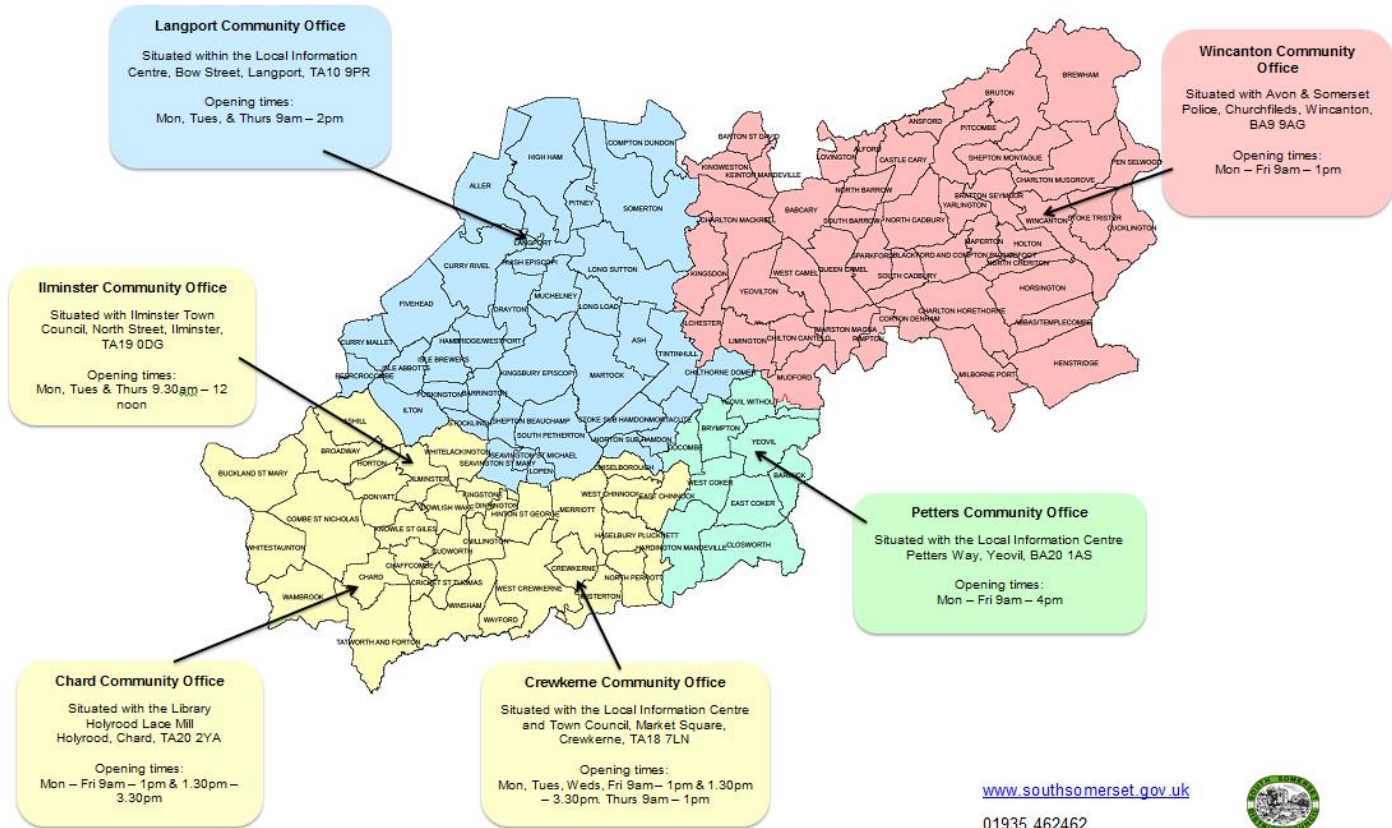
The community offices are located in Yeovil, Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster, Langport and Wincanton and are managed by the Community Office Support Manager and Deputy Community Office Support Manager, reporting to the Assistant Director, Communities. There are 13 (9.5FTE) Community Support Assistants (CSA) across the team who provide customer access to services assistance at the 6 Community offices. They also provide administrative and project support to the Area Development teams.

The Community Offices

The main SSDC services that customers visit our offices are:

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)
Homefinder (online social housing service)	Help with accessing the Homefinder service and weekly bidding process
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/Building Control	Hand out application forms
Community Safety	Recording incidents

SSDC Community Offices



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

- Cash machines are available in Petters House and Chard. Customers can make payments for council tax, parking fines, planning and building control applications.
- There is free public computer and phone access in Petters House, Chard, Crewkerne & Wincanton allowing customers to access online services through self-service or assisted self-service.
- All offices are co-located with other authorities/agencies.
- All front offices have a hearing loop.
- All offices are fully accessible, except for Ilminster where it hasn't been possible to fully adapt.

The community offices provide face to face service and enables customers to receive advice and assistance to many SSDC services, as well as the ability to signpost to other agencies where necessary. They ensure vulnerable members of the community and those who find it difficult or unable to contact the council by other means are able to fully access our services.

As well as the community offices customers are also able to access SSDC services over the phone and/or via the SSDC website. There are a number of services now available online; completing applications, various payment options, reporting issues (including missed waste and recycling collections) and registering to vote. Homefinder applications can only normally be done via the internet.

All CSAs are trained to deal with the wide range of front office enquiries and are able to cover any community office ensuring that full opening hours are maintained across the

district. Generally there is only one member of staff on the front desk, but back up support is provided in the busier offices, including Petters, to help reduce customer waiting time.

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.

