

Meeting AN 03M 11/12
Date 27.07.11

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Village Hall,
Norton Sub Hamdon on **Wednesday 27 July 2011**.

(2.00pm – 6.10pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Pauline Clarke

Terry Mounter

Graham Middleton

Roy Mills

David Norris

Shane Pledger

Jo Roundell Greene

Sylvia Seal (2.40pm to 5.40pm)

Sue Steele

Paul Thompson

Derek Yeomans

Also present:

SCC Cllr John Bailey (until 3.30pm).

Officers:

Charlotte Jones

Val Keitch

Colin McDonald

Charlotte Thomas

Adrian Noon

Lee Walton

Linda Hayden

Nick Whitsun-Jones

Becky Sanders

Area Development Manager (North)

Community Justice Panel Co-ordinator

Strategic Housing Manager

Orchards Project Officer (SCC)

Area Lead North/East

Planning Officer

Planning Officer

Principal Legal Executive

Committee Administrator

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

20. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

21. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Barry Walker.

22. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

23. 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 24 August 2011 at the Village Hall, Long Sutton.

24. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public.

25. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman reminded members of the following workshops and meetings:

- Review of Area Working (North) – workshop 1 on 16 September at Brympton Way and workshop 2 on 23 November at Norton Sub Hamdon Village Hall.
 - The Area North Annual Parish Workshop was provisionally arranged for the evening of 19 October.
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26. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Sue Steele expressed her concerns regarding the situation with the recreation field in Ilton, where Yarlington Housing Group were unable to erect boundary netting until at least September, thereby limiting the use of the field during the school holidays.

27. Keeping South Somerset Orchards Alive (Agenda item 8)

The Orchards Project Officer gave a short presentation about the project 'Keeping South Somerset Orchards Alive' and explained to members:

- The background to the project including funding, project duration, and interesting facts & figures about orchards in the locality. Most parishes within Area North were included in the project.
- Aims of the project included raising awareness of the importance of orchards, free advice and training in orchard management, training volunteers to undertake wildlife surveys, creating at least two community orchards and encouraging schools to explore the natural heritage of orchards and planting new ones on school grounds,
- The project had been well received in Norton Sub Hamdon, with advisory visits to orchard owners in the village, advice on grants for new orchard planting, a need identified for training on pruning, and volunteers had been recruited to conduct wildlife surveys.

In response to questions from members she clarified that:

- The project only covered traditional, non commercial orchards.
- There was no-one currently trained within the team to identify varieties of apples, however they had contacts who could.
- The project was reliant on people and owners identifying old orchards and making them known to the project.
- She acknowledged that the 'adopt a tree' was an approach to investigate further.

Members thanked the Orchards Project Officer for her very informative presentation.

*Charlotte Thomas, Orchards Project Officer (SCC)
cmthomas@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 355427*

28. Community Justice Panel (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 9)

In the absence of the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager, the Area Development Manager (North) presented the report as shown in the agenda which explained in detail the role of the panel. The level of support needed to sustain the service had been reviewed. The South Somerset Community Justice Panel (SSCJP) had now achieved charitable status and was progressing to be totally independent of South Somerset District Council, however one-off funding was required during the interim period.

In response to questions from members the Area Development Manager (North) and Community Justice Panel Co-ordinator explained that:

- Funding from Yarlington Housing Group was expected to continue, and other housing associations were being approached to work with the panel and contribute financially.
- Areas East and West had agreed funding, however Area South would not consider the request until early August.
- The SSCJP were looking at other trust funds for future support.
- Training on restorative justice would be offered to volunteers and schools in the autumn.

Members were unanimous in their support for the panel and to approve the recommendation for one-off funding. They commended the work achieved by the panel to date.

RESOLVED: That Area North Committee allocate £2,500 of one-off funding to the South Somerset Community Justice Panel to enable the project to continue through 2011/12, from the Area North allocation for Service Enhancements.

Reason: To determine a request for the allocation of a financial contribution to the South Somerset Community Justice Panel.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

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

29. Area North Affordable Housing Development Programme – Outturn Report 2010-11 (Agenda item 10)

The Strategic Housing Manager introduced himself for the benefit of new councillors and apologised for the delay in bring the report to North Committee. He explained that the report, as shown in the agenda, was an opportunity to look at the three-year programme as a whole. He noted that since his last report eighteen months ago there had been changes to the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) programme. The amount of new homes built in South Somerset had out performed other districts in the South West. However the number of families in housing need continued to increase. At the current

time he was unable to confirm which projects would be funded in the future as in depth information on the results of the last bid round to the HCA had not been released.

