

Meeting AN 09M 11/12
Date 25.01.12

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer on **Wednesday 25 January 2012**.

(2.00pm – 4.35pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Pauline Clarke
Roy Mills
David Norris

Shane Pledger
Sylvia Seal
Sue Steele

Paul Thompson
Derek Yeomans

Also present: Cllr John Bailey (SCC)

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Fiona Johnson	Housing & Welfare Manager
Ben Miller	Minerals Project Officer (SCC)
Katy Menday	Countryside Manager
Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director, Operations & Customers Focus
Dominic Heath-Coleman	Planning Assistant
Adrian Noon	Area Lead North/East
David Norris	Development Control Manager
Becky Sanders	Committee Administrator

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

98. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

99. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Mounter, Jo Roundell Greene and Barry Walker.

100. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

101. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area North Committee would commence at the earlier time of 1.30pm on Wednesday 22 February 2012 at the Edgar Hall, Somerton and not at Long Sutton as had been published in the agenda.

102. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public.

103. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman reminded members that the draft Core Strategy would be considered at the next meeting. It would be an important meeting with Area Committee making comments on the recommendations, but there would be no decisions. It was suggested that representatives from parish councils be encouraged to attend the meeting.

Members were also reminded about the SCC "Local Choice" events to be held across Somerset during February. The South Somerset event would be on 21st February at the Edgar Hall, Somerton and all councillors were invited to attend and to encourage the attendance of parish councillors.

104. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

There were no reports from members.

105. Somerset Community Foundation – Local Giving (Agenda item 8)

The Chairman introduced Justin Sargent from the Somerset Community Foundation who gave an informative presentation about the organisation including:

- Its purpose and track record
- How the foundation could support local community organisations
- Endowment funds
- Surviving Winter
- Localgiving.com and match funding
- Raising aspirations

Mr Sargent encouraged members to put local groups in contact with the Somerset Community Foundation. Members thanked him for his comprehensive presentation.

106. SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in Somerset and Careline (Agenda item 9)

The Housing and Welfare Manager presented her report on welfare benefit work in the district and highlighted work done to date, as detailed in the agenda. She reported that figures showed they had levered in over 16 times more money than the service actually cost to run. It was also noted that the work of the team had multiple value to SSDC which included helping to save tenancies, so potentially minimising the costs associated with dealing with homelessness.

She informed members that her role also involved managing the Careline Service. Careline, which was self sustaining, was an alarm system that enabled people to enjoy living independently in their own home with the knowledge that emergency help or advice was available at the touch of a button. Showing the associated equipment to members she said it was easy to install and a real benefit to vulnerable people. She reported that other devices such as smoke detectors were also available to link to the system.

The Chairman thanked the Housing and Welfare Manager for an excellent report, and members congratulated the officer on the outstanding work of the team.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Fiona Johnson, Senior Welfare Officer
fiona.johnson@somerset.gov.uk or 01935 463737*

107. Somerset County Council – Minerals Options Paper for Consultation (Agenda item 10)

The Minerals Project Officer (SCC) gave a comprehensive presentation to raise awareness of, and explain, the Minerals Options Paper that was currently out for consultation. He explained the process of the consultation and that it was the next stage in the development of the Minerals Core Strategy. He highlighted points for members' interests to the local area involving:

- Aggregates
- Peat
- Building stone
- Mineral safeguarding areas

During a short discussion members raised some questions regarding the dormant and active quarries in Area North. In response, the Minerals Project officer clarified that:

- active quarries had specific end dates for extraction.
- Existing conditions associated with dormant sites would be reviewed if the sites were to be re-activated.

It was noted the consultation would end on 12 February 2012. Members were encouraged to respond to the consultation individually and to help raise awareness of the consultation within the local community. The Chairman thanked the officer for his presentation.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that:

- (1) Members be encouraged to respond to the consultation.
- (2) Members noted the formal response from SSDC would be made by District Executive.

*Vicky Munn, Minerals Lead Officer (SCC)
vmunn@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 358289*

108. Update Report from the Countryside Service (Agenda item 11)

The Countryside Manager presented her report as shown in the agenda, and commented that the work of the team focussed mainly around practical work and

community engagement. She explained that the report aimed to give an update on the work of the service across the district over the past year and some projects for year ahead including:

- Yeovil Country Park, Ham Hill Country Park and Chard Reservoir had retained Green Flag status
- 1431 volunteer days donated over the past financial year – equivalent to 6 full-time staff. The work of the volunteers was invaluable.
- Events and activities – some smaller events than in previous years but well attended.
- Training of apprentices in traditional land management skills and surveying of various species.
- Challenges included poor weather at some of the organised events, dog attacks on sheep, and other incidents of irresponsible behaviour associated with littering.
- Archaeological dig at Ham Hill in 2011, teams would be returning in the late summer/autumn of 2012 and 2013.
- The coming year would focus on sourcing external funding for projects, and activities to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee including tree planting and an official jubilee beacon at Ham Hill.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Sylvia Seal commented that the team and volunteers were to be congratulated for their work, and acknowledged that without the volunteers less work would be achieved.

The Chairman and members praised the work of the team and thanked the officer for her informative report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
katy.menday@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462522*

109. Consultation on Proposed Customer Charter (Agenda item 12)

The Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) introduced the report as shown in the agenda and explained that this consultation was part of a wider consultation about how staff interacted with customers. Many local authorities had a customer charter and there was always a need to keep a focus on what the customer wanted and expected from us. Another reason for having a charter was so staff had clear standards and guidance on how to deal with difficult customers.

