

Meeting AN **03M** 08/09  
Date **25.06.08**

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008** at the Village Hall, Fivehead.

(2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.)

**Present:**

**Members:**

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Keith Ronaldson
Tony Carvin	Jo Roundell Greene
Ann Campbell	Sylvia Seal
Rupert Cox	Sue Steele
Roy Mills	Derek Yeomans
Derek Nelson (from 2.40pm)	

**Officers:**

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer
Natalie House	Community Regeneration Officer
Andrew Shaw	Senior Technician, Engineering and Property Services
Lee Walton	Planning Officer
Steven Banks	Planning Officer
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

**Also Present:**

Ric Pallister	Portfolio Holder for Health, Housing, Inclusion, Revenues & Benefits
Darrell Locke	Senior Development Officer, South Somerset Homes

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

### 19. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paull Robathan.

## 21. **Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)**

The Committee Administrator advised that, having taken advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer, neither Councillor Patrick Palmer or Councillor Ann Campbell were required to declare any interest in Agenda Item 9, Martock Precinct Improvements – Phase 2 Capital Bid, as Ward Members for Martock.

However, Councillor Patrick Palmer, having taken this advice, decided he would declare a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 9, Martock Precinct Improvements – Phase 2 Capital Bid, in the interest of openness as a member of Martock Parish Council.

He left the room and Councillor Ann Campbell took the chair during consideration of this item.

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## 22. **Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)**

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008 at the Millennium Hall, Seavington.**

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## 23. **Public Question Time (agenda item 5)**

Mr B Harvey, representing the Fivehead Playing Field Management Committee, asked what impact the Local Area Agreement would have on their future aspirations to convert the tennis court in Fivehead to a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).

The Head of Area Development (North) clarified that 'Local Area Agreements' were central government's agreement with County and District Councils to direct resources and design services to address social, economic and environmental priorities in Somerset. She confirmed that support to assist local communities make the best case to attract funding was available.

The Ward Member, Councillor Sue Steele said that she and County Councillor Derek Nelson were well aware of the desire for a MUGA in the village and were very supportive, however, the survey of need was somewhat outdated and needed reviewing. She strongly supported the SSDC policy to ensure that projects could demonstrate long term financial sustainability prior to receiving grant aid.

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## 24. **Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)**

The Chairman reminded Members of the Area North Community Forum event being held on 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July and asked that they support the event by visiting the community bus at its various locations on these two dates.

The Chairman also mentioned that Awards for All grants had been awarded to the villages of Pitney, Ilton and Drayton, with assistance of advice from the Community Development Officer.

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## 25. **Reports from Members (agenda item 7)**

There were no reports from Members.

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## 26. Discussion on Affordable Housing in Area North (agenda item 8)

The Head of Area Development (North) introduced Darrell Lock, Senior Development Officer of South Somerset Homes and Councillor Ric Pallister, Portfolio Holder for Health, Housing, Inclusion, Revenues & Benefits. She regretted that the Housing Development Officer was unable to attend the meeting but said that she would attend in July or August to update the Committee on rural exception sites.

Councillor Ric Pallister provided Members with a brief overview of the current housing policies affecting South Somerset. He noted that the Regional Spatial Strategy required the Council to primarily focus housing development in towns with a population of over 3,000 people and in South Somerset this would only cover the towns of Yeovil and Chard. The next level of focus was sustainable rural centres i.e. Martock or Castle Cary however, this did not discount small schemes in rural villages. He noted the problems encountered with encouraging landowners to offer suitable sites in rural villages for small affordable housing schemes and said a survey of available land across the County was currently being conducted, funded by the LSP, which would hopefully identify parcels of land for development.

During discussion, it was noted that:-

- Landowners were reluctant to come forward as agricultural land was now worth more.
- Planners must be more flexible in their approach to rural exception sites and allow 'piggyback' schemes of 1 or 2 houses for sale within an exception site.
- Members must be honest with Parishes seeking affordable housing schemes in that the process can take some years to come to fruition.