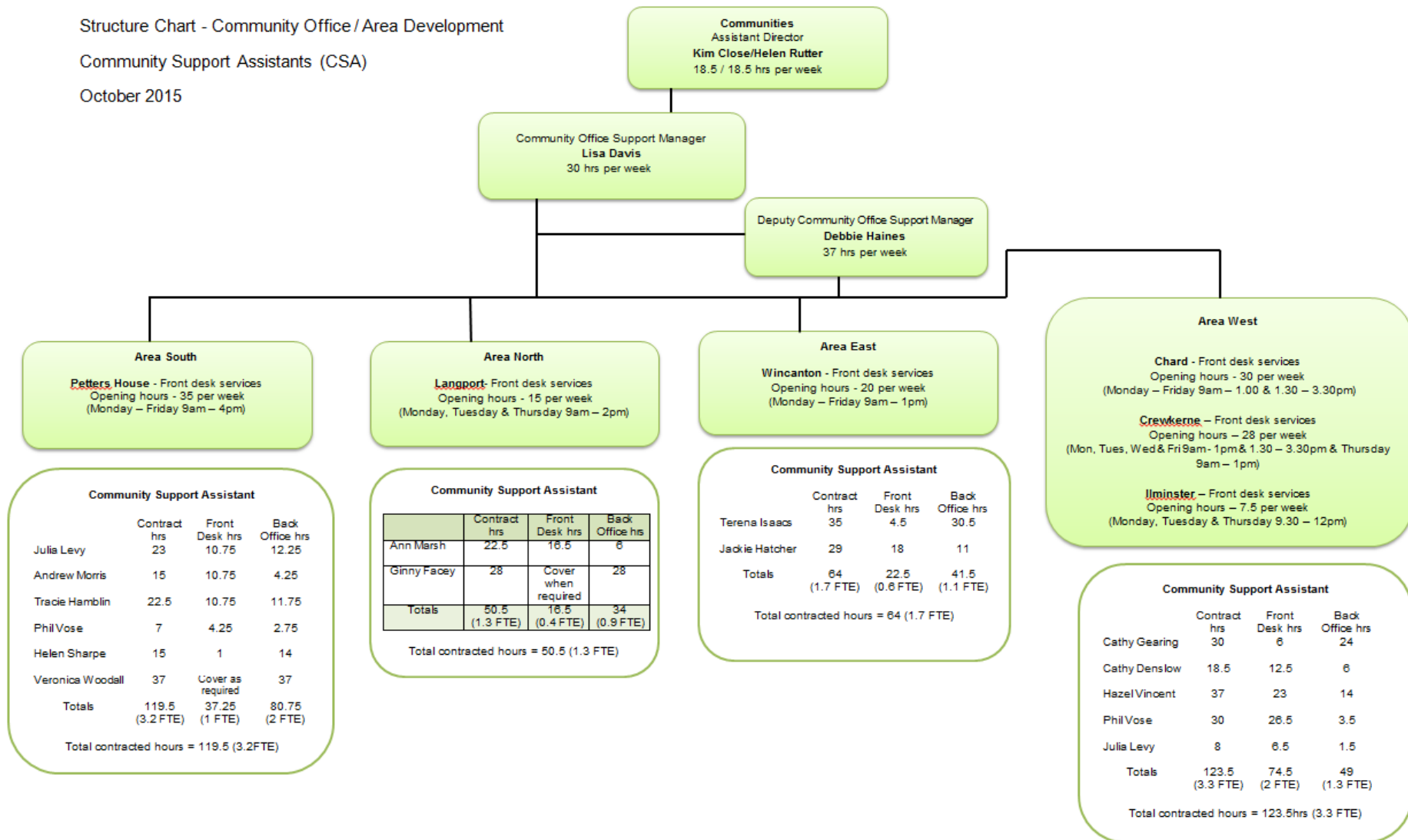
The complexity of enquiries at the front office can vary please see appendix 1 for case studies.

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

Structure Chart - Community Office / Area Development

Community Support Assistants (CSA)

October 2015

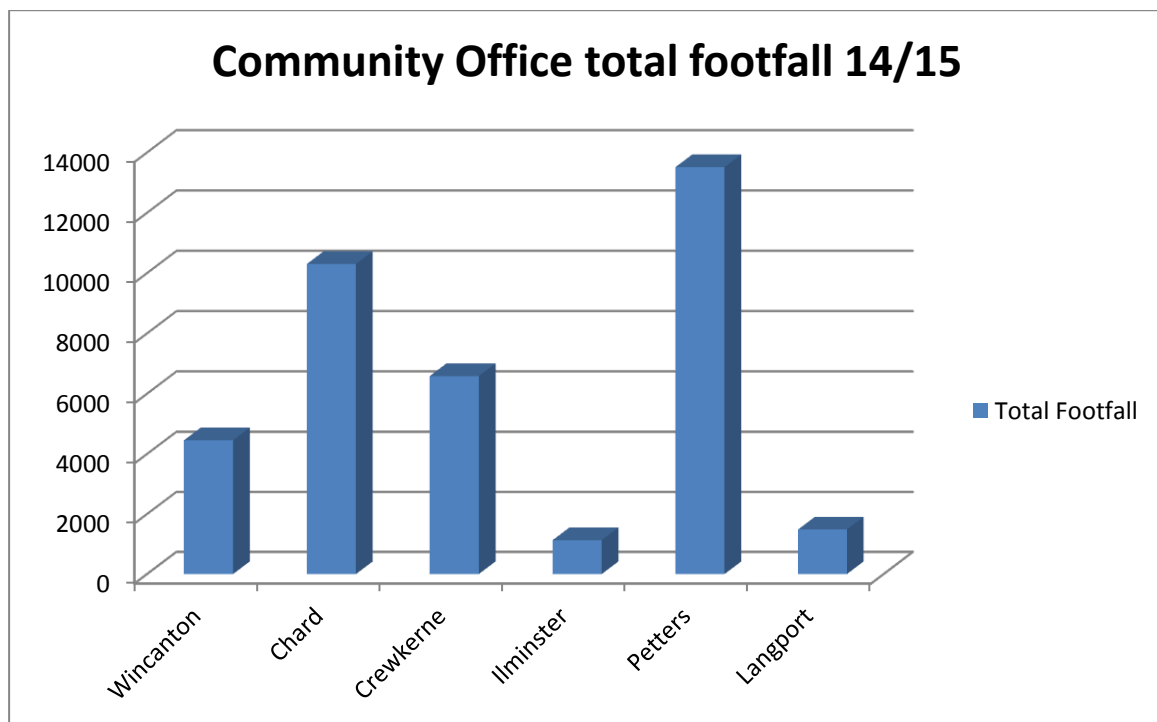


Footfall figures (Number of customers visiting the Community Offices)

Total footfall comparisons for all Community Offices from April 2012 - April 2015

All Offices	SSDC	Community	12-13	13-14	% change from previous year	14-15	% change in footfall 13/14 - 14/15
Benefits			18561	15345	-17%	13560	-12%
Council Tax			4270	4282	0.3%	4250	-0.7%
Housing & Homelessness			3450	2608	-24%	2306	-12%
Refuse & Recycling			1882	1411	-25%	1469	4%
*Core services total			28163	23646	-16%	21585	-9%
Other SSDC enquiries			5768	4067	-29%	4206	3%
Non SSDC enquiries			10522	8102	-23%	6832	-16%
Reception duties			8462	6189	-27%	4848	-22%
Total Footfall			52915	42004	-21%	37471	-11%