During a brief discussion, members made a few comments and asked that extra copies of the guidelines were circulated to them so that the consultation could be promoted in the community and to parish councils.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus)
vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462200*

110. Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) – Appointment of a Member (Agenda item 13) (Executive Decision)

The current, appointed member, Cllr Pauline Clarke, commented that meetings of LARC were interesting and that SSDC needed a presence. She was finding it difficult to attend meetings due to other commitments, and was therefore standing down from the appointment.

Councillors Paul Thompson and Graham Middleton had expressed an interest in the appointment, as detailed in the agenda. No further nominations were made during consideration of the item. It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Paul Thompson be appointed, and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously. As shown in the agenda report, Cllr Graham Middleton would act as the deputy.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Paul Thompson be appointed to serve on the Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) programme executive board for the remainder of the 2011-12 municipal year.

Reason: To appoint a district council representative to an outside organisation.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

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

111. Area North Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 14)

The Area Development Manager (North) had no updates. Members suggested that a report on tourism would be of interest and this was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

*Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462596*

112. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 15)

The agenda report was noted, which informed members of planning appeals that were lodged, dismissed or allowed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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

113. Planning Applications (Agenda item 16)

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

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

11/04330/FUL – Erection of a fountain (retrospective) at La Fontana Care Home, Foldhill Lane, Martock. Applicant: Mr Nunzio Notaro.

The Planning Assistant presented the report as shown in the agenda and explained that the original approved plans for the care home had not included a fountain in the centre of the parking area, but had indicated a tree and landscaping. The main consideration was impact on visual amenity and the character of the area. It was not considered that the fountain was so detrimental to the area as to justify a refusal, and so the officer recommendation was to approve the application.

The Chairman commented that there had been much local interest in the site when the care home was originally considered. People had noticed the fountain was not on the plans and locally comments had been made that the materials were not in keeping with the area.

During a brief, lively, discussion members raised varying comments including:

- Fountain would be pleasing on the eye and offer interest to the care home residents
- It would be more acceptable if it were in local stone

In response to a question, the Area Lead clarified that due to the size of the fountain it had triggered the requirement for planning permission. However he acknowledged that the structure had probably been intended as a piece of art.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application, as per the officer recommendation, as shown in the agenda. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried five in favour, four against.

RESOLVED: That planning application 11/04330/FUL be APPROVED subject to the condition as shown in the agenda report.

(Voting: 5 in favour, 4 against)

11/02448/FUL – Erection of 52 residential units with associated works, car parking and access ways. Applicant: Mr R Mead.

The Area Lead presented the report as shown in the agenda and updated members that Wessex Water had confirmed they were not seeking obligations. The Tree Officer had also recommended an extra condition for tree protection measures and this was detailed in the presentation.

Members were reminded of the planning history of the site including the management of the trees. The Area Lead clarified that this application for 52 dwellings was a revision to the open market element of the site. The officer recommendation was to approve the application.

Mrs S Lavis, objector, raised concerns regarding overlooking of her property and the boundary fence.

The Area Lead confirmed that plots 49-52 had rooflights but no other windows to the rear elevation and there would be a two metre high fence.

Agent, Mr S Travers, commented that the application was the last chapter in a long process. The community had benefitted from a roundabout and housing of various tenures to meet local needs.

Ward member, Cllr Roy Mills, noted the parish council gave its support pending boundary fencing. He also noted there were concerns locally about drainage.

The Area Lead acknowledged that foul water drainage had been a concern however Wessex Water had stated that they now had no objection to the scheme. Their position had been queried and it had been confirmed that no contribution towards upgrades to the sewerage system were to be sought through this planning application.

During a short discussion members raised some queries to which the Area Lead responded:

- All houses were allocated two parking spaces and flats had one
- Responsibility for the future maintenance of the trees and the associated costs would be by either a commuted sum and transfer to SSDC or by a management company with all households paying an annual fee. No individual property owner would be liable.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application subject to the completion of a Section 106 planning obligation and the conditions as detailed in the agenda. On being put to the vote, the proposal was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning application 11/02448/FUL be APPROVED 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.
- (b) The conditions as detailed in the agenda plus an additional condition as follows:-

Prior to implementation of this planning permission, site vegetative clearance, demolition of existing structures, ground works, heavy machinery entering site or the on-site storage of materials, a scheme of tree planting, a Tree Protection Plan and an Arboricultural Method Statement relating to all retained trees on or adjoining the site shall be drafted so as to conform to British Standard 5837: 2005. The tree planting scheme, the Tree Protection Plan and the Arboricultural Method Statement details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council and it shall specify the following details:

- A scheme of any new tree planting, detailing the method of installation (to include mulching), size, locations, species and timing of planting;
- details of any required tree works so as to conform to BS

3998:2010 - Tree Works;

- plans detailing root protection areas, construction exclusion zones and the installation of tree protection fencing;
- layout plans showing the locations of required below-ground services
- special tree protection and engineering measures for any approved installation of built structures, below ground services and hard surfacing within the root protection areas of retained trees;
- a scheme of arboricultural on-site supervision, monitoring and certificates of compliance relating to the tree protection measures. Upon implementation of this planning permission, the measures as specified within the agreed scheme of tree planting, the Tree Protection Plan and the Arboricultural Method Statement shall be implemented in their entirety for the duration of construction, inclusive of any landscaping measures.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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

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Chairman