Mr D Lock, Senior Development Officer at South Somerset Homes (SSH), updated the Committee on current SSH redevelopment sites within Area North. He said that:-

- Although the redevelopment of the site at Copse Lane, Ilton had now reached appeal stage, SSH were still in negotiation with planning officers over a revised scheme.
- Problems with access to the site at Westfield, Curry Rivel should shortly be resolved with the purchase of additional land near the access road. A concept scheme was being developed for consultation.
- Consultation with tenants on redevelopment at Moor Close, Compton Dundon would take place over the next 6 months. Following this, the wider community would be consulted and it was not expected that any work would start for at least 2 years.
- Regeneration of PRC houses was a priority for SSH.
- Their policy on decanting families from houses to be redeveloped had recently been reviewed and in future this would not happen until planning permission had been granted.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder and the Senior Development Officer, SSH for attending and contributing to the discussion.

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

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

## 27. Martock Precinct Improvements – Phase 2 Capital Bid (Executive Decision) (agenda item 9)

*(Councillor Patrick Palmer, having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room during discussion of this item. Councillor Ann Campbell assumed the role of Chairman in his absence for this item).*

The Community Regeneration Officer noted that although the cost of the scheme was high, it had been sensitively designed in consultation with local residents.

Members expressed some concern that previous works to the car park were now being reversed and that the cost of Phase 2 was high, considering that Phase 3 of the redevelopment of the Precinct was yet to come forward.

The Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that previous works to the car park were approved through planning permission of an adjacent site and those works were carried out at the expense of the developer.

During discussion, it was noted that whilst Members were content to confirm the grant of £23,000 towards the improvements to the car park, the Parish Council should note that only £2,000 remained for Phase 3 of the redevelopment from the Area North Capital allocation, and they should precept accordingly or raise funds elsewhere for this future scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £23,000 be made from the Area North Capital Programme allocation for Martock, towards Phase 2 improvements to the Moorlands Precinct Car Park, Martock.

**Reason:** To approve the allocation of financial support towards improvements to Moorlands Precinct Car Park, Martock.

*(Voting: 10 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)*

*Natalie House, Community Regeneration Officer (North) - (01458) 257487  
e-mail: natalie.house@southsomerset.gov.uk  
Garry Green, Principal Engineer (Project delivery) – (01935) 462066  
e-mail: garry.green@southsomerset.gov.uk*

## 28. Area North 2007/08 Outturn Report (Executive Decision) (agenda item 10)

The Head of Area Development (North) advised that this was the annual outturn report from Financial services, detailing the position of Area North's Revenue Budget, Area Reserve and Capital Programme as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

Members were content to confirm the outturn position, the Area North Reserve and the slippage on approved capital schemes and note the report.

**RESOLVED:** That:

1. the outturn position and explanation of variances from budgets for the financial year 2007/8 be noted.
2. the position of the Area North Reserve be noted and the reduction of outstanding commitments from £26,090 to £11,990 as set out in the report, be agreed.
3. the slippage of £199,045 on approved capital schemes, of which £522 will be returned to the unallocated capital programme, be approved.

**Reason:** To note the outturn position and the Area North Reserve and agree the reduction of outstanding commitments and slippage on approved capital schemes.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

*Jayne Beevor, Principal Accountant, Financial Services - (01935) 462320  
e-mail: jayne.beevor@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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## **29. Area North Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 13)**

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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## **30. Planning Appeals (agenda item 14)**

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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## **31. Planning Applications (agenda item 15)**

**08/00568/FUL – Formation of access, rebuilding of barn (with some conversion) to form two dwellings and the erection of a garage block at Bridge Farm, Stembridge, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BP.**

The Development Control Team Leader reminded Members that consent for conversion of the barn had been granted in 1994 and renewed in 2000, however, during the conversion work, part of the barn had collapsed and work had ceased. Since then the remaining building had significantly deteriorated and he estimated that 65% of the original barn had collapsed and 35% remained standing, albeit in poor condition. He

said the policy PPS7 on barn conversions allowed for conversion in rural areas to preserve historical barns, however, because of the substantial reconstruction that would have to take place, he could not see that policy applied in this case.

