

Meeting AN **05M** 07/08
Date **26.09.07**

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 26th September 2007** at the Village Hall, Norton-sub-Hamdon.

(2.00 p.m. – 5.05 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Paull Robathan
Tony Carvin	Keith Ronaldson
Ann Campbell	Jo Roundell Greene (to 4.25p.m.)
Rupert Cox	Sylvia Seal
Roy Mills	Sue Steele
Derek Nelson	Derek Yeomans

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North)
Tim Bodys	Solicitor
Adron Duckworth	Conservation Manager
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader
Lynne Axford	Senior Housing Development Officer
Madelaine King Oakley	Area Support Team Leader (North)
Gerard Tucker	Economic Development Team Leader
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

Others:

Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson	Avon & Somerset Police
Sergeant Mark Whitfield	Avon & Somerset Police
Sam Healey	Chief Officer, South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA)

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

53. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd August 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

54. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

55. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

Agenda Item 5: Public Question Time

Councillor Derek Yeomans noted that members of Langport Town Council were attending the meeting and he said that if they wished to discuss the Great Bow Yard project in Langport then he would declare a personal and prejudicial interest as a Director of the Warehouse Trust and leave the room during any discussion.

56. Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 24th October 2007 at The Village Hall, Ilton.**

57. Public Question Time (agenda item 5)

(Councillor Derek Yeomans, having earlier made a declaration of interest, left the room during discussion of this item).

Mr Robin Williams, Clerk to Langport Town Council, spoke of his concerns regarding the Warehouse roof at the Great Bow Yard, Langport. He said an original artists impression of the completed building had clearly shown a clay tiled roof and Town Council had not been consulted on the substantial change of materials to galvanised tin. He asked that the District Council take enforcement action to change the roof materials back to clay tiles, as originally proposed in the artists impression.

Mr P Mounter of Langport Town Council spoke of his concerns regarding a recently submitted planning application for the erection of wood pellet and refuse store at Great Bow Wharf, Langport. He asked that, in light of the Town Council's concerns regarding the roof of the Warehouse on the site, that this application be determined by the Area North Committee and the design and materials be sympathetic to the riverside setting.

Mr C Osborne of Langport Town Council said this was a prominent site in the town and it made a statement when entering the town from the west. He queried the lack of building control inspections at the site which, he felt, had resulted in the inappropriate silver galvanized tin roof. He also queried why, following a request to the Ward Member from the Town Council, this was not a separate item for full discussion on the Agenda.

The Ward Member, Councillor Roy Mills, replied that the request from the Town Council for this to be an item for discussion on the Agenda had arrived the day after the Agenda had been published, and so, he had been advised to raise the matter at an informal meeting with Members and planning officers. At that meeting, the Chairman had requested that the Conservation Manager, the Development Control Team Leader and a Solicitor of the Council attend the Area North Committee to answer any questions. He said the Town Council would be happy to compromise but the shiny silver galvanized roof, currently in place, urgently needed some treatment.

The Conservation Manager said that the original plans submitted for the Great Bow Yard, Langport did not specify any roof materials, however, the amended plans submitted later, did state that new industrial corrugated steel roofing would be used. In granting planning permission for the development, Condition 10 of the Decision Notice (05/03000/LBC) stated that prior to commencement of the development full particulars of

the proposed roof covering of the New Store, including materials, profile, colour and finish shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. However, the applicants had not submitted these details prior to installing the roof.

(Post Meeting Note: Planning Officers now confirm that the original plans and amended plans did indicate a corrugated steel roofing material).

The Solicitor for the Council stated that as the colour of the roof was subject to prior approval by the planning authority, then the applicants were open to enforcement action if Members felt that necessary.

It was noted that with regard to the consideration of future applications relating to the site, they would fall within the Planning Scheme of Delegation and that any application could be considered by the Committee by agreement with the Chairman, at the request of the Ward Member, with reasons relating to planning issues.

During discussion, Members felt that all the involved parties should to meet to mutually resolve the situation before any enforcement action was considered. If that meeting did not result in the satisfactory discharge of Condition 10 of the planning permission (05/03000/LBC) then enforcement action be considered. Members were unanimously in favour of this.

58. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)

The Chairman asked Members to note that the next informal meeting with planning officers would be Monday 19th November at 2.00p.m. at the Council Offices, Old Kelways, Langport.

59. Reports from Members (agenda item 7)

Councillor Paull Robathan reported that he had attended a consultation evening regarding the future of South Petherton hospital. He said the proposal was to make the hospital into a 24 bed facility for the rehabilitation of stroke, heart and neurology patients which would be integrated with both Yeovil and Taunton hospitals. He asked that a copy of the consultation document be circulated to all Members for them to comment on the proposals by 4th December.

