

Meeting AN **08M** 08/09
Date **26.11.08**

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 26th November 2008** at the Millennium Hall, Seavington.

(2.00 p.m. – 4.42 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

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

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North)
Alasdair Bell	Deputy Head of Environmental Health & Community Protection
Teresa Oulds	Community Development Assistant
Les Collett	Community Development Officer
Philip Debidin	Solicitor
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader
Adrian Noon	Major Applications Co-ordinator, Development Control
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

Others:

Mr Roger Powell	Martock Parish Council
Mrs Claire Cruwys	Youth Development Officer, Martock Youth Centre

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

91. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd October 2008, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

92. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Roy Mills.

93. **Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

94. **Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)**

The Chairman reminded Members that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 17th December 2008 at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.**

95. **Public Question Time (agenda item 5)**

There were no questions from members of the public.

96. **Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)**

The Chairman announced that:-

- Flood awareness workshops were due to be held in December and January by the Engineering and Property Services team in conjunction with the County Council and Environment Agency to raise awareness and offer guidance to Parish Councils and the general public. The Area North Workshop was to be held on 16th January 2009 from 5.00p.m. in the Meadway Hall, Compton Dundon.
 - In the recent National Loo of the Year Awards several public toilets in South Somerset had been commended including Cox's Yard, Somerton which had been awarded the top 5 star grading and the Whatley Car Park, Langport had been awarded a creditable 4 star grading.
 - he would be holding a Christmas drinks reception at Long Sutton Golf Club on Thursday 27th November from 6.30 to 8.30p.m. for all the Chairmen of the Area North Parish Councils.
 - He had recently attended the launch of the Long Sutton Parish Plan and he congratulated the local community on its completion,
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97. **Reports from Members (agenda item 7)**

Councillor Sylvia Seal reported that the Yeovil Tourist Information Centre had recently been awarded second place in the South West Tourism Awards. They had also received the top award in the Mystery Shopper category out of 296 other Tourist Information Centres in England.

The Committee asked Councillor Seal to pass on their warm congratulations to the Manager of the Yeovil Tourist Information Centre on achieving these well deserved awards.

Councillor Rupert Cox reported that he had Chaired the first meeting of the Levels and Moors Local Action Group to discuss projects and new funding of the project. He said it had been a good first meeting and he encouraged all 83 parishes within the scheme to be involved.

Councillor Ann Campbell reported that she had recently attended the Last Night of the School Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London where a choir of 550 Somerset schoolchildren had sung and greatly impressed the audience.

Councillor Keith Ronaldson reminded the Committee that the David Hall in South Petherton were part of the Peoples Millions funding the following day (27th November) and he asked Members to support the hall by voting by telephone for the project when the number was released at 9.00am. The number would also be published on the Website: www.thedavidhall.org.uk and at www.southsomerset.gov.uk

Councillor Paull Robathan reported Waterways Development Trust had been invited to appear on local television at Creech St Michael, Taunton and therefore hoped that funding had been secured for the trip boat project.

Councillor Sue Steele reported that a very successful Area North Community Safety Workshop had taken place on 17th November at Long Sutton Golf Club where excellent presentations had been made by various officers involved in the Partnership which were well received by a large audience.

98. Addressing Local Priorities in Area North – Affordable Rural Housing (agenda item 8)

The Head of Area Development (North) presented her report to the Committee, advising that the purpose was review the progress of schemes for affordable housing in Area North and to identify how the Development Control and Area Development teams could further assist the process.

The Development Control Team Leader confirmed that several planning policies positively encouraged affordable housing in rural communities but there were many variations to each scheme and although the planning system was there to help progress affordable housing plans, it could be further modified and refined to assist applicants.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that:-

- If communities were contemplating rural housing sites in their village they should contact the Rural Housing Enablers at the Community Council for Somerset for advice and assistance in the first instance.
- The Area Development team had now collated one database of information on the progress of rural affordable housing schemes within Area North.

The Development Control Team Leader also confirmed that:-

- Although planning policies were not specific to houses or caravans/mobile homes, Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) may be less enthusiastic to fund temporary homes.
- The LSP had identified 56 possible sites in friendly/public ownership which would be honed down to 15 possibles and then 5 firm sites for affordable housing.
- Although PPS3 discouraged mixed developments of high value market housing used to offset lower cost social housing, he felt the decision was finely balanced and if a developer was not making an excessive profit then such developments could be possible.

- Landowners needed to be aware that land at the edge of villages, outside of the development limit, would not be brought forward except for affordable rural housing.