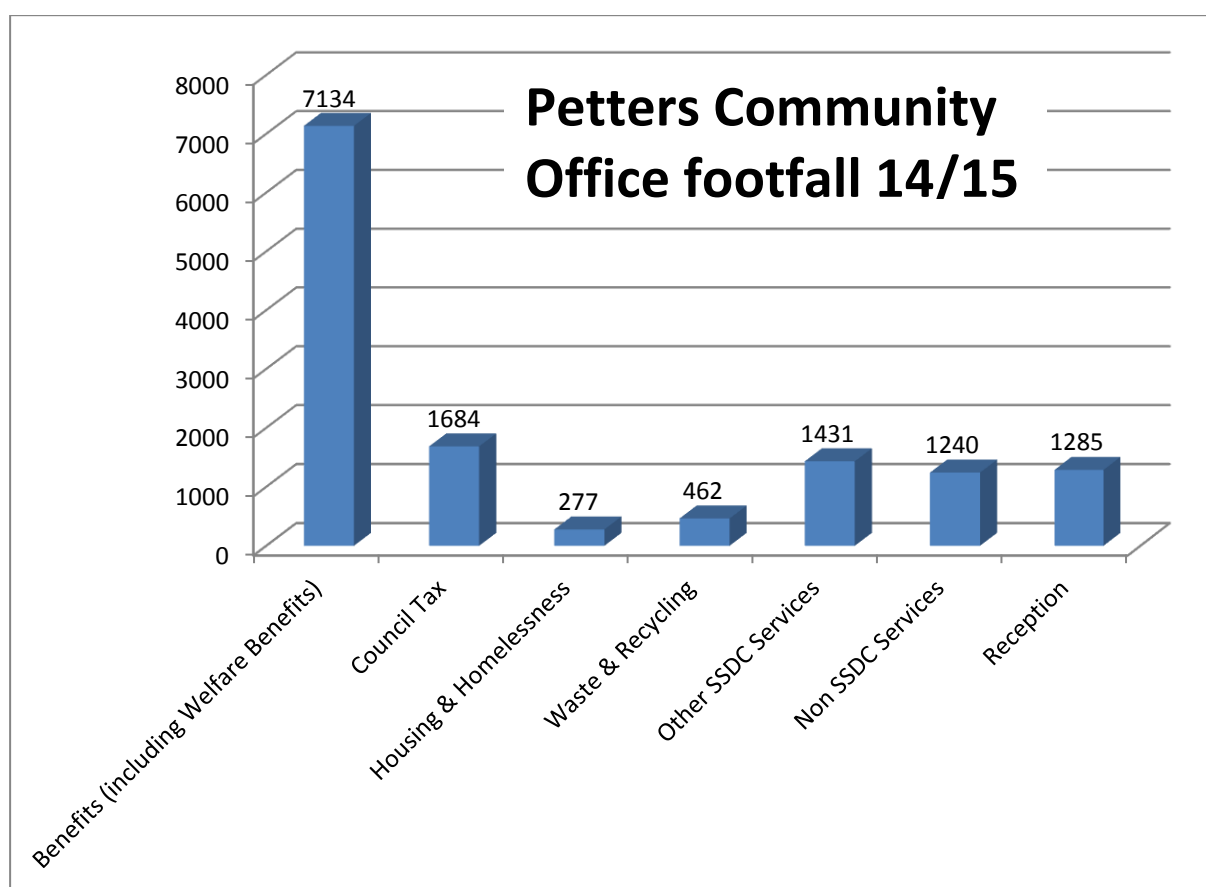
*Core services relate to Benefits, Council Tax, Housing & Homelessness and Refuse & Recycling



Total footfall comparisons for Petters from April 2012 - April 2015

Petters	12-13	13-14	% change from previous year	14-15	% change from 13-14 to 14-15
Benefits	10757	8388	-22%	7052	-16%
Council Tax	1523	1591	4%	1684	6%
Housing & Homelessness	407	306	-25%	277	-9%
Refuse & Recycling	598	389	-35%	462	19%
Total core services	13285	10674	-20%	9475	-11%
Other SSDC enquiries	2590	1494	-42%	1513	1%
Non SSDC enquiries	2081	1442	-31%	1240	-14%
Reception duties	2881	1878	-35%	1285	-32%
Total Footfall	20837	15488	-26%	13513	-13%

Although footfall has reduced from the previous year the decline is not as significant. It should be noted that whilst increasing numbers of the public are accessing services via the website or telephone the residual enquiries tend to be from more vulnerable people many of whom have complex enquiries which take longer to deal with.



The highest proportion of work undertaken by the CSAs in Petters front office relates to Benefit enquiries. This is receiving and processing benefit applications forms, evidence and other enquiries. Staff processed around 1,400 application forms and over 4,000 of receipted items of evidence at Petters House.

It should be noted that the non SSDC enquiries include bus pass enquiries/issue of forms, Town Council and SCC enquiries and any other enquiries that fall outside of SSDC's remit. We also provide a reception service for visitors to the building.

The Housing Advice Centre is also located at Petters House and during 2014-15 they received 6,791 customers.

9,761 transactions were completed via the Cash machine.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) are also located at Petters House but they have their own front office.

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

Customer Survey

A customer satisfaction survey is carried out every year and was compiled in September 2015 in all of the community offices and 467 responses were received.

Customer age group analysis

16-29	27%
30-44	26%
45-59	22%
60-74	18%
75+	7%

The team once again received a 99% satisfaction score of Good or Very Good relating to the overall service received.

Out of 458 responses 449 customers rated the waiting time before being seen as Good (95) or Very Good (354).

Out of 455 responses 448 customers rated the knowledge of the staff as Good (81) or Very Good (367)

98% of customers said that the CSA had been able to provide the information or help that was needed with the other 2% of customers being referred to another agency.

Comments received from customers on help provided:

- “Excellent, brilliant, superb”*
- “Very helpful and nice to speak to”*
- “Very helpful”*
- “Very helpful, friendly”*

Customers were also asked why they had chosen to call at the office rather than using another office, phone us or use our website.

79% of customers said the offices was near to their home with 6% saying they found it easier to communicate face to face due to speech, hearing or language problems.

Comments received from customers on why the use the offices:

"I am not confident using a computer or do not know how to access the website on my phone"

"Couldn't get through to Yeovil by phone"

"Misunderstanding, easier to understand in Person"

"Find it easier to communicate face to face"

"Prefer to deal face to face when providing evidence"

The results for Petters House show that 8% of customers completing the survey would find it very difficult to get to another office, 11% are not confident or do not have access to a pc or website access on a phone and 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. 100% of customers received the information or help that they needed whilst visiting Petters House.

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:

Appendix 1 - Enquiry examples

Example 1

A non-English speaking lady come to the office and was accompanied by a friend to translate, despite this there were still language barriers.

The lady in question had previously failed to pay her Council Tax and therefore received a summons which had been passed to Ross & Roberts (SSDC debt collectors). The lady had then at this point fulfilled her repayments and the account was cleared.

The lady then received another bill from Ross & Roberts for the same amount and was confused and very upset. Having compared the bills, everything was identical except for a variance on the surname.

I tried to explain to her friend how the error had occurred and reassured them both that nothing was owed but because of the language barrier it was quite difficult for them to understand.

I contacted Council Tax who confirmed the error and said they would get in touch with Ross & Roberts.

I also checked current liability to ensure everything was up to date.

This whole process took about half an hour to resolve but I did manage to reassure the lady that it would be dealt with and she went away happy.

Example 2

A recently widowed lady brought in details of her husband's small private pension. She was hard of hearing and found it difficult to use the phone.

She asked if I could ring and pass on the details, including her email address and mobile phone and explain to them that any communication would have to be done via email or text message if they needed any more information.

Whilst she was in the office I was able to request Single Person Discount with Council Tax, plus knowing that she was in receipt of benefits I explained that she may be able to get help with the funeral costs. I printed and helped her fill in the application form from the Gov.uk website, including a note explaining that she was hard of hearing and could only deal with communication via email or text message.

I also assisted with her moving – ie. arranging for her garden bin to be removed, processing the move on our systems and reminding her to take final readings on electricity and gas meters etc.

She was very grateful for all the assistance given, saying that she felt comfortable coming in the office.

