

Meeting AN 10M 11/12  
Date 22.02.12

### **South Somerset District Council**

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Edgar Hall, Somerton on **Wednesday 22 February 2012**.

(1.38pm – 7.00pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Pauline Clarke	Shane Pledger	Sue Steele (1.45pm to 6.40pm)
Graham Middleton	Jo Roundell Greene	Paul Thompson
Roy Mills	Sylvia Seal	Derek Yeomans (to 6.42pm)
David Norris		

**Also present:** Cllrs Ric Pallister and Tim Carroll

**Officers:**

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Amy Cater	Solicitor
Andy Foyne	Spatial Policy Manager
Jean Marshall	Spatial Policy Team Leader
Elizabeth Arnold	Strategic Monitoring Officer
Jo Manley	Policy Planner
Keith Lane	Policy Planner
Adrian Noon	Area Lead North/East
David Norris	Development Control Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager
Becky Sanders	Committee Administrator
Anne Herridge	Committee Administrator

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

---

#### **114. Minutes (Agenda item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

---

#### **115. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Mounter and Barry Walker.

---

#### **116. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)**

The Chairman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in section 7.1 – Employment Land of the Core Strategy report as he had an interest in land for employment that was already allocated in Martock (for clarity this refers to pages A52 to A55 as shown in the agenda and recommendation 27).

Councillor Pauline Clarke declared a personal interest (to avoid any doubt) in planning application 11/04811/FUL as she had attended meetings about the surgery when she was a town councillor several years previously. She also more recently attended a patient group to look at the design of the development.

---

#### **117. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda item 4)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area North Committee would commence at the normal time of 2.00pm on Wednesday 28 March 2012 at the Village Hall, Norton Sub Hamdon.

---

#### **118. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)**

There were no questions from members of the public.

---

#### **119. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)**

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

---

#### **120. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)**

There were no reports from members.

---

#### **121. South Somerset Core Strategy – Consideration of Representations and Recommendations for the Proposed Submission Draft. (Agenda item 8)**

Prior to the officer presentation and discussion by committee of this item, the Chairman explained that Area North Committee would only be considering and discussing development issues within Area North. He reminded people of the dates for the other Area meetings, District Executive and Council, and explained that the Yeovil Urban Extension would be debated at Area South Committee.

Cllr Ric Pallister, Chairman of the Project Management Board, introduced the agenda item and explained what the Core Strategy was, why it was needed and where the process was at the current time. Parts of his presentation included:

- The Core Strategy was about keeping or making communities sustainable – ability for people to live, work and socialise.
- Government says we must allow for growth
- Unemployment in South Somerset is about half the national average
- Population growing – aging population, natural growth, households splitting up, and inward migration
- Much of the proposed housing for 2006-28 had already been delivered or committed.
- Risk of under-estimating the need for future housing
- Concentration in growth at employment hubs

The Spatial Policy Manager gave a thorough presentation on the report as shown in the agenda and explained the format for consideration of the recommendations within the report and for any comments of the Area North Committee to be forwarded to District Executive.

The Spatial Policy Manager gave a presentation regarding Part 1 of the Project Management Board (PMB) report. This was followed by public participation, committee discussion and then voting. The same process was repeated for parts 2 and 3 of the PMB report.

*Due to the complexity of the report and the crossing over of subject issues, comments made by the public have been minuted collectively, i.e. comments made in parts 1, 2 and 3 have been grouped together.*

Thirteen members of the public made comments including:

- The proposed Yeovil Urban Extension (YUE) needed to be carefully considered, was not necessary and was unviable without the Community Infrastructure Levy
- Members were only being asked to endorse the higher figure for proposed housing and the figure was too high
- Some sources suggested that estimated population in South Somerset for 2026 would be 170,000 in which case the YUE would not be needed.
- Life in villages would become more expensive and stagnate
- Levels of growth proposed were not supported by data
- Proposals for the YUE is strategic and doesn't build on rural strengths
- Somerton should be a rural centre with housing set at a lower level than was recommended in the report, and that development should be phased
- Agricultural land needed to be protected for food supply.
- Proportion of growth in rural areas to population would be a disaster
- It was not known when the recession would end
- Querying the cost of the process, and that reports were primarily only available online
- Preventing new developments adjacent to old settlements seemed to have been forgotten
- Thought the north west option for an urban extension towards Chilthorne Domer had been dropped
- Businesses aren't attracted to Yeovil due to the road network – Yeovil is already gridlocked.
- Most people won't understand the impact of the Core Strategy
- Policy SS2 should include low impact dwellings and infill development per se is not sustainable.
- Rural schools need supporting
- Concern at proposals outlined in recommendations 27, 31, 32, 43 and 66
- Consideration of the draft Core Strategy should be delayed.

