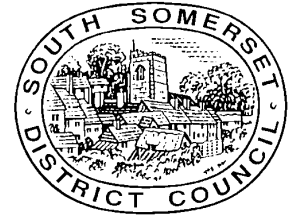


# South Somerset District Council

## Notice of Meeting



# Area North Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Wednesday 25 April 2012**

**2.00pm**

**The Millennium Hall  
Seavington  
TA19 0QH**

(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 3.30pm.**

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](mailto:becky.sanders@southsomerset.gov.uk)

website: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk/agendas](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/agendas)

This Agenda was issued on Monday 16 April 2012.

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*



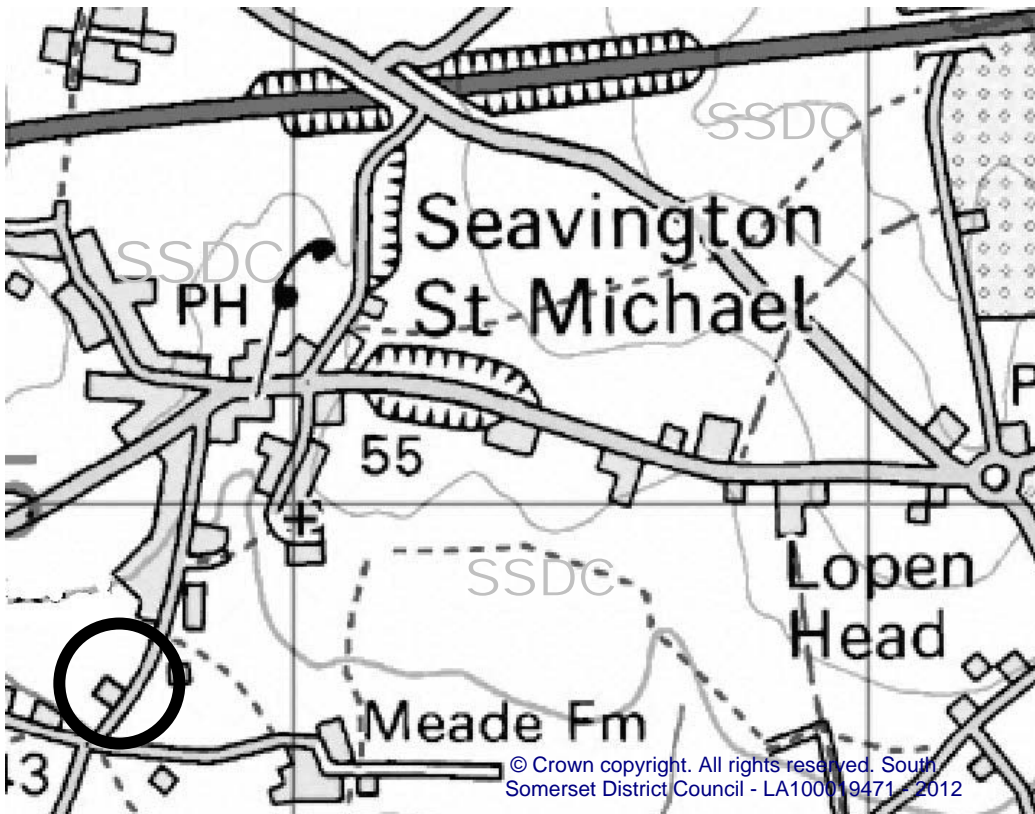
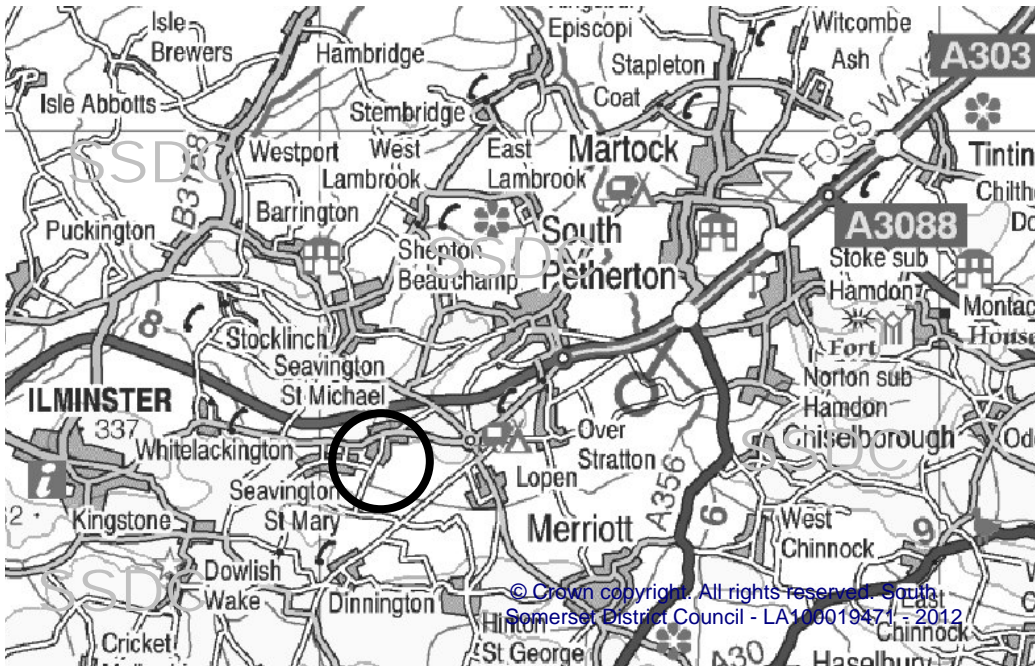
**2007-2008**  
Neighbourhood and  
Community Champions:  
The Role of Elected Members  
**2006-2007**  
Improving Rural Services  
Empowering Communities  
**2005-2006**  
Getting Closer to Communities