Agenda Item 9

Area South Committee Forward Plan

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Acting Chief Executive
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter / Kim Close, Communities
Service Manager: Kim Close, Area Development Manager - South
Agenda Co-ordinator: Jo Boucher, Democratic Services Officer, Legal and Democratic Services SSDC
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

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
December 2015	Somerset Highways – maintenance programme	A six monthly update report on the current and expected highways maintenance programme in Area South	Mike Fear, Assistant Highway Service Manager, South Somerset Highways
	SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset	Annual Update on the Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset	Catherine Hansford, Welfare Benefits Team Leader
	Citizens Advice South Somerset	Update Report on the Citizens Advice in South Somerset	David Crisfield, Third Sector Partnership Co-ordinator
	Section 106 Monitoring Report	Update Report	Neil Waddleton, Section 106 Monitoring Officer
January 2016		<i>Please note this meeting will only be held if there are planning applications to be determined</i>	
3rd February 2016	Community Health & Leisure Service Update Report	Annual Update Report	Lynda Pincombe, Community Health & Leisure Manager
	Local Housing Needs in Area South	Annual Update on the Local Housing Needs in Area South	Kirsty Larkins, Housing & Welfare Manager
2nd March 2016	Streetscene Update Report	Annual Update Report	Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
	Countryside Service Update Report	Annual Update Report	Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
6th April 2016	Grants Update Report	Annual Update Report	Natalie Ross, Community Development Officer

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background/ Purpose	Lead Officer
	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
	Markets	Current position of Street Markets in Area South	Kim Close, Assistant Director Communities/Area South Development Manager

Agenda Item 10

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: Coker
Proposal: Demolition of existing bungalow, erection of 14 dwellings, together with associated landscaping, access and infrastructure (GR 351633/112251)
Appellant: Mr David Matthews
Site: Moor End Nursery Moor Lane Hardington Moor Yeovil BA22 9NW

Appeals Dismissed

Ward: Yeovil (West)
Proposal: The installation of replacement windows and door (Part Retrospective) (GR 354924/116196).
Appellant: Mr C Daley
Site: 32 Grove Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2BB

Financial Implications

None

Implications for Corporate Priorities

None

Other Implications

None

Background Papers: Planning application files

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2015

by **David Walker MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 2 October 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/15/3129940

32 Grove Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2BB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr C Daley against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/00054/FUL, dated 2 January 2015, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2015.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows and door.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of The Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The property is a semi-detached house of early 20th century design constructed of red brick with a front projecting bay. It has been enlarged with a two storey side extension but otherwise is similar in appearance to the adjoining neighbour. The two houses fall within The Park Conservation Area and are located opposite the junction with Linden Road where they are viewed as a pair in views towards the junction. The combined appearance of the two houses at this junction is an important element in the character and appearance of the area.
4. Under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
5. The proposed works, which have been partly implemented, are comprised of UPVC windows in a golden oak finish and UPVC front door in red with a white frame.
6. The proposed windows share broad elements of design with the timber sash windows at the adjoining property, which appear to be original. However, the plastic frames have a much larger profile and do not adequately reflect the frame thickness, horn detailing, and proportions of the margin lights of the

original windows. As a result the proposals lose some of the elegance of the timber sash windows of the neighbour.

7. The brown woodgrain effect, intended to replicate the traditional materials of the area, has a similar tone as the red brickwork of the house. It fails to provide the colour contrast of white painted joinery which is considered to be a characteristic of the area by the Council's Conservation Officer.
8. The proposed door is described as unglazed but the plans show the forms of a Georgian fanlight. It does not reflect the form and proportions of the panelling and glazing of the existing door. With the adjoining property sharing a door design the introduction of a modern alternative in a different architectural style would further reduce the similarities, symmetry and so the visual interest in the pair of houses.
9. The combined effect of the design, materials and finishes of the windows and door would be to diminish the historical integrity of the building and harm its appearance. As the appearance of the conjoined pair of houses is an important feature of the street this would lead to harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area, although the harm identified would not be 'substantial harm' under the terms set out at Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The energy saving and environmental benefits of the proposal would not offset this harm.
10. The appellant submits that No. 32 is the first property along Grove Avenue within the conservation area and as a result there are inconsistencies in the application of planning controls along the street. However, it is for the Council to decide what to include within any conservation area having regard to the special architectural or historic interest of an area, and The Park Conservation Area designation was confirmed in 2008.
11. The appellant also points to the many other properties of the street with UPVC windows and this was confirmed at the site visit, including those falling within the conservation area. However, the Council notes that the existence of poor quality alterations to some of the houses within the conservation area, including UPVC windows, is identified as a negative feature within the Conservation Area Appraisal. Moreover, the Council's intentions to conserve and enhance the historic environment for its contribution towards the economy, tourism, education and culture of the area are set out at Policy EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 (the Local Plan), with design criteria to promote local distinctiveness at Policy EQ2.
12. These policies are consistent with sections 7 and 12 of the Framework, particularly the requirement at paragraph 126 for a Local Plan strategy to take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Under the circumstances, little weight is applied to the existence of negative features within the conservation area as justification for new development that would have a harmful effect.
13. Whilst the proposed windows and door would deliver thermal benefits these do not sufficiently outweigh the harm that has been identified. Regard has also been given to the potential to paint the windows to provide more colour contrast but this would not offset the remainder of the harmful effects of the proposals described.

14. It is concluded therefore that the proposals would result in harm to the character and appearance of The Park Conservation Area and would not accord with the requirements of policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the Local Plan, or Sections 7 and 12 of the Framework.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

David Walker

Inspector

Agenda Item 11

Schedule of Planning Applications to be determined by Committee

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Acting Chief Executive
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.

Please note: Consideration of planning applications will commence no earlier than 3pm.

Members of the public who wish to speak about a particular planning item are recommended to arrive for 2. 50pm

SCHEDULE					
Agenda Number	Ward	Application	Brief Summary of Proposal	Site Address	Applicant
12	YEOVIL SOUTH	15/03862/FUL	Alterations and the change of use of property to a larger House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (sui generis use) (GR 355165/115265)	83 Hendford Hill Yeovil Somerset	Mr B Oozageer

Further information about planning applications is shown below 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.

Agenda Item 12

Officer Report On Planning Application: 15/03862/FUL

Proposal :	Alterations and the change of use of property to a larger House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (sui generis use) (GR 355165/115265)
Site Address:	83 Hendford Hill Yeovil Somerset
Parish:	Yeovil
Yeovil (South) Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr J Field Cllr N J Gage Cllr S McAllister
Recommending Case Officer:	Andrew Collins Tel: 01935 462276 Email: andrew.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	20th October 2015
Applicant :	Mr B Oozageer
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Alan J Young Ltd The Lodge Penn Hill, Yeovil Somerset BA20 1SF
Application Type :	Other Change Of Use

Reason for referral to Committee

This application is referred to the committee at the request of Cllr Nigel Gage, one of the Ward Members with the agreement of the Area Chairman to enable concerns over the level of parking, the impact upon the Conservation Area and the comments of the neighbours to be fully debated.