Councillor Rupert Cox expressed his disappointment at the management of the Somerset County Council Local Area Working Panel meeting held in North Cadbury recently. He felt that this had adversely affected the reputation and therefore the relationship between SCC and the parishes, which he regretted

Several other Members expressed their dissatisfaction at the way the Area Panel meeting had run. The Head of Area Development (North) said that there were on going discussions between the District and County Councils at various levels, partly in response to the decision by Government not to accept the SCC bid for a Unitary Council, and partly to take forward the commitment of both Councils to improving local working arrangements, in particular the engagement with parishes and the local accountability of services. A report with proposals for moving forward in Area North was due to be received by the Area North Committee shortly but, it may also be an appropriate item to raise at the State of the District meeting in November. She undertook to update Members on this issue at the October meeting of the Committee.

60. The Police Authority – Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson and Sergeant Mark Whitfield (agenda item 8)

Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson of Avon & Somerset Police provided Members with a powerpoint presentation of the organisation and performance of the police in South Somerset. She said that there had been overall a 22% reduction in crime from April 2003 and although vehicle crime was still significant, resources were being deployed to this area. There were now 10 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) in the Yeovil area and 7 in the Somerton area.

Sergeant Mark Whitfield explained the process for obtaining and imposing a dispersal order in a village or town. He said that if a Parish or Town Council felt that there was disorder or the likelihood of disorder in an area, then they could apply to the Chief Superintendent for a dispersal order. Once agreed and signed by the Chief Superintendent, then the order would be advertised by signs in the area and notices in local papers. Any youths under the age of 16 found in the area after 9.00p.m. would be taken home by the police. Successful orders had run for 6 months in Bruton and Castle Cary where there had been a noticeable improvement in behaviour, in conjunction with diversionary youth activities.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Superintendent replied that:-

- Despite the reduction in Government funding, it was still her aspiration to employ more PCSO's to achieve the target of one PCSO per parish.
- Under the Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods initiative, all households in Somerset would be receiving a leaflet giving them photographs and the mobile telephone numbers of all Police Constables and PCSO's in their area so the public could contact them direct for non-urgent police enquiries.
- The public's fear of crime was disproportionately high for the low crime area of South Somerset. Residents did not feel as safe as they should.
- Communication was key and relationships would be built with the media to publicise good news and make informed comments if any problems arose within the police force.
- A pilot scheme was currently being trialled in Weston-super-Mare which would allow police officers the technology to work in their car rather than return to a station to complete paperwork.
- The powers of PCSO's was still under review by the Government.

The Chief Superintendent concluded that she would be happy for Members to contact her by e-mail through the Police website if they had any concerns in the future.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Superintendent and the Sergeant for attending and updating the Committee. He said their work was greatly appreciated.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
e-mail: charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk*

61. Social Housing Development Programme – Outturn 2006/07 (agenda item 9)

Mr R Hughes, Chairman of Curry Mallet Parish Council, spoke regarding an affordable housing development which the Committee had approved in October 2006 at Lyddons Barns, Curry Mallet. He said that when the permission was granted a figure of £500 per dwelling had been requested as a contribution from the developer to improve local recreation facilities, however, this had now risen to £2,000 per dwelling, which was causing concern at Hastoe Housing Association, the proposed developer and the conversion of the barns was stalled by this. He said the Parish were willing to waive the contribution to local recreation facilities, or at least reduce them to the original £500 to allow the development to go ahead.

The Senior Housing Development Officer said that she was aware of this situation and acknowledged that social housing was provided on a tight budget. She said meetings were ongoing to resolve where the additional £3,000 would be found.

The Development Control Team Leader said he was hoping the situation would be resolved at a meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing on 12th October.

The Senior Housing Development Officer said that mainly thanks to the help of South Somerset Homes and their schemes for demolishing old and concrete PRC houses and redeveloping the sites with new housing, 227 new affordable homes had been built during 2006/07. She said that generally speaking, Housing Associations sought higher standards of housing than the private sector. They used modern methods of construction, were larger and had higher eco-standards than private developments. She provided Members with a range of photographs of new affordable development sites across South Somerset.

During discussion, Members regretted that there had only been one rural exception site within Area North during the last two years and felt that more needed to be done to progress small village schemes.

The Head of Area Development (North) reminded Members that the Community Council for Somerset were due to present a report to the Committee in October. She suggested an informal meeting of Members and the Head of Economic Development, Planning and Transport to scope the detail of that report. She also offered to ascertain whether the tenants would be allowed the right to buy their new homes in the future.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Housing Development Officer for her informative report.

Post Meeting Note: South Somerset Homes tenants, who were tenants prior to March 1999, still have the Right to Buy their property at a discounted price, unless it is an especially adapted property or a sheltered bungalow. South Somerset Homes tenants who became tenants after March 1999, have the Right to Acquire their property at its market value, less £10,000, but only in the larger towns of over 3,000 properties in South Somerset (Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Martock, Somerton, Wincanton, Yeovil). They must have lived in the property for at least one year and have been a Housing Association tenant for 5 years. Other Housing Associations offer cash incentives to help their tenants purchase private housing, so freeing up the Housing Association property for a new tenant.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Lynne Axford, Senior Housing Development Officer - (01935) 462944
e-mail: lynne.axford@southsomerset.gov.uk*

62. Waterlinks Update (agenda item 10)

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
e-mail: charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk*

63. Somerton and Langport Links Service (agenda item 11)

The Area Support Team Leader (North) said the report was to update Members on the Somerton and Langport Links Service, which they had grant funded £12,500 in April 2007. She introduced Sam Healey, Chief Officer of the South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA).