The Spatial Policy Manager and Chairman of the Project Management Board responded to comments made, some of which included:

- There would be reduced Community Infrastructure Levy rates but there would still be planning obligations which would be more site specific – overall a developer would pay a similar amount to infrastructure in the community
- Acknowledge concerns of growth in Somerton, remaining housing provision required for duration of Core Strategy would have an effect similar to an embargo on future major development. If a site nearer to the facilities in the centre of the town came forward it would be considered.
- Lower grade agricultural land would be taken where possible

- The north west option, towards Chilthorne Domer, for a Yeovil Urban Extension was not being proposed by SSDC, but by objectors.
- Most economic projections were published tri-monthly and usually no more than four years ahead.
- Regarding policy SS2, there was evidence of an inverse correlation of services decline in relation to population growth in small rural settlements.
- Everyone who had been engaged in the process up until the current time or had made representation had been notified directly of the dates of meetings. There had also been newsletters and press articles.
- RNAS Yeovilton had recently confirmed that 700 staff would be coming to the area and these would need to be housed.

*Outcomes of committee voting on the recommendations of the PMB report have been collated into a table at the end of each part for ease of referencing.*

During the ensuing committee discussion generally about Part 1 of the report members made several comments including:

- A long-term plan was needed, but possibly also mini plans with shorter time frames.
- Focus of report seemed to be about the higher growth figure, no pros and cons of a lower growth figure.
- 5% economic growth was needed to maintain housing figures proposed and this was high. Proposed total dwellings to 2026 should be no more than 13,000
- Need to make sure there is ample supply of land to meet demand.
- Must plan for the future. A good economy needs jobs and workers need homes.
- If more houses there needed to be proper infrastructure to support it including water supply and dealing with household waste.
- Officers and councillors have done their best to get communities involved in the Core Strategy

In response to comments made, the Spatial Policy Manager commented that:

- The issue of water would be a challenge but the Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicated problems were surmountable
- The lower figure for the total proposed dwellings was not linked to economic activity data
- No proposal in report for the Yeovil Urban Extension to go towards Chilthorne Domer. If Council decided that the south option was no longer right, then the process would need to be redone and go out for re-consultation
- The Core Strategy could be revisited after a time but it would not be a quick review and would require additional resource and costs. The current plan had taken four to five years so far.

Members discussed each settlement separately for recommendations 4 and 6 (taken together) of the PMB report:

#### Somerton

Ward member, Cllr David Norris, supported the town council's comments that it should be a rural centre and not a market town. Its facilities were more akin to that of a rural centre.

Ward member, Cllr Pauline Clarke, queried if Somerton fitted the definition of a market town in terms of the Core Strategy. She commented that there was much local concern about the number of houses proposed and that an average growth of ten dwellings per year was probably acceptable, but there needed to be message that there was no scope for major growth.

In response the Spatial Policy Manager commented that there needed to be consistency and that status was primarily about employment and services. If Somerton were to be downgraded to rural centre status there would be less growth and services would be more at risk.

#### Langport

Ward Member, Cllr Roy Mills commented that Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council supported its status as a market town, although there were concerns about some aspects of infrastructure.

#### Martock, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon

Ward members for each settlement were content to endorse recommendations 4 and 6.

Cllr David Norris, requested that the minutes record his displeasure that PMB recommendations 4 and 6 were discussed and voted upon together.