Site Description and Proposal





The site is located on the south-eastern side of Hendford Hill, near to the junction with Southwoods. The property is a large detached dwellinghouse located within the designed Conservation Area. To the front are a vehicular access and an area of hard standing.

Hendford Hill is the classified A30 and is an important route through Yeovil. Double yellow lines exist on both sides of the road. In front of the application site is a pedestrian refuge to allow safe crossing of the road.

This application seeks permission for the conversion of the property to a large HMO (*sui generis* use). In detail it is proposed to convert the 3 storey property into 9 en-suite rooms, with shared hall, kitchen, bathroom, utility and conservatory in the main house. In an out building is a shared games room and a further en-suite room.

To the side of the property are an area for the parking of 10 bicycles and an area for bins. The hard standing is proposed to be used for the parking of 6 cars. The Design and Access Statement says that additional parking could be provided if doubled up.

The submitted Design and Access Statement suggests that the HMO would provide much needed accommodation for professional people employed by local business.

Amended plans have been received that have showed the existing attached carport to the side and confirmation that it would be retained.

During the course of the application further information has been supplied from the agent in relation to the current and proposing working of the HMO.

o It has been detailed that the property is already being occupied by six people and only two of the parking spaces are in regular use. The applicant owns other HMO's in Yeovil

and the property will be well managed and maintained by the applicant who has high quality accommodation. The bedrooms will be occupied by single professionals employed by local companies such as Westlands and other nearby engineering firms. Occupants will be on short or long term contracts and there will be some international residents. The international residents and those on short term contracts do not have a need for a car. Either transport is arranged or due to going to the same place there is an element of car sharing.

o No external alterations are proposed to the dwelling and the building could easily be reused as a single dwellinghouse.

o No parking standards for HMO's are detailed in the standing advice and that the dwelling can be used for up to six residents as a HMO without any planning permission with no control over level of parking.

HISTORY

00/02942/FUL - The erection of a replacement conservatory to the side of dwellinghouse - Conditionally approved - 5/4/01

911503 - The erection of a building for use as a snooker and recreation room - Conditionally approved - 14/8/91

771145 - Construction of additional vehicular access - Conditionally approved - 11/10/77

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF indicate it is a matter of law that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

On the 5th March 2015 the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted. Therefore it is considered that the development plan comprises this plan.

Policies of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

SD1 - Sustainable Development

SS1 - Settlement Strategy

HG5 - Achieving a Mix of Market Housing

TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

TA6 - Parking Standards

EQ2 - General Development

EQ3 - Historic Environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

CONSULTATIONS

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL - Recommends approval.

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - Standing advice applies. In this case ensuring that there is sufficient parking and turning on site. It is however noted that there are no specific details

in relation to HMO.

SSDC HIGHWAYS CONSULTANT - Initially raised concerns over the level of parking on the site. In the basis of the additional information gave the following comments;

"I understand that an HMO of up to six rooms can be provided without the need for planning permission. The submitted plans shows that six car parking spaces are available at present although I would question the ability to use one of the delineated spaces and still allow sufficient room for other vehicles parked in the remaining spaces to be able to turn within the site. Therefore, at present the building could be occupied by six residents using five car parking spaces in a reasonable manner.

The agent states that the building is actually occupied by six residents at present yet only two of the spaces are in regular use. The agent points to the current use of the building, providing high quality accommodation to single professionals (not couples), and the sustainability credentials of the site. The management of the building is quite key in that prospective occupiers would be made aware of the on-site car parking provision and I am persuaded by the arguments that the premises will be managed in this way with instructions not to park on neighbouring streets. On the basis that an additional four rooms are effectively being sought with the current availability of three car parking spaces, on balance, I consider it would be unreasonable to raise a highway objection to the proposal, given the guidance set out in the Somerset Parking Strategy. I would prefer the frontage wall to be lowered to a maximum height of 600mm to improve visibility up the hill, if such action is achievable/acceptable. I would also recommend the proposed cycle parking facilities are suitably conditioned."

REPRESENTATIONS

6 letter of objection and a petition signed by 50 residents of Hendford Hill, Nursery Road and Southwoods has been received with the following comments made;

- o There is already a parking problem in Southwoods caused by commuters and employees of Bradfords and this would exacerbate these issues.
- o Occupiers of nearby flats despite having their own parking, park in Southwoods.
- o The plans show 10 en-suite rooms which could be occupied by 20 people. Therefore fails to see how 6 parking spaces are appropriate and would result in further parking problems in Southwoods.
- o There is potential for reversing onto Hendford Hill causing highway danger for traffic.
- o Considers the proposal to be an overdevelopment of the site with increased noise.
- o The proposals would have an adverse effect upon the Conservation Area.
- o Increased number of vehicles entering and leaving the site.
- o The area has resulted in a lot of changes from separate houses to flats, children's nursery, hostel accommodation, old people's accommodation and guest houses. The proposal would result in a further change to the community and environment.
- o Questions whether the kitchen area is sufficient for 10 people.
- o Potential greater chance of deterioration of the property.
- o Large number of wheelie bins could result in a hazard.

In addition a letter has been received from the Member of Parliament for Yeovil. The following comments are made;

- o Considers that not only on-site parking provision needs to be considered but also the general pressure on parking in the area.
- o Supports the suggestion for improved cycle facilities but understands residents'

concerns. Wonders if a plan to manage the issue be considered as part of the application.

CONSIDERATIONS

Planning permission is not required for the change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to a HMO (C4) providing that it is restricted to 6 residents. Therefore the key considerations of this application are does the additional 4 residents result in unacceptable harm.

Principle

The site is located within the urban development of Yeovil as defined in the Local Plan. In addition there is a mix of uses in the area and therefore the principle is accepted.

Parking issues and highway safety

By far the biggest concern by local residents is parking. Parking is restricted in Hendford Hill by reason of double yellow lines and there is already parking congestion within neighbouring roads of Nursery Road and Southwoods.

Additional information has been provided by the agent to explain the proposed operation of the HMO and also that the property is currently operating as up to 6 residents with only 2 car parking spaces currently in use. The sustainability benefits of the location were also detailed. In addition it has been confirmed that the premises will be managed to ensure that there would not be parking on neighbouring streets.

Bicycle parking is proposed for 10 cycles to serve the 10 rooms and there is 5 useable parking spaces provided on site.

On the basis of this information the SSDC Highways Consultant and the requirements of the Somerset Parking Strategy, considers that it would be unreasonable to raise a highway objection.

Concern has been raised over highway safety with additional movements into the site and potential reversing onto Hendford Hill. It is not considered that utilising an existing access onto the classified road would result in any danger. Likewise there is sufficient turning on site to allow vehicles to enter and exit the site in forward gear. As such it is not considered that the proposal would result in highway danger that would warrant refusal of the application.

In assessing all the above comments and the merits of the scheme, the proposals are considered to comply with Policies TA5 and TA6 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

Concern has also been expressed that the proposed intensification of use would result in an adverse effect upon residential amenity through noise. No external changes to the property are proposed. There is a communal rear garden that would be available to the occupiers. An outside amenity area is important to be able to relax outside. There is no indication that there would be excessive noise due to more people living in the property. Large families with young children can often cause more disturbances. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not adversely affect residential amenity and complies with Policy EQ2.