During discussion, Members felt that the cost of individual plots of land was rising and this was not helping to secure affordable housing. It was felt that any additional support which could be provided in Area North to enable and assist communities to deliver affordable housing schemes was a positive step forward and that a further progress report be presented to them in February 2009.

The Chairman warmly thanked the Head of Area Development (North) and the Development Control Team Leader for providing a full and forthright report on the progress of affordable rural housing schemes within Area North.

RESOLVED: That Members:-

1. Noted the key messages as set out in Section 9 of the report.
2. Endorsed the proposed next steps as set out in Section 9 of the report.
3. Requested a further update report and clear assessment of additional resources or capacity required to support affordable rural housing schemes in Area North be presented to the Committee in February 2009.

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

99. Environmental Health and Community Protection Service Update (agenda item 9)

The Deputy Head of Environmental Health and Community Protection introduced his report to Members with the assistance of a powerpoint presentation (copy of slides attached). He highlighted the wide ranging public health, safety and environmental aspects of the service and invited questions from Members.

In response to questions from Members, the Deputy Head of Environmental Health and Community Protection confirmed that:-

- There were 915 known empty properties within South Somerset and the target was to bring 25 back into occupation each year. Many of the properties were subject to probate or other legal complications which prevented their rapid return to occupation.
- Once caravan sites had been granted planning permission, the Housing Standards team issued them with a license. They were then periodically inspected for fire risk/adequate sewerage arrangements etc. to ensure they met the required standards.
- The Homeaid Partnership Scheme was jointly funded by Social Services, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and SSDC. The scheme provided for large scale adaptations and alterations for disabled and vulnerable clients. As part of the scheme there was also a Handyman service that provided assistance to elderly residents with small works such as electrical repairs, furniture moving and fitting new door locks etc

The Deputy Head of Environmental Health and Community Protection agreed to re-distribute information on the Homeaid Partnership Scheme to all Parish Councils to ensure they were aware of the scheme available to their elderly residents.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Head of Environmental Health and Community Protection for attending and providing an informative report and presentation of the service.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and presentation be NOTED.

*Alasdair Bell, Deputy Head of Environmental Health & Community Protection - (01458) 257440
e-mail: alasdair.bell@southsomerset.gov.uk*

100. Area North 2008/09 Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 30th September 2008 - (agenda item 10)

The Head of Area Development (North) reported that there were no significant under or overspends on the Revenue budget at the half way point of the financial year. She said that she would confirm that the money set aside for Planning Enforcement would not show as slippage in future years until it was required.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that work on the Cockle Moor Bridge was almost complete although there was some small remedial work outstanding. She did not recommend releasing the grant money until all works were completed and she confirmed that she would seek the Committee's approval before making the final grant payment.

During discussion, Members noted that:-

- The delay to the refurbishment of the Bracey Road play area was disappointing.
- The sports pavilion at Stoke-sub-Hamdon had been severely damaged by vandals recently and this and other issues may affect the Football Foundation grant. Changes to the scheme, if required would be reported back to the Area Committee, in the light of the grant awarded towards the new changing rooms project.

Members were content to note the current financial position of the Area North Budgets.

RESOLVED: That the current position of the Area North budgets be NOTED.

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

101. Area North Community Grants – Martock Youth Project (Executive Decision) - (agenda item 11)

The Community Development Assistant advised that the project had received substantial support and investment from the Parish Council and the Youth Affairs Committee and since writing the report, the local Beat Manager of Avon and Somerset Police had expressed his support as he took the opportunity to drop in and chat to the young people. The SSDC Young People's Officer and Senior Youth Worker for South West Local Service Team had also both expressed their support for the project, which catered for not just 8 to 13 year olds, but also younger children too. She introduced Mr Roger Powell of Martock Parish Council and Mrs Claire Cruwys, the Youth Development Officer for Martock Youth Centre.

Mr Powell of Martock Parish Council said there were over 1,000 young people under the age of 16 in Martock with, previously, no place to meet. The existing Youth Centre had been closed in 2007 as it had been declared unsafe and so, at a public meeting for the local community plan, it had been decided that investment in young community facilities should be a priority. The old Youth Centre had been completely refurbished and the Youth Development Officer employed, working in partnership with the District Council, SCC Youth Service. In order to give stability to the long-term future of the project, money committed over 3 years would allow the Youth Development Officer to establish a thriving and ultimately, self-sustaining project.