The Chief Officer of the SSVCA advised that the conditions attached to the SSDC grant of £12,500 had now been met. A 3 year Business Plan had been approved by the SSVCA, which included the Links Service and 14 of the 16 conditions detailed in the Business Plan had been achieved. Letters had been sent to all non-contributing Parish Councils, detailing the number of passengers using the Links service within their parish and requesting a future contribution from them. The independent steering group had been formed and had met 3 times and a more detailed business plan was being worked on. She circulated the projected budget for the service to the Committee. She further advised that at this stage, the project showed a good projected surplus, which could mean that a future grants request from SSDC should be far lower than the current year. She said she would continue to work with the Head of Area Development North to review the need for grant aid through a service level agreement.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Officer replied that:-

- The Links service now had 4 vehicles and this was sufficient to cover present demand for the service.
- She was awaiting advice regarding the level of depreciation which they should budget for on the vehicles.
- The independent steering group was looking at marketing and advertising the service.
- Although there was a management fee of £2,000 in the budget, she had not drawn any money from this and would not until she felt the service could afford it.

The Head of Area Development (North) reminded Members that the Transport Officer would be attending the October Committee meeting and she asked that they contact the Committee Administrator with any particular questions or points they wished to be covered in his report.

The Chairman thanked the Area Support Team Leader (North) and the Chief Officer of the SSVCA for an informative report and discussion.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report be noted.
 2. That a further report in 12 months be included in the Forward Plan.
 3. That any issues relating to community transport be forwarded to the Committee Administrator to be included in the October report from the Transport Officer.

*Madelaine King-Oakley, Area Support Team Leader (North) - (01458) 257428
e-mail: madelaine.king-oakley@southsomerset.gov.uk*

64. Annual Review of the Economic Development Service (agenda item 12)

The Economic Development Team Leader asked Members to note the recommendation in his report to encourage businesses to engage with the enhanced service now being provided by the Economic Development unit. He mentioned several ongoing projects which the service was encouraging, particularly the Business Ambassador Service, aimed at engaging businesses and providing guidance and support with Environmental Health, Planning and other relevant services of the authority.

During discussion, Members expressed concern that Somerset County Council were considering withdrawing the Community Chest grants service. It was noted that the Somerset County Council Fieldworker, responsible for administering the service, was due to report to Committee in October and the situation would be clearer then.

Members were wholehearted in their praise for the Economic Development Team Leader and the enhanced service his team now provided.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Gerard Tucker, Economic Development Team Leader - (01935) 462527
e-mail: gerard.tucker@southsomerset.gov.uk*

65. Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 13)

Members were content to note the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Forward Plan be NOTED.

*Angela Cox, Committee Administrator - (01458) 257437
e-mail: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk*

66. Planning Appeals (agenda item 14)

The Chairman asked that Members note the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Simon Gale, Head of Development & Building Control - (01935) 462071
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67. Planning Applications (agenda item 15)

06/03173/FUL – Erection of two storey extension at Chantry Farm, Beer Road, Aller, Langport, Somerset TA10 0RA

The Development Control Team Leader advised that although this was a large extension to the existing farmhouse, it would remain a four bedroom dwelling and although he did not object to the principle of the extension, it was a finely balanced decision.

Mr C Strong of Aller Parish Council said that they had been unanimous in their support for the proposal. He reminded the Committee that the village had no development limit and there was a need to retain working families within the village.

Mr M Williams, on behalf of the applicants, said that the existing farmhouse was a modern construction, set down from the road, behind a hedge. The applicants were willing to carry out additional planting and the extension would be subservient to the existing house. There were no listed buildings nearby and it would not be out of character with the area and it would allow the family to remain in the village.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, regretted that the application had taken over 12 months to be brought to Committee for determination. He said although it was a substantial extension, it was set down from the road and the house would remain a four bed dwelling, and therefore still affordable to the farming community in the future. He said that planning officers had only put forward one reason for refusal and he asked Members to support approval of the application.

Members briefly discussed the application and were in agreement with the Ward Member that this was an acceptable development, subject to conditions on the materials to be used, the windows to match existing, removal of permitted development rights and provision of a suitable landscaping scheme.

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to appropriate conditions, including:-

- materials to be agreed in writing
- windows to match existing,
- removal of permitted development rights
- provision of a suitable landscaping scheme

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*Simon Gale, Head of Development and Building Control - (01935) 462071
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Chairman