Visual amenity / Character of Area

The site is located within the designated Conservation Area. As required by legislation, any

development within a conservation area should either preserve or enhance that character or appearance of the area. No external changes are proposed to the dwelling and only minor internal changes are proposed to facilitate the change. There is a mix of uses within Hendford Hill and some of the larger properties have been converted into flats. The conversion to flats are often more intrusive as more subdivision is required.

The area to the front of the property is already laid to hardstanding therefore there is no physical change to this area. The road frontage is surrounded by a low brick wall with planting behind. This is to be retained.

The SSDC Highways Consultant has suggested that the existing boundary wall could be reduced in height. However the wall is an important feature within the Conservation Area and any alterations would be detrimental. This alteration was only suggested if possible.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposals comply with Policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use to a larger HMO (sui generis use) has brought about a lot of public interest. However the proposals are not considered to result in an adverse highways impact, not considered to adversely affect visual or residential amenity and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such the proposals comply with Policies TA5, TA6, EQ2 and EQ3 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant planning permission for the following reason, subject to:

01. Notwithstanding the neighbour comments the proposals do not result in an adverse highways impact, do not adversely affect visual or residential amenity and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such the proposals comply with Policies TA5, TA6, EQ2 and EQ3 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

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: 3858/02A and 3858/03A received 13 October 2015.

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

03. The use hereby approved shall be occupied by no more than 10 people and the communal areas (conservatory, utility and games room) as shown on drawing 3858/02A shall remain available for all residents.

Reason: To determine the scope of the application and in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028).

04. The cycle parking shown on approved drawing 3858/02A shall be installed before the implementation of this permission and thereafter retained for the storage of bicycles in association with use hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel in accordance with the Somerset Parking Strategy (March 2012)

05. The area allocated for parking and turning on the submitted plan, Drawing no. 3858/03A, shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies ST5 and ST6 of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028.

Agenda Item 13

Affordable Housing Development Programme

Head of Service: Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Lead Officer: Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Contact Details: colin.mcdonald@southsomerset.gov.uk
or (01935) 462331

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the outturn position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2014/15 in relation to Area South and future prospects.

Recommendation

The Committee are asked to note the outturn position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2014/15 and the prospects for the future.

Public Interest

This report covers the provision of affordable housing in Area South over the past year and anticipates the likely delivery of more affordable homes being constructed in the future. It will be of interest to members of the public concerned about the provision of social housing for those in need in their local area and of particular interest to any member of the public who is seeking to be rehoused themselves or has a friend or relative registered for housing with the Council and its Housing Association partners.

“Affordable” housing in this report broadly refers to homes that meet the formal definition that appears in national planning policy guidance (the ‘National Planning Policy Framework’). In plain English terms it means housing made available to people who cannot otherwise afford housing (owner occupied/mortgage or rented) available on the open market. Typically this includes rented housing (where the rent is below the prevailing market rate for a private sector rented property of similar size and quality) and shared ownership (where the household purchases a share of the property that they can afford and pays rent, also at a below market rate, on the remainder)

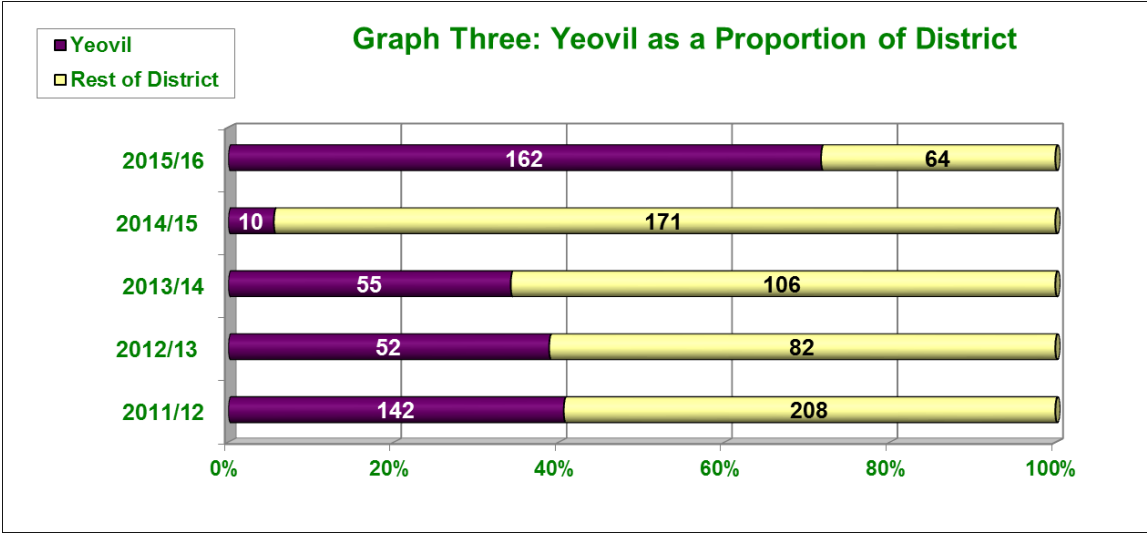
This report covers the level of public subsidy secured (which is necessary in order to keep rents at below market rates), sets out where affordable housing has been completed and describes schemes that are either already underway or are expected to be built in the near future. It does not cover the letting of the rented housing or the sale of the shared ownership homes; in short, it is concerned with the commissioning and delivery stages only.

Background

The overall programme is usually achieved through mixed funding (Social Housing Grant [administered by the Homes and Communities Agency - HCA], Local Authority Land, Local Authority Capital, Housing Association reserves and planning obligations obtained under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and the careful balancing of several factors. This includes the level of need in an area; the potential for other opportunities in the same settlement; the overall geographical spread; the spread of capacity and risk among our preferred Housing Association partners and the subsidy cost per unit.

A previous report was considered by the Area South Committee on 3rd September 2014 which considered the outturn for the previous financial year (2013/14) and the prospects for the then current financial year (2014/15). Since then an annual update report on the programme has been provided to the District Executive twice - on 4th September 2014 and 1st October 2015. Both reports to the District Executive give more detail in terms of the longer term perspective and the provision of affordable housing across the entire district.

Graph three from the most recent District Executive report is reproduced below, covering a five year period including four completed years from 2011-15 and a projection for the current financial year (2015-16). It demonstrates that for the first three years around 30-40% of all new affordable homes in the district were delivered in Yeovil. Last year this fell to just over 5% but the current projection is that this year it will increase to almost 75%. This fluctuation is partly due to slippage of a 59-unit scheme which should have been completed by 31st March 2015, had it done so then just under 30% of last years completions would have been in Yeovil, however we would still be predicting just under 65% this year. It should be noted that this graph projects the completion of schemes underway during the current financial year and does not include new schemes which the District Executive subsequently agreed to allocate capital subsidy towards.



