

Meeting AN 12M 07/08  
Date 23.04.08

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008** at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.

(2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.)

**Present:**

**Members:**

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Jo Roundell Greene
Tony Carvin	Sue Steele
Ann Campbell	Sylvia Seal
Rupert Cox (from 2.50p.m.)	Derek Yeomans
Paull Robathan	

**Officers:**

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer
Natalie House	Community Regeneration Officer
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
David Norris	Planning Team Leader, Development Control
Gerard Tucker	Economic Development Team Leader
Lee Walton	Planning Officer
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

**Also Present:**

Kim Sharp                                      Assistant Area Highways Manager, SCC

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

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### 166. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

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### 167. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roy Mills, Derek Nelson and Keith Ronaldson.

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### 168. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

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### 169. Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at the Village Hall, Compton Dundon.**

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### 170. Public Question Time (agenda item 5)

Mr I Neale of Somerton spoke regarding Home Farm, Somerton. He noted the decline of the building over recent years and the refusal of planning permission at Somertonfield Road as an alternative housing location for the family. He asked what progress was being made by SSDC to take enforcement action to clear the site and to compulsory purchase the buildings as he understood that the site was to have been cleared 12 to 14 months previously.

The Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that the situation was regularly monitored by senior officers within the Council and that the clearance of the site and discontinuance order were in hand. She said that due to the complexity of the case the Solicitor to the Council would provide Mr Neale with a short written reply to his question.

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### 171. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)

The Chairman thanked those who had attended the presentation at the Ham Hill Visitors Centre on the wind turbine project and reminded Members of their forthcoming planning tour of sites in Area North on 12<sup>th</sup> May, starting at 9.15a.m. from Old Kelways Offices, Langport.

He also reminded all present of the Annual Meeting with Town and Parish Councils, due to be held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May from 7.00p.m. at Long Sutton Village Hall.

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### 172. Reports from Members (agenda item 7)

Councillor Paull Robathan reported that the current Leader + project was due to come to an end in June 2008 and would conclude with the Walking Festival. He said that all other Leader + projects were due to conclude by then, within budget, and therefore there was no necessity for an overall evaluation report.

Councillor Paull Robathan also reported that he had attended a Somerset Waste Partnership meeting where the Partnership had accepted that the recent change of waste and recycling collection days within South Somerset had not been implemented as smoothly as expected. However, he said that SSDC's contact centre staff had efficiently handled many telephone calls regarding the changes and should be commended for their assistance. He also noted the trials, due to commence in the Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and Mendip areas for the kerbside collection of plastic and cardboard and the use of two new collection vehicles, to which SSDC had contributed towards.

Councillor Sue Steele said she was pleased to report that the Section 106 Obligation for the conversion of Lyddons Barns at Curry Mallett had been signed and the planning permission decision notice issued so that the development could now go ahead.

Councillor Tony Canvin expressed his concern at the delay in issuing Section 106 Obligations, particularly highlighting the problems currently being experienced at an

affordable housing site in Compton Dundon. It was agreed that a letter be written on behalf of the Committee to the Corporate Director (Health and Well-Being) expressing their unanimous concern at the delay and asking for a swift resolution.

Councillor Ann Campbell reported that since local speed watch volunteers in Long Load had regularly monitored traffic in the village, the instances of speeding vehicles had dropped from 15% in 2004 to 4% in March 2008. Members felt that this was an excellent example of community commitment successfully reducing speeding within their village.

### 173. Area North Highways Report (agenda item 8)

The Assistant Area Highways Manager introduced his report to Members, noting that scheduled resurfacing work on the A37 from Ilchester to the Halfway House, Chilthorne Domer had not been included in the report.

In response to questions, the Assistant Area Highways Manager confirmed that:-

- Resurfacing work on the B3165 in Bower Hinton was scheduled for completion during September 2008.
- Records were kept of defective drain covers and repeat problems of drain blockages, however, there was no regular monitoring to check for blockages.
- A scheme to relieve flooding in Ruskway Lane, Barrington was currently being devised, to include culverts and continuing existing ditches.
- Resurfacing work in Montacute would also include pavements.
- The provision of a footpath at Lightgate, South Petherton was outside his maintenance remit, however, a letter recently received requesting the footpath had been passed to the Local Transport Partnership.

Members asked that Parish Councils be notified when weedspraying was due to take place in their area so that they could arrange for vehicles to be moved to allow maximum effective weedspraying.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Area Highways Manager for attending to update the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be NOTED.

*Kim Sharp, Assistant Area Highways Manager (0845) 345 9155  
e-mail: kpssharp@somerset.gov.uk*

### 174. Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) (agenda item 9)

The Head of Area Development (North) advised Members that she was cautiously optimistic that the bid for funding would be successful. She said the emphasis of the long term investment programme would be the local economy within the rural landscape, together with advice and assistance to small rural businesses and community groups. The bid was for £2.5m over 6 or 7 years and if awarded, would concentrate on communication.

During discussion, it was noted that:-

- Following a review of the boundary for the programme, most of the parishes within Area North were to be included in the area of the bid for funding.
- A member appointment to the new project would be postponed until the final outcome of the bid was known.
- The project was not based on statutory boundaries as some projects would be geographically based on local need.

Members were unanimous in their support of the submission for funding by the Local Action for Rural Communities programme.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report be NOTED.
  2. That Members endorse the submission for funding by the Local Action for Rural Communities programme to the South West Regional Development Agency.