The Chairman announced that for transparency the committee would revisit recommendation 6 regarding Somerton. During the further discussion, Ward member, Cllr David Norris, commented that Somerton believed growth needed to be limited and proposed that the housing figure be reduced to 300. Ward member, Cllr Pauline Clarke, commented that locally there was a fear that development would take place without facilities being provided. In response the Spatial Policy Manager noted that a reduced housing number would require reconsideration of the settlement status, and that with any growth and development there would be an element of natural phasing. Cllr David Norris proposed that PMB recommendation 6 be amended to reflect a reduction in the total housing requirement for Somerton of 300, but this was not supported. The original proposal to endorse the recommendation as shown in the agenda was voted upon again and carried.

<b>PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)</b>	<b>Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)</b>	<b>Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed</b>	<b>Voting</b>
<b>Part 1</b>			
Rec 1 (p. A7)	2.1 End date of plan	Endorsed	Unanimous
Rec 2 (p. A14)	2.2 District wide scale of growth	Endorsed	9 in favour, 2 against
Rec 3 (p. A14)	2.3 Review of the status of Yeovil, market towns and rural centres – terminology.	Endorsed	Unanimous

<b>PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)</b>	<b>Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)</b>	<b>Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Part 1 continued			
Rec 4 (p. A16)	2.3 Review of the status of Yeovil, market towns and rural centres – market town status – no change for Somerton, change Langport / Huish Episcopi to market town from rural centre.	Endorsed	Somerton: 9 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention  Langport/Huish Episcopi: 10 in favour, 1 abstention
Rec 6 (p. A21)	2.4 Distribution of growth between Yeovil, market towns, rural centres and rural settlements – revised settlement policy SS4 – distribution of housing growth – Somerton, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Martock, South Petherton. Stoke Sub Hamdon		Martock, South Petherton, and Stoke Sub Hamdon: unanimous in favour
Rec 5 (p. A16)	2.3 Review of the status of Yeovil, market towns and rural centres – rural centres – no changes apart from Langport / Huish Episcopi to market town.	Endorsed	10 in favour, 1 abstention
Rec 7 (p. A24)	2.5 Review of policy SS2 (development in rural settlements) development areas and infilling.	Endorsed	Unanimous

In part 2, the Spatial Policy Manager reminded members that only PMB recommendations 22, 23 and 24 were for discussion by Area North Committee, and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) needed to be endorsed for submission along with the draft Core Strategy.

During a brief discussion about PMB recommendations 22, 23 and 24, Wessex Ward member, Cllr Pauline Clarke commented that she wasn't convinced the direction for growth for Somerton was right but struggled to suggest an alternative. In response to a comment, the Deputy Development Manager explained that the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) aimed to bring together the infrastructure plans of various providers and stakeholders. Members were content to endorse the three PMB recommendations.

<b>PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)</b>	<b>Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)</b>	<b>Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed</b>	<b>Voting</b>
Part 2			
Rec 8 (p. A27)	3.1 Yeovil – direction for development – Yeovil Urban Extension	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 9 (p. A28)			
Rec 10 (p. A29)			

PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)	Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)	Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed	Voting
Part 2			
Rec 11 (p. A32)	3.1 Yeovil – direction for development – Yeovil Urban Extension	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 12 (p. A33)			
Rec 13 (p. A34)			
Rec 14 (p. A35)			
Rec 15 (p. A36)			
Rec 16 (p. A36)			
Rec 17 (p. A39)	3.2a Chard – direction for development	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 18 (p. A40)	3.2b Crewkerne – direction for development		
Rec 19 (p. A41)	3.2c Ilminster – direction for development		
Rec 20 (p. A42)	3.2d Wincanton – direction for development		
Rec 21 (p. A44)	3.2e Ansford / Castle Cary – direction for development		
Rec 22 (p. A45)	3.2f Langport / Huish Episcopi – direction for development		
Rec 23 (p. A46)	3.2g Somerton – direction for development	Endorsed	Unanimous
Rec 24 (p. A48)	Implications of infrastructure planning	Endorsed	10 in favour 1 abstention

After the Spatial Policy Manager presented part 3 of the report, there was a short discussion during which there were comments made that members of the committee had received the report papers in ample time to read the report fully, and ask any questions of officers prior to the meeting.

