

Meeting AN **08M** 07/08
Date **19.12.07**

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 19th December 2007** at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.

(2.00 p.m. – 4.50 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Paull Robathan
Tony Carvin	Keith Ronaldson
Ann Campbell	Jo Roundell Greene
Rupert Cox	Sylvia Seal
Roy Mills	Sue Steele (to 4.00 p.m.)
Derek Nelson	Derek Yeomans (from 2.40 p.m.)

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North)
Simon Gale	Head of Development & Building Control
Gerard Tucker	Economic Development Team Leader
Madelaine King Oakley	Area Support Team Leader (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
Andrew Gunn	Development Control Deputy Team Leader
Mike Muston	Planning Consultant
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

Others:

Alex Sherman	Manager of LEADER + Project
Emily Ruthven	Team Leader, Age Concern
Vicky Breeze	Area Working Support Officer, SCC

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

103. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th November 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

104. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

105. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

106. Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 23rd January 2008 at The Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.**

107. Public Question Time (agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public.

108. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)

The Chairman welcomed Vicky Breeze of Somerset County Council who was attending to gain experience of Area Committees as she supported area working and the Area Forums of Somerset County Council.

109. Reports from Members (agenda item 7)

Councillor Paull Robathan reported that he had attended his first meeting as recently appointed representative on the Somerset Levels and Moors LEADER + group.

Councillor Sylvia Seal reported that she and Councillor Roy Mills had recently attended a Sports Award evening at Yeovil Football Club. Councillor Mills commented that they had been the first Sports Awards held in South Somerset and he hoped they would become an annual event. All local sports had been represented and he felt it was important to recognise their achievements.

110. Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER+ Annual Report (agenda item 8)

The Manager of the Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER + project reminded Members that this was an European Union funded regeneration project which had been in existence since 2002 and was due to complete in 2008. The programme had successfully supported 86 projects, many with match funding and he particularly highlighted 7 projects within Area North:-

- Level Best Food Brand – 74 local businesses had now signed up to this
- Orchard Link – a co-operative for small orchard growers
- Marsh Ragwort Study – a 3 year trial to control this toxic plant – the final report to be published soon
- Farm Plastic Recycling – 300 tonnes successfully recycled in 2 years into plastic footpath planks
- Farmer Links – a mentoring process, sharing good land management practice
- Langport Festival of Walking – attendance at this event had doubled in 2007 from the previous year

- Somerset Guild of Craftsmen – assisting with their re-branding and updating their promotion material

He concluded that as the programme was nearing its end, the projects were being evaluated and he was now putting together a case for further funding from 2008 to 2014 to continue the economic development work across the levels.

In response to questions, the Manager of the Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER + project confirmed that:-

- The results of the Marsh Ragwort study would be made widely available, when the study was completed.
- The Langport Area Development Trust (LADT) were looking to make the Langport Festival of Walking a sustainable, annual event, linking in with other trails in the area.
- The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) were seeking funding to continue the Farm Plastic Recycling scheme.
- The evaluation of the various projects would look in detail at the project delivery, background and what they had brought to the area.

Councillor Jo Roundell Green, as Portfolio Holder for Environment and Property, noted that although the Farm Plastic Recycling was technically considered commercial waste and therefore not the responsibility of the Somerset Waste Partnership to collect, she felt the scheme must continue as it was beneficial to both farmers and the environment. She undertook to look at continuing the scheme under the Waste Partnership.

The Chairman thanked the Manager of the Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER + project for his presentation.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Alex Sherman, Manager of LEADER+ (01458) 251309
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111. Somerset Levels & Moors LEADER+ Request for Financial Support (Executive Decision) (agenda item 9)

The Head of Area Development (North) reminded Members that this was the final year of partnership contributions to the programme, which were confirmed annually. She noted that she had added two conditions requesting evaluation of the final/major projects and to endorse support for the Local Action in Rural Communities bid.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that there would be no commitment, financial or otherwise, on behalf of SSDC in the expression of interest letter for the Local Action in Rural Communities bid.

Members were content to confirm the partnership contribution and the two additional conditions.

