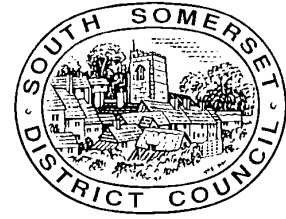


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Area North Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Wednesday 25 January 2012

2.00pm

**The Village Hall
Chilthorne Domer
BA22 8RD**

(location plan overleaf - disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



The public and press are welcome to attend.

Please note: Planning applications will be considered no earlier than 4.00pm.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, Becky Sanders on Yeovil (01935) 462462.

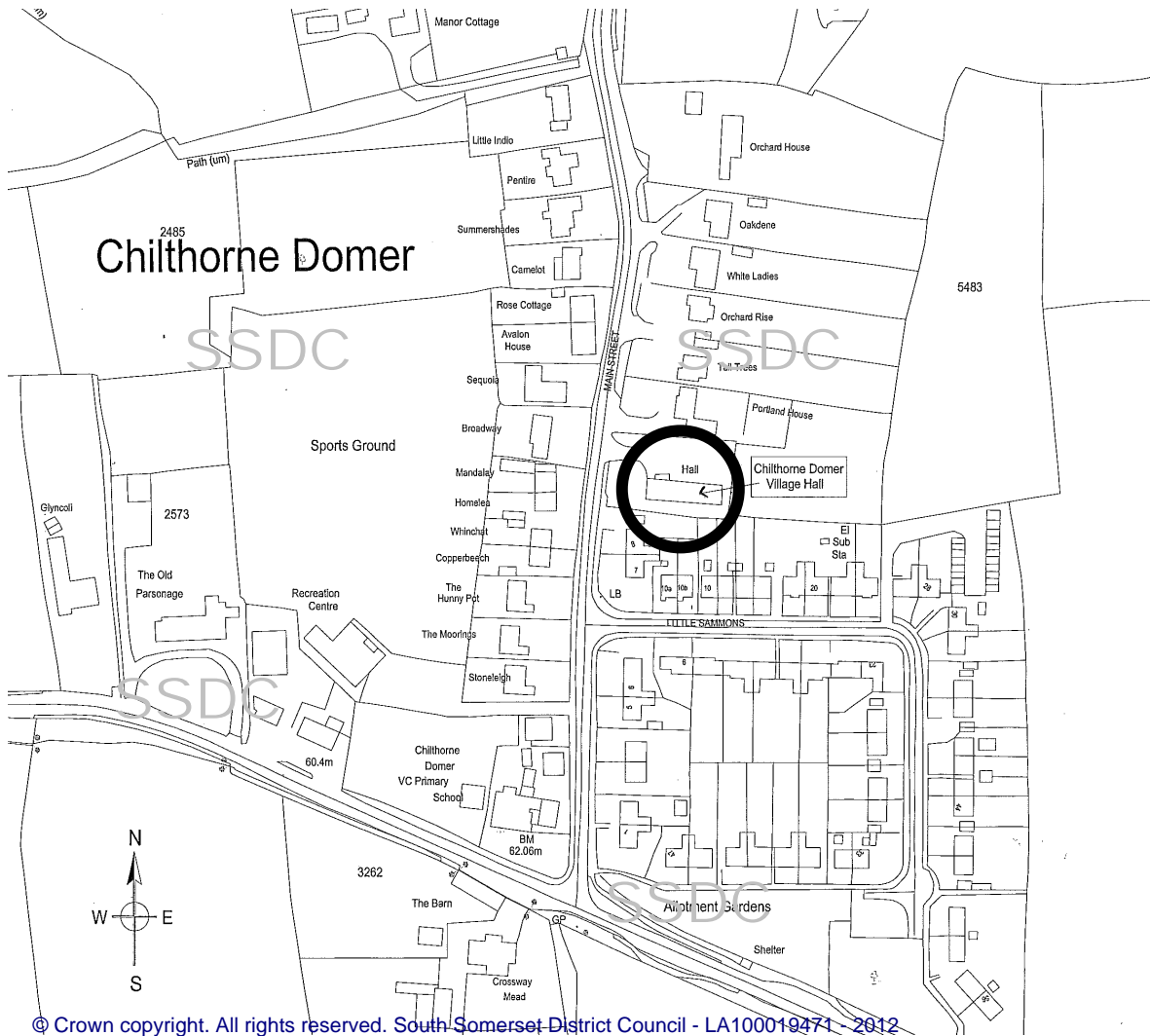
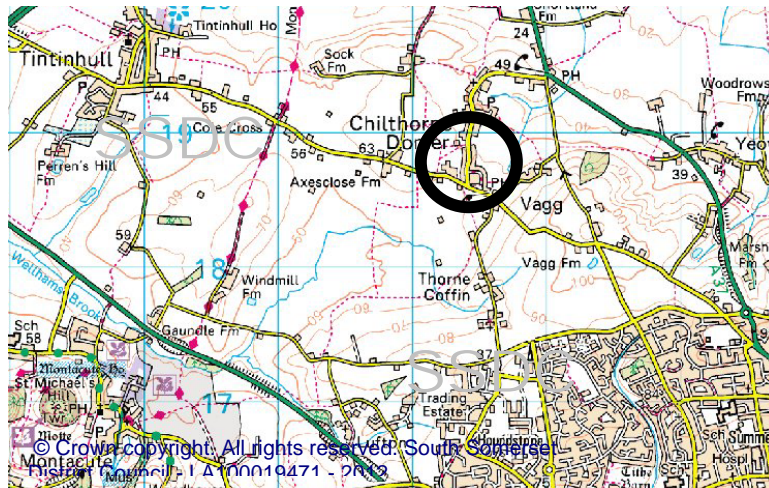
email: becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk

website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/agendas

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 17 January 2012.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

Location of meeting venue



Ordnance Survey mapping/map data included within this publication is provided by South Somerset District Council under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function to undertake its statutory function on behalf of the district. Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping/map data for their own use. South Somerset District Council - LA100019471 - 2012.

Area North Membership

Pauline Clarke (Vice Chairman)	Patrick Palmer (Chairman)	Sue Steele
Terry Mounter	Shane Pledger	Paul Thompson
Graham Middleton	Jo Roundell Greene	Barry Walker
Roy Mills	Sylvia Seal	Derek Yeomans
David Norris		

Somerset County Council Representatives

Somerset County Councillors (who are not already elected district councillors for the area) are invited to attend area committee meetings and participate in the debate on any item on the agenda. **However, it must be noted that they are not members of the committee and cannot vote in relation to any item on the agenda.** The following County Councillors are invited to attend the meeting: Councillors John Bailey and Sam Crabb.

South Somerset District Council – Corporate Aims

Our key aims are: (all equal)

- To increase economic vitality and prosperity
- To enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change
- To improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens
- To ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities
- To deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers

Scrutiny procedure rules

Please note that decisions taken by Area Committees may be "called in" for scrutiny by the council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

Consideration of planning applications

Consideration of planning applications usually commences no earlier than 4.00pm (unless specified otherwise), following a break for refreshments, in the order shown on the planning applications schedule. The public and representatives of parish/town councils will be invited to speak on the individual planning applications at the time they are considered. Anyone wishing to raise matters in relation to other items on the agenda may do so at the time the item is considered.

Highways

A representative from the Area Highways Office is usually available from 1.30pm at the hall to answer questions and take comments from members of the Committee. Alternatively, they can be contacted through Somerset Highways direct control centre on 0845 345 9155.

Members questions on reports prior to the meeting

Members of the committee are requested to contact report authors on points of clarification prior to the committee meeting.

Information for the public

The council has a well-established area committee system and through four area committees seeks to strengthen links between the Council and its local communities, allowing planning and other local issues to be decided at a local level (planning recommendations outside council policy are referred to the district wide Regulation Committee).

Decisions made by area committees, which include financial or policy implications are generally classed as executive decisions. Where these financial or policy decisions have a significant impact on council budgets or the local community, agendas will record these decisions as “key decisions”. Members of the public can view the council’s Executive Forward Plan, either online or at any SSDC council office, to see what executive/key decisions are scheduled to be taken in the coming months. Non-executive decisions taken by area committees include planning, and other quasi-judicial decisions.

At area committee meetings members of the public are able to:

- attend and make verbal or written representations, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- at the area committee chairman’s discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to up to three minutes on agenda items; and
- see agenda reports

Meetings of the Area North Committee are held monthly, usually at 2.00pm, on the fourth Wednesday of the month in village halls throughout Area North.

Agendas and minutes of area committees are published on the council’s website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk /agendas](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/agendas)

The council’s Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information about this committee can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

Public participation at committees

This is a summary of the protocol adopted by the council and set out in Part 5 of the council’s Constitution.

Public question time

The period allowed for participation in this session shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

Planning applications

Comments about planning applications will be dealt with at the time those applications are considered, rather than during the public question time session.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer's report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the planning officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The planning officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the committee chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

- Town or Parish Council Spokesperson
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicant/Agent
- District Council Ward Member

If a member of the public wishes to speak they must inform the committee administrator before the meeting begins of their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections and who they are representing. This must be done by completing one of the public participation slips available at the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

The same rules in terms of public participation will apply in respect of other agenda items where people wish to speak on that particular item.

If a councillor has declared a personal and prejudicial interest

Under the new Code of Conduct, a councillor will be afforded the same right as a member of the public, except that once the councillor has addressed the committee the councillor will leave the room and not return until after the decision has been made.

Area North Committee

Wednesday 25 January 2012

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2011.**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Declarations of interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, which includes all the provisions of the statutory Model Code of Conduct, members are asked to declare any personal interests (and whether or not such an interest is "prejudicial") in any matter on the agenda for this meeting. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 10. In the interests of complete transparency, members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under the code of conduct.

Planning applications referred to the Regulation Committee

The following members of this committee are also members of the council's Regulation Committee:

Councillors Patrick Palmer, Shane Pledger and Sylvia Seal.

Where planning applications are referred by this committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, in accordance with the council's Code of Practice on Planning, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as members of that committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

4. **Date of next meeting**

Councillors are requested to note that the next Area North Committee meeting will be held on **Wednesday 22 February 2012 at the Village Hall, Long Sutton at the earlier time of 1.30pm.**

5. **Public question time**

6. Chairman's announcements
7. Reports from members

<i>Items for Discussion</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
8. Somerset Community Foundation – Local Giving.....	1
9. SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset and Careline.....	4
10. Somerset County Council - Minerals Options Paper for Consultation .	14
11. Update Report from the Countryside Service	19
12. Consultation on Proposed Customer Contact Guidelines.....	25
13. Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) – Appointment of a Member.....	29
14. Area North Committee – Forward Plan	31
15. Planning Appeals	33
16. Planning Applications.....	34

**Please note that the decisions taken by Area Committees may be called in for scrutiny by the council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation.
This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications**

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

8. Somerset Community Foundation – Local Giving

Contact Details: Justin Sargent, Chief Executive, Somerset Community Foundation
Email: info@somersetcf.org.uk
www.somersetcf.org.uk
01749 344949

Justin Sargent, Chief Executive of the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF), will make a presentation on the work of the Foundation and specifically a new programme called Local Giving.

Background Information on the Somerset Community Foundation

“At the heart of our approach is a strong belief in the importance of helping communities respond to their local circumstances in their own way”

<http://www.somersetcf.org.uk>

- Part of a national network of Community Foundations, charities dedicated to strengthening local communities, creating opportunities and tackling issues of disadvantage and exclusion.
- Direct grants to local charities and voluntary organisations that make a genuine and lasting impact on the lives of local people.
- Set up in 2002 to provide a new independent funding body to tackle poverty and disadvantage throughout Somerset. Since 2002 SCF has distributed almost £3m in grants to a wide range of local charities. Since 2006 has built a £2m endowment fund for the county.
- Provide a service to help personal and business donors achieve their specific charitable goals within Somerset.