In response to members questions, the Strategic Housing Manager replied that:

- Projects required large amounts of capital funding and it was unlikely to be able to fulfil all housing need.
- He acknowledged comments made that performance should be measured against need.
- Housing developments over a certain size triggered a requirement for 35% affordable housing. In some circumstances there could be viability reasons for negotiating a lower proportion. Policies associated with the emerging Core Strategy might suggest a lower threshold to trigger affordable housing.
- Affordable housing could be interpreted to be housing available to those who would not be able to afford private sector or market value housing at prevailing rates.
- The new affordable rent regime would anticipate rent charges of up to 80% of market rents, with a potential to negotiate. This was a higher level than the old social rent regime but was still more affordable than rent at prevailing private market rents.

The Strategic Housing Manager was thanked for his comprehensive report.

RESOLVED: That the outturn position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2008/11 be noted.

*Colin McDonald, Strategic Housing Manager
colin.mcdonald@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462331*

30. **Area North Affordable Housing 2011-12 Progress Report (Agenda item 11)**

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report as shown in the agenda, and explained that it gave an overview of the current situation with all affordable housing projects in Area North. She noted that some parishes had undertaken housing needs surveys but no further actions had been taken to date. This had unfortunately led to some parishes feeling that they were not a priority. She updated members that since the report had been produced, a planning application for the scheme in Turn Hill ward had been received.

During the short, lively discussion, members raised several questions to which the Area Development Manager (North) and Strategic Housing manager responded:

- The scheme for High Ham, as shown in appendix A of the agenda report, was unlikely to come forward and would be removed from future reports.
- The scheme at Compton Dundon was partially built, but some aspects of Building Regulations and planning conditions were outstanding and therefore the homes could not be signed off for habitation.
- It was acknowledged some housing needs surveys were undertaken six or more years ago and may need to be reviewed.
- People chose whether they wanted to go on the housing register and they should be encouraged to do so even if they felt there was little hope of seeing affordable housing in their community, in order to identify a need.

Members thanked the officers for their report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462251*

31. **SSDC Partnerships Review (Agenda item 12)**

The Area Development Manager (North) presented the report as detailed in the agenda on behalf of the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager. She referred members to the appendix that detailed the four partnerships in Area North, and explained that Area North Committee were asked to forward recommendations to District Executive regarding the recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee. It was explained that some entries on the register did not fit the proposed SSDC definition of a partnership, and whilst there was a recommendation to remove an entry from the register the work would continue.

Members were unanimous in their approval to forward the recommendations to District Executive as detailed in the agenda report.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations be made to District Executive:

- Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities be retained on the SSDC Partnerships Register.
- Langport Abattoir Liaison Group, Links Community Transport Steering Group and Martock Youth Project be removed from the SSDC Partnerships Register.

(Voting: Unanimous)

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

32. **Area North Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 13)**

The Area Development Manager (North) had no updates on the Forward Plan. She advised councillors that as there were no scheduled reports for the September meeting, the proposal was to hold the public committee meeting for the consideration of planning applications only and the other time being used for a workshop or planning tour. The importance of the meeting on 26 October 2011 and the Core Strategy report was highlighted, which would be an opportunity for the Area Committee to feed back comments to the District Executive.

The Area Development Manager (North) confirmed that the report on the revised management agreement for the operation of the Huish Episcopi Sports Centre was expected at the date shown.

RESOLVED: That members noted the Forward Plan.

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

33. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 14)

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*

34. Planning Applications (Agenda item 15)

The Committee considered the applications 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).

10/01397/COU – Change of use from B1 and B2 industrial to B2 (general industrial) or B8 (storage and distribution). Land rear of Merryhay, Main Street, Ilton. Applicant: Ilton Estates Ltd.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda report, and explained that the application site was to the north of the village. The application had been submitted so that the premises could be marketed to a wider clientele. The officer's presentation also included photographs submitted by local objectors to indicate their concerns about highway safety and HGV movements through the village.

It was noted that written representation had been received from the Chairman of the Parish Council, in which he commented that the application had seen a large number of general concerns about highway safety and a lack of pavements, and was concerned that the issues raised appeared to have been ignored.