In response to comments made the Spatial Policy Manager and Chairman of the Project Management Board (PMB) explained that:

- The PMB would not be changing the maps in the map schedule attached to the current report in any substantive way
- Lopen Head, historically, was employment land for South Petherton as had been recommended by the Inspector to the saved Local Plan. It would however be a matter for re-appraisal in the light of the emerging Core Strategy and changing Government policy.
- The Area Committees were members first opportunity to discuss the proposed changes to the draft Core Strategy. Issues could be raised again at District Executive and Council, when the final decision would be made.
- Previously Developed Land (PDL) should be the preference to greenfield
- Acknowledge target of 35% affordable housing had not been achieved to date, but the obligation for 35% remained
- Policy for new tourist facilities would not preclude everything, but would be a judgement of scale and balance depending on the site and function. The new policy, EP7, would give reasoning and justification to refuse an application where appropriate.

*The Chairman, Cllr Patrick Palmer, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in PMB recommendation 27 left the room for the voting on that recommendation – there was no discussion on the item. Cllr Pauline Clarke was in the chair for voting on PMB recommendation 27 only.*

<b>PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)</b>	<b>Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)</b>	<b>Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed</b>	<b>Voting</b>
<b>Part 3</b>			
Rec 25 (p. A50)	5. Implications of CIL and interim planning obligation policy	Endorsed	10 in favour 1 abstention
Rec 26 (p. A52)	6. Planning obligation policy post introduction of CIL		
Rec 27 (p. A53)	7.1 Policy matters - employment land		9 in favour 1 abstention
Rec 28 (p. A57)	7.2 Yeovil Airfield Safeguarding	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 29 (p. A57)	7.3 Policy CV3 Chard Obligations	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 30 (p. A58)	7.4 Housing density	Endorsed	10 in favour 1 abstention
Rec 31 (p. A59)	7.5 Use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development		
Rec 32 (p. A61)	7.6 Affordable housing		
Rec 33 (p. A62)	7.7 Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People		
Rec 34 (p. A62)	7.8 Specialist housing provision for older people		
Rec 35 (p. A63)	7.9 Henstridge Airfield	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 36 (p. A63)	7.10 Employment Land safeguarding	Endorsed	10 in favour 1 abstention
Rec 37 (p. A64)	7.11 Live / Work facilities		
Rec 38 (p. A64)	7.12 Major new tourist facilities		
Rec 39 (p. A65)	7.13 Stoke Sub Hamdon town centre boundary and primary shop frontages		
Rec 40 (p. A65)	7.14 Sequential approach policy for town centre uses		
Rec 41 (p. A67)	7.15 Retail hierarchy		
Rec 42 (p. A68)	7.16 Locally derived retail thresholds policy		
Rec 43 (p. A68)	7.17 Presumption against major new regional shopping facilities		
Rec 44 (p. A69)	7.18 Policy TA1 – to include Rail Freight		
Rec 45 (p. A69)	7.19 Policy TA2 – travel plans		
Rec 46 (p. A70)	7.20 Car parking standards		
Rec 47 (p. A71)	7.21 Viability of open space standards in light of Open Space Strategy		
Rec 48 (p. A71)	7.22 Climate change		
Rec 49 (p. A72)	7.23 Additional policy changes – YV2	Not for consideration by Area North Committee	
Rec 50 (p. A72)	7.23 Additional policy changes – YV4 (and CV4)		
Rec 51 (p. A73)	7.23 Additional policy changes – YV5		



PMB report recommendation number (agenda page number)	Heading and brief summary of PMB recommendation (for full wording of recommendation, please refer to agenda report)	Area North Committee: Endorsed, Endorsed with minor change or Not endorsed	Voting
Rec 52 (p. A73)	7.23 Additional policy changes – HG7	Endorsed	10 in favour 1 abstention
Rec 53 (p. A73)	7.23 Additional policy changes – HG8		
Rec 54 (p. A73)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP2		
Rec 55 (p. A74)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP4		
Rec 56 (p. A74)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP7		
Rec 57 (p. A74)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP9		
Rec 58 (p. A74)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP10 -14		
Rec 59 (p. A75)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP15		
Rec 60 (p. A75)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EP16		
Rec 61 (p. A75)	7.23 Additional policy changes – TA1		
Rec 62 (p. A75)	7.23 Additional policy changes – TA3		
Rec 63 (p. A76)	7.23 Additional policy changes – HW4		
Rec 64 (p. A76)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EQ3		
Rec 65 (p. A76)	7.23 Additional policy changes – EQ7		
Rec 66 (p. A76)	8. Drafting of the Core Strategy proposed submission document		
Rec 67 (p. A77)	9. Sustainability and appropriate assessment		
Rec 68 (p. A78)			
Rec 69 (p. A78)	10. Equalities Impact Assessment		
Rec 70 (p. A79)	11. National Planning Policy Framework		
Rec 71 (p. A79)	Next steps		

