

Meeting AN 05M:09/10
Date 28.04.10

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer on **Wednesday 28 April 2010**.

(2.00pm – 4.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale
Ann Campbell
Tony Carvin
Rupert Cox

Roy Mills
Derek Nelson
Keith Ronaldson
Jo Roundell Greene

Sylvia Seal
Sue Steele
Derek Yeomans

Somerset County Councillors

Anne Larpent

Officers:

Mark Williams
Charlotte Jones
Neil Mc Williams
Chris Cooper
Alasdair Bell
Adrian Noon
Lee Walton
Becky Sanders

Chief Executive Officer
Area Development Manager (North)
Assistant Highway Service Manager (SCC)
Streetscene Manager
Environmental Health Manager
Development Control Team Leader
Planning Officer
Committee Administrator

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

60. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 March 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

61. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paull Robathan.

62. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

63. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda item 4)

The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting of the Area North Committee would be held on Wednesday 26 May 2010 at the Millennium Hall, Seavington.

64. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

Mr G Townrow addressed members and wished to thank the SSDC Countryside Service for the training courses provided to volunteers. He commented that the courses were very beneficial to local communities. Thanks was also conveyed to the Streetscene Enforcement Team for arranging and supporting recent community events. Councillor Sylvia Seal, as Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, acknowledged the work of the volunteers and that SSDC was pleased to support and encourage local communities.

65. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman informed the committee that he had recently attended the official opening of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in Fivehead, and was pleased that the Area North Committee had financially supported the project. He also wished to thank the local community for their work in achieving the project.

The Chairman advised that at a meeting of the Area Chairmen and Development Management in March, it had been agreed that with regard to planning applications at Mill Lane Business Park in Lopen, that planning officers would ensure that the adjoining parish and ward member were consulted and invited to speak at the relevant Area Committee meeting. If proposed development 'straddled' the parish boundary then the SSDC Constitution required that it be considered at Regulation Committee.

Mark Williams, the new Joint Chief Executive Officer was welcomed to the meeting.

66. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Sue Steele commented that she was pleased that the Fivehead MUGA had opened and noted that that it had taken a lot of hard work for the project to be completed.

67. Highway Authority End of Year Report – Area North (Agenda item 8)

The new Assistant Highway Service Manager presented the report and advised that there were two omissions regarding proposed resurfacing schemes for 2010-11, the omissions being Holloway Road, Lopen and Sutton Road, Somerton.

It was noted that:

- Grass cutting would begin in May for A class roads, followed by B and C class roads in June.
- Weedkilling would take place between May and August.
- The new five-year Highway contract with Atkins was in a transition phase and that although budgets had been reduced there was more performance monitoring in place.
- A three week programme of surface dressing for South Somerset had commenced.

Some members raised concerns, these being:

- Drainage issues may require investigation on the road between Ash and Tintinhull
- The junction of the A372 and B3165 at Long Sutton required monitoring as the surface was often in a poor state.
- The standard of surfaces following repairs undertaken by utility companies

Other more specific issues were logged with the Assistant Highway Service Manager who acknowledged that he would investigate the issues further and would be in direct contact with the relevant councillors.

In response to questions from members, the Assistant Highway Service Manager confirmed that:

- Pot holes were repaired prior to surface dressing
- The additional funding from Government for repairing potholes would be used for those reported by the public.
- The resurfacing works for Lopen were scheduled for November.
- Rural road gullies were cleared once a year – the service was reactive and often reliant upon people reporting issues.

Members thanked the Assistant Highway Services Manager for an informative report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Neil McWilliams, Assistant Highway Service Manager
countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk or 0845 345 9155*

66. Performance of the Streetscene Service (Agenda item 9)

Members noted the report as shown in the agenda. The Chairman thanked the Streetscene Service for the work done at Hills Lane in Martock and noted that positive comments had been received from the public. In response the Streetscene Manager acknowledged that the project had been a partnership with County Training and Yeovil Hire Centre.

