

Meeting AN 08M 10/11
Date 24.11.10

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Millennium Hall, Seavington on **Wednesday 24 November 2010**.

(2.00pm – 4.38 pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Roy Mills	Jo Roundell Greene
Ann Campbell	Derek Nelson	Sylvia Seal
Tony Carvin	Paull Robathan	Sue Steele
Rupert Cox (from 3.45pm)	Keith Ronaldson	Derek Yeomans

Somerset County Councillors

John Bailey

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer (North)
Alice Knight	Third Sector & Partnerships Manager
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
Adrian Noon	Area Lead North/East (Development Management)
Claire Alers-Hankey	Planning Officer
Becky Sanders	Committee Administrator

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

90. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 27 October 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, and were approved and signed as a correct record subject to a spelling correction in the title of planning application 10/03097/FUL.

91. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

92. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

93. 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 15 December 2010 at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.

94. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from the public.

95. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman did not make any announcements.

96. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Roy Mills commented that he and Councillor Tony Canvin had attended a meeting to discuss the Bartletts Elm roundabout as there had been some issues regarding large vehicles experiencing difficulty manoeuvring around the roundabout.

Councillor Sylvia Seal noted that the Tourist Information Centre at Cartgate had won an award and was in the top six centres nationally.

Councillor Ann Campbell commented that she had attended a careers fair that had been an excellent event and many young people had attended.

Councillor Sue Steele noted that the Post Office in Ilton would be closing in February 2011 but there would be a part-time service hosted from alternative premises. She also commented that the recent announcement regarding Rok going into administration had had an effect on the housing development in Copse Lane in the village.

97. Area North Community Grants – Chilthorne Domer Pavilion Refurbishment (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 8)

The Community Development Officer introduced the report as shown in the agenda and explained that the grant request was for 50% funding towards refurbishment of the pavilion. Proposed works had been prioritised to make the pavilion safe, secure and to work towards Hallmark scheme accreditation and included relaying of the paved path, kitchen refurbishment, boiler replacement, creating secure external storage and the removal of an internal wall to improve layout and access. He noted that members were aware that there had been issues in the village regarding the pavilion and Recreational Trust for a number of years. He summarised the background to the trust and commented that there was a new committee of trustees.

Members were informed that since the agenda had been printed the requested funding from Yarlinton Housing Association Community Fund had been agreed and they had also offered to give further advice on the project.

Ward member, Councillor Jo Roundell Greene thanked officers for their work in helping to resolve issues and commented that the project would make a big difference to the

community. She commented that there was a lot of work to be undertaken and there was now a willing committee to get things done.

There was a brief discussion and members were broadly in favour of supporting the project and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £12,500 be awarded to Chilthorne Domer Recreational Trust towards the refurbishment of the pavilion allocated from the Area North Capital Programme – Local Priority Schemes, subject to the SSDC standard conditions for community grants and the following special condition:

- a) The applicant must make provision for future maintenance and replacement of the facilities. SSDC recommends the applicant establish a sinking fund to achieve this condition.

Reason: To determine an application for financial support submitted by Chilthorne Domer Recreational Trust.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*Les Collett, Community Development Officer (North)
leslie.collett@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01458) 257427*

98. SSDC Voluntary Sector Strategy (Agenda item 9)

The Third Sector and Partnerships Manager gave a brief presentation about the SSDC Voluntary Sector Strategy that was adopted at full Council in July 2010. She explained that the strategy had been prepared around the time of the General Election and as a result had been checked to ensure it was still relevant to the plans of the coalition government. It was noted that there was a need to review how the authority supported the voluntary sector in a time of reducing budgets. The presentation included information about:

- Office for Civil Society
- Big Society Strategy – consultation will end on 6 January 2011
- Voluntary sector in South Somerset
- Aims of the SSDC Voluntary Sector Strategy included:
 - Help to give the voluntary and community sector organisations a voice
 - Support conditions for a thriving voluntary sector
 - Improve our services
 - Strengthen our communities

There was a short discussion and in response to questions and comments from members, the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager informed members that:

- The government had a vision that the voluntary sector could deliver some services but the funding for voluntary groups had also been reduced.
- South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) were consulting community groups.
- Idea of the Big Society Bank would be to provide a single channel of government funding for the voluntary sector
- The government would be establishing a transition fund which the Lottery had been commissioned to deliver, however full details were still awaited.