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

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## **175. Area Development Plan Review and Update (agenda item 10)**

The Head of Area Development (North) provided Members with a short power point presentation of the achievements within Area North during 2007/08.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- Area North Committee should scrutinise Section 106 Obligations more closely.
- The position of rural businesses and the promotion of trading estates should be considered.
- Area North Community Forums should be arranged to discuss the priorities of the Area enhanced budget.
- The Area Development team could support local communities in their bids for affordable housing.

The Head of Area Development agreed to revise the 2008/09 Area Development Plan to take account of these comments and present the new Area Development Plan to the Committee in May 2008.

- RESOLVED:** That the report be NOTED.

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

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## **176. Area North Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 11)**

It was noted that a report on affordable housing in Area North was due to be presented to the Committee in June 2008. Members requested that pertinent questions be compiled prior to the meeting, through the Committee Administrator, and be forwarded to the relevant officers as a brief for the meeting.

Members were content to note the updated 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*

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### **177. Planning Appeals (agenda item 12)**

Members were content to note the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Planning Appeals report be NOTED.

*Simon Gale, Head of Development & Building Control - (01935) 462071  
e-mail: simon.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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***Prior to determination of the planning applications the Committee adjourned to receive a briefing on Planning Circular 01/06 from the Senior Legal Executive and the Planning Team Leader.***

### **178. Planning Applications (agenda item 13)**

**07/05377/COU – Change of use of land from paddock to gypsy site for 4 no. pitches on Land O/S 2847 part, Isle Abbotts Road, Fivehead, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6QH.**

The Planning Officer drew Members attention to the briefing note he had issued prior to the meeting regarding the amendment and deletion of several conditions in his agenda report. He said that although permanent permission had been applied for, he was recommending temporary approval to allow time for more suitable sites to be identified within the district.

The Senior Legal Executive reminded the Committee that Planning Circular 01/06 indicated that there was an obligation on Local Authorities to provide gypsy and traveller sites and where there was an unmet need for sites then substantial consideration should be given to rural settings and whether a temporary planning permission was justified.

In response to questions from Members, the Planning Team Leader, Development Control clarified that:-

- Paragraph 45 of Planning Circular 01/06 accommodated temporary sites where Local Authorities had not yet made adequate provision of sites in their area as identified in their Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- Although the application was for permanent permission, the planning officer was recommending temporary permission to allow the Council time to identify sufficient authorised sites in the district.
- The applicant's Agent had indicated that temporary permission was acceptable.

Mr M Cavill, Chairman of Fivehead Parish Council spoke of the strong local opposition to occupation of the site. He said the site had been deemed unsuitable for development in the Local Plan and the occupants had shown a blatant disregard for the planning process by occupying the site prior to obtaining planning permission. He referred to the many other gypsy and traveller sites in the local area and asked that substantial screening be carried out if permission were granted.

The Ward Member, Councillor Sue Steele, said the site was very narrow and very close to Stillbrook Farm to the south. She expressed concern at the number of vehicles to be accommodated on the site, the consequent increase in traffic on the narrow access road, the disposal of surface water, toilet facilities, and night time illumination of the site and the number of other gypsy and traveller sites in the local area.

During discussion Members expressed concern that the officers report did not accurately reflect the applicants original request for permanent permission. They also expressed deep concern that the Highway Authorities recommendation of a 33 metre visibility splay at the entrance to the site, potentially involved the removal of a large section of hedging which currently screened the site. Other points made were:-

- Intensive occupation of a narrow site
- Concern at commercial operations taking place at the site
- Inappropriate and unsustainable site
- Adverse effect on indigenous population
- The applicants must justify the need of this particular site

In conclusion, Members felt that there was inadequate information before them to make an informed decision and it was proposed to defer the application. The Senior Legal Executive concurred that the changes to the conditions and the points raised regarding the visibility splay and treatment of sewage and floodwater from the site were reasonable grounds to defer the application for further clarification.

A second proposal to refuse the application was made however this was not seconded and the Councillor withdrew his proposal.

It was then proposed to defer the application for further clarification on the altered conditions, the amount of hedge to be removed to create the necessary visibility splay and the treatment of sewage and floodwater from the site. The proposal to defer was seconded and on being put to the vote was carried.

**RESOLVED:** That planning permission be **DEFERRED** for further clarification on:-

- the altered conditions
- the amount of hedge (if any) to be removed to create the necessary visibility splay
- the treatment of sewage and surface water from the site

*(Voting: 8 in favour, 2 against, 0 abstentions)*

### **08/00367/FUL – Erection of a new plant and machinery store on land O/S 6155 part, Picts Hill, High Ham, Langport, Somerset TA10 9EX**

The Planning Officer provided Members with a power point presentation of the proposed development. He noted that the height of the proposed building would be 7.6 metres at the ridge and 4.5 metres at the eaves and he drew Members attention to his conclusions in the report that the site was outside the development limits and had the potential to become a nuisance neighbour in the future.

Mr P Dance spoke in support of the application. He reminded Members that the site already had planning permission to operate as a builders yard and the proposed building

was essential to house a valuable piece of machinery. He disagreed with the planning officers conclusions regarding the future potential to become a nuisance neighbour.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, expressed his support for the application. He said that this was an established local business which needed to protect its equipment and he proposed that permission be granted with appropriate conditions.

Members were in agreement that the development be allowed with suitable conditions, including the materials to be used, hours of operation, disposal of surface water, lighting and noise, to be agreed in consultation with the Ward Member.

**RESOLVED:** That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions on materials to be used, hours of operation, disposal of surface water, lighting and noise, to be agreed in consultation with the Ward Member.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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Chairman