The Planning Officer advised that the wording with reference to application 09/02442/FUL under 'planning history' in the agenda report should have read ' A legal obligation revoked the outline.....' and not rescinded.

Members were reminded that Highways had not raised any objections and considered that B8 usage was unlikely to have a significant impact upon traffic through the village.

Ms K King, objector, spoke on behalf of many residents and referred to the Localism Bill. She commented that local people did not want the B8 usage as it was felt a warehouse would generate more goods traffic and not much employment, also that pedestrians and horseriders would be put at risk especially in the dark. She further noted that roads through the village were already congested with parked cars, and the short time the site had been advertised was insufficient to determine a weak market for its original planning use.

Ward Member, Councillor Sue Steele, commented traffic was a problem and there had always been concerns about it in Ilton.

During discussion, members raised several comments including:

- Only route available to goods traffic was through the centre of the village
- Operating times should be the same as the original application 7am to 8pm and not 6am to 9pm as suggested by the applicant.
- Concerns of residents were acknowledged but difficult in planning terms if other parts of site have B8 usage and traffic already associated with the site as a whole.
- Existing restrictions on traffic movements should remain the same.

The Principal Legal Executive advised members that if they were minded to approve the application it should be subject to the Council's Solicitor being satisfied that existing planning obligations would offer sufficient restrictions with regard to traffic movements otherwise a supplementary new Section 106 should be entered into prior to a decision notice being issued.

In response to members comments, the Area Lead clarified that the traffic movements stated in the agenda report only referred to delivery vehicles to the part of Ilton Business Park situated to the north of the access road.

- It was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation subject to:
- (a)(i) The Council's solicitor(s) being satisfied prior to issue of the decision notice granting planning permission that the previous Section 106 planning obligations relating to the application site are sufficient to ensure the continuance of the numeric limitation of delivery vehicle movements to and from Ilton Business Park and
 - (ii) in the event of the Council's Solicitor not being satisfied as to the matter in (i) above, the Council's solicitor(s) be instructed to secure, prior to issue of the decision notice granting planning permission, the completion of a Deed of Variation or (as may be advised by the said solicitor(s)) a new Section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the said solicitor(s)) covering the numeric limitation of delivery vehicle movements to and from Ilton Business Park and, if the said solicitor(s) deem it necessary, the consolidation of the said previous obligations; and
 - (b) The imposition of the planning conditions set out in the agenda report subject to condition 5 being varied to allow use between 7.00am and 8.00pm.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was carried, seven in favour, four against and one abstention.

- RESOLVED:** That planning application 11/01397/COU be **approved** for the reason set out in the agenda subject to:
- (a)(i) The Council's solicitor(s) being satisfied prior to issue of the decision notice granting planning permission that the previous Section 106 planning obligations relating to the application site are sufficient to ensure the continuance of the numeric limitation of delivery vehicle movements to and from Ilton Business Park and
 - (iii) in the event of the Council's Solicitor not being satisfied as to the matter in (i) above, the Council's solicitor(s) be instructed to secure, prior to issue of the decision notice granting planning permission, the completion of a Deed of Variation or (as may be advised by the said solicitor(s)) a new Section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the said solicitor(s)) covering the numeric limitation of delivery vehicle movements to and from Ilton Business Park and, if the said solicitor(s) deem it necessary, the consolidation of the said previous obligations; and
 - (b) The imposition of the planning conditions set out in the agenda report subject to condition 5 being varied to allow use between

7.00am and 8.00pm.

(Voting: 7 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention)

11/00702/FUL – The demolition of existing dwellings and erection of 2 No. replacement dwellings, conversion of barns to dwelling & garaging & construction of new farmstead comprising barn, dairy, dwelling-house, yards, informal track, slurry store, silage clamp and siting of a mobile home (Revised applications 08/05297/OUT, 08/05169/REM and 08/03872/FUL). Land at Manor Farm, Littleton Road, Compton Dundon. Applicant: R E Fewings and Son.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda report. She updated members that since the report had been published the Environment Agency had confirmed they had no objections to the amended plans. Also that a further letter of objection had been received repeating concerns about access and highways. She also confirmed that members had received a letter circulated by the applicant. The presentation explaining the application included some images supplied by local objectors.