Main Programmes

Surviving Winter Appeal

- Somerset Community Foundation has a scheme to enable all who can afford to forego some or all of their Winter Fuel Payment (WFP), to make a donation to help those who need extra help during the winter months.
- The money raised by the Surviving Winter Appeal will be used to support local charities and community organisations who can reach the people most in need of help and make sure they can afford to stay warm, eat well and remain mobile, as well as help them in practical ways such as ensuring they can make doctor's appointments, get to the shops, and maintain an active social life.

- Find more at http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/surviving_winter_appeal.html

Community Grant programmes

- The Foundation administers a variety of funds for grant making. Priorities are:
 - Supporting vulnerable and frail older people and their carers
 - Supporting communities affected by rural isolation and loneliness
 - Improving life opportunities for disadvantaged young people and adults.
 -
- Applications are invited from voluntary led, community targeted organisations with a management committee, a constitution (or working towards one) and a bank account.
- Preferred average grant size is £2-3000 or below. The next deadline for applications is 9th March 2012.

Raising Aspirations

- A programme based on philanthropy and partnership to address the growing gap between the attainment of young people in Somerset and the average for England, particularly by children from the poorest families.
- The Raising Aspirations programme has been designed by Somerset Community Foundation to address this issue through a mentoring scheme, grant making and by bringing together people to develop further ideas and mobilise resources.
- Funding has been secured from a local charitable trust to run a 3 year pilot mentoring project in partnership with Crispin School in Street. Contacts are being developed with the professional community, people in trades, in music and the arts, and in the public sector to secure volunteers to provide one to one mentoring to the pupils in the school.
- We already have funds in excess of £50,000 per annum from funds established within the Foundation by local donors and business to support the grant-making aspect of the programme, and we expect this to continue to grow.

Somerset Guardians

- A programme aimed at the business community to provide a corporate charitable donations service.

Local Giving

- A national programme being operated in partnership with the Somerset Community Foundation.

- Local Giving is a web based fundraising scheme for community groups and potential charitable donors to be matched without the requirement of a formal grant making / application process.
 - Eligible organisations need to have clear charitable aims, and also be based and working in Somerset. There is fee to appear on the site for more than three months, but the initial period is free.
-

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

9. **SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset and Careline**

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus)
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well Being)
Service Manager: Kirsty Jones, Housing and Welfare Manager
Lead Officer: Fiona Johnson, Senior Welfare Officer
Contact Details: fiona.johnson@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 463737

Purpose of the Report

To update and inform Members on the work of the Welfare Benefit Team and South Somerset Careline for the financial year 2010/11.

Public Interest

The report gives an overview of the work of the Welfare Benefit Team within the Council showing progress to date and how the work achieves multiple added value for South Somerset. The report also gives an update on Careline – an alarm system that enables people to enjoy living independently in their own homes secure in the knowledge that emergency help is available at the touch of a button.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the Report

Background

Arising from our own assessment of poverty in the District in 1996 and later work done on benefit take-up for the Somerset County Council Poverty Commission in 1998, the Council decided to back a 3 year Welfare Benefits Take-Up Campaign for South Somerset. This was a pilot designed to test what we as a District Council could achieve, by both tapping into our own resources (primarily via Community Advisers in community offices) and enabling more take up work in other sectors through practical support and identification of external funding.

This initiative, managed in partnership with South Somerset CAB, was resourced with a sum of £100,000 over the 3-year period commencing April 2000. This enabled SSDC to employ a Welfare Benefit Officer based in the Social Inclusion Team. In response to demand the service grew and by 2001 the existence of the welfare benefits programme supported and complemented the introduction of the Verification Framework into Housing Benefits, giving Members and officers increased confidence that deliberate fraud would be tackled whilst maintaining a safety net for supporting vulnerable people.

When the Social Inclusion Unit ceased to exist the Welfare Benefit Team transferred to the Housing and Welfare Section - which has resulted in even closer working with the housing teams to prevent the loss of tenancies.

Client Case Study 1

SSAFA (Soldier, Sailor, Army, Air Force Association) contacted us to request assistance with Jo who, whilst serving in the Army and working abroad in a war zone, had personally experienced some horrific incidents which had resulted in her becoming extremely vulnerable. Life had become almost unbearable for her and she felt unable to cope on numerous levels.

We worked with Jo to apply for Disability Living Allowance, Housing and Council Tax Benefit and Employment Support Allowance (Support Group). This resulted in her receiving a combined income of £12,786.80 per annum. We were also able to help her claim significant outstanding arrears.

This assistance enabled Jo to start to move her life forward. It was a pleasure to see her begin to feel life was worth living once again.

Client Case Study 2

Gladys is a 70 year old widow, living alone, with serious health problems. She had applied for Attendance Allowance 2 years prior to contacting us, and been refused. Supported by a Welfare Benefit Adviser a fresh claim was made. Initially this too was refused but after further intervention by the Welfare Benefit Officer Attendance Allowance was finally awarded at £49.30 per week (£2563.60 per annum). Gladys also received an increase in her Pension Credit due to the award of the Attendance Allowance – in total her annual income increased by £5,185. And in addition Gladys was awarded a backdated lump sum of £2000.

Gladys was delighted – she now feels able to have the heating on without worry!

*All names used are fictitious

Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset

What does the Welfare Benefit Team consist of?

Due to the 20% increase in the number of cases in 2008/9, coupled with the economic downturn, it was agreed that the Team could be increased by 1 x f/t post for a period of 2 years. Hence the Welfare Benefits Team currently consists of the equivalent to 2.5 full time permanent and 1 x temporary full time Welfare Benefit Advisers who are responsible for undertaking casework for clients, identifying their welfare benefit entitlement. During 2010/11 the caseload continued to increase as a result of the ongoing pressures related to the economic crisis.

The staff work across the whole of South Somerset offering home visits as appropriate. They assist in preparing claims, representing clients at Appeals, up to and including Social Security Commissioners level, and representing clients at Tribunal hearings.

Addressing Need

Nationally up to £12.7 billion of means tested benefits were **unclaimed** in 2008/9 (representing 85% take up of available benefits). This compares with £9.99 billion of means tested benefits unclaimed in 2006/7. At that time, using estimates supplied by the Office of National Statistics, this indicated that up to £26.6 million was going unclaimed by the people of South Somerset. An assumption can therefore be made that

the then unclaimed figure of £26.6 million for the people of South Somerset will now be considerably higher.

Progress to date

The table shown at Appendix 1 gives an overview of what has been achieved over the last 11 years.

During 2010/11 the Welfare Benefit Team undertook casework for **835 clients across South Somerset achieving an Annual Income for clients of £1,784,112. In addition clients received a total of £375,496 in Lump Sums. Combined total: £2,159,608** (at 30/12/11). Please note that these figures are provisional due to the time lag involved in benefits being awarded/clients confirming their award, and we would expect these figures to show a slight increase over the coming months.

It is also worth noting that based on the total figure of £2,159,608 this work levered in welfare benefit payments 16.5 times more than the actual cost of the service!

It should also be noted that the figures show only those details confirmed by clients to us. Whilst we discuss outcomes/send Follow Up Forms not all clients respond to confirm receipt of their awards, and it is considered that some of income gained goes unreported.

Much of the total Annual Income achieved for clients represents an ongoing annual income figure and as such is likely to continue on a recurring basis. The effects of this on the local economy should not be overlooked.

Saved Tenancies are those cases which would have resulted in the loss of the tenancy but for the intervention of the Welfare Benefit Team. Maintained Tenancies are those where the Welfare Benefit Team have undertaken a significant amount of work with the clients towards assisting in the successful maintenance of the tenancy. **The figures for Saved and Maintained Tenancies for 2010/11 currently stand at 28 and 50.** We consider these figures may increase slightly over the coming months due to the effect of the time lag from commencing work with a client to finishing working with them.

Assuming the cost to SSDC of dealing with a homeless application is £2630* per family, the 28 x tenancies saved by the intervention of the Welfare Benefit Team equates to a potential saving of £73,640. It is also arguable that further potential savings were made by the 50 x Maintained Tenancies, as it is highly probable that a number of these would have progressed to the stage of loss of tenancy without early intervention.

Out of the 835 clients we worked with we assisted them in taking 147 cases to Appeal. Of these 123 were successful. We also took 123 cases to Tribunal and won 88% of them. These cases result in clients receiving considerable backdated lump sums and significant increases in income. A small number of cases have been taken forward to Commissioner level.

Over the year within Area North training of frontline staff has taken place to enable them to assist older people directly who may have an entitlement to Attendance Allowance.

Client Satisfaction Forms – just a few of the comments received over the year:

“(He) was the most helpful and caring person you could have met at such a stressful time, for which I am extremely grateful”.

“Please pass my thanks onto her. To say she excelled was an understatement, I received a positive decision at Tribunal”.

“(She) is Top Class, absolutely brilliant! I hope that despite Govt cuts it will not affect the W B Team”.

“You probably won’t remember me particularly ... you helped me out about 3 years ago ... my husband has now died and I just wanted to let you know how grateful I am for the help you gave me at that time. I was very struck by the care and compassion with which you treated us”

“You to us as a family are a Godsend”.

“Thank you so much for all of your help. We appreciate everything you do. You’re a star”.

“(She) was everything that you would want in an advisory capacity. I would certainly tell anyone in need of help and advice to see her”.

“I was very pleased with the way (he) handled my case. I was kept well informed and I couldn’t have asked for better”.

“Your advisor was knowledgeable and helpful. Thank you so much”.

“She gave me meticulous help – she is a credit to the council”.

“Her competence and communication ability helped me at a time of insecurity”.

“She made a very difficult process seem easy, she was understanding, very patient and reassuring, a credit to your department”.

Achieving Multiple Added Value

Apart from putting money in the pockets of those who need it, there is widespread added value from this work, including:

Working with the Homelessness Team we assist in preventing loss of tenancies. In addition to the potential direct savings to SSDC identified earlier in this report there are other associated savings. In 2004 the estimated cost for a 2 child family if an eviction took place without a homeless application being made was £3563. The wider social costs in relation to education and health services were estimated to be £4896. (Somerset Community Legal Service Partnership: County Court Project). In addition the emotional impact on clients not receiving such assistance will be considerable.

The link between health and wealth needs to be acknowledged. The Acheson Report specifically recommended benefit take up as a measure to tackle health inequalities.

Both the payment to the individual clients and the payments to SSC/SSDC contribute to increased spending in the local economy.

Provision of advice around Welfare Rights to ensure people claim all they are entitled to has been shown to have large economic benefits to local communities. A report in Scotland ("Extending Scottish Input – Output Systems, McNicoll) found that for every £1 million of benefits recovered the local multiplier effect generates 36 full time jobs in the local (Scottish) economy. On this basis, last year approximately 77 jobs could potentially have been created or sustained as a consequence of this work.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's), often used for items like showers and stairlifts, are rationed. In addition to DFG's, SSDC are now able to offer low interest loans in some cases. Ensuring clients are in receipt of the correct welfare benefits can be advantageous in enabling them to either fund purchases directly, or enable them to be in a position to repay loans.

The welfare benefit work also supports that of the Private Sector Tenancy Support post, working with clients to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to, thereby assisting them in successfully maintaining their tenancy.

Careline

The Senior Welfare Officer manages South Somerset Careline in addition to the Welfare Benefit Team. This has the added bonus of the Careline staff being able to identify welfare benefit issues in the course of their work. At the end of March 2011 Careline was supporting 1947 clients.

Careline, which is self sustaining, is an alarm system which enables people to enjoy living independently in their own home, secure in the knowledge that emergency help or advice is available at the touch of a button. Within seconds of pushing the alarm button they are through to a team of advisers, all of whom are fully trained to respond to those in need. Their experience comes from handling thousands of calls a year from the elderly and frail, the disabled, those convalescing, young or vulnerable, and those working or living in isolation. For example during April 2010, in addition to the numerous calls received for various other reasons, we supported clients by calling out 42 x Ambulances as a result of clients suffering falls, breathing difficulties, cuts, chest pains, 7 x Doctor callouts due to clients feeling faint or in pain/feeling unwell, 3 x Police callouts due to No Response calls and 1 x Nurse callout (client diabetic, no reading).

