

Meeting JAN 01M 08/09
Date 28.01.09

South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Joint Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 28th January 2009** at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.

(2.00 p.m. – 3.55 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Jill Beale	Patrick Palmer
Ann Campbell	Paull Robathan
Tony Carvin	Keith Ronaldson
Rupert Cox	Jo Roundell Greene
Philip Horsington	Sylvia Seal
Roy Mills	Sue Steele
Derek Nelson	Derek Yeomans

Also Present:

Tim Carroll	Leader of the Council
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Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Head of Area Development (North), SSDC
Julian Gale	Group Manager - Community Governance, SCC
Vega Sturgess	Corporate Director – Environment
Vicky Breeze	Community Development Officer, SCC
Chris Cooper	Head of Streetscene, SSDC
Roger Meecham	Engineer, SSDC
Kim Sharp	Assistant Highway Manager, SCC
Michael Gottlieb	Streetscene Supervisor
Les Collett	Community Development Officer, SSDC
Emily McGuinness	Acting Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (SSDC)
Teresa Oulds	Community Regeneration Officer, SSDC
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator, SSDC

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

1. Election of Chairman (agenda item 1)

The Committee Administrator invited nominations for the position of Chairman of the Joint Area Committee (North).

Councillor Patrick Palmer was proposed and seconded and was unanimously elected as Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Patrick Palmer be elected as Chairman of the Joint Area Committee (North) for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

2. Election of Vice Chairman (agenda item 2)

(Councillor Patrick Palmer in the Chair)

The Chairman then invited nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. Councillor Ann Campbell was proposed and seconded and was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Ann Campbell be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Area Committee (North) for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

3. Agreeing to the Co-option of Parish Council Member onto the Joint Area Committee (agenda item 3)

The Chairman asked for the Committee's agreement to the co-option of Councillor Philip Horsington of Tintinhull Parish Council to the position of Parish Council Representative Member on the Joint Area Committee (North) for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

Members were unanimous in their agreement to the co-option of Councillor Philip Horsington of Tintinhull Parish Council

4. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Douglas Campbell, Pauline Clarke, Sam Crabb and John Sharpe (SCC).

5. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 5)

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Date of Next Meeting (agenda item 6)

The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting of the Joint SSDC/SCC Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 25th February 2009 at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.**

7. Public Question Time (agenda item 7)

There were no questions from members of the public.

8. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 8)

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their support in electing him their Chairman and welcomed both District and County Council officers in attendance to the first meeting of the Joint Area Committee.

Several Members expressed their disappointment that none of the new County Council Members had been able to attend the first Joint Committee meeting.

The Group Manager - Community Governance (SCC) noted that County and District Council meeting dates had not yet been co-ordinated and so there would be some conflict of Committee dates until June 2009.

9. Reports from Members (agenda item 9)

Councillor Paull Robathan said he was pleased to report that funding was now secured for the new hospital in South Petherton, and, following a survey of local residents, the local GP surgery would also move to the same location. However, he cautioned that 4 important issues should be addressed prior to the opening of the hospital. These were the moving of the 30mph speed limit to further down the hill, the provision of a regular bus service to the hospital site, the provision of a footpath link from the hospital to the village and the addressing of flooding issues at the bottom of the hill, below where the hospital would be built.

Members were in agreement with Councillor Robathan that it was sensible to consider these issues early and the Head of Area Development (North) agreed to look into this.

Councillor Rupert Cox said he had recently attended a meeting of Huish Episcopi Parish Council where they had discussed the new Sixth Form College to be established at Huish Episcopi School and the part-funding by the Parish Council of a new roundabout at the junction of the A372 and B3153. He questioned, as the Joint Committee business progressed, when determination or consultation of this type of County Council planning application would be devolved to the Joint Area Committees.

Councillor Ann Campbell advised that a leaflet of useful contacts had been compiled by the Community Regeneration Officer titled 'Ever wondered who to ask?'. This was to be circulated to all Parish Councils and local libraries and Members were provided with copies. She thanked the Community Regeneration Officer for her work in compiling the leaflet.

10. Joint Area Committees – Somerset County Council – Managing Expectations (agenda item 10)

Julian Gale, Group Manager - Community Governance (SCC) introduced his report to Members. He said it was important to build on the reports which the Committee already received and introduce joint reports with County Council officers as required. He said that he hoped joint reports from both SSDC and SCC officers would give Members a rounded picture of the overall services. He confirmed that SCC would be pleased to participate in the Annual Parish Meetings which SSDC officers arranged and he also hoped to forge links with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). He concluded that although the Joint Area Committees were a pilot scheme, the Chief Executive officer and

Corporate Directors at SCC were committed to making links with the SSDC democratic process.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that constitutional changes were being made to allow SCC Councillors to participate in SSDC planning applications and applications for community grants from March 2009.