The Planning Officer explained to members that the current farm site was constrained by existing housing and topography. Access was via the B3151 and the junction on the B3151 had limited visibility. The application proposed a new access alongside the restricted byway. The farm was an ex-county farm that had suffered from little capital investment and lacked modern equipment. The proposal would be financed by the sale of the two new dwellings and a barn conversion on the existing site, all of which already had the benefit of planning permission. She clarified to members that this application sought permission for a new farm and to legalise the siting of a mobile home.

It was explained that the proposed development was deemed to promote agricultural business and it was accepted in planning terms that there was a need for an agricultural dwelling. The Highways objection came from concerns regarding additional traffic associated with the future additional residential use on the existing site. It was noted that the Rights of Ways issues regarding the Restricted Byway had been overcome and a new access track would run parallel to it. Relocating the farm, and associated access track, would reduce mud along Littleton Road. Alternative access arrangements had been investigated that would avoid Littleton Road, however these had been financially prohibitive. The Environment Agency had no objections to the proposals for dealing with slurry and welcomed the proposed modern design. The Planning Officer commented that the main reason for refusal was due to Highways objections.

Councillor M Dennis, of Compton Dundon Parish Council, commented that the parish council unanimously supported the application and the benefits it would bring to the community. They felt the business should be supported in being sustainably viable and with modern practices. Relocating the farm would eliminate the need to drive livestock up Littleton Lane. He noted that the access onto the B3151 was within a 30mph limit and that workers living on site would reduce their need to travel.

Mrs K Hunter, spoke on behalf of nearby residents in objection to the application. They had concerns about mud on the road, which in the past had led to flooding. She also commented the proposed access along the Restricted Byway was not designed for large vehicles. She noted that they did not agree with the agent's statement regarding Highways.

Mr M Walters, supporter, explained that he was a Chartered Surveyor in the agricultural business. He had worked with the applicant for several years and commented that the

family were committed to running the farm at a time when many farms were being sold off. He explained that the applicants had to comply with much legislation and the lack of modern buildings was a hindrance. It was also critical to the business that staff lived on site.

Ms J Fryer, agent for the applicant commented that the applicants were under pressure to make changes to the infrastructure to comply with legislation. She noted the only consultee appearing to object to the application was Highways. Moving cows to the parlour generated much muck along the road, and the proposal would mean movements were all on site. The application was the culmination of six years work to resolve issues and the aim was to deliver efficiency and potential.

Ward Member, Councillor Pauline Clarke, commented that she had been aware of the situation for several years and the Parish Council now supporting the application was an indication that many issues had been resolved. She clarified with the Planning Officer that the alternative access route referred to by the objectors would mean going over third party land. This was confirmed. She acknowledged that the access onto the B3151 was not ideal but didn't consider it to be of such concern to warrant refusing the application.

Ward Member, Councillor David Norris, also commented that the Highways concerns appeared to be overplayed. He felt the application should be approved with conditions regarding phasing and the state in which the old farm buildings were to be left.

During the short, lively discussion members expressed several comments including:

- Proposal should improve the situation in the local area
- Current buildings were unattractive and neglected
- Countryside in area was for farming and farmers should be supported
- Access on to B3151 is an existing and reasonable junction

The Area Lead advised members that if they were minded to approve the application then a Section 106 planning obligation would be required as detailed in the agenda report plus an additional point revoking the extant permissions for the erection of the replacement dwellings and barn conversions.

The Planning Officer indicated the justification would be benefits to economic activity and not prejudicial to highways safety. Conditions to be agreed by officers in consultation with the Area North Chairman and both ward members and to include:

- replacement dwellings
- barn conversion
- agricultural workers dwelling - occupancy, materials, removal of permitted development rights for extensions
- mobile home – occupancy and time limit
- Silage clamp and slurry store – method of construction and earth moving
- Conditions and informatives as required by consultees
- Existing farm site – landscaping and removal of structures
- Proposed farm site, including new track – landscaping

Members proposed to approve the application, contrary to the officer recommendation, subject to the four issues within a Section 106 planning obligation and the condition suggested by the Planning Officer, and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning application 11/00702/FUL be **approved**, contrary to the officer recommendation.

Justification:

The proposed relocation of the farmstead and redevelopment of the existing site is considered to be justified development in the countryside that will benefit economic activity without adversely impacting upon neighbouring amenity; sustainability objectives; or the rural landscape. It is not considered that the development will significantly increase the use of the existing access and as such the proposal would not be prejudicial to highways safety. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with saved Policies STR1, STR6, 5 and 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and saved Policies ST3, ST5, ST6 EC3 and TP5 of the South Somerset District Local Plan.