The Streetscene Manager commented that a focus of the service in the coming months would be areas that were not often inspected, in particular difficult to access areas. Issues relating to dog fouling would be the focus for enforcement. It was also noted, from service requests, that Area North appeared to experience more fly tipping than other areas, possibly due to its rural nature and network of quiet lanes. Most service requests were responsive issues which suggested that most people considered that the routine work was acceptable.

Members were happy with the work of the Streetscene Service and were unanimous in their thanks for the bulb-planting programme. The following comments were also made:

- Invitation to walk the parish with a representative from Streetscene and Highways was excellent and worthwhile.
- Work in Hills Lane, Martock had had a beneficial effect regarding anti-social behaviour and community issues.
- Tackling dog fouling had been undertaken discretely and sensitively by the enforcement team.
- Please notify parish clerks when weeding programme commence in order that car owners can be encouraged to park elsewhere.

- Gratitude for:
 - the work done at Abbey Fields in Curry Rivel
 - the support of Parish Lengthsmen
 - dealing with fly tipping issues in Islemoor Ward
 - Working in partnership with parishes

In response to questions from members, the Streetscene Manager confirmed that:

- Inspections were done randomly.
- Regarding leaf clearance it was difficult to obtain good results all of the time due to nature and the weather.
- South Petherton had scored average rather than good in the Local Area Quality Inspections mainly due to the low figures of people who had been consulted.
- The pavement sweeper was primarily used in urban areas, but could be used in rural areas if requested.

The Chairman thanked the Streetscene Manager for his report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462840

67. Environmental Health Service Update Report (Agenda item 10)

The Environmental Health Manager presented the report as detailed in the agenda. He advised members that in general there were three strands to the service:

- food & safety
- community protection
- housing

Members noted that:

- The review of hygiene in butchers shops following the Pennington Report had been completed in South Somerset.
- The service had worked with Development Management to form local planning guidance regarding wind turbines.
- A report about new Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-12 was due at District Executive on 13 May 2010.

The Environmental Health Manager explained the current status of the Home Aid and Handyman services and that a county-wide service was currently out to tender. The current joint arrangement with SSDC and Taunton Deane Borough Council had been extended to November 2010 when it was expected the new county-wide service would be provided by a new county wide provider.

In response to questions from members the Environmental Health Manager confirmed that:

- 'Scores on the Doors', a national public information service to find the official local authority hygiene ratings for food businesses, was being rolled out across South Somerset in the next three months.
- A few negative comments had been expressed by the public regarding costs of materials supplied by the Handyman Scheme. The issues had now been resolved.
- Compulsory purchase of empty dwellings was not a favoured option as there needed to be a justifiable case for a local authority acquiring a building and substantial funding

- would be required. Consultation with other local authorities had indicated that enforced sale may be an effective measure for some private sector empty properties.
- Noise issues at public houses depended on their licence, planning conditions as well as the frequency of noise issues. If issues are reported they would be monitored by an officer.
 - Alternative sources of funding to continue the Zero Project was being investigated.

The Chairman thanked the Environmental Health Manager for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Alasdair Bell, Environmental Health Manager
alasdair.bell@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01458) 257440*

68. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda item 11)

The Area Development Manager (North) informed councillors that:

- a report regarding Huish Episcopi Sports Centre would come to Area North Committee within the next three months.
- the Asset Strategy report would now be in June.
- In the next few months there would be a report about the Affordable Housing Programme. The Ward Member for Turn Hill requested that a future discussion included the differing models for ownership and tenure which were becoming more apparent for small scale rural housing schemes.

Members were invited to forward any further suggestions for future reports to the Area Development Manager (North) or the Committee Administrator.

*Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01458) 257437*

69. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 12)

Councillors noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of planning appeals that were lodged, dismissed or allowed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*David Norris, Development Manager (01935) 462382
david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk*

70. Planning Applications (Agenda item 13)

The Committee considered the application set out in the schedule attached to the agenda and the planning officer gave further information at the meeting and, where appropriate, advised members of letters received as a result of consultations since the agenda had been prepared.