Careline also offers a comfort call service, for example for those who are unwell or just left hospital.

All that is needed to join the Careline service is a modern BT point and an electric socket close by. No hard wiring is required. We offer a no obligation demonstration, and if the client is happy with it, our experienced installers fit the unit there and then.

Over the last few years new technology has evolved that enables Careline not only to offer the standard alarm, but also a range of sensors that can be used to enable people to continue to enjoy independent living in their own homes for longer. For example, we are now able to offer flood detectors, smoke detectors, enuresis sensors, medication dispensers, etc. These sensors are linked to the alarm so, for example, if a smoke detector is activated the Careline advisers can respond by calling the Fire Brigade if appropriate.

Financial Implications

None

Corporate Priority Implications

Works towards Corporate Themes, numbers:

Theme 1: Increase economic vitality and prosperity

Theme 3: Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

Both the work within the Welfare Benefit Team and Careline brings us into daily contact with vulnerable clients and people with disabilities. We also work with the Community Link workers who are available to assist us with translating and interpreting.

Background Papers: *McNicoll I H and Blakemore D (1993) "A Pilot Study on the Construction of a Scottish Environmental Input-Output System, Report to Scottish Enterprise"*
Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health Report by Sir Donald Acheson (Nov 98)
Somerset Community Legal Service Partnership: County Court Advice Project Report dated 24/3/04

*The assumption that the cost to SSDC of dealing with a Homeless Application is approx £2630 per family is made up as follows:

Processing Homelessness application (3 days x Officer and Admin time): £280

Housing family pending decision – 3 weeks at £550 per week: £1650

Ongoing Housing Solution – deposit (e.g. loss of interest, proportion of bad debt), rent in advance, fees, etc: £700 Total: £2630

Appendix 1 Financial and Case Summary

Year 1 (2000/01) - Operational for six months

Area	Casework	General Help and Welfare Benefit Checks	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
Total for District	139	419	1,514.21	43,741.72

Year 2 (2001/02) - Figures include 3 months of Additional Hours work

Area	Casework	General Help and Welfare Benefit Checks	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	12	277	1,696.00	13,814.84
North Add	7		0.00	8,305.80
East	9	204	520.00	4,053.40
East Add	8		731.25	2,925.00
South	22	511	5,993.00	24,434.00
South Add	11		729.51	7,793.76
West	148	300	13,167.98	146,357.19
West Add	26		2,427.79	24,183.64
Benefits Officer	93	22	8,631.84	72,049.20
Total for District	336.00	1314	33,897.37	303,916.83

Year 3 (2002/03)

Area	Casework	General Help and Welfare Benefit Checks	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	39	121	4,035.84	20,082.92
North Add	52		10,695.29	39,259.40
East	46	347	10,429.49	91,417.48
East Add	64		12,025.30	129,484.00
South	28	1067	3,822.33	29,011.71
South Add	51		10,247.66	40,197.04
West	70	1018	17,339.19	96,583.42
West Add	87		25,748.00	161,902.77
Benefits Officer	138	38	19,429.53	122,454.10
Total for District	575	2591	113,772.63	730,392.84

* Figures to be confirmed

Year 4 (2003/04)

Area	Casework	General Help and Welfare Benefit Checks	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	1	182	0.00	851.76
North Add	53		17,987.00	92,513.10
East	28	230	6,872.36	53,361.20
East Add	48		13,876.00	82,858.20
South	0	0	0.00	0.00
South Add	40	462	9,727.80	79,481.50
West	10	553	1,926.50	13,703.50
West Add	101		42,625.80	235,705.00
Benefits Officer	127	34	31,373.14	133,376.94
Total for District	408	1461	124,388.60	691,851.20

Year 5 (2004/05) (as at 6/9/05)

Area	Casework	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	70	20,565.00	108,904.00
East	139	37,527.00	217,277.00
South	101	34,267.00	156,783.00
West	150	49,325.00	285,455.00
Benefits Officer	127	21,159.00	141,165.00
Total for District	587	162,843.00	909,584.00

Year 6 (2005/06) (as at 27/11/06)

Area	Casework	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	49	11,287.00	51,022.00
East	83	22,976.00	123,645.00
South	104	40,027.00	235,801.00
West	134	28,145.00	225,156.00
Benefits Officer	120	34,269.00	149,279.00
Total for District	490	136,707.00	784,905.00

Year 7 (2006/07) (as at 1/8/07)

Area	Casework	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	71	25,543.93	117,347.74
East	54	24,899.63	133,691.32
South	95	24,932.45	104,025.82
West	122	25,942.50	187,945.16
Total for District	342	101,318.51	543,010.04

Year 8 : 2007/8 (as at 17/6/09)

Area	Casework	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	57	21,388.00	141,192.00
East	62	22,854.00	134,276.00
South	203	158,761.00	323,686.00
West	179	85,856.00	356,222.00
Total for District	501	288,860.00	955,375.00

Year 9 2008/9 (as at 5/10/09)

Area	Casework	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	74	25,812.00	83,547.00
East	80	22,618.00	116,447.00
South	207	68,649.00	265,723.00
West	244	110,141.00	397,143.00
Total for District	605	227,220.00	862,890.00

Year 10 2009/10 (as at 22 June 10)

Area	No. of clients	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	80	29,659.00	143,203.00
East	84	27,357.00	104,238.00
South	205	63,669.00	289,697.00
West	219	118,590.00	357,495.00
Total for District	588	239,275.00	894,633.00

Year 11 2010/11 (as at 5 Jan 12)

Area	No. of clients	Lump sum £	Increase to Annual Income £
North	116	42,051.00	251,999.00
East	123	57,410.00	310,899.00
South	262	117,617.00	578,822.00
West	334	158,418.00	642,392.00
Total for District	835	375,496.00	1,784,112.00

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

10. Somerset County Council - Minerals Options Paper for Consultation

SCC Service Manager: *Vicky Munn, Minerals Policy Manager*
munm@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 358289

Lead Officer: *Ben Miller, Minerals Project Officer*

Contact Details: *bmiller@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 355981*

Consultation website: *http://www.somersetconsults.org.uk*

Recommendations

- (1) Members are invited to respond to the consultation
- (2) Note that a formal response from SSDC will be made by the District Executive

Public Interest

The Minerals Options Paper identifies a number of issues and potential options relating to future minerals development within Somerset. The consultation covers all minerals extracted in Somerset, namely peat, aggregates and building stones. It provides an opportunity for consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public. Feedback from this consultation will inform the preparation of the County Council's Minerals Core Strategy which will run to the year 2028.

The presentation to Area North provides an opportunity for any specific local issues to be raised and local knowledge gathered.

Main report

This report summarises the key issues and questions within the documents currently out for public consultation.

This consultation has started and runs until 12 Feb 2012.

An appendix is attached with a map showing the locations of current active and dormant quarries in Area North.

There are full details of the consultation, including an on-line questionnaire at:
<http://www.somersetconsults.org.uk/consult.ti/MineralsOptionsPaper/consultationHome>

A paper copy of the Summary Minerals Options Paper is available at Somerset Libraries, and Somerset District and Borough Council Offices, or upon request.

Minerals policy is important because it defines how the balance between the need for minerals by society and impacts on local communities and the environment affected by minerals extraction will be met. It also highlights where benefits from quarrying can be secured through positive reclamation and how to achieve sustainable minerals provision. It is the basis on which planning decisions are taken when applications are made for additional minerals extraction.

Purpose: The Minerals Options Paper and Summary have been drafted for consultation to support development of future minerals policy in Somerset. Several issues and options specific to each of the main mineral types worked in Somerset (aggregates, peat and building stones) and broader issues such as minerals safeguarding and development management policy topics are covered.

Who are we contacting? We have sent out letters and emails to parishes, district councils, minerals industry and local interest group representatives to highlight the consultation. We have sent postcards to residents living near quarries and peat digging areas. A press release has gone out. The consultation document is available at www.somersetconsults.org.uk or paper copies can be requested.

What next? Following consultation, responses will be considered and will help to inform new policy. A pre-submission Minerals Core Strategy will be written setting out Somerset's minerals policy which will require approval by Somerset Full Council before further consultation takes place.

Overview of the issues included in the Minerals Options Paper:

AGGREGATES

1. How big should the crushed rock landbank* be?

(*Landbank is the amount of tonnage with consent to be worked.)

Responses from the Aggregate Issues consultation (March-May 2010) varied from 10 years only to 20 years supply to be maintained throughout the plan (i.e. plan period of 15 years plus 20 years beyond). Two scenarios are suggested 15 years only and 15 years for the lifetime of the plan. A further question asks what supply rate should be used: 13.41Mt/yr (Somerset's apportionment proposed by the South West Regional Aggregates Working Party) or 11.7Mt/yr (average annual sales from 1999 to 2009).

2. Exceptions when additional reserves can be permitted despite an excessive landbank

Current national policy indicates that additional reserves should be considered if there is a demand for aggregates that can't be met by existing reserves.

The consultation asks if there should there be a limit on the quantity of additional reserves that can be permitted where a need that cannot be met from other sources is identified?

3. Maintaining local supply

Somerset has two large rail-linked quarries with a combined permitted annual output of 14 million tonnes which exceeds the permitted output of all the other aggregates quarries combined. National policy highlights the risk of stifling competition where large landbanks are held within a few sites. Concentration of minerals activity at a few sites would increase impacts around those sites and could result in greater transport distances to market. How should smaller quarries access additional reserves to meet local demand?

One option allows small additions only, representing 15 years or so of supply for smaller sites. An alternative option is proposed whereby all quarries can apply for additional reserves but with a cap on the total reserves held at any one site eg. 25 years worth. Longer term this could result in a lower landbank and provide flexibility for operators to manage their site planning and investment without having to consider timing with respect to the landbank size. With this option there would be no need for a policy relating to Issue 2 above.

4. Dormant and abandoned sites

Dormant sites (ones which have a planning permission but cannot work without agreed modern working conditions) and abandoned quarry sites can blight local areas. The paper asks consultees to identify which sites are particularly problematic and why. There are three mechanisms identified which could be implemented to improve these sites.

5. Shortfall in sand and gravel reserves

Somerset has a shared responsibility for sand and gravel provision with Devon and Cornwall. Devon has met the bulk of the shared sand and gravel apportionment in recent years. However, a shortfall of reserves has been identified post-2019. Devon has identified potential future sites and is keen to maintain a spread of supplies thereby reducing transport impacts. A sand and gravel site at Whiteball straddles the Somerset/Devon border. Two areas with potential for future mineral extraction are identified at Whiteball on the Somerset-side in the existing Somerset Minerals Local Plan. Somerset can continue to contribute to sand and gravel supplies by retaining the areas around Whiteball, reviewing whether there are other potential sites in Somerset, and/or include criteria based policy for new sand and gravel reserves as and when proposals are put forward.

6. Restoration and after-use in the East Mendips

The consultation asks if the restoration and after-use of quarry sites in the East Mendips, (an area of concentrated minerals activity) should be determined by meeting criteria defined in an agreed long term strategic landscape-scale restoration strategy, or be determined on a site by site basis? An argument is made that reclamation in this area should have a biodiversity focus given the presence of a European designated nature site and the rural nature of the area.

7. Carbon and production of aggregates

It is in operators interests to reduce energy consumption. However, to encourage focus on a range of carbon-reducing measures operators could be asked to submit a carbon action plan with proposals. Renewable energy schemes could form a part of carbon-reduction measures. Should renewable energy schemes be supported where connected with minerals operations, and if so which? Or should renewable energy schemes be considered separately?