RESOLVED: Members agreed that:-

1. a payment of £5,317.88 be made from the Area North Grants Budget to Somerset County Council, towards the Levels and Moors LEADER + Programme, as agreed in 2001.
2. a financial report on the programme, including an evaluation of the final/major projects supported during the life of the programme be requested.
3. the Area North Committee support the bid to the successor programme for the Levels and Moors and request further information on any required partnership contributions as soon as they are available.

Reason: To continue to support the work of the Somerset Levels and Moors LEADER + Programme.

(Voting: unanimous)

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

112. Update on the Active Living Project in Area North (agenda item 10)

The Area Support Team Leader (North) introduced Emily Ruthven of Age Concern, and noted that a fuller report would be presented to Committee in February 2008.

Miss Ruthven of Age Concern provided Members with a brief outline of the work of the Partnership for Older People Project (POPP) in Area North. She said that although the two year project was due to cease in April 2008, there was a commitment from Somerset County Council and the Somerset Primary Care Trust to continue to support existing schemes, which included:-

- Tai Chi classes in Langport
- A mini day centre at St Gildas in Langport
- Extension to the Langport WRVS lunch club
- An extra activity per week at the Pitway Sheltered Scheme in South Petherton
- The Methodist Live at Home scheme in Norton-sub-Hamdon

In response to questions from Members the Team Leader for Age Concern confirmed that most of the projects were volunteer led and she said that she would check that the mini day centre at St Gildas in Langport were in contact with the Langport Senior Citizens Club.

The Chairman thanked the Team Leader for Age Concern for attending to present the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

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

113. Supporting Parish Plans in Area North (agenda item 11)

The Community Development Officer noted that his report covered the rural parishes within Area North and the larger parishes of Martock, South Petherton Langport and Somerton would be reported upon separately. He said the completed parish plans had proved very useful in preparing the Area North Development Plan and were also taken as material consideration when determining planning applications. He said that the existing parish plans must be regularly monitored and amended as circumstances required. Many of the plans were on the SSDC Website. The Community Council for Somerset were planning to set up a parish plan group to encourage those villages with plans to meet and discuss any improvements. He concluded that in future, parish plans may have to be self-financing which they could do through their Parish Precept or SSDC grants.

The Chairman thanked the Community Development Officer for a comprehensive and informative report.

RESOLVED: That Members agreed to:-

1. Endorse the on-going support from the Area Development Service to the parish planning process.
2. Request reports seeking endorsement of recently completed plans including Fivehead, Pitney and Lopen.
3. Request further guidance on the role of Parish Plans in the Local Development Framework from the Head of Planning Policy, Economic Development and Transport.

Reason: To continue to support the on-going parish planning process.

*Les Collett, Community Development Officer - (01458) 257427
e-mail: leslie.collett@southsomerset.gov.uk*

114. Area North Community Offices Update Report (agenda item 12)

The Area Support Team Leader provided Members with a brief update of the operation of the two Community Offices in Langport and Somerton since the control of them had been transferred to the Area Development team. She said there had been a marked improvement in the time spent with customers since the reception staff were no longer under pressure to answer the main SSDC telephone number. There was consistency of 3 regular reception staff who were knowledgeable in the local area and who used the Northgate computer system when dealing with enquiries to provide consistency of service. The Area Support Team had recognised peaks and troughs in their workload and had proactively offered to assist other teams within the Council during their busy periods.

In response to a question, the Head of Area Development (North) stated that significant technological investment would be required to provide community offices in either Martock or South Petherton and she felt that there should be a corporate decision to extend the service in this way. Similarly, there were no plans to extend the opening hours of the Somerton Community Office at present.

The Chairman warmly thanked the Area Support Team Leader for her report.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

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

115. Improved Area Working (agenda item 13)

The Head of Area Development (North) advised that SSDC were now looking at new ways of working together with both Somerset County Council and its parish councils. Area Committees must now react to requests for enhanced services from the community. To this end, a very successful Parish Workshop was held on 6th December, and the views of the parishes in Area North who attended were reflected in the recommendations in her report. She said that although these had been identified as priority areas, other may follow and she would report to the Committee again with precise proposals of the work to be carried out.