During discussion, Members noted that SSDC Members could hold their Executive Portfolio Holders to account on issues of concern and the same must be available to the Joint Committees of SCC Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Julian Gale, Group Manager – Community Governance (SCC) - (01823) 355025
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11. Joint Area North Forward Plan - (agenda item 11)

The Head of Area Development (North) advised that the Joint Area North Forward Plan presented to them was a draft version for Members to confirm and add any specific issues which they wished to discuss in the future.

Members were content to note the new Joint Area North Forward Plan as presented and asked that reports on the following be added:-

- Highway and planning issues surrounding the proposed 6th form College at Huish Episcopi and the impact of additional traffic on the junction of Field Road / Somerton Road, Huish Episcopi.
- Emergency planning arrangements (civil contingencies) in Area North - a joint report
- SCC service briefing
- Accommodation for gypsies and travellers

RESOLVED: That Members:-

1. Noted the proposed Joint Area North Forward Plan as attached at Appendix A to the report.
2. Identified the following reports for inclusion in the next Joint Area North Forward Plan:-
 - Highway and planning issues surrounding the proposed 6th form College at Huish Episcopi and the impact of additional traffic on the junction of Field Road / Somerton Road, Huish Episcopi.
 - Emergency planning arrangements (civil contingencies) in Area North - a joint report
 - SCC service briefing
 - Accommodation for gypsies and travellers

*Angela Cox, Committee Administrator (SSDC) - (01458) 257437
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12. Streetscene Service – Monitoring Report (agenda item 12)

The Head of Streetscene (SSDC) said he was pleased to report that the service was performing very well, and improving thanks to the hard work and dedication of his staff. He particularly highlighted:-

- The planting of 24,000 spring bulbs in various locations across Area North, with assistance from members of the public.
- A review of the locations of all litter bins across the district had been completed.
- Best Value Performance Indicator 199a (BVPI199a) had now been replaced by National Indicator 195 (NI195) to record the levels of street cleanliness, including litter, graffiti and fly-posting and allow comparisons to be made nationally.
- The programme of agreed service enhancements requested by the towns and parishes in Area North was progressing and would be completed by March 2009.
- The new pavement sweepers were making a worthwhile contribution to the cleanliness of the district.
- The contract for the maintenance of the Cartgate picnic area had been extended.
- The Parish Lengthsmen schemes continued to work well.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Streetscene confirmed that:-

- The pavement sweepers were allocated to North/East and West/South areas and swept every pavement in every town and village at least once per year as a minimum service.
- The Streetscene officers had a good relationship with the Somerset Waste Partnership in jointly resolving excess waste and fly-tipping issues.
- Local inspections of Parishes by Streetscene staff, in conjunction with Parish Councillors and the local Ward Member continued to work well.

During discussion, it was noted that some outlying rural settlements were investigating the possibility of sand banks to hold an emergency supply of sand bags in case of threat to property by flood water.

The Chairman and members of the Committee particularly thanked the Head of Streetscene and his staff for their excellent work in providing a sandbag service to houses at risk of flooding over the weekend of 13th and 14th December 2008.

RESOLVED: That Members:-

1. noted the contents of the report and presentation
2. noted the programme of Service Enhancements outlined in Appendix A

*Chris Cooper, Head of Streetscene (SSDC) - (01935) 462840
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13. Water Management and Reducing Flood Risk in Area North (agenda item 13)

The Engineer (SSDC) noted that South Somerset had experienced particularly high rainfall twice in the previous 12 months resulting in localised flooding in May and December 2008. He provided Members with a power point presentation of the radar

weather chart for 12th December to highlight the narrow band of heavy rain which passed over South Somerset and caused flooding in many areas. He noted that:-

- Individual households were responsible for defending their properties against risk of flooding.
- Developers must now produce flood risk assessments detailing the impact of their proposed development on water displacement elsewhere in the locality.
- Use of alternative types of sandbags were being investigated, although so far, traditional sandbags were the best option for domestic households.
- A number of issues had been identified in the Pitt Review on flooding, which Local Authorities were required to address.
- Flood awareness workshops were currently being held across the district for Parish Council representatives and the public, in partnership with the Environment Agency and Highway Authority, to give advice on how to protect property from flooding.