Mr A Booth, Agent for the applicants, said a large proportion of the barn still remained and that it was capable of conversion. All the original materials remained on the site and would be reused and the barn was in the middle of the village of Stembridge, not at some remote location as implied in the planning officer's report. If left in its current state the barn could attract vermin and vandalism.

The Ward Member, Councillor Derek Yeomans, noted that the barn conversion had twice been granted approval and had been in the process of conversion when it partly collapsed. He said it was now an eyesore and should be rebuilt without variation to the original plans and once completed, would add historic ambience to the village.

During discussion, some Members expressed concern at the deterioration of the building in a central location within the village and were supportive of the Ward Members comments.

The Development Control Team Leader confirmed that a Section 215 notice could be issued which required an owner to tidy an unsafe or dilapidated site. He cautioned that this could set a precedent for the conversion of dilapidated barns in the countryside.

The majority of Members felt that this route of action could take years to achieve and supported the Ward Member that the best resolution was to allow the rebuilding and conversion.

The Ward Member proposed that planning permission be granted and this was seconded. On being put to the vote, it was carried (Voting: 7 in favour, 5 against, 0 abstentions).

**RESOLVED:** That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions to be determined in consultation with the Ward Member and to include a condition on the removal of nearby agricultural buildings.

Justification: This important site within the village justifies an exception to policy. It does not set a precedent as it is not in open countryside and planning permission for the conversion was previously granted in 1994 and renewed in 2000.

*(Voting: 7 in favour, 5 against, 0 abstentions)*

#### **08/01685/FUL – Erection of a timber garden furniture store (Revised application) at 1 Cross Lane Cottages, Cross Lane, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset TA10 9LR**

The Planning Officer provided Members with a short power point presentation of the site, highlighting the elevated decking area already existing and the height of the proposed garden furniture store to be sited there.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, noted that a smaller storage structure had previously been granted permission, to be sited on the elevated decking, however, a more substantial construction was now proposed and the Parish Council and neighbours

had expressed deep concern at the height, overlooking and shadowing of neighbouring properties. He did not feel that he could support the application in its present form.

Members were unanimously in agreement with the Ward Member that the proposal was overbearing on neighbouring properties and was inappropriate in a Conservation Area.

**RESOLVED:** That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:-

- Adverse impact upon the character of Conservation Area and setting of listed building.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

**08/01616/FUL - Conversion of barn to form annexe/garaging at West Knole House, Knole, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset TA10 9HY**

The Planning Officer advised that there was already extant permission on the site for the conversion of two other outbuildings to two holiday lets. He noted that due to the character and setting of the listed building it would be almost impossible to extend it, hence the scaled ancillary residential annexe proposed.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, noted that the proposed annexe would lead to more cars and more parking required at the site. He said that he supported the Parish Council's views that this was incremental over development of the site.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Some Members felt that conversion of the barn would improve its appearance, whilst others felt that conversion of the final outbuilding was opportunistic and one step too far.

The Ward Member proposed that planning permission be refused, for the reasons of over development of the site in a conservation area and the adverse impact upon the setting of a listed building, and this was seconded. On being put to the vote, it was carried (Voting: 7 in favour, 5 against, 0 abstentions).

**RESOLVED:** That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:-

- Adverse impact upon setting of listed building and character of Conservation Area

*(Voting: 7 in favour, 5 against, 0 abstentions)*

**08/01617/LBC - Conversion of barn to form annexe/garaging at West Knole House, Knole, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset TA10 9HY**

The Development Control Team Leader advised that although Members had refused full planning permission for the site, they must also vote separately on the Listed Building Consent. Although the barn itself was not listed, it was listed by its association and proximity to the main house.

It was proposed and seconded to refuse listed building consent as the development would have an adverse impact upon the character of the listed building, West Knole House, and was contrary to policy. On being put to the vote, it was carried (Voting: 10 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

**RESOLVED:** That listed building consent be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:-

- Adverse impact upon character of listed building
- Contrary to policies EH3 and EH5 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006

*(Voting: 10 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions)*

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Chairman