Subject to:

- (a) the prior completion of a section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued, the said planning obligation to cover the following items/issues:
- (i) the phasing of development
 - (ii) that all farming activities at the present site are relocated to the new site
 - (iii) that the existing site is left cleared and tidy
 - (iv) the revocation of the extant permissions for the erection of the replacement dwellings and the barn conversion.
- (b) The imposition of planning conditions on the grant of planning permission, these to be agreed by officers in consultation with the Area North Chairman and both ward members, to include:
- Replacement dwellings – As per 08/05169/REM and 06/01447/OUT (Total of 20 conditions)
 - Barn conversion – As per 06/01456/FUL (14 conditions)
 - Agricultural workers dwelling – Occupancy, Materials, Remove pd rights for extensions
 - Mobile Home – Occupancy, Temporary time limit
 - Silage clamp and slurry store – Method of construction inc earth moving
 - Technical conditions/informatives as required by consultees (any conditions reasonably recommended by Highways)
 - Existing farm site – Landscaping (hard and soft), Removal of existing structures
 - Proposed farm site, including new track – Landscaping (hard and soft)

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

11/00494/FUL - Application for a new planning permission for the erection of 13 houses and garages together with access road and parking area to replace extant permission 07/05685/FUL to extend the time limit for implementation at the Former Highways Depot, Etsome Terrace, Somerton. Applicant: Edgar Homes Ltd.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda report and with the aid of slides reminded members of the original application.

The Area Lead explained the background regarding the Section 106 planning obligations. The original application had been approved but with the recommended condition 19 being removed. This application sought to extend the time on the approved application. He explained that the policy of the Local Planning Authority was to seek planning obligations. It was the opinion of the LPA that any agreement between the applicant and Somerton Town Council was a private land owner matter and not a planning obligation. He reminded members that the roads on the development would be provided by the applicant but would not be adopted by the Highway Authority. The school drop off area was not ideal as it could only be accessed through a gated area. The applicant was still required to address the District Council's planning obligations unless the applicant could demonstrate that the scheme was unviable if the obligations were sought. To date, no information regarding viability had been received and therefore the conclusion was that contributions to SSDC should be sought.

The Principal Legal Executive clarified to members that the agreement in place between the applicant and the Town Council was a private arrangement and was not considered to be planning gain; SSDC was not a party to the agreement and therefore had no control over it.

Mr M Edgar, applicant, commented that work on the development had not started before the expiry of the permission due to the economic climate. He was surprised that the requested leisure contributions had risen from £9,514 in the original application to £77,399 now, which he considered to be unreasonable.

Mr T Canvin, spoke on the application, noting that the gated area on the development was for health and safety reasons, in order that the town council could manage access to the school site. The agreement already in place was not for the applicants benefit but for the school and community.

Ward Member, Councillor Pauline Clarke, commented that the site was currently unattractive and provided no parking for the Memorial Garden or a proper drop off zone for the school. She expressed concern as to how the increased figure for leisure contributions had been derived, and the justification for such a large increase.

In response, the Area Lead commented that the Leisure department had become more sophisticated in their calculations for contributions, and that although the local planning policies CR2 and CR3 had been in place for five years, the application of this policy requirement had been modified since the original application was approved. He noted that what the applicant had agreed with the town council in their private agreement would be taken into account as a material consideration, and be given credit if there were ongoing discussions about viability of the development. He reminded members that the roads in the development would have to be constructed anyway irrespective of any agreement.

Ward Member, Councillor David Norris, was of the opinion that an obligation should be sought but not necessarily to the extent suggested.

In response to comments from members, the Area Lead clarified that the application was before Committee as there was a need to reconsider it in light of modified policies, and therefore whether Section 106 planning obligations should be sought.

Members commented that if the development had commenced then the application would not be being discussed. They were content to approve the application, contrary to the officer's recommendation, on the terms of the original approval as stated in the minute of Area North Committee on 26 March 2008.

RESOLVED: That planning application 11/00494/FUL be **approved**. Justification and conditions as per previous approval as set out in the appendix to the officer's report with the exception of condition 19.

(Voting: 11 in favour, 1 against)

11/01556/OUT – Outline application for the erection of new health park including new care home, GP surgery, parking and access. Land adjacent The Pennards, Behind Berry, Somerton. Applicant: Close Care Homes (Somerton) Ltd.

