

## South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held as a **Virtual Meeting using Zoom meeting software on Wednesday 16 December 2020.**

(4.00 pm - 4.55 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Adam Dance (Chairman)

Neil Bloomfield	Crispin Raikes
Louise Clarke	Dean Ruddle
Tim Kerley	Mike Stanton
Clare Paul	Gerard Tucker



**Officers:**

Netta Meadows	Director (Service Delivery)
Trudy Gallagher	Specialist - Principal Planner
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Jo Morris	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)

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

---

### 150. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 September were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

---

### 151. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Malcolm Cavill, Mike Hewitson and Tiffany Osborne.

---

### 152. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

---

### 153. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 4)

Members noted that the next meeting of Area North Committee was scheduled for 2pm on Wednesday 27 January 2021, and was likely to be a virtual meeting using Zoom.

There was a short discussion about possible items for discussion at the next meeting including an update regarding the phosphates issue and the latest position regarding the five year land supply. In response the Director (Service Delivery) acknowledged the

comments made and noted she would go back to officers with a request for updates for members.

---

**154. Public question time (Agenda Item 5)**

There were no questions from members of the public present at the meeting.

---

**155. Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman made no formal announcements. He wished everyone a good Christmas and hoped for better times in 2021.

---

**156. Reports from members (Agenda Item 7)**

There were no reports from members.

---

**157. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 8)**

There was no discussion and members were content to note the Forward Plan.

---

**158. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 9)**

Members noted the report that detailed the planning appeals which had been lodged, dismissed or allowed.

---

**159. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined By Committee (Agenda Item 10)**

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications to be determined at the meeting,

---

**160. Planning Application 20/01112/FUL - Merricks Farm, Park Lane, Huish Episcopi (Agenda Item 11)**

***Proposal: Change of use of 2 existing holiday units to straightforward open market dwellings, together with a provision of residential curtilage and parking spaces.***

The Principal Planner (Development Management) presented the application as detailed in the agenda, including details for parking, access and vicinity to neighbouring agricultural buildings. She explained to members the relevant planning history on the site, and highlighted key considerations and some of the issues for this application.

She updated members that since writing the report, she now proposed an additional reason for refusal based upon the issue of the phosphate levels in the Somerset Levels and Moors catchment area.

A member of the public addressed members in objection to the application and raised concern that additional traffic would make the lane more hazardous as there are few passing spaces. She also noted that occupiers of nearby dwellings contributed to maintenance of the lane, so assumed any new owners would do too?

The applicant provided a brief history of why the buildings had been converted to holiday lets, and explained that since then there had been enquiries about purchasing the properties. He referred to sustainability and the site being within walking distance to Langport, and commented the lane would not be more hazardous, as the buildings were already used as holiday lets and there were four passing spaces. The properties would provide needed one bedroom accommodation.

The agent commented the buildings already existed, could be occupied and had been deemed to be in a sustainable location when converted. The size of the properties were adequate and a garden area was proposed to be added to each to improve the offer. He noted that regarding the phosphates issue an application had been approved recently at another committee, where an application had been approved subject to the phosphates issue being addressed.

During discussion by members, a number of comments were raised some of which included:

- Regarding minimum space standards – are they policy?
- Need to consider types and size of housing available locally.
- Already a small collection of properties in the location, and there are plenty of cycling and walking opportunities.
- Note no local objection from the parish council.
- Properties are small but that is a choice for the buyer.
- Can occupancy levels be conditioned?
- State of the access road may be an advantage so that it doesn't get used as a short cut.
- Farm buildings are close by – should there be concerns about use and smells?
- How many people live in a property is not a committee decision.

In response to comments made, the Principal Planner explained some aspects including that:

- Regarding the agricultural buildings immediately behind the properties – when the holiday lets had been approved it had been conditioned that the buildings could not be used for livestock. She acknowledged there was still potential for a noise issue depending on future use of the agricultural buildings.
- If members were minded to approve the application, it would need to be subject to the ecology issue regarding phosphates on the Somerset Levels being delegated to officers to resolve first.

At the end of discussion it was proposed to approve the application, subject to the ecology issue regarding phosphates being resolved by officers, mainly on the grounds of it being a sustainable location.

In response to the proposal and hearing comments made during discussion, the Principal Planner suggested wording for the justification and advised that conditions would be required for:

- Time limit
- Agreed plans
- Parking spaces to be provided before first occupancy

- Electric vehicle charging point
- Removal of Permitted Development Rights

On being put to the vote, the proposal to approve the application, was carried 7 votes in favour and 1 against, with no abstentions.

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 20/01112/FUL be APPROVED, contrary to the officer recommendation, subject to the ecology issue regarding phosphates being resolved by officers, and subject to the following:

**Justification:**

The development, if approved, would allow the units to be occupied as independent dwellings which would represent sustainable development and would have no harmful impact on highway safety or amenity, and are of an adequate size for a single occupant. Thus the proposal accords with policies SD1, SS1, SS2, EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028), the provisions of the NPPF and the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015).

**Subject to the following conditions:**

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 referenced:  
Location Plan  
Proposed Site Plan  
Proposed Floor Plan

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

03. Prior to first occupation of either unit as an independent dwelling, the parking spaces shown on the Proposed Site Plan must be implemented in a bound, permeable surface, and kept clear for parking purposes thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking provision and to accord with policy TA6 of the Local Plan, the Somerset County Council Parking Standards and the provisions of the NPPF.

04. Prior to first occupation of either unit as an independent dwelling, one electric charging point (of a minimum 16amps) for electric vehicles per dwelling shall be provided adjacent to the parking spaces. Once installed such charging points shall be retained and maintained in working order, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development is resilient and sustainable in accordance with Policy TA1 (Low Carbon Travel) of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

05. The agricultural building immediately to the north of the proposed dwellings shall not be used to house livestock at any time.

Reason: To reduce the noise pollution caused by the adjacent agricultural unit, in accordance with policy EQ2 of the Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

06. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings shall be formed in the building, or other external alteration made including the erection of boundary treatments, without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the barn and the local setting, and to accord with the NPPF and Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2015.

*(Voting: 7 for, 1 against, 0 abstentions)*

---

.....  
Chairman