The Area Working Support Officer for Somerset County Council (SCC) spoke of the challenge to progress SCC and SSDC to work together to provide enhanced services for the community. She said that she would be working with SSDC officers to map how they worked with their parishes and to suggest improvements. She would also be looking at how services were delivered to the community and to see if any improvements could be made.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- Closer working between the County and District Councils would help to prevent duplication of service.
- Parishes would want to see action and the Area Forums must be held accountable.
- The Area Forums must build on the good relations that SSDC had with its parishes.
- The two identified priorities of services for young and older people were currently the responsibility of SCC and any enhanced services must be provided in partnership with SCC.

Members were content to endorse the recommendations contained in the report.

RESOLVED: That Members agreed to:-

1. Allocate £10,000 to each of the two identified area priorities of supporting young people, and, supporting older people, subject to further detail of the planned outcomes, costs and timetables.
2. Host an Area Forum meeting in March 2008.

Reason: To support the enhanced approach to area working, as agreed by full Council in December 2006.

(Voting: unanimous)

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

116. Somerset Waterlinks – Programme Review (agenda item 14)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Well-Being, Councillor Sylvia Seal, noted that a great deal of officer time had been spent on the Waterlinks bid and although it had not been put forward to the final BIG Lotteries bid, SSDC now needed to look at what projects could still be delivered.

The Head of Area Development (North) said that many of the projects from the Waterlinks bid were now included in the Area Development Plans and although the District Executive Committee approved a capital contribution in February 2007, this had been subject to match funding. The Head of Finance had indicated that this decision would be reviewed and she would now be presenting a revised report on the projects to District Executive in February 2008.

Members expressed their support for the presentation of a revised report to the District Executive in February 2008.

RESOLVED: That Area North Committee recommend to District Executive that:-

1. SSDC express support for the values and vision of the Waterlinks programme, and work with partners towards the agreement to revise the programme, and the corresponding agreement if still required, for further consideration at a later date (timescales to be agreed)
2. the current allocation to the Waterlinks programme within the Corporate Capital Programme be retained, according to the revised proposals from the Head of Area Development (North), with detailed scheme proposals to be submitted by August 2008.

Reason: To recommend to the District Executive Committee that SSDC continue to support and participate in the revised Waterlinks programme.

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
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117. Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 15)

Members were content to note the Forward Plan.

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

*Angela Cox, Committee Administrator - (01458) 257437
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118. Planning Appeals (agenda item 16)

The Chairman asked that Members note the Planning Appeals report.

RESOLVED: That the Planning Appeals report be NOTED.

*Simon Gale, Head of Development & Building Control - (01935) 462071
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119. Planning Applications (agenda item 17)

07/04032/REM - The formation of a vehicular access and the erection of 6 houses with garages at Factory and Premises, Thorney Road, Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BB

The Development Control Deputy Team Leader reminded Members that they had granted outline permission for the site in April 2007, on condition that the reserved matters be brought back to Committee for determination. Following deferment of the application from the November Committee to allow for the circulation of amended plans, he reported that two of the plots had been rotated by 90 degrees to prevent overlooking. He further reported that Condition 2 of his report required amending as he would agree the height of the boundary fence as well as the materials, in writing, to prevent overlooking of neighbouring properties. He also wished to add a condition requiring obscured glazing to the first floor window of the southern gable end of Plot 2, again, to prevent overlooking of neighbouring properties. He had received one further letter from the Parish Council commenting on overlooking, however, he felt that the best design had now been achieved, given the limited size of the site.

Mr J House of Knightstone Close, said that he had originally objected to the proposals on the grounds of overlooking from Plot 2, however, the planning officer had negotiated a 90 degree rotation of the plot, and had conditioned obscured glazing in a first floor window and a higher fence, therefore, he was now content with the proposals.

The Ward Member, Councillor Derek Yeomans, complimented the Development Control Deputy Team Leader for his negotiations with the developer to achieve the best possible layout of properties on the narrow site. He endorsed the officer's recommendation to approve planning permission.