(Copies of all letters reported may be inspected in the planning applications files, which constitute the background papers for this item).

10/00657/OUT The erection of a workplace home at land Os 6155 part, Picts Hill, High Ham.

Applicant: Mr M Dunlop.

The Planning Officer outlined the application to members, as shown in the agenda report, with the aid of maps and photographs of the site, and noted that gaps and countryside between existing dwellings added to the character of the area. He commented that policies indicated support for conversion to workplace homes rather than new builds. The proposals were deemed to be an unwelcome development form and no exceptional or unique need had been proven. He highlighted that there had been an appeal on Hillside Cottage which was situated a short distance to the west. This had sought a new dwelling and the inspector had considered that it would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with policies, which aimed to control residential development within the countryside.

Mr A Walrond spoke in support of the application on behalf of the applicant, Mr Dunlop. He commented that it was difficult to describe the site as rural when it was bounded by the B3153 and neighbouring the 34 modern houses at Hamdown Court. He further considered that the open field system referred to in the report started after the neighbouring farm when heading towards Somerton. The Highway Authority comment about infrequent public transport was incorrect as there was an hourly bus service travelling past the site with a designated bus stop approximately 100 metres along the road. He highlighted that there had been two recent burglaries and that the owners would prefer to live on site to react and prevent further losses. Mr Walrond commented that the owner's long-term plans for the site were to consolidate the business, rebuild the existing buildings and re-landscape the site.

Mr P Dance, agent for the applicant, noted that in the Local Plan, SSDC appeared to be in support of workplace homes. He commented that precedent was not a genuine planning reason for refusal and needed to be assessed upon merits. In terms of sustainability, the site was a good location being next to a main road and the owner living on site would reduce the number of car journeys required. He also noted that improved security would add to the viability of the business. He commented that if members were minded to approve the application that it could be controlled by a section 106 planning obligation to tie the use and ownership.

Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, noted that although the site was in High Ham parish it was nearer to Langport. He considered that the Highway Authority comments weren't relevant to this part of High Ham parish. He felt the definition of a workplace home in SSDC policies was open to differing interpretation, and that with consideration, the proposal was an exception that could be permitted and should be supported.

Members discussed the application at length and varying comments were made including:

- the aerial photograph indicated the site was not in a rural area, as surrounded by other dwellings
- dwelling should be tied to the business
- concern about a two storey dwelling as the site is near the brow of the hill
- security was not a planning issue, and security would always be an issue regardless of the type of business
- the proposed dwelling is not for manufacture, unsure if it's a workplace home
- business isn't under threat but could be more successful if able to secure premises.
- No reason why business could not continue without the proposed dwelling

In response to a question, the Development Control Team Leader explained that he didn't consider that Policy ME4 was meant for a workplace home. ST3 was a more appropriate policy for such a proposal. The Planning Officer reminded members that the application was not to consider the business but the dwelling only.

Most members were minded to approve the application subject to it being conditioned by a section 106 planning obligation, that the house, when built, would be tied to the business premises, and the details of the site access to be agreed. It was proposed and seconded to approve the application and on being put to the vote, the proposal was carried (voting: 7 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention).

RESOLVED: That planning application 10/00657/OUT be APPROVED subject to:

- (a) The prior completion of a section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitors) before the decision notice granting permission is issued, the said planning obligation to cover the following items/issues:
- (i) to tie the house and the builders yard to a single planning unit not to be subsequently sold off separately and only to be occupied by someone solely or mainly employed at the builders yard.
- (b) And the following conditions:-
- Standard time limit for outline/submission of reserved matters
 - Reserved matters
 - Levels
 - Details/specification of access to the site to be agreed

Reason: The proposal dwelling would provide essential security and accommodation to support the economic benefits provided by the existing business. It would not constitute the undesirable or unsustainable consolidation of development beyond the recognised limits of a designated settlement. As such it complies with policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan, and policies ST3, ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and Planning Policy Statements 3 and 7.

(Voting: 7 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention)

*David Norris, Development Manager (01935) 462382
david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk*

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Chairman