PEAT

8. Establishing a landbank for peat

Projections for future need for peat are based on the Government's target of zero peat use in England by 2030 to be met through voluntary changes with support from a Task Group. There are some valid concerns about the likelihood of this target being met. Should demand for peat not decline as expected there could be a rise in peat imports if English peat reserves are not maintained. Policy could be developed to retain flexibility to release new reserves if monitoring of peat use and reserves indicate there is a need. At this stage there are sufficient supplies of Somerset peat for the lifetime of the plan (further work is being carried out to confirm this). Current national planning policy proposals set out in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework will ban all future peat permissions. Somerset's Minerals Core Strategy will have to ban peat permissions and retaining flexibility will no longer be an option if this national policy is adopted

9. Sites with potential to impact on "Regulation 63" designated land

Sites with permission for peat extraction with the potential to negatively impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area are known as "Regulation 63" sites. Future policy could enable peat reserves in such sites to be "given up" for in return for planning permission elsewhere in a less sensitive location. A new permission would have

to be acceptable under normal planning terms. As discussed in Issue 8 above, if national policy bans all future peat permissions this will not be an option.

10. Reclamation framework for peat

Comments were made via the Peat Issues Paper consultation (November – December 2009) that the current reclamation framework included in the Minerals Local Plan could be improved. The consultation options are to retain the existing framework; to revise it to reflect changes in the industry and biodiversity ambitions of the Natural Environment White Paper; or to allow a variety of beneficial land uses on a site-by-site basis.

BUILDING STONE

11. Local stone for local demand

Respondents to the Building Stone Issues Paper consultation (August 2010 – September 2010) raised concerns regarding diversity of building stone supplies and potential impact on maintaining the local character and distinctiveness of the county. Options proposed could assist in increasing the range of building stone types currently supplied, including consideration of additional activities to help improve the economic viability of building stone quarries and affirming the importance of building stones for maintaining the historic environment and character of Somerset.

ENERGY MINERALS

12. Coal, oil and gas

Provision of energy minerals from on-shore reserves will increase in the future. The Department for Climate Change has issued 3 licences granting exclusive rights for exploration and extraction. Most exploration and all extraction activity will require planning permission. Policies will be developed to cover the key stages of energy-mineral development, and aspects requiring consideration within the planning system.

MINERAL SAFEGUARDING AREAS

13. Safeguarding minerals for future use

Previous consultation on safeguarding highlighted a lack of understanding regarding the issue. The Minerals Options Paper should help to clarify this. Given the technical nature of this topic it is proposed that we will define the mineral safeguarding areas and mineral consultation areas based on the requirements of Minerals Policy Statement 1, best practice guides and discussions with the minerals industry. Areas identified for safeguarding will be consulted on in detail at the next consultation phase.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

14. List of topics to cover

A list of topics is provided that could be covered. Consultees are asked whether all are relevant, or whether there are additional topics that should be included. National policy is to be slimmed down. A broad list of topics is therefore likely to be needed at a local level.

For more information please contact:

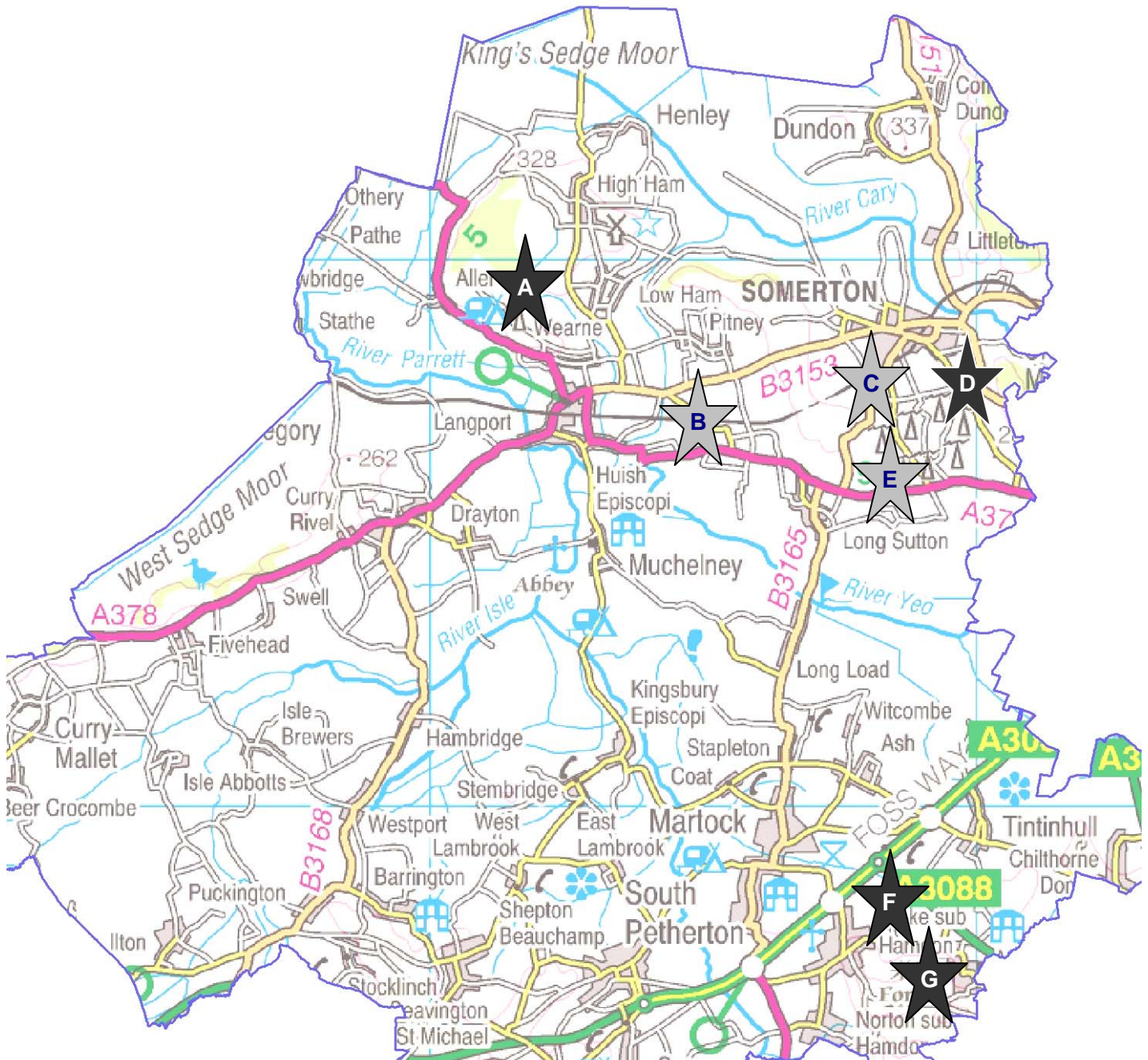
Vicky Munn, Minerals Policy Manager
Email: vmunn@somerset.gov.uk
Tel No.: 01823 358289

Ben Miller, Minerals Project Officer
Email: bmiller@somerset.gov.uk
Tel no.: 01823 355981

Environment Directorate
Somerset County Council
PP C601c
County Hall
TAUNTON TA1 4DY

Quarries in Area North

(Active and dormant)



Parish	Ward	Map Ref	Quarry Name	Status
Huish Episcopi	Turn Hill	A	Bowdens Lane Quarry, Bowdens Lane, Langport, TA10 0QL	Active
Long Sutton	Turn Hill	B	Downslade, Hermitage Road, Upton, Long Sutton, TA10 9NW	Dormant
Somerton	Wessex	C	Badgers Cross, Badgers Cross Lane, Somerton, TA11 7JF	Dormant
Somerton	Wessex	D	Ashen Cross, Ashen Cross Road, Somerton, TA11 7HR	Active
Somerton	Wessex	E	Appledoor Field, Langport Road, Long Sutton, TA11 7JD	Dormant
Stoke Sub Hamdon	Hamdon	F	Ham Hill North, Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon, TA14 6RW	Active
Montacute	St Michael's	G	Ham Hill South, Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon	Active

Please note – placement is indicative only!

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

11. Update Report from the Countryside Service

<i>Executive Portfolio Holder:</i>	<i>Sylvia Seal, Health and Well Being</i>
<i>Strategic Director:</i>	<i>Vega Sturgess, Operations and Community Focus</i>
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	<i>Steve Joel, Health and Well Being</i>
<i>Service Manager:</i>	<i>Katy Menday, Countryside Manager</i>
<i>Lead Officer:</i>	<i>Katy Menday, Countryside Manager</i>
<i>Contact Details:</i>	<i>Katy.menday@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462522</i>

Purpose of the Report

To update members on the work of the Countryside Service across the District over the past year and on key projects for the next 6 months.

Public Interest

This report aims to detail the achievements of the Countryside Team at South Somerset over the past year, with particular reference to the rangers based at the countryside sites. It will explain what has been completed in terms of land management and also event delivery for the public. The countryside team manage sites at Ham Hill Country Park, Yeovil Country Park, Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, Sampson's Wood, Langport Visitor Centre and cycleway, Moldrams Ground Local Nature Reserve and Eastfield Local Nature Reserve.

Recommendation

That members note the report.

Across the South Somerset Countryside Sites

In 2011/12 the Countryside Service manages 650 acres of public access land comprising land designated mainly as Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves. A team of 5.8 Full Time Equivalent officers manage the sites to a net expenditure budget of £257, 820. The budget is managed cross 4 budget codes allocated to the 3 largest countryside sites (Yeovil Country Park, Chard Reservoir and Ham Hill) and Langport Visitor Centre.

- The largest sites have again secured 3 Green Flag Awards.
- For 2011 a diverse events program was developed which included over 41 public events. From children's bug and mini beast sessions to fayre events, heritage sessions and bush craft camps it has been well received.
- Throughout 2011 the rangers led educational session for schools seeing 410 pupils on the countryside sites, and 6500 people attended the 41 organised events.
- 1431 volunteer days were donated across the district (an increase on last year) and we secured a total of £50k of funding for projects and land management.
- The rangers have actively sought out new income streams e.g. through the sale of logs after woodland management.
- Volunteers have played an increasingly important role for the team: helping them secure income by processing wood, fund raising and organising events through

functions like the Friends of Ham Hill, protecting sites through a Park watch function and directing management of the sites via the Countryside Steering Group.

- The Woodland Trust sponsored 2 tree planting schemes; a total of 1500 trees will be planted during winter 2011.
- Practical land management continued including dry stone walling, hedge laying, scrub and tree stock management and grassland works.
- Sites were kept clean and safe, and bins were regularly emptied.
- Wildlife enhancement schemes; bat, bird, mammal and butterfly surveys plus construction of various animal “homes”.
- Two new apprentices started at the Country Parks in September, there were over 40 applicants for the year long posts.
- Rangers worked closely with two Groundwork South West Teams, providing placements for the teams at both Country Parks, assisting them in establishing an apprenticeship scheme and were pleased to see many participants going on to find employment.
- The most frequent compliments received by the team relate to the free or cost recovery events suitable for all the family. Ham Hill and Ninesprings receive compliments about woodland and landscape management.
- New countryside web pages have been launched at www.southsomersetcountryside.com

Challenges over the year

- Some events, including Yeovil May Fayre, suffered at the hands of the British weather, decreasing participation numbers.
- The hard winter created increased issues with tree stock and rangers have needed to carry out a greater amount of management and use climbing arborists where necessary.
- The ongoing management programme in Sampsons wood continues to be a success, but many adjoining residents are still unhappy having such large trees next to their properties.
- In the high summer months the main countryside sites continue to suffer from excessive littering. Increased casual ranger cover, increased enforcement, and a revision of bin layouts has gone some way to improving things, but on some occasions the inconsiderate few have left the sites in a dreadful state.
- Ham Hill lost 10 sheep in various dog attacks over the year. Posters on site, parish news articles and media presence have raised the profile of this issue, but some dog owners do not take responsibility for their pets and these times have been challenging for the rangers and the farmer.
- There are continuing issues with angling at Chard Reservoir, we are working with the angling club to overcome littering of the site and the EA have assisted with advice. A significant pollution incident of red diesel into the reservoir last winter was traced to Oscar Mayers who later provided support and financial aid to help in the clear up operations.