The Spatial Policy Manager reminded members that they were also being asked to endorse the content and recommendations within Appendices A and B to the report. Members were generally content to do so – 10 in favour, 1 abstention. It was briefly outlined that the next steps in the process would include a further stage of public consultation prior to submission of the document.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their patience and officers for the work done.

**RESOLVED:** That the draft report on the Core Strategy to the District Executive be endorsed by Area North Committee.

*(Voting: majority in favour, please see minute for voting details)*

## 122. Area North 2011/12 Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 31 December 2011 (Agenda item 9)

Due to time constraints, the Chairman suggested that items 9, 10 and 11 be deferred to the next meeting, and this was agreed.

### 123. Area North Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 10)

This item was deferred to the next meeting

---

### 124. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 11)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

---

### 125. Planning Applications (Agenda item 12)

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).

#### **11/04811/FUL – Erection of new health park including new care home, GP surgery, parking and access on land adjacent The Pennards, Behind Berry, Somerton. Applicant: Close Care Homes (Somerton) Ltd.**

The Area Lead presented the report as shown in the agenda and explained that the Local Planning Authority was satisfied that the care home was justified. He updated members that shortly before this meeting a draft unilateral undertaking from the applicant had been received that suggested the care home aspect of the application would not commence until a contract was let on the surgery. As the paperwork had only been received on the day of this meeting, Legal had not been able to look at it in detail to make any comment.

In the presentation it was explained that:

- There were some concerns locally about the prominence of the building when viewed from the north
- The application site had changed since the previous outline proposal as it now included the bungalow to the south of the site
- The care home building had now been set back from the road, the design amended and there was additional landscaping
- Access arrangements were as had been previously approved
- Additional comments had been received regarding the timetable for contaminated land surveys, whether it was the right location due to noise, and the site should be for a surgery only
- The word 'not' had been omitted from condition 4 in the agenda report – second sentence should read 'The development shall not be occupied....'
- Key considerations were scale, design, landscaping and delivery of the surgery aspect
- An additional condition would be required for bin storage associated with the surgery

The officer recommendation was for approval subject to suitable assurance that the surgery would be delivered as part of the comprehensive development of the site. He suggested a unilateral undertaking could provide such assurance for delivery of the surgery aspect of the development, but advised members that this would need to be to

the satisfaction of the Council's solicitor. Members were also reminded that the care home and surgery were subject to different funding streams.

Cllr M Fraser-Hopewell of Somerton Town Council, explained that the town council had a corporate interest in the application. He noted a new surgery was essential and needed to be located in the centre of the town. Compromises needed to be made, but in general members of the town council supported the application.

Mr C Meek, spoke in support of the application and commented that both the care home and surgery were wanted by many people in Somerton. He considered that Wessex House was no longer big enough and was in need of modernising.

Mr S Collier, agent for the applicant, commented there was considerable support locally for the application. He noted that the applicant fully intended to build the surgery at the same time as the care home, and a draft unilateral undertaking had already been submitted.

Ward member, Councillor David Norris commented the principle for the development had already been established and main matters were design and possible over development. The revised design was better in keeping with area. The relevant parties were content that the design met their needs, however he had concerns regarding parking arrangements and the ability for large vehicles to get through the site. The development would meet local needs and felt that subject to a unilateral undertaking the application should be approved.

War member, Councillor Pauline Clarke, noted that facilities at Wessex House could be described as adequate rather than ideal as many rooms were without en-suite facilities, corridors were too narrow for wheelchairs to pass and the lift was very small. There was no dispute over the care that residents received. Somerton needed this development and she was in support of the application.