- The SSVCA were able to deliver generic services e.g. Human Resources, for smaller organisations. However their external funding had been reduced and they relied upon SSDC for core funding.

The Chairman thanked the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager for her informative presentation.

*Alice Knight, Third Sector and Partnerships Manager
alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01963) 435061*

99. Addressing Community Priorities – Area North Development Plan 2010-11 Update Report (Agenda item 10)

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report as shown in the agenda and highlighted to members that the report included an update on projects being supported by the Area Development Team. She commented that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review would have implications on work currently being supported but the detail was not known. It was also noted that some aspects of the report were connected to the Budget Monitoring Report (agenda item 11). The Area Development Manager summarised the report and commented that Somerset County Council (SCC) budget cuts could impact on Area North priorities due to:

- Available funding to partnership schemes
- Libraries review
- Highways budgets significantly reduced
- Children and adult service levels
- Bus subsidies

There was a lively discussion following the presentation during which members raised various comments and concerns including:

- Parishes were looking for advice regarding the future of libraries and parish lengthsmen
- Parishes had received a letter from SCC which implied parishes could look to do some highway maintenance
- Affordable housing could become more difficult to deliver, but remained a top priority
- Difficult for parishes to precept by January 2011 as little information was available about the impact of budget cuts upon services at the current time
- There seemed to be little consultation with ward members and parishes regarding Play Days.

In response to questions the Area Development Manager (North) commented that:

- It wasn't the responsibility of SSDC to fill the shortfall of funding cuts of other public sectors. However SSDC could review its support if there was a proposal for the alternative delivery of a service or project.
- Officers and the Area Chairman were aware that parishes were looking for information and discussions were underway regarding the hosting of a workshop. It was acknowledged that the timing of the workshop needed to be carefully considered.
- Lengthsmen was not only an issue about funding but also officer support to facilitate the licence and authority to work on the highway.
- The community event proposed in the report recommendation would facilitate the allocation of the Area North Service Enhancement budget and focus on

resilience, transition and priorities for investment to help communities get from where they were now to where they want to be in the future.

Members were generally in favour of the proposal for a community event, with the date and details to be confirmed in the near future. It was noted that the Area Chairs were due to discuss the district wide response regarding current Service Enhancement budgets at their meeting in December.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the proposal for a community event in early 2011 as part of the Area North Service Enhancement programme be supported.

*Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01458) 257401*

100. Area North Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30 September 2010 (Agenda item 11)

The Area Development Manager summarised the report as shown in the agenda and commented that most capital schemes in either the Area North or the Corporate Programmes were likely to be complete by the end of the financial year. She noted that there was approximately £200,000 unallocated in the Area North Capital programme for future years, which represented a healthy balance into priority local schemes. The Area Development Manager explained that there was approximately £18,000 remaining in the grants budget, which was unusual at this stage in the financial year. She asked members to remind community groups that grant funding was still available where there was a clear financial need and benefits to the community.

Members were content to approve all recommendations.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that:

- 1) the current financial position on Area North budgets be noted
- 2) the position of the Area North Reserve as at 30 September 2010 be noted
- 3) the position of the Capital Programme for 2010/11 to 2014/15 and of the Play & Youth capital investment programme in Area North be noted
- 4) the position of the Area North Community Grants budget, including details of grants authorised under the Scheme of Delegation by the Area Development Manager (North) in consultation with the ward member(s) be noted

(Voting: Unanimous)

*Nazir Mehrali, Management Accountant
Nazir.Mehralli@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462205*

101. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda item 12)

The Area Development Manager (North) informed councillors that:

- There was a need to re-schedule the Buildings at Risk report
- The Section 106 Planning Obligations report would be made to Committee by January 2011.