The Area Lead summarised the report as shown in the agenda report and clarified this was an outline application with access and layout to be considered now, and design, appearance and landscaping etc to be reserved for later consideration. He explained that two further letters had been received, one in support of the application and the three storey proposal. The other letter concerned a previous objector who reiterated their previous concerns and challenged the applicants comments. He drew members attention to the consideration of the three-storey aspect of the care home in his report, and that if it was felt inappropriate, an informative was included with the conditions if members were minded to approve the application.

It was explained that access over the railway bridge from the main town car park to King Ina Road was of unknown ownership, and it was a popular link for the local community. The bridge was single carriageway, and he had specifically requested Highways to carefully consider the impact of the proposal on this bridge. It was clarified that the proposed entry to the site was directly off Behind Berry and only exiting traffic would use King Ina Road. Indicative drawings of the surgery and care home were shown to members. He suggested that a clear message was given to the applicant that the three storey design of the care home was felt to be inappropriate. It was suggested that there should be no windows on the first floor, south elevation of the doctors surgery due to the proximity of the neighbouring private bungalow. His recommendation was to approve the outline application.

Mr Ian Neale, objector, commented that the proposal was over development, lacked green space, and traffic exiting King Ina road lacked good visibility. He felt parking on the site had been exaggerated and was concerned about pedestrian safety over the railway bridge. He commented that the site would be excellent for a surgery that was much needed, but the care home was unnecessary.

Dr E Griffiths, spoke in objection to the application. She noted that the number of rooms stated for care home could not be accommodated without three storeys. The proposal indicated consulting rooms on the first floor of the surgery which was very unusual and not ideal. There was no scope for future expansion of the surgery as the local population increased and the proposal was limited from the outset by the size of the site. She felt it was a good location for the surgery but not the care home as well.

Mr A Larpent, spoke in support of the application as Chief Executive for the Somerset Care Group who were a potential tenant and provider of care services. He noted that Somerset Care were a not for profit organisation which was accessible to all and affordable. With the demographic challenges of Somerset they looked to integrate their services with the local community. Economic viability was a key consideration of the proposal with the number of rooms and three storey element of the care home being a factor.

Mr J Bailey, agent and Director of Close Care Homes commented that Somerset Care and the GP Practice were long established and trusted providers. They had been

brought together to improve an outdated and inadequate current surgery that no longer met statutory requirements. The proposal would provide modern facilities and additional services in a central location. The facility was needed in Somerton.

Ward Member, Councillor David Norris, commented it was a difficult application and felt that Highways were incorrect there were be no significant increase in traffic and footfall across the railway bridge. He acknowledged that potential residents of the care home were likely to be high dependency and unlikely to use the bridge. He suggested if approving the application it should be with the provisions suggested by the officer. He commented that it was unfortunate that the site was not for the sole use of the surgery.

Ward Member, Councillor Pauline Clarke, concurred with the comments of Councillor Norris. She noted that Somerton had looked for a new surgery for many years. She acknowledged that viability and finance had to be considered and working with the care home might be the only way forward.

In response to other comments made by Councillor Clarke, the Area Lead clarified that:

- Applicant had been encouraged to make a full application
- Layout would be as shown in the outline application but agreement of detailed design would be considered later as reserved matters.
- The Local Planning Authority would not be bound by the three storey element or the number of rooms. It could be stressed to the applicant that the three storey element was, as indicated, considered to be unacceptable.
- A significant change to access could not be considered as part of any reserved matters application.

The Chairman commented that the proposal seemed to be have been squeezed into the site and left little option but to push up to three storeys to provide the number of rooms required.

During the short discussion members raised several comments including:

- A high dependency care home would have many staff, little parking available
- Little stimulation of outside space for care home residents and visitors
- Surgery with first floor consulting rooms was very unusual in modern times
- Site very squashed
- Acknowledge finance situation
- Inadequate parking

It was proposed to approve the application, as per the officer recommendation, subject to the conditions and informative as indicated in the agenda report. On being put to the vote was carried 6 votes in favour and 5 against.

RESOLVED: That planning application 11/01556/OUT be **approved** subject to the conditions and informative indicated in the agenda report.

(Voting: 6 in favour, 5 against)

*David Norris, Development Manager (01935) 462382
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.....
Chairman