During discussion, it was requested that the first floor window of the southern gable end of Plot 2 be fixed, as well as obscured glazing to prevent any overlooking of neighbouring properties. Members were unanimously in favour of the officer's recommendation with the proposed amendments.

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to Conditions 1 to 7 as detailed in the Officer's agenda report, with the following amendments:-

1. Condition 2 be amended to read "No permission is hereby given to the height of the proposed fencing along the southern boundary. Full details of the wooden panel fencing to include the materials and proposed height of the fencing shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The agreed boundary fencing shall be fully installed to the written satisfaction of the LPA before all of the 6 dwellings hereby approved are first occupied and shall be permanently retained and maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA"
2. An additional condition requiring the fixing of and obscured glazing to the first floor window of the southern gable end of Plot 2.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

07/03984/FUL – The erection of 52 no. dwellings, B1 employment floorspace and extension to hotel on Land at Old Kelways, Somerton Road, Langport, Somerset

The Planning Consultant reported that he had two updates to his report. There had been an objection to the application from the Environment Agency, however, following the receipt of a revised flood risk assessment and some informatives on water efficiency, they had now withdrawn their objections. Also, a further letter had been received from a neighbour, reiterating previous objections to the applications.

He stated that, if Members wished to approve the application, then he proposed an amendment to Condition 7 to remove the word 'additional' as Plot 13 had the potential for overlooking of other properties. He also requested that the Section 106 planning obligation wording be amended to include at (ii) "and other sports/community facilities"

Mr C Lowery, representing some of the residents of Wearne, spoke of their objection to the development. He said that the site was outside the defined development limit and that there were other sites allocated for development in the near area. They were also concerned that the development could extend to the field to the north of the site. However, the increase in traffic was their main concern and he drew Members attention to the proposed access for cycles to the east of the site onto Wearne Lane, which he said was wide enough to accommodate cars or motorcycles in the future.

The Planning Consultant acknowledged that the gap to the east of the site onto Wearne Lane was wide but he felt that Condition 17 of his recommendation addressed this.

Mr D Lohfink, Agent for the applicants, said that they had sought to address Members concerns expressed at their previous application on the site. Employment space had been added, the size of the public open space had been reduced, but still included a play area, highway concerns had been addressed with a right hand turn lane added at the entrance to the site, together with contributions towards a safe route to school and junction improvements at the A372/B3153 junction. He commended the application as a high quality, mixed use development.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, referring to the letters of objection, said that although the site was outside the development limit, it was a brownfield site. Both the local schools and the doctors surgery had the capacity to accommodate the additional people which the development would attract and he felt that local businesses would also benefit. He also felt that the business units made the site more sustainable and he noted that the site was on a regular bus route to Yeovil and Taunton. He confirmed that he supported the Planning Consultant's recommendation to approve the application.

In response to questions from Members, the Planning Consultant confirmed that:-

- There were 111 car parking spaces allocated for the proposed 52 houses, 14 for the hotel, 30 for the business units and 44 for the Kelways offices. Under current Government advice, this was sufficient for the site.
- The applicants had submitted a Transport Assessment with their application, which stated that the current roads were sufficient to accommodate the development, however, he had negotiated a contribution from them towards the proposed roundabout at the junction of the A372/B3153 roads. He did not feel it was reasonable to condition that the roundabout be constructed prior to commencement of the development of the site.
- Although Condition 18 requested details to be submitted for the treatment of foul and surface water, sewerage was not primarily a planning issue.

The Ward Member proposed the Planning Consultant's recommendation, with the two amendments he had suggested. This was seconded and on being put to a vote, was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to:-

1. the prior completion of a Section 106 planning obligation in respect of affordable housing, contributions to public open space, landscaping, play areas and other sports/community facilities, off-site highway works and improvements to Huish Episcopi secondary school.
2. Conditions 1 to 18 as detailed in the Officer's agenda report, with the deletion of the word 'additional' in Condition 7.
3. an informative in respect of water efficiency as requested by the Environment Agency

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

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