In recent years a significant element of the affordable housing delivery programme has been produced through planning obligations within larger sites being brought forward by private sector developers. However the delivery of these is tied to wider economics, not least the developers view of prevailing market conditions and the speed at which they estimate completed properties will sell at acceptable prices. Typically the required affordable housing is agreed at the outset of larger sites, but delivered as the site progresses over a number of years.

Dorcas House Trust (otherwise known as Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses) is a registered Charity, No. 235337 and is regulated under Charity Commission Schemes dated 3rd September 1973 and 1st February 1978. The Area South Committee act as Trustees of the trust. This report also refers to the opportunities for obtaining replacement properties for the Trust.

Stonewater is a new Housing Association, created from the merger of Raglan and Jephson (both of whom were appointed as main partner housing associations for the council), which officially came into being in January 2015. Under the recent review of housing association partners, Stonewater has become a main partner association for the next four years in it's own right.

The Chancellors relatively recent announcements imposing an overall reduction in Housing Association rents over the next four years has significantly affected borrowing ability (based on projected rental streams), leading to shortfalls in the funding arrangements for schemes already part way through the pipeline. Further background detail on this aspect can be found in the report that was considered by the District Executive last month.

2014/15 Outturn

During 2014/15 eighteen properties were developed in Area South, of which just sixteen represented a net gain. For the first time affordable rent dwellings were the clear majority – fifteen in total. There were two social rented dwellings and one on an intermediate rent. Most unusually there were no new shared ownership dwellings at all. The full details are shown at Appendix A.

Three different Housing Associations delivered five schemes, being a scheme of six dwellings in West Coker and the remainder in Yeovil. The programme in Area South benefitting from just over £¾ million in public subsidy, being just under £ ½million capital grant from the District Council and land valued at £ 170,000, supplemented by just over £130,000 from the HCA. Last year Area South was the only area where Council land was utilised by way of subsidy.

The projection reported to the Committee last year was for 75 dwellings to be delivered but inevitably there was some slippage, in this case the first phase of the Lufton Key Site where we now expect 59 dwellings to be delivered by the end of the calendar year. The slippage was caused by a number of factors including some weather delays and some supply chain shortages but the most significant factor was the demise of Brookvale who were acting as main contractors for three Housing Associations on several sites across the district including Lufton. As a consequence of this slippage, delivery of new affordable housing in Yeovil was disappointingly low last year with only ten new homes.

The majority of these new homes in Yeovil were delivered by Knightstone on the Lyde Road Key Site, combining both the last remaining properties due without recourse to public subsidy and a small number of additional properties achieved through a cocktail of subsidy including grant from both the HCA and the District Council. Knightstone also utilised Recycled Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) which is shown as part of the total subsidy in the Appendix.

Of note is the achievement of three new five bedroom houses in Yeovil. One acquired by Knightstone as part of the package of properties acquired at the Lyde Road key site. The other two were created by conversions of existing properties, one with Stonewater and one with Yarlington, although neither of these made a net addition to the overall stock. No five bedroom properties were acquired through 'bought not built' which tends to be a more expensive route, although it does make a net addition to overall stock.

2015/16 programme

The programme for the current financial year is shown at Appendix B and includes the new allocations agreed by the District Executive last month. Appendix B shows all the schemes we expect to be underway in Yeovil during this financial year although at least two of these will not complete until 2016/17.

Two Housing Associations – Stonewater and Yarlington – will produce a total of 165 dwellings across five different sites, using just over £2 million in public subsidy of which just

under £1¼ million is initially from the District Council and currently just under £1 million awarded by the HCA. None of the sites benefit from public land at a reduced value.

This includes the first 59 dwellings at the Lufton key site (which has slipped from 2014/15), delivered without recourse to public subsidy, but no other sites in Area South where planning obligations may produce affordable housing. Other such sites might deliver but have not been included as we currently have no indications of contracts being struck between developers and housing associations and cannot be certain that a viability argument may emerge to reduce or eliminate the affordable element, nor that the site may simply be 'mothballed' until economic circumstances make it attractive enough for the developer to commence.

The final number may also vary if there are any further individual acquisitions such as through 'bought not built' or mortgage rescue. The schemes listed in Appendix B include only one house with five bedrooms, so an additional purchase through 'bought not built' is more likely this year.

Programme Changes since September 2014

There have been a number of changes in the overall programme since the last such report to the Area Committee in September 2014, perhaps more so than in previous years. This has included re-allocation of HCA funding and the new allocation of just under £1¼ million from the District Council.

The HCA had allocated £270,000 to Chapter One for the proposed refurbishment of Christopher House in Yeovil. The Strategic Housing Unit had begun discussions with Chapter One over the nature of the refurbishment and the particular client group that the building best suited. During the Housing Association re-selection process it became clear that a potentially serious issue was emerging with Chapter One nationally with the regulatory arm of the HCA keeping the governance and viability of the Association under very close scrutiny. The allocation is now believed to be withdrawn and we have begun discussions with Chapter One about the potential transfer of the building to a different Housing Association with a view to a new bid then being submitted to the HCA to effectively re-allocate the lost funding.

The HCA had allocated £648,417 to Stonewater (then Raglan) for a proposed development of 33 dwellings at Dampier Place in Yeovil. This proposal fell through and the funds were reassigned to other developments, including £470,402 which was transferred to Stonewater's 19 unit scheme at Goldcroft in Yeovil.

In addition Stonewater has brought forward a scheme to develop twenty four flats on a site at Queensway in Yeovil, close to the Tesco store and the development at Wellington Flats inherited from the Council by Yarlinton. £457,607 has been reassigned from other former HCA allocations to achieve this scheme, but additional costs and the general reduction in borrowing ability caused a shortfall of £ 139,000. The District Executive meeting last month allocated this amount from the Councils capital programme in order to ensure that the scheme is achieved.

The Council had previously allocated £100,000 to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) to create four new self contained flats at 80 South Street, Yeovil, together with the proposed day centre provision. After a lot of detailed consideration BCHA withdrew from the scheme and our other main partner Housing Associations were asked to look at the proposals and at alternative proposals to create five or six dwellings without the

day centre provision. The cost of refurbishment works on a listed building, together with the general reduction in borrowing ability has caused each of our main partner Housing Associations to decline the building in turn. 80 South Street is now being considered afresh by the Councils Strategic Asset Steering Group. The District Executive meeting last month de-allocated the £100,000 from BCHA.

In April 2015 the portfolio holder agreed to the allocation of £748,000 to Stonewater towards the first 21 dwellings on the site of the former Seatons garage they have acquired at West Hendford in Yeovil. Planning permission had previously been granted on this site with an obligation to provide affordable housing. It had been agreed that the affordable housing could be located in a single cluster (of 18 dwellings) in one corner of the site and in September 2009 Jephson Housing Association (now part of Stonewater) completed the affordable housing element, consisting of 16 dwellings for rent and two for shared ownership. However the rest of the site remained undeveloped until acquired by Stonewater who now propose to develop it using the existing planning permission, with some minor amendments.

The allocation of grant from the council covers the first phase consisting of 21 dwellings, breaking down into nine for rent and twelve for shared ownership. The homes for rent will include 1 and 2 bedroom flats and 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses, whereas those for shared ownership will all be either 2 or 3 bedroom houses. This first phase is weighted more heavily in favour of shared ownership (57%) because the existing (former Jephson) neighbouring dwellings are 89% rented.