Yeovil Country Park (Area South)

- Penn Hill wildlife garden has flourished, bringing new colour and interest to a previously disused area on Penn Hill. The conservation volunteers completed this project with help from Headway support group, who also successfully re-designed the old rose garden on the site.
- The rangers have provided support and led walks for a local MIND programme of environmental walks; grant funded sensory walks are delivered by the ranger to help people explore the fantastic environs of Yeovil Country Park through the seasons.

- Yeovil College secured a Woodland Trust tree pack of 500 trees for planting in January. The students have been assisting the rangers in preparing the site for the planting works and helped forge a great working relationship between the team and the College.
- A visitor survey in Yeovil Country Park returned an encouraging satisfaction rating of 86%, with many positive comments about the woodlands and events managed by the rangers.
- The Yeovil May fayre had a good range of stalls and free activities, the day was blighted by poor weather but the turn out was excellent considering the weather.
- Funding work continues towards the community ranger base. Applications have been submitted to various local funders and we intend to re-approach the Heritage Lottery Fund with a revised bid. Both Yeovil Town Council and Westlands have pledged £5K of support
- A new Friends of Yeovil Country Park had its inaugural meeting in January and Yeovil Rotary Club provided Christmas draw tickets to be sold by this group in aid of the ranger base project, raising £250
- Work in Ninesprings Valley Gardens continues, with laurel cleared and a replacement native flora planted.
- A fantastic new storytelling zone has been finished in Southwoods. Fairy doors, balancing beams, woodland mushrooms, a creepy tree and willow shelters all add to the natural seating already provided.

Sampson's Wood, Yeovil (*Area South*)

- From autumn 2011 we enter year 3 of a significant tree management project; to stabilise the peripheral tree stock in the woodland, and veteran trees in the woodlands core.

Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve (*Area West*)

- The July 2011 countryside event was a great success. As well as increased visitor numbers (c.400) donations of £350 were taken. Visitors could make a bird box, a willow sword or wigwam, meet the Eduzoo animals or try clay modeling. Local targeted publicity helped secure the events success.
- The reed bed restoration project continues: the hard work of the volunteers was evident this summer with dense lush growth. For the first time in many years a pair of swans bred on site and 1 cygnet successfully fledged.
- The volunteer team continued to expand over the year; upwards of 40 bird boxes have been built and erected by the volunteers.

Moldram's Ground Local Nature Reserve, Pen Selwood, Wincanton (*Area East*)

- A new management plan for site has been completed and is currently being formatted and is out for approval by Natural England. This includes specific prescriptions on management for dormice and great crested newts.
- A considerable amount of work has been completed on site increasing the number and suitability of the ponds, plus erection of dormice boxes. Volunteer and public events have been arranged on site to help deliver works.

Area North

Ham Hill Country Park

- Higher Level Stewardship works continue and the benefits in the site landscape are already evident with encouraging biodiversity in the meadow fields with a bumper

orchid crop in the summer. A survey in October produced evidence of dormice in some woodlands.

- Natural England paid for an Archaeological Management Plan for the site, providing a gazetteer and works prescriptions to ensure the Scheduled Ancient Monument is protected.
- The Friends of Ham Hill secured £9,000 of funding to deliver community arts workshops culminating in a performance in July interpreting the history of Ham Hill.
- The rangers September heritage fair was a great success, with families enjoying a day of free events on site, with an estimated 3000 attendance.
- A Woodland Trust sponsored community tree planting took place in Pit Wood, with 500 new trees planted.
- Cambridge Archaeological Unit and Cardiff University were on site July – September excavating in advance of a quarry extension. A 2 acre area was dug and they uncovered a complex network of Bronze, Iron and Roman remains. This included human remains and extensive artefacts. The excavation team will be returning in the summers of 2012 and 2013. www.hamhillfort.info
- The Centre continues to be used by a range of groups including Groundwork, local archaeologist and teacher Eddie Wills for his Iron Age sessions, Forest School and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. A wider range of external groups now hire the facility for activities like sponsored walks including Macmillan Cancer Research and Crewkerne Running Club.

Eastfield Local Nature Reserve, High Ham opposite Windmill

- Butterfly Conservation are leading on the management of this site with significant scrub management already completed, this has been funded by SITA through a landscape wide Butterfly Conservation project.
- Ant surveys have taken place and propagated wild thyme plants planted by volunteers. The site is progressing well and a decision as to when large blues will be released will be taken in summer 2012. www.butterfly-conservation.org

Langport Visitor Centre

- The re-designed leaflets of 2011 have been very successful and a repeat print will be required for spring 2012.
- A new suite of signs has been erected funded by Area North and the cycle way leases re-negotiated.
- The ranger team are working to improve the safety of the cycle way by completing tree safety surveys and delivering all required works.

Headlines for the next 6 months

- A pre application form will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund to advance a project to deliver a smart phone application for Ham Hill. The “app” will use all the evidence from the archaeological dig and create a new innovative suite of interpretation for the site. Partners include the 2 universities and Somerset County Council.
- We will continue to seek funding for the Yeovil Country Park ranger base build, with various additional avenues being explored by the Friends of the Country Park.
- The rangers will plant standard oak trees at Yeovil Country Park, Ham Hill Country Park and Chard Reservoir for the June Jubilee celebrations. A beacon has been registered for Ham Hill to take place on June 4 as part of the chain across the country.
- The Green Flag Awards for 2012 will include an application for Ham Hill for Green Heritage status.

- Both Country Parks are due for a review of their management prescriptions in 2012, which will take into account the protected species work and new projects for each site.

Financial Implications

The net revenue budget in 2011/12 for the countryside service was £257,820 (which takes into account £85,000 of income secured).

Corporate Priority Implications

The work of the countryside service delivers for the following targets.

CORPORATE PLAN – THEME 2: ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT, ADDRESS & ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

2.1 – Explore options for biodiversity enhancement on SST partner land by 2012 and deliver projects each year to 2026

2.3 – With SST partners, develop a joint Open Spaces strategy for South Somerset by 2012

2.4 – Agree land management plans for own estate by 2012

2.9 – Increase resident satisfaction with street cleaning, car parks, public toilets and open spaces/ Country Parks.

2.19 – Decrease CO2 emissions in Somerset from 7.9 Tonnes/head/year (2006)

2.21 – Support an SST campaign by 2010 to raise community awareness and involvement in environmental approaches

CORPORATE PLAN – THEME 3: IMPROVE THE HOUSING, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR CITIZENS

3.19 – Support SST to develop a long term (over 20 years) multi-agency commitment and action plan to reduce the number of children and adults that are overweight and obese and deliver one initiative by 2012 (SCS Action 9)

3.20 – Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and adult participation in sport and active leisure.

3.29 – Increase access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

CORPORATE PLAN – THEME 4: ENSURE SAFE, SUSTAINABLE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

4.1 – Deliver positive activities for children, young people (especially those at risk of exclusion or offending) and families, designed to reduce anti-social behaviour by October 2010 (SCS Action 1)

4.6 – Decrease perceptions that drug use/dealing is a problem from 30.5% (2008) to 23.4% by 2011/12 (Action 3)

4.9 – Develop a range of approaches and initiatives that build confidence and reduce fear of crime by maintaining a level of 92% of population that feels safe in their community by 2012.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

The Countryside Team are aware of the challenges faced in mitigating climate change and as a team work hard to ensure that their operations have a minimal carbon footprint.

We ensure that by approaching the management of the countryside sites in a traditional manner they offer the largest carbon sink for other operations.

Annually the team plants an average of 500 trees and these are always native, ensuring they are best suited to our current climate and provide the habitats with the best chance of adapting to future climate change.

By having site-based rangers, travel is kept to a minimum and carbon emissions kept low. Instead of heavy use of power tools the nature of the work means that a significant volunteer work force is mobilised keeping fuel consumption low.

Annually thousands of members of the public of all ages have contact with the ranger team through organised educational events; promoting wildlife, green spaces, green living, traditional countryside management and minimising your carbon footprint.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The countryside team work hard to ensure that the countryside sites are as accessible as possible. Stiles are removed in favour of gates. An audio trail and free mobility vehicle are for hire at Ham Hill Country Park. Easy access trails are promoted at the largest sites. The website contains relevant information and assistance for planning visits and the South Somerset Disability Forum continues to advise the rangers on proposed works and projects, they also have a place on the South Somerset Countryside Steering Group

Background Papers: None

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

12. Consultation on Proposed Customer Contact Guidelines

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus
Service Managers: Ian Potter (Revenues and Benefits Manager)
Jason Toogood (Customer Focus Support Manager)
Lead Officers: Vega Sturgess, Ian Potter and Jason Toogood
Contact Details: vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462200
ian.potter@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462270
jason.toogood@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462107

Purpose of the Report

To consult with Area Committees on the proposed Customer Contact guidelines.

Public Interest

It is important to South Somerset District Council (SSDC) that our customers should know the standards of customer service that they should expect when they contact us either by phone or face to face in our offices, and what the Council expects of them. Currently these guidelines are on our website and in our area and community offices asking for public comments and feedback. The reason for taking the proposed guidelines to area committees is to ask for comments from elected councillors who can use their own experience with customers to inform their comments. In addition, parish and town councils are being asked for their comments. It should be noted that these guidelines only covers the quality of operational face to face access, and does not cover strategic or service issues including for example the number of access points or eventual service decisions.

Recommendation

That members comment on the proposals.

Background

SSDC has always been committed to putting customers and residents at the heart of everything we do. We aim for high quality yet value for money services, giving customers a real choice about how they contact us. When they do contact us, we aim to provide a high quality of customer care. There are some extremely good examples of customer care across the authority, these guidelines aim to build a consistent level of service across the council.

The other side of the coin is that our staff also expect certain standards of behaviour from customers. In recent months, there has been a worrying increase in the numbers of difficult and aggressive customers and this has proved extremely stressful for our staff. Several measures have been put in place to address this issue and the three authors of the report were tasked by the council's Corporate Performance Team to update the previous Customer Charter and give a clear message to customers about what behaviours will not be tolerated. It should be noted that these guidelines cover only the

face-to-face or phone interaction between SSDC staff and public. They do not cover specific service issues, which are already covered by service standards for each particular service.

What do we want to achieve?

- (1) The proposed guidelines are intended to concentrate on the positive and show a link between what the customer can expect from us and what we expect from the customer on each row of the guidelines.
- (2) A document that fits on one page of A4 paper and is not overly wordy.
- (3) A document that is written in a simple, easy to read format, using Plain English
- (4) A document that is developed together with our staff, councillors, parish and town councils and those who use our offices and website.

What is the process?

- (a) All of the council's managers have had the opportunity to feed into the draft document.
- (b) Staff, at recent team meetings, have been asked to comment and their views have already resulted in some amendments.
- (c) A survey incorporating the proposed guidelines is on the website, asking for users of the website to comment.
- (d) Hard copies are in our area and community offices and visitors are asked to comment if they wish to do so.
- (e) A copy has been sent to every parish and town council inviting comments.
- (f) All four area committees are being involved and asked to comment.
- (g) In March 2012, all the comments will be pulled together and where there is clear consensus the guidelines will be finalised.
- (h) All employees will then be made aware of the final Customer Contact guidelines and they will also be displayed in all our offices

Financial Implications

None arising from the report.

Corporate Priority Implications

None directly.

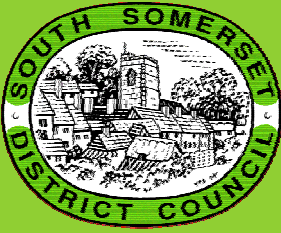
Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Full consideration to equalities has been given in producing these guidelines and a comprehensive consultation is in place to ensure all groups have the opportunity to respond.

Background Papers: None



Customer Contact

Important to you

Important to us

We care about the quality of our contact with you.

You play an important role in this.