The Youth Development Officer for Martock said the project had very good links with the local police and had partnerships with other local groups. They were considering local community work and producing their own youth newsletter. There was also a seniors night for people up to 19 years old which was popular with those who had attended the youth club previously.

In response to a question, the Head of Area Development (North) confirmed that the three year grant would be subject to budgetary provision each year and the wording of the recommendation had been agreed with Financial Services. She agreed to take particular care when writing to the applicant, if successful, to ensure the conditions were fully understood.

Members were unanimous in their support for the project.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a grant of £4,000 be made from the Area North Community Grants Budget towards the Martock Youth Project for 2008/09, with a forward commitment of £3,500 in 2009/10 and £3,000 in 2010/11, subject to budgetary provision, evidence of need and satisfactory fulfilment of the Service Level Agreement and all subject to SSDC standard grants conditions.
 2. That the Head of Area Development (North) be authorised to sign the Service Level Agreement on behalf of SSDC, between Martock Parish Council, Martock Youth Centre and SSDC.

Reason: To provide continued support to the Martock Youth Project.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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

102. Area Development Plan Quarterly Monitoring Report - (agenda item 12)

The Head of Area Development (North) reported that a briefing note on the new SSDC and SCC Joint Area Committees would be presented to the December meeting. Also, as Avon and Somerset Police re-aligned their operational boundaries with South Somerset, a new Area North sergeant would be appointed in January 2009.

It was noted that, following presentation of the update report on Affordable Rural Housing in February, consideration could be given to allocating part of the Service Enhancement Budget towards some further work in this area.

Members were content to note the progress of the Area North Development Plan.

RESOLVED: That Members:-

1. NOTED the updates and progress made towards addressing local priorities as detailed in the Area North Development Plan at Appendix A to the report.
2. Give further consideration to allocating part of the Service Enhancement Budget towards further work on progressing Affordable Rural Housing in February 2009.

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
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103. Area North Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 13)

Members were content to note the report.

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

*Angela Cox, Committee Administrator - (01458) 257437
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104. 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
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105. Planning Applications (agenda item 15)

08/02484/OUT - Erection of three no, dwellings on Land adj. The Orchards, Stembridge, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BP

The Chairman advised that the planning application had been withdrawn by the applicants.

08/03510/S73 – Application to remove Condition 02 of decision notice 05/02831/FUL dated 03/04/07 re: the construction of a roundabout at new access road prior to any works on site at Bartletts Elm School, Field Road, Huish Episcopi, Langport, Somerset TA10 9SP

The Major Applications Co-ordinator, Development Control advised that the County Highways had reiterated their previous comments that the mini-roundabout at the access point to the site was still necessary, however, he felt that, on balance whilst the condition may have been deemed necessary for the 2005 outline application for the development of the whole site, it was possibly an onerous condition for the existing 14 unit conversion. The Section 73 application had allowed him to revisit all the previous conditions attached to the decision notice 05/02831/FUL and so he had proposed a new condition 2, requiring improvements to the access junction to be approved in writing to achieve a

good standard of visibility to the site. He concluded that in agreeing the new conditions, Members would not be prejudicing any future improvements to the junction of the A372/B3153.

Mr John Wood, on behalf of Huish Episcopi Parish Council and Langport Town Council, said the application did not merit the roundabout and should be removed from the conditions of both previous permissions at the site as it would be confusing to local traffic and visitors alike. He asked that plans for a major roundabout at the junction of the A372/B3153 be brought forward as soon as possible.

Councillor Derek Yeomans spoke on behalf of the Ward Member, Councillor Roy Mills. He agreed with the Town and Parish Council that the mini-roundabout would be confusing to traffic and he said the construction of a major roundabout at the junction of the A372/B3153 was vital for road safety and for the additional houses planned in the immediate area. He noted that money had been set aside for road improvements by the County Council and land reserved for junction improvements from the Bartletts Elm site so he felt that they recognised the need for the major roundabout. He also pointed to the large abattoir lorries which used the road and the proposal for the nearby school to become a sixth form college, which would all add to local traffic. He asked Members to support the officer's recommendation.

During discussion, Members supported the deletion of the mini-roundabout but felt that a major roundabout should form part of the application.

The Solicitor advised Members that they should look at the application in isolation and not any future possibilities for road improvements in the area.

Members felt that the application did not remove or prejudice the need for a major roundabout at the junction of the A372/B3153 and were in agreement with the Planning Officer's recommendation. On being put to the vote, it was carried (voting: unanimous in favour).

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to Conditions 1 to 8 as detailed in the Planning Officer's report.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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