In response to questions from Members, the Engineer (SSDC) confirmed that:-

- To keep an accurate record, he would shortly be writing to all Town and Parish Councils, asking for details of properties which were flooded on 12th and 13th December 2008.
- Grants to install flood defence measures in households at risk from flooding were available through the Pitt Review, although a flood risk assessment of a property must first be produced by a flood expert to qualify for the grants.
- Flood risk assessments were important and Town and Parish Councils must contribute local knowledge of potential at-risk areas.
- Drain jetting and gully clearing were important to quickly take excess flood water away safely, however, it should be noted that they could be cleared one day and silt up overnight during heavy rainfall.
- He continued to work closely with Highway Authority staff to resolve drainage and flooding issues and they jointly attended Parish Council meetings to discuss local flooding problems.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- County and District Council staff must continue to work closely on flooding issues.
- The schedule of minor land drainage works at Appendix A to the report should be updated and circulated to Members.
- Letters should be sent to farmers and landowners reminding them of the importance of keeping ditches clear.

It was suggested and agreed that a letter be sent to the Portfolio Holder for Highway Services at SCC to seek assurance that there would be no diminishment in the budget and service levels for highway services to maintain drains and gullies, which acted as preventative measures in time of flood risk to households.

The Chairman thanked the Engineer (SSDC) and the Assistant Highways Manager (SCC) for the joint services they had provided to alleviate flooding of households over the weekend of 12th December 2008.

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That Members NOTED the current situation with regard to flooding and land drainage issues.

*Roger Meecham, Engineer (SSDC) - (01935) 462069
e-mail: roger.meecham@southsomerset.gov.uk*

14. Area North Community Grants – Fivehead Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) (Executive Decision) (Excepted Business) (agenda item 14)

The Community Development Officer advised that the existing tennis court on the Fivehead playing field had fallen into disrepair and the Playing Field Committee now wished to convert it into a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). He noted that the Playing Field Committee had surveyed local residents for their views and 65% of them were in favour of the conversion. As a result, fundraising had taken place, local children had been consulted and the Parish Council had raised the parish precept to contribute towards the scheme and provide a sinking fund of £1,000 per year towards future repairs or replacements. He said it was an excellent example of a community working together to achieve their goal.

The Ward Member, Councillor Sue Steele, expressed her support for the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture said she was pleased to hear that the whole community were involved and the Parish Council had contributed to both the establishment and the future maintenance of the MUGA.

The Head of Area Development (North) noted that a condition of the grant was that open access be maintained for all the community.

Members were unanimous in their support for the scheme.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Committee APPROVE a grant of £12,500 to the Fivehead Playing Field Management Committee project, to be funded from the Area North Capital Grants Programme 2008/09 allocation for “Improving Community Halls and Facilities” subject to the standard terms and conditions for SSDC Community and Leisure Grants.
 2. That the approval granted be also subject to the following special conditions:-
 - a. Fivehead Playing Field Committee will continue to own and manage the facility, under the existing terms of trust, any future changes to the arrangements for ownership and management of the facility to be agreed in writing with SSDC.
 - b. The applicant makes provision for the future maintenance and replacement of the facilities (e.g: through the establishment of a sinking fund).
 - c. The final design for the MUGA to be approved in writing by the SSDC Play and Youth Facilities Officer prior to placing orders for equipment or ancillary items.
 - d. SSDC is notified of, and approves in writing, any proposed changes to the project.
 - e. On completion of the construction work, the applicant commissions SSDC to carry out a Post Installation Inspection of the MUGA and pays SSDC's fees in connection with the inspection.
 - f. The applicant continues to maintain the MUGA in accordance with EN1176 and the play equipment manufacturer's instructions.

- g. The applicant displays and maintains a sign at the entrance to the MUGA that conforms to the guidance set out in EN 1176 (information supplied from the Play and Youth Facilities Officer).
- h. The applicant sends a representative to SSDC's Routine Visual Playground Inspection Training and Introduction to Playground Management training at their own expense.
- i. The applicant takes steps to involve and consult the local community about the MUGA proposals and in particular the views of children and young people's are sought and considered and provides evidence of this when submitting the final design for approval.
- j. The applicant includes the following clause in the contract to install the MUGA: "The employer will withhold a 5% retention of the contract value for one year following the date of the site completion certificate. This will be paid to the contractor after one year, unless installation problems occur with the facility and then the Employer reserves the right to use the retained funds to rectify any problems experienced. The retention and/or use of the retention sum do not preclude the Employer from seeking damages for breach of contract, should the value of the breach of contract exceed the sum."

Reason: To support the establishment of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Fivehead.

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

15. Planning Appeals (agenda item 15)

Members noted that an application for a gypsy site at Fivehead had been subsequently allowed by the Planning Appeal Inspector, following their Committee decision to refuse permission in May 2008. It was felt that an open and transparent joint SCC/SSDC report on gypsy and traveller sites within Area North and in relation to other sites across South Somerset should be presented to the Committee. It was agreed to add this report to the Joint Area Committee Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Planning Appeals report be NOTED.

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