The Council	The Customer
What you expect of us:	What we expect from you:
Be polite, welcoming and professional	Be polite and respectful
Provide face to face and phone contact during working hours and any time on our website	Use the contact method that you prefer
Provide a high quality customer contact	Recognise that we have busy times and cannot always solve a problem straight away
Listen carefully to what you have to say and do our best to help you	Understand that we can't always give you the answer or result you want
Find the right person to answer your query	Accept you may have to be transferred to someone else to resolve your query
Keep appointments with you	Keep your appointments with us or let us know if you can't
Put things right if they go wrong and learn from our mistakes	Help us improve our service by telling us when we get things wrong
Be clear about the information we need from you	Respond straight away to our requests wherever possible
Provide you with good help and advice	Please tell us if you are unsure about our advice
Treat you as an individual	Remember we are people too
Recognise that you sometimes need to contact us when you are unhappy about something	Behave in a way that does not harass or upset anyone
To allow you to make complaints about our service. Just ask for a form or use our website.	To recognise that we may need to ask you to alter your behaviour or ask you to contact us when you are less upset

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

13. Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) – Appointment of a Member

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Directors: Helen Rutter & Kim Close, Communities
Service Manager: Charlotte Jones, Area Development (North)
Lead Officer: As above
Contact Details: charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462251

Purpose of the Report

To seek an appointment from SSDC to the Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) programme executive board.

Public Interest

The Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) (formerly Leader +) was allocated £1.8 million from the European Union and DEFRA up until December 2013. The Levels and Moors area spans from Burnham-on-Sea and Cheddar in the west and north, to Glastonbury in the east and Martock and South Petherton in the south and all areas in between.

One Councillor and one officer from each of the partner district councils hold a place on the programme executive board (EB). The EB makes decisions on the investments made by the programme and monitors the results of previous grants. The EB members are expected to promote the programme and support community engagement.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to appoint one member to serve on the Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) programme executive board for the remainder of the municipal year 2011-12.

Report

Councillor Pauline Clarke was appointed in June 2011 for a term of one year, however due to significant other commitments she has requested that a replacement appointment is made.

The aim of the programme is to promote sustainable development in the Levels & Moors to strengthen the economy, vibrancy and environmental quality for all residents, businesses and visitors.

The programme seeks to support projects which are distinctive, innovative, involve wide partnership working, represent good value for money and will leave a lasting positive legacy for the Somerset Levels & Moors.

The programme is about to enter the final phase, with final decisions on grants to be made by April 2012, followed by monitoring to ensure that all projects are completed and paid by December 2013.

Further details are available on the programme website:

<http://levelsandmoors.somersetleader.org.uk/> or from the Programme Manager, Dominic Dunbrook, DDunbrook@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 357081.

Nominations and appointment process

The following Councillors have expressed interest in this appointment.

- Cllr Graham Middleton
- Cllr Paul Thompson

Any further nominations may be made at the start of this item. Councillors will be asked to vote for one candidate. The councillor placed second will be asked to act as a deputy.

Financial Implications

None from this report

SSDC does not contribute financially to the programme other than officer time to support the work of the executive group. This is estimated at around 6 days per year.

Corporate Priority Implications

Supporting this programme to engage with the local community and invest the programme funding contributes to the following corporate priorities:

Theme 1: Increase Economic Vitality and Prosperity: 1.14 Support South Somerset Together to develop distinctive, balanced, local economies.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None from this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

Applications to the Levels and Moors programme are assessed for equality and diversity implications. The programme has supported a range of projects including those which targeted younger and older people and those facing rural exclusion / isolation.

Background Papers: *Minute 15, Area North Committee 22 June 2011.*

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

14. Area North Committee – Forward Plan

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Directors: Helen Rutter & Kim Close, Communities
Service Manager: Charlotte Jones, Area Development (North)
Lead Officer: Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
Contact Details: becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462596

Purpose of the Report

This report informs Members of the Area North Committee Forward Plan.

Public Interest

The forward plan sets out items and issues to be discussed over the coming few months. It is reviewed and updated each month, and included within the Area North Committee agenda, where members of the committee may endorse or request amendments.

Recommendation

Members are asked to: -

- (1) Note and comment upon the proposed Area North Committee Forward Plan as attached at Appendix A and Identify priorities for further reports to be added to the Area North Committee Forward Plan.

Area North Committee Forward Plan

Members of the public, councillors, service managers, and partners may also request an item be placed within the forward plan for a future meeting, by contacting the Agenda Co-ordinator.

Items marked *in italics* are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives.

To make the best use of the committee, the focus for topics should be on issues where local involvement and influence may be beneficial, and where local priorities and issues raised by the community are linked to SSDC and SCC corporate aims and objectives.

Further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area North Committee, please contact the Agenda Co-ordinator; Becky Sanders.

Background Papers: None

Appendix A – Area North Committee Forward Plan

Further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area North Committee, please contact the Agenda Co-ordinator; Becky Sanders, becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk

Items marked in italics are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives. Key: SCC = Somerset County Council

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background / Purpose	Lead Officer(s) SSDC unless stated otherwise
22 Feb '12	South Somerset Core Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	To provide an opportunity for the Area Committee to consider the draft Core Strategy, with specific implications for Area North, prior to decisions for its adoption by District Executive and Full Council.	Andy Foyne, Spatial Planning Manager
22 Feb '12	Area North Quarterly Budget Monitoring and Update to Capital Programme	To provide a financial statement for the budgets under the control of the Area Committee.	Nazir Mehrali, Management Accountant
28 Mar '12	<i>Economic Development Service</i>	<i>Annual update on the work of the Economic Development, Tourism and Heritage service.</i>	<i>David Julian, Economic Development Manager</i>
28 Mar '12	<i>Community Safety</i>	<i>To provide an opportunity for discussion of issues affecting community safety in Area North. A representative of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary will also attend.</i>	<i>Steve Brewer, Community Safety Officer and Les Collett, Community Development Officer</i>
TBC	<i>Historic Buildings at Risk</i>	<i>Update report.</i>	<i>Ian Clarke – Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services.</i>

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

15. Planning Appeals

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place & Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy
Service Manager: David Norris, Development Manager
Lead Officer: As above
Contact Details: david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462382

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

Public Interest

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the Committee.

Recommendation

That members comment upon and note the report.

Appeals Lodged

11/02091/FUL – Land OS 1821 Batemore Farm, Park Lane, Montacute.
Erection of a barn for recreational equestrian purposes.

10/04403/FUL – VRS, Badgers Cross Lane, Somerton.
The installation of an 11kW wind turbine on an 18m tower.

11/03221/FUL – Land adjacent New House, Baulkes Yard, Bow Street, Langport.
Conversion of existing building to B1 light industrial use on the ground floor and residential use on the first floor.

Appeals Dismissed

None

Appeals Allowed

None

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

16. Planning Applications

The schedule of planning applications is attached.

The inclusion of two stars (**) as part of the Development Manager's recommendation indicates that the application will need to be referred to the District Council's Regulation Committee if the Area Committee is unwilling to accept that recommendation.

The Lead Planning Officer, at the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Solicitor, will also be able to recommend that an application should be referred to District Council's Regulation Committee even if it has not been two starred on the Agenda.

Human Rights Act 1998 Issues

The determination of the applications which are the subject of reports in this plans list are considered to involve the following human rights issues: -

1. Articles 8: Right to respect for private and family life.
 - i) Everyone has the right to respect for his/her private and family life, his/her home and his/her correspondence.
 - ii) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.
2. The First Protocol

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his/her possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interests and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

Each report considers in detail the competing rights and interests involved in the application. Having had regard to those matters in the light of the convention rights referred to above, it is considered that the recommendation is in accordance with the law, proportionate and both necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and in the public interest.

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

Background Papers: *Individual planning application files referred to in this document are held in the Planning Department, Brympton Way, Yeovil, BA20 2HT*

Planning Applications – 25 January 2012

Planning Applications will be considered no earlier than 4.00pm

Members of the public who wish to speak about a particular planning item are recommended to arrive for 3.45 pm.

The inclusion of two stars (**) as part of the Development Manager's recommendation indicates that the application will need to be referred to the Regulation Committee if the Area Committee is unwilling to accept that recommendation.

The Lead Planning Officer, at the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Solicitor, will also be able to recommend that an application should be referred to Regulation Committee even if it has not been two starred on the Agenda.

Item	Page	Ward	Application	Proposal	Address	Applicant
1	36	MARTOCK	11/04330/ FUL	Erection of a fountain (retrospective)	La Fontana Care Home, Foldhill Lane, Martock	Mr Nunzio Notaro
2	40	LANGPORT & HUISH	11/02448/ FUL	Erection of 52 residential units with associated works, car parking and access ways.	Bartletts Elm, Field Road, Huish Episcopi	Mr R Mead

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

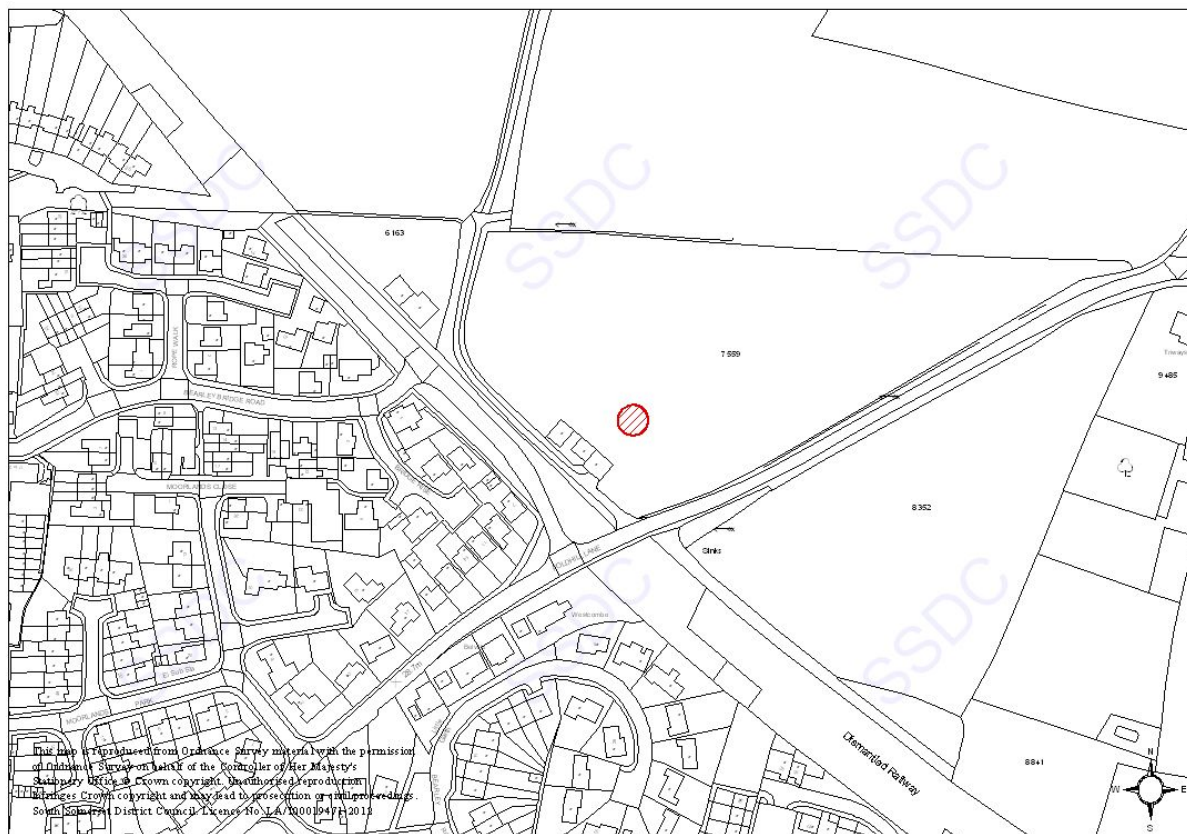
Officer Report On Planning Application: 11/04330/FUL

Proposal:	The erection of a fountain (retrospective) (GR: 346746/119597)
Site Address:	La Fontana Care Home, Foldhill Lane, Martock
Parish:	Martock
MARTOCK Ward (SSDC Members)	Mr G H Middleton (Cllr) Mr Patrick Palmer (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Dominic Heath-Coleman Tel: 01935 462643 Email: dominic.heath-coleman@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	28th December 2011
Applicant:	Mr Nunzio Notaro
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Boon Brown Architects (FAO: Mike Payne) Motivo, Alvington, Yeovil Somerset BA20 2FG
Application Type:	Minor Other less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is before the committee, at the request of the ward member and the area vice-chair, as the opinion of the Parish Council and objections from the occupiers of a neighbouring property are contrary to the officer recommendation.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The proposal seeks retrospective permission for the erection of a fountain. The property is a single and two storey care home for dementia patients, finished in brick and timber cladding with a sedum roof and metal window frames. The building is located close to various residential properties and open countryside. The fountain is constructed of white painted concrete. The property is not located within a development area as defined by the local plan.