There was a brief discussion during which mixed opinions were expressed. Some members felt the site was over developed and there were parking issues; others were of the opinion the surgery was desperately needed and acknowledged the care home was needed for viability. In response to a comment, the Area Lead clarified that the design of the building helped minimise the bulk, but it would also be prudent, given members concerns, to add an extra condition about levels. It was proposed and seconded to approve the application subject to the conditions as set out, with the amendment to condition 4, two additional conditions for bin storage for the surgery and levels, and subject to an undertaking, to the satisfaction of the Council's solicitor, to ensure the delivery of the surgery. On being put to the vote this was carried nine in favour, two against.

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 11/04811/FUL be APPROVED subject to the receipt of a Section 106 unilateral undertaking, in a form satisfactory to the Council's solicitor, to tie the delivery of the surgery to the care home, and the conditions as set out in the officer's report, with the following amendment to condition 4 and the following additional conditions:-

Condition 4 – to read:-

Upon completion of works a Remediation Verification Report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority providing evidence that the remediation work has been completed, and it shall include a Remediation Certificate signed by the developer, confirming satisfactory remediation of the site. The development shall not be occupied (unless

agreed otherwise by the Local Planning Authority) unless the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing its acceptance of both the Completion Report and Remediation Certificate.

Additional condition 19 (bin store for surgery) to read:

The surgery hereby permitted shall not be occupied until such time as a secure bin storage area has been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

Additional condition 20 (levels) to read:

No development shall be carried out until such time as details of the proposed levels have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Once approved such details shall be fully implemented unless agreed otherwise in writing by the local planning authority.

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

*(Voting: 9 in favour, 2 against)*

**11/03832/FUL – Erection of 9 dwellings (plots 53-61) in lieu of approved employment units B and C (revised scheme) on land at Old Kelways, Somerton Road, Langport. Applicant: C G Fry and Son Ltd.**

The Area Lead introduced the application as shown in the agenda and referred to an email circulated to members by the applicant. He updated members that letters had also been received from residents on site that referred to the space being empty and questioned why build employment units that would remain empty, and that their preference was for the area to be housing. He informed members of a correction to the report in that E1 was not for employment but was a small shop/café and hence had become retail. The Area lead clarified to members that if the application were to be approved it would mean the total loss of employment space on the site, and that this was the only issue for consideration.

Mr D Lohfink, from C G Fry the applicant ask members to consider the specific circumstances in that the employment space had been marketed for two years without success. He noted that they were not compelled to build the floorspace and there was nothing in previous conditions or Section 106 obligations requiring them to do so. They would still provide contributions and affordable housing if the application were to be approved.

Ward member, Councillor Shane Pledger, noted that the site had been well developed and that the site needed to be finished, but felt there wasn't a need to build the employment floorspace.

During a short discussion, mixed views were expressed including:

- Employment space would be needed in the future, if not now
- Market will change in the future, employment land shouldn't be lost
- Perhaps different marketing strategy required

- Need to work with applicant to try and support them
- If a resident on site, would want the site completed in some way and tidied up.
- Employment space should be kept unless proof that it won't be needed anytime in the future
- As a new development all residents on the site should be aware the space was allocated for employment use
- Developments such as this should be phased to minimise these situations

In response to comments made the Area Lead commented that there could be an argument that there was no interest in the space because it had not been built, but there might be if built. The Area Development Manager (North) commented that Langport wanted more land for employment and there was no wish to see a release of the employment space. She acknowledged it was a currently a difficult economic climate and that there was a risk of blank space on the site.

It was proposed and seconded to accept the officer recommendation to refuse the application. On being put to the vote this was carried six in favour and three against.

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 11/03835/FUL be REFUSED as per the officer recommendation for the following reason:

It has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that there is no demand for the approved employment units or that there loss would have no detriment impact on employment opportunities in the area. In the absence of such justification the loss of this employment opportunity would be detrimental to the economic sustainability of the locality contrary to saved policies ME6 and ME7 of the South Somerset local plan and the advice of PPS4.

*(Voting: 6 in favour, 3 against)*

.....  
Chairman