Following the suggestion of the ward member for Hamdons, it was agreed that a short presentation would be made at the December meeting about the All Saints Hall, Stoke Sub Hamdon.

Members requested that if the Asset Management report was to be delayed that they be able to view the list of assets without a report on the strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Area North Committee Forward Plan be noted.

*Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462077*

102. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)

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*

103. Planning Applications (Agenda item 14)

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).

10/03068/COU – Change of use of land and siting of one mobile home and one touring caravan for one traveller/gypsy residential pitch at OS0062 Mildmays Road, High Ham. Applicant: Mr A Hughes.

The Planning Officer updated members that previously the Ministry of Defence had not been consulted about the proposal, but she had spoken to them in the last two days and they had raised no objections.

With the aid of Powerpoint slides she explained the application and highlighted the site location in relation to the surrounding roads and dwellings. She recommended, that if members were minded to approve the application, that condition 5 was amended to withdraw permitted development rights. The key issues were considered to be Highways,

need for the traveller/gypsy pitch, and the visual impact. It was noted that the Highway Authority had not raised any objections. She commented that a need for a Gypsy/Traveller pitch had been shown. The Landscape Architect had raised concerns however these were not considered relevant to determination of this application as planning guidance indicated that a traveller/gypsy pitch was an exception.

Mr C Palmer, on behalf of High Ham Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. He commented that the parish council was open to change and diversity but considered the proposal did not fit with planning policies. It was also noted that applications for other proposals in the parish had been refused on landscape and sustainability grounds for the same reason this application was being recommended for approval.

Mr S Allen, spoke in objection to the proposal and noted that the officer report described the site as fairly remote, but he and others considered it to be fairly close to housing. He commented that the applicant had been offered other sites which might have been more sustainable. He questioned whether the committee would be able to guarantee the applicant adhered to recommended conditions.

The Area Lead explained that Gypsies and Travellers were one of the few exceptions to some planning policies. He commented that there were no recommendations personal to the applicant but if the proposal was approved it would provide a designated Gypsy and Traveller pitch to a person or persons with bona fide gypsy/traveller status. Members were reminded that there were enforcement procedures but it should be assumed the applicant would comply with conditions.

The Planning Officer noted that there was a history of enforcement on the site, however the occupier had always been swift to comply with requests for action. She commented that the impact on residential amenity was minimal as the site was fairly remote from housing. It was also noted that planning circulars indicated that concerns about the local landscape should not be used as a reason to refuse an application such as this.

Mr A Hughes, the applicant, informed members that it was a different family on the land when it had been subject to a previous enforcement issue.

Ward member, Councillor Rupert Cox, commented that the parish council had clear views on the application and they recognised Gypsy and Traveller legislation. He acknowledged their frustration and considered they were raising a significant point regarding sustainability and Highways, and that if the application had been for a house it would probably be recommended for refusal but because it was a Gypsy and Traveller site it was recommended for approval. He questioned whether the demand for the pitch was known as land at Pitney had been purchased by the authority but was not used.

The Area Lead explained that sustainability and landscape considerations had to be balanced with other policies and on this occasion had fallen in the applicants favour. He commented that Gypsies and Travellers were a recognised group where exceptions on normal policies could be made.

There was a short, lively discussion and in response to questions from members the Planning Officer clarified that:

- Sewerage/drainage provision was in place (confirmed by the applicant)
- No planning permission had previously been refused on the site
- If there were any enforcement issues in the future, the case officer for this application would be involved.

- Condition 4 did not permit storage on the site.
- The conditions would not stipulate how many people could live on the site but it would be restricted as it was a single pitch.
- The recommended amendment to condition 5 was to withdraw permitted development rights for the erection of outbuildings, sheds and other structures.

Most members were content to support the officer recommendation for approval of the application subject to the amendment of condition 5.

RESOLVED: That application 10/03068/COU be APPROVED subject to the conditions set out in the agenda report with an amendment to condition 5 to also withdraw permitted development rights for the erection of outbuildings, sheds and other structures.

(Voting: 11 in favour, 2 against)

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

.....
Chairman