HISTORY

10/04663/FUL - The erection of brick walls and piers to entrance of care home - Application permitted with conditions 21/01/2011

10/04664/ADV - The display of two top-illuminated wall-mounted signs - Application permitted with conditions 28/01/2011

10/03440/FUL - Change of use of land for the keeping of animals ancillary to adjacent care home and erection of associated barn and landscaping - Application permitted with conditions 15/09/2010

10/02960/FUL - The erection of timber barn and paddocks together with associated landscaping works - Application withdrawn 13/08/2010

09/00128/FUL - The erection of a specialist dementia care home, together with associated vehicular and pedestrian access and landscaping - Application permitted with conditions 18/09/2009

07/01176/FUL - Erection of a church building - Application permitted with conditions 06/06/2007

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the relevant development plan comprises the saved policies of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, and the saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan.

The policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

Saved policies of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development

Saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006):

Policy ST5 - General Principles of Development

Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development

National Guidance

PPS1 - Sustainable Development

PPS3 - Housing

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy
Goal 3 - Healthy Environments
Goal 4 - Services and Facilities
Goal 8 - High Quality Homes

CONSULTATIONS

MARTOCK PARISH COUNCIL - At a recent meeting of the Parish Council members agreed not to recommend the above planning application for approval. Members considered that the fountain was inappropriate for the position and too large for the site. Furthermore, members objected to the colour of the fountain and that it was not in the original plans.

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - No observations

AREA ENGINEER - No comment

REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of objection received from the occupiers of nearby property. The objections were raised on the grounds that the fountain is not in keeping with the character and heritage of Martock.

CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed fountain is not considered to be of a design and materials that is characteristic of the settlement of Martock. However, neither are the buildings of the care home that form the context in which the fountain is located. The fountain is not prominent when viewed from outside the site and the site is located on the edge of the settlement. As such, and notwithstanding the objections of the parish council and the occupiers of a nearby property, the proposed fountain is not considered to cause such harm to the character of the area that a refusal of planning permission is justified.

It is not considered that the proposal will have any impact on residential amenity.

Accordingly the proposal is considered to comply with policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be granted for the following reason:

01. The proposal, by reason of its size, scale and materials, causes no demonstrable harm to residential or visual amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of Policies ST6 and ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006) and Policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. Notwithstanding the time limits given to implement planning permission as prescribed by Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), this permission (being granted under section 73A of the Act in respect of development already carried out) shall have effect from the 01 June 2011.

Reason: To comply with Section 73A of the Act.

Area North Committee – 25 January 2012

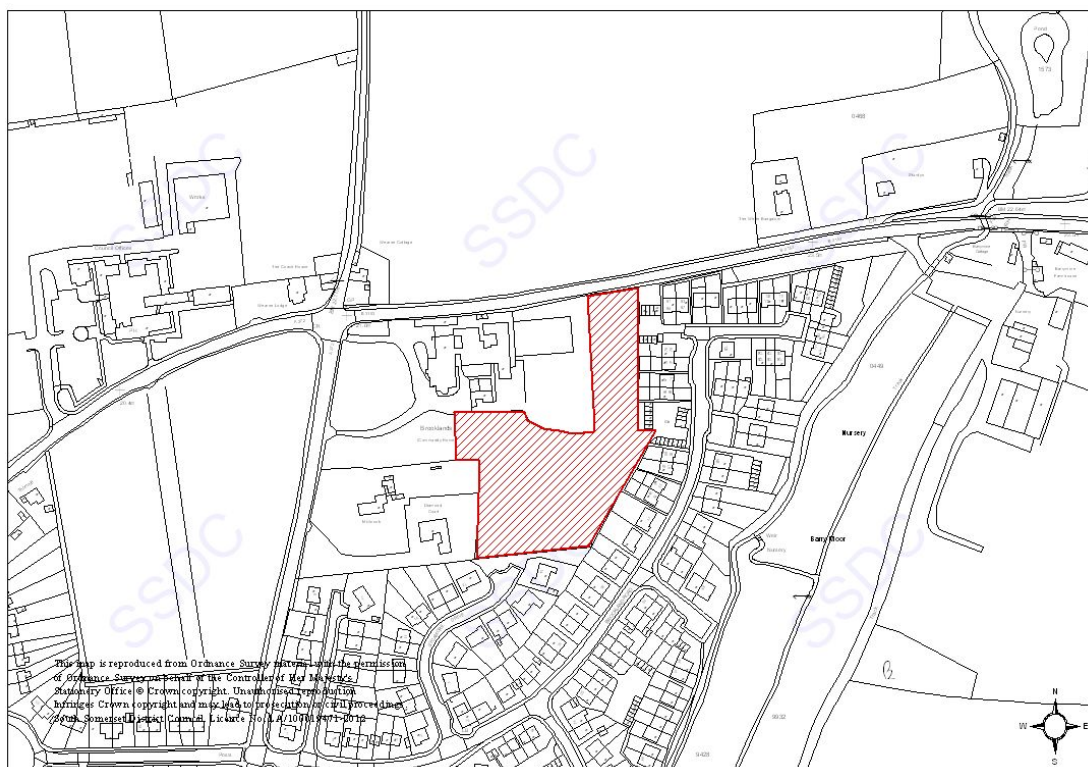
Officer Report On Planning Application: 11/02448/FUL

Proposal:	Erection of 52 residential units with associated works, car parking and access ways. (GR 342856/127524)
Site Address:	Bartletts Elm, Field Road, Huish Episcopi
Parish:	Huish Episcopi
LANGPORT AND HUISH Ward (SSDC Member)	Mr Roy Mills (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Adrian Noon Tel: 01935 462370 Email: adrian.noon@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	30th September 2011
Applicant:	Mr R Mead
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Boon Brown Architects Motivo, Alvington, Yeovil Somerset BA20 2FG
Application Type:	Major Dwlg's 10 or more or site 0.5ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is referred to committee with the agreement of the Ward Member and Chairman due the level of interest that the development of this site has created in the past.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



This application relates to a 1.6 ha site to the rear of the original Bartletts Elm school building, backing onto Brooklands Road to the east and bounded by the B3153 to the north. The northern part of the site, which has been prepared for development, was used a sports ground and there was a sports hall, now demolished, on the eastern part. The southern part of the site comprises a large area of mostly self-sown scrub land, with some ornamental species left over from when the area was a managed garden.

There is a substantial stone boundary wall to the B3153 with chain link fences to the south and east boundaries. There are many mature trees on the site in include an number of protected specimens

The properties to the east, which back onto the site, are modern two-storey dwellings dating from the 1970s. To the south bungalows in Sycamore Drive are separated from the site by a strip of landed owned by a third party. To the west is a large detached property (Diamond Court) and the former school building and coach house, now converted to 14 flats.

This part of site has approval for 102 houses of which 45 affordable homes have been built. 52 dwellings are now proposed on the remainder of the site as a revision of the previous approval, an over all drop of 5 units. The scheme comprises:-

- 6 two-bed flats
- 4 two-bed coach houses (flats over garages or FOGs)
- 10 two-bed houses
- 19 three-bed houses
- 13 four-bed houses
- access via the new 5-arm roundabout
- 94 parking spaces
- an area of public open space around the row of protected trees.

The layout closely follows the approved scheme, incorporating pre-dominantly 2 storey buildings of a mix of render, stone, slate and tile. 2 pair of 2 ½ storey houses would be provided as a focal point to the main access road and a similar height building would accommodate the 2 flats. The proposal has been slightly amended to move plot 48 (a 'FOG') forward to enable maintenance and to provide a 2m rear fence at the neighbour's request and the landscaping scheme has been adjusted to address concerns raised by the landscape architect.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement (including a Statement of Community Involvement), a Design and Access Statement and an Arboricultural Report.

HISTORY

05/02818/OUT Outline planning permission granted for residential development of site to the rear. This required the completion of the new access (a mini-roundabout on Field Road) prior to commencement. This permission establishes tree protection zones, provides for a LEAP and further open space at the front of the site and is subject to a section 106 agreement to provide affordable housing, on site open space and contributions towards off-site leisure facilities. The agreement also covers the 14 flats approved by the associated application for the conversion of the former school buildings.

05/02831/FUL Planning permission granted for conversion of existing building

and coach house to 14 units. An identical access condition was attached and the approval is subject to a S106 agreement (see above).

- 08/03510/S73 Application approved to vary condition 2 of 05/02831/FUL to delete the requirement for the formation of mini-roundabout prior to commencement in favour of a requirement to agree junction improvements prior to occupation.
- 08/04583/REM Reserved matters approved for the erection of 99 houses and flats.
- 08/04879/FUL Planning permission granted for the erection of 3 dwellings on land outside red line of 05/02818/OUT. This permission is also subject to a condition (2) for the mini-roundabout to be formed prior to commencement.
- 08/04806/FUL Planning permission granted for a revised parking layout for 17 spaces and bin store to serve the 14 approved flats with the converted former school.
- 10/00055/TPO Consent given for tree removal works in front of former school building to facilitate formation of new roundabout at junction of A372/B3153.
- 10/00848/S73 Application approved to vary condition 2 of 08/04879/FUL to require access improvements prior to occupation.
- 10/00849/S73 Application approved to vary condition 2 of 05/02831/FUL to remove the requirement for the formation of mini-roundabout prior to commencement in favour of a requirement to agree junction improvements prior to occupation
- 10/02424/FUL Planning permission granted for formation of new vehicular access (via new 5-arm roundabout) and estate road to serve residential development
- 10/05130/S73 Application approved to delete condition 3 of 05/02818/OUT which required a mini-roundabout to be constructed at the junction of the new access road and the A372 and improved visibility from the A372 onto the B3153 in an easterly direction. This regularised the access from the 5-arm roundabout approved by 10/02424/FUL

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000):
 STR1 - Sustainable Development
 Policy 48 - Access and Parking
 Policy 49 - Transport requirements of new development

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):

Policy ST1 - Rural Centres
 Policy ST5 - The Quality of Development
 Policy ST6 - Landscape and Architectural Design
 Policy ST10 - Planning Obligations
 Policy EC3 – Landscape Character
 Policy HG1 - Provision for New Housing Development
 Policy HG4 - Housing Density
 Policy HG6 - Affordable Housing Target
 Policy HG7 - Affordable Housing
 CR2 – On-site Leisure Provision
 CR3 – Off-site Leisure Provision
 Policy CR4 - Amenity Open Space
 Policy TP1 - Pedestrian Provision
 Policy TP2 – Travel Planning
 Policy TP4 - Road Design
 Policy TP7 - Car Parking

Policy-related Material Considerations
 None relevant

National Guidance
 PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
 PPS3 - Housing
 PPG13 - Transport
 PPS25 - Flooding

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy
 Goal 3 - Healthy Environments
 Goal 4 - Services and Facilities
 Goal 8 - High Quality Homes
 Goal 9 - A Balanced housing Market

Parish/Town Plan – Huish Episcopi
 No conflict

Other Relevant Documents:
 None

CONSULTATIONS

HUISH EPISCOPI PARISH COUNCIL – no objection in principle subject to consideration of the privacy of residents in “Brookland Road estate, Diamond Panes and Millbrook by way of fencing at an appropriate height and newly planted trees to prevent overlooking, where necessary tidying up the existing trees as well”.

LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL – comments awaited at the time of writing.

AREA DEVELOPMENT – no objections raised subject to previous obligations being carried forward.

COUNTY HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY – no objection in principle, the access will be via the new roundabout. A number of technical points are raised about the internal road layout and the Travel Plan. The applicant has agreed to address these.

LEISURE POLICY CO-ORDINATOR – requests a contribution of £185,198.37 (£3,561.51 per dwelling) towards sports arts and leisure facilities as follows:-

Relevant leisure need	Council Delivery Strategy
Equipped Play Space	To be provided by proposed LEAP within the adjacent parcel of land within Bartlett Elm site.
Youth Facilities	Off site – contribution towards the provision of a multi use games area at facilities at the Memorial Playing Fields, Langport
Playing Pitches and Changing Room Provision	Off site – contribution towards the enhancement of pitches and changing rooms at the Memorial Playing Fields, Langport and or Huish Episcopi Academy School
Swimming Pool	Off site - contribution towards the development of a new indoor swimming pool in the Langport/Huish Episcopi area or towards the development of a centrally based 8 lane district wide competition pool in Yeovil.
Sports Hall	Off site - contribution towards the enhancement of the sports hall at Huish Episcopi Academy School or towards the development of a centrally based 8-court district wide competition sports hall in Yeovil.
Theatres and Arts Centres	Off-site – contribution towards expanding and enhancing the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil.
Synthetic Turf Pitches (STP)	Off site – contribution towards the development of a new 3G STP at Huish Episcopi Academy School.
Indoor Tennis Courts	Off site – contribution towards the provision of a new indoor tennis centre in Yeovil, likely to be within Yeovil Sports Zone.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – no comments to make

AREA ENGINEER – No objection subject to adoption of surface water system.

WESSEX WATER – notes that there is limited capacity in the foul water system and the developer would be expected to contribute to improvements Surface water should not enter the foul system and should be discharged at green field run-off rates with attenuation. Adoption of onsite infrastructure should be by Wessex Water's Section 104 Agreement.

CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER – no objection subject to installation of solar water heating to each dwelling.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT – no objection

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT – initially requested revisions to the landscaping, no objection to the amended scheme.

REPRESENTATIONS

6 letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:-

- increased traffic on narrow access road, it should be widened;
- lack of signage on entrance road (speed, no through road);

- the main contractor should be liable for uninsured contractors;
- impact of contractor's heavy vehicles using access road;
- the views of the police, emergency services and highways should be sought;
- proximity of new properties, particularly no. 48, to existing homes in Brookland Road (loss of views, blocking of light and overlooking);
- we were promised a 2m fence;
- proximity of development to trees;
- loss of trees;
- impact on trees and wildlife;
- the pre-application consultation referred to in the supporting application was in relation to the previous application and is misleading;
- the dwellings along the east side should be re-sited as previously approved;
- Yarlington should develop this site for affordable housing;
- Overlooking to retirement flats;
- Lack of play area for children.

CONSIDERATIONS

The previous grant of outline permission and subsequent approval of reserved matters have clearly established the principle of the residential development of this site. It is not considered that there have been any material changes to policy or circumstance that could justify reversing those decisions, further the previous approvals remain extant, having been partially implemented.

A number of issues have effectively been resolved by previous approvals, namely:-

- The access via the new roundabout has been agreed as being appropriate to serve the approved development;
- The layout is essentially the same as agreed by the approved reserved matters
- A tree retention and protection plan was been agreed at outline stage which identified all trees to be retained together this 'no build' areas. Whilst this allows for the removal of many trees, including a row of very substantial cypresses, it seeks to retain the specimens of most value, including the row of wellingtonias.
- The level of development on this part the site has been agreed at 45/ha. This proposal, for 5 less units, would be at a lower density
- The incorporation of 2 and 2 ½ storey units has been accepted

On this basis it is not considered that the neighbour's objections to the access arrangements, the impact of traffic on the approve roundabout/access road and the loss of trees/impact on trees can reasonably be supported in this instance. The council's tree officer is fully aware of the issues raised and the requirements of the previously approved scheme and is closely monitoring the situation.

Accordingly there are not considered to be any conflict with policies ST1, HG1 or HG4. The key issues are considered to be whether the changes to the scheme would have any impact on:-

- Visual amenity
- Residential amenity
- Drainage
- Internal highways
- Planning obligations

Visual Amenity

The proposal closely follows the approved layout with very similar house types. These are considered to be of an appropriate scale, design and detailing. The landscaping proposal again closely reflects what has been previously approved. On this basis it is considered that, subject to conditions to agree the materials and ensure that the agreed landscaping is carried out the proposal complies with policies EC3, ST5 and ST6.

Residential Amenity

Within the development it is considered that adequate amenity would be created for future occupiers. With regard to any impact on existing adjoining residents it is considered that adequate separation would be maintained to protect the amenities of properties to the east of the site (Brooklands Road). In this respect the position of plot 48 has been slightly altered to address a maintenance concern.

With regard to the possible overlooking from the new houses to the approved (and now occupied) sheltered flats, the separation remains as previously approved - approximately 30m across the open space and 11m across the road. Neither are considered inappropriate.

Accordingly it is considered that the proposal would not create any undue loss of amenity and therefore complies with policies ST6 and CR4.

Drainage

It has been confirmed that the proposed surface water drainage strategy is acceptable and that the necessary infrastructure would be adopted by Wessex water. This would comply with the advice of PPS25.

There is an outstanding issue with the capacity the foul water system which Wessex Water feel should be addressed by this applicant. It is to be noted that no such requirement was placed on the original development which could be built out without a contribution towards any necessary improvements. This omission does not reflect a change in circumstance, rather a previous failure to request the contribution.

Notwithstanding the fall back position this issue is considered sufficiently important to merit further discussion. The applicant's agent is confident that an agreement can be reached with Wessex Water and an oral update on this matter will be needed.

Internal Highways

The proposed level of parking is considered acceptable. The highways officer initially raised a number of technical concerns and issues with the travel plan to which the applicant has responded. At the time of writing the final comments of the highways officer were awaited, however it is understood that their concerns are largely technical and could normally be addressed by their technical adoption process and/or discharge of condition. Whilst an oral update will be required this aspect of the proposal is considered to comply with policies ST5, TP1, TP4 and TP7.

The comments in relation to travel planning are noted and refer to the travel plan associated with the outline permission. As this application is a stand-alone scheme a separate travel plan requirement is necessary. This could reasonably be achieved by condition as was done on the outline permission and would satisfy policy TP2.

Planning Obligations

A Section 106 attached to the previous outline approval agreed planning obligations to provide for a LEAP and open space at the front of the site, affordable housing, on site open space and contributions towards off-site leisure facilities. 45 affordable homes have been provided by Yarlinton Homes who have implemented the reserved matters approval. Accordingly it is not considered reasonable to seek further affordable units on what is in effect simply a re-jigging of the previously approved open market part of the site.

The previously agreed LEAP and open space to the front of the site would still be provided by Yarlinton as an obligation on their development; it would however also meet the needs of this site, addressing a concern raised by a local resident. The sports, arts and leisure obligation has been adjusted to reflect this 'on-site' provision, however the requested off-site obligation (£3,561.51 per dwelling) is significantly more than previously sought, which equated to just under £1,971.11 per dwelling.

It is considered that there have been material changes in circumstance in the past 5 years that justify this uplift and officers have been unwilling to set this obligation aside or reduce it without justification. The applicants have not sought to formally cite the viability of the scheme and have agreed to this obligation. They remain concerned about viability and reserve the right to revisit this issue at a latter date.

Whilst it would be preferable, and more open, to explore this issue now, the desire to defer it to a later date could not justify with-holding permission at this stage. Government advice is quite clear that local planning authorities must take a pragmatic position on such matters.

On this basis it is considered that the proposal complies with policies ST5, ST10, HG7, CR2 and CR3.

Other Issues

There are not considered to be any protected species that would adversely affected by the proposal, however a condition is recommended to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendation of the submitted Ecology Survey.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the concerns raise by local residents, and subject to the final comments of Wessex Water, it is not considered that this proposal would have any undue impact on highways safety, visual or residential amenity, trees or ecology. Accordingly the proposal is recommended are approval subject to planning obligations and appropriate safeguarding conditions.

Section 106 Agreement

An agreement would be necessary to ensure that off-site sports, arts and leisure obligations are secured as requested by the Leisure Policy Co-ordinator.

Recommendation

That, subject to no objection being maintained by Wessex Water, conditional permission should be granted 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 ensure that a contribution of £3,561.51 per dwelling is secured to mitigate the impact of the increased local population created by this development on sports arts and leisure facilities locally and in the District as requested and set out by the Leisure Policy Co-ordinator.

and

- b) the following conditions

Justification

The proposed development would be provided with adequate parking and would not be prejudicial to highways safety or sustainable travel objectives, residential amenity, the wellbeing of the retained trees or the visual amenities of the locality and would make provision to adequately mitigate its impact on sports, arts and leisure facilities As such the proposal complies with the saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Conditions

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

02. The development shall carried out in accordance with the following plans:-
3006/01J; 02B; 03C; 04B; 05B; 06C; 07D; 08C; 09E; 10B; 11A; 12B; 13B; 14B; 15C; 16B; 17C; 18B; 19A; 20B; 21A; 22A; 23; 24A; 25; 26A; 27; 28; 29; 30; 31; 581/01a; 02; and T5554/SK01P; SK2P.

Reason: To define the development hereby approved.

03. No development hereby approved shall be carried out until particulars of following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority;
- a. details of materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for the external walls and roofs;
 - b. details of the recessing, materials and finish (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for all new windows (including any rooflights) and doors;
 - c. details of all hardstanding and boundaries

Once approved such details shall be fully implemented unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the *South Somerset Local Plan*.

04. The landscaping scheme shown on drawing number 581/01A shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season following commencement, or as otherwise extended with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority. For a period of five years after the completion of the planting scheme, the

trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition to the satisfaction of The Local Planning Authority and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or the appropriate trees or shrubs as may be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with saved policies ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. No part of the development shall commence until details of a Travel Plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development and to accord with policy TP2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

06. The areas allocated for parking, including the garages, shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be converted or used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason – To ensure that adequate parking is provided and maintained to meet the needs of the development in accordance with policy TP7 of the South Somerset Local Plan, adopted 2006.

07. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details, of the foul and surface water drainage system to serve the development, including technical specifications and calculations where appropriate, such be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority . once approved such scheme shall be fully implemented and maintained in good working order at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development is adequately drained in accordance with saved policy EU4 of the south Somerset local Plan and the advice of PPS25.

08. The recommendations of the Michael Woods Ecological Survey, May 2011, submitted with the application, shall be adhered to at all times throughout the construction phase unless agreed otherwise in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the ecology of the site in accordance with policy EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with Somerset County Council). The plan shall include construction operation hours, construction vehicular routes to and from site, construction delivery hours, expected number of construction vehicles per day, drained parking area for contractors, specific anti-pollution measures to be adopted to mitigate construction impacts and a scheme to encourage the use of public transport amongst contractors. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with policies EP6, ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

10. The proposed estate roads, footways, footpaths, tactile paving, cycle ways, bus stops/bus lay-bys, verges, junctions, street lighting, sewers, drains, retaining walls, service routes, surface water outfall, vehicle overhang margins, embankments, visibility splays, accesses, carriageway gradients, drive gradients, car parking and street furniture shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with details to be approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. For this purpose, plans and sections, indicating as appropriate, the design, layout, levels, gradients, materials and method of construction shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- In the interests of highways safety in accordance with policies ST5 and TP4 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

11. The proposed roads, including footpaths and turning spaces where applicable, shall be constructed in such a manner as to ensure that each dwelling before it is occupied shall be served by a properly consolidated and surfaced footpath and carriageway to at least base course level between the dwelling and existing highway.

Reason:- In the interests of highways safety in accordance with policies ST5 and TP4 of the South Somerset Local Plan.