**This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Location of meeting venue



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## 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 also 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: John Bailey and Sam Crabb.

## South Somerset District Council – Council Plan

**Our focuses are:** (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses.
- Environment – We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use.
- Homes – We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income.
- Health & Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

## 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 (**but this month no earlier than 3.45pm**), 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 will attend Area North Committee quarterly in February, May, August and November – they will be available from 1.30pm at the meeting venue 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 (unless specified otherwise), 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 April 2012**

## Agenda

### *Preliminary Items*

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2012.**
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 at 2.00pm on **Wednesday 23 May 2012 at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.**

5. **Public question time**

- 6. Chairman's announcements
- 7. Reports from members

*Page Number*

*Items for Discussion*

- 8. Update On Changes To Local Bus Services Following Somerset County Council's Decision On Bus Subsidy .....1
- 9. Area North Community Grants – Barrington Village Hall Installation of Roof Mounted Solar Panels (Executive Decision).....13
- 10. Addressing Community Priorities - Area North Development Plan 2011-12 – Outturn Report .....19
- 11. Area North Committee – Forward Plan .....36
- 12. Planning Appeals.....39
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**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 April 2012

## 8. Update On Changes To Local Bus Services Following Somerset County Council's Decision On Bus Subsidy

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance  
 Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy  
 Service Manager: Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager  
 Lead Officer: Nigel Collins, Transport Strategy Officer  
 Contact Details: nigel.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462591

### Purpose of the Report

To update members on the impact on local bus routes in Area North following Somerset County Council's decision about bus subsidy reductions and progress to date on measures to mitigate the effects.

### Public Interest

Somerset County Council (SCC) has agreed to make savings of £1.5m by reducing bus subsidies. This has resulted in changes to some bus routes, which are scheduled to take place in the week commencing Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May. The decision on which routes are affected follows a consultation undertaken by SCC (from 12<sup>th</sup> December until 15<sup>th</sup> January). Concern has been raised by members about the impact of these reductions in terms of accessibility, especially for rural communities. This resulted in South Somerset District Council (SSDC) making a formal response to SCC's consultation, which suggested ways to lessen these impacts and this report seeks to update members on the results of subsequent discussions with the County Council.

### Recommendations

That members:

- (1) Note the contents of this report.
- (2) Recommend that the Transport Strategy Officer continue to liaise with the County Council to endeavour where possible to lessen the impact of the impending changes to bus routes and consider appropriate alternatives when these are necessary and feasible.
- (3) Recommend that the Transport Strategy Officer work with the Area North Development team, the County Council and key stakeholders to raise awareness of the services available, particularly with regard to bus links to the new Doctors' Surgery and Hospital at South Petherton.
- (4) Recommend that the Transport Strategy Officer seek confirmation that the additional Department for Transport grant of £315,434 received by SCC for 2012/13 for "establishment and development of Community Transport" will be used for the purpose intended and seek the appropriate apportionment of this fund to Area North recognising its rural nature and to ensure social inclusion.