The proposal is that grant funding from the Council subsidises the first phase on the same 'underwriting' basis as we have before, i.e. with the expectation that Stonewater will apply to the HCA under their CME (continuous market engagement) process. If the allocation of Council grant can be replaced, either entirely or partially, by HCA grant funding then the amount released could be applied to the second and third phases of the site.

Stonewater are also planning a specialist dwelling to accommodate five clients with Learning Disabilities. This is to be located on a different part of the site (rather than the first phase) and required an adjustment to the existing planning permission. Such a scheme is likely to require a higher level of subsidy than the general needs dwellings, but in addition to a potential bid to the HCA we are also expecting a capital contribution from the County Council (who have primary responsibility for the care and support needs of this client group). However to give Stonewater confidence to move forward with this specialist provision, last month the District Executive agreed to the principle of providing subsidy from our capital grant programme.

Yarlington have brought forward an opportunity to create three 3 bedroom bungalows on a site in Yeovil, subject to planning permission. It is possible for each of the three bungalows to be designed flexibly, bearing in mind the specific needs of the intended households but allowing for ease of further adaptation in the future. Last month the District Executive agreed to allocate £315,000 to Yarlington to create these three bungalows on the basis that two are made available at social rent and the other as shared ownership. In addition to the allocation being subject to planning permission, Yarlington will be expected to submit a bid to the HCA. It is doubtful that the HCA would pick up the entire cost so we can expect some level of SSDC grant to be taken up even if the HCA do agree to co-fund. In addition we can expect some difficulty in keeping outcome rents to social rent level, the affordable rent model on such properties not being affordable for the two households identified.

Portreeves or Corporation Almshouses (also known as Dorcas House Trust)

The Area South Committee act as trustees of the trust. A report was submitted in July 2014 confirming the sale of Dorcas House and the total funds available to the trustees for procurement of replacement properties. The Committee were also informed in that report of the proposed approach that the properties procured are two-bedroomed self-contained houses or flats, possibly in pairs rather than a block of dwellings in a single building as was previously the case

The affordable housing development programme report in September 2014 further reported that there had been discussions with Raglan Housing Association to consider incorporating some replacement properties for Dorcas House within their prospective sites in the same manner that they were able to help the Jubilee Almshouse Trust in Chard several years previously. This will achieve new dwellings built to modern standards, taking advantage of the pro rata costs of a much larger scheme. It also has the advantage of re-provision for Portreeves (or Corporation) Almshouses within the parish boundary of Yeovil Town, as per the original foundation.

Over the past year this proposal has been delayed somewhat due to a number of pressing changes in the development programme including the need for Housing Associations to complete schemes funded by the HCA under their 2011-15 programme by 31st March 2015, the merger of Raglan with Jephson to form Stonewater and the recent Government announcements affecting the ability to raise loan finance. Consequently it was not possible to include any properties for the trust within the scheme at Goldcroft. It is also less feasible to include any properties within the blocks of flats at Queensway, especially as this would involve a leasehold tenure for the trust. Currently the only scheme within the civic boundary of Yeovil Town is the scheme at West Hendford where the allocation of council funding has guaranteed only the first 21 dwellings.

Financial Implications

The level of SSDC capital funding is shown in the appendices. However this does not indicate the size of the unallocated programme. The main contingency funding has traditionally been held back to meet operational requirements, such as "Bought not Builts" for larger families, mortgage rescue and disabled adaptations specifically designed for clients where opportunities do not exist in the current stock.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Previously all affordable housing in receipt of public subsidy, whether through the HCA or from the Council, had to achieve the minimum code three rating within the Code for Sustainable Homes. The HCA has now dropped this requirement and work has been undertaken to understand the precise differences between code three and current building regulations (which have improved). Whilst the Council may be able to seek slightly higher standards than those achieved through building regulations where it is the sole funder of schemes, this is rarely the case as usually there is some HCA grant sought at some stage.

Equality and Diversity Implications

All affordable housing let by Housing Association partners in South Somerset is allocated through Homefinder Somerset, the county-wide Choice Based Lettings system. Homefinder Somerset has been adopted by all five local housing authorities in the County and is fully compliant with the relevant legislation, chiefly the Housing Act 1996, which sets out the prescribed groups to whom 'reasonable preference' must be shown.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

The Affordable Housing development programme clearly provides a major plank in addressing "Focus Three – Homes" and in particular meets the stated aim:

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

and the major statement in the Plan:

"We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income"

Privacy Impact Assessment

This report does not directly impact on any data held of a personal nature.

Background Papers: Area South Affordable Housing Development Programme
Area South Committee – 3rd September 2014

Affordable Housing Development Programme
District Executive – 4th September 2014

Affordable Housing Development Programme: West
Hendford, Yeovil (Portfolio Holder Report)
Executive Bulletins no.s 670 & 671 (17th & 24th April 2015)

Affordable Housing Development Programme
District Executive – 1st October 2015

Appendix A: Combined HCA & SSDC Programme 2014/15 outturn

	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership/ Intermediate	Net Gain New Homes	Total Grant	Level of grant from SSDC	SDC land allocation value	Level of grant from HCA	Planning Obligation	completion
Yeovil	Stonewater	Larkhill Road	0	0	1	1	£137,600	£137,600	£70,000	£0		Aug-14
	Stonewater	Hathermead Gardens*	0	1	0	0	£39,818	£39,818	£0	£0		Jun-14
	Yarlington	Westfield Place*	1	0	0	0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£0		Dec-14
	Knightstone	Lyde Road** (Cunningham Rd)	1	8	0	9	£212,016	£30,000	£0	£32,016	✓	Jun-14
West Coker	Stonewater	Font Villas	0	6	0	6	£342,200	£143,000	£100,000	£99,200		Mar-15
Totals			2	15	1	16	£801,634	£420,418	£170,000	£131,216		

* extensions to create five bedroom properties, but no net gain in overall numbers

** Lyde Road - £150,000 of RCGF included in total grant figure to demonstrate full uplift from planning obligation only.

Appendix B: Combined HCA & SSDC Programme projected as underway during 2015/16

	Housing Association	Scheme Name	Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership/ Intermediate	Net Gain New Homes	Total Grant	Level of grant from SSDC	SDC land allocation value	Level of grant from HCA	Planning Obligation	completion
Yeovil	Stonewater	West Hendford	0	9	12	60	£748,000	£748,000	£0	£0		Nov-16
	Stonewater	Queensway	0	24	0	24	£596,607	£139,000	£0	£457,607		Nov-16
	Stonewater	Goldcroft	0	19	0	19	£470,402	£0	£0	£470,402		Jan-16
	Yarlington	Specialist bungalows	2	0	1	3	£315,000	£315,000	£0	£0		tbc
	Yarlington	Lufton Key Site	30	0	29	59	£0	£0	£0	£0	✓	Nov-15
Totals			32	42	42	165	£2,130,009	£1,202,000	£0	£928,009	59	