## Background

As part of a programme to reduce Somerset County Council's budget gap of £26m for 2012/13, the subsidies made to bus services were reduced. **Appendix 1** contains the contextual information for the cuts, including SCC's methodology in selecting routes and on-going mitigation measures.

As part of the consultation to determine the options and reductions in subsidies for specific routes needed to achieve the saving of £1.5m, SCC held a special meeting at the Brympton Way offices for District Councillors and Town and Parish representatives on Wed 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012. A significant number of Town & Parish Councils attended and the views of this council were by and large echoed by their representatives. SSDC's formal response following that meeting is attached as **Appendix 2**.

SCC's Transporting Somerset team (the public transport department) reviewed SSDC's response, together with those submitted during the public consultation and considered mitigating measures to reduce the impact of the likely cuts in service prior to their Cabinet Member's decision on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

The subsequent changes to bus routes are scheduled to take place in the week commencing Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012 and SCC will be putting revised timetables on their website, once these have been finalised with the operators.

### Implications for routes within Area North (see **Appendix 3**).

- It is clear that SCC has taken note of some of the points raised during the consultation, with some routes now suffering no reductions and others operating at a reduced level.
- Links to South Petherton Hospital/new surgery:
  - There were concerns that, with the withdrawal of service 91 (Chard/Crewkerne to South Petherton), bus links to South Petherton Hospital and the new doctors' surgery (when built) would be curtailed. However, SCC has now procured an agreement with South West Coaches to extend the existing 81 (Yeovil, Montacute, Stoke-sub-Hamdon and Norton-sub-Hamdon to South Petherton) which should alleviate the problem. However, whilst the 91 will operate its last journey on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May, the earliest anticipated start date for the 81 is Mon 11<sup>th</sup> June.
  - The DRT N6 can also cover many of the journeys to the hospital, though this is not well known locally and would benefit from improved publicity. Although journey times from the western section of the DRT area are longer than would be ideal, nevertheless the service offers the potential to give excellent coverage to what would otherwise be very isolated communities.
- The coverage of DRT routes within South Somerset is shown on **Appendix 4**.
- Some areas within Area North such as Somerton and Langport are well served in comparison with other areas of Somerset by traditional "fixed" bus routes.
- There is a conventional minibus service operated by Isle Brewers Transport as follows:

- 903 (Mondays and Wednesdays) High Ham/Aller/Long Sutton areas to Langport
  - 904 (Tuesdays and Fridays) Isle Brewers/Fivehead/Drayton areas to Langport
  - 850 (Thursdays) High Ham and Lambrook/Kingsbury areas to Langport
  - 901 (Saturdays) Isle Brewers/Fivehead/Curry Mallet areas to Taunton
- South Somerset Links operates in and around Langport and Somerton.
  - The change in the level of bus subsidy has also prompted operators to look at their commercially operated (i.e. without subsidy) routes and this is likely to continue as the impact of the changes filters through.
  - First Bus has made minor timetable changes to the 377 (Wells via Somerton-Yeovil) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

The Transport Strategy Officer will give a verbal update to the Area North Committee should we become aware of any further changes.

### **Potential Measures to Reduce Impact**

In cases where services are either being withdrawn or curtailed there will clearly be instances where some journeys currently made by bus will still be socially necessary. This is likely to increase demand on Community Transport Providers such as the South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action Ltd (SSVCA), which operates South Somerset Links from the Langport Information Centre. The District Council is therefore continuing to liaise with Transporting Somerset to lobby for improvements to DRT and Community Transport journeys to ensure more comprehensive coverage, especially in those areas where traditional bus services are being withdrawn.

One way of enhancing this type of service would be to make use of the additional funding as announced by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to provide additional support to local transport authorities in respect of the “establishment and development of Community Transport” in 2012/13. This is a repeat of the 2011 grant of £315,434. Clarification that this funding is being put to this use is currently being sought from SCC.

Some residents do not appear to be aware of the varying forms of transport available to them, and it is suggested that the Area Development Team work with local organisations to raise the profile of local services across the area.

Other options to alleviate social exclusion could include working with taxi operators using taxi bus schemes, which have proved successful in other areas.

This mitigation work is ongoing and the Transport Strategy Officer will give a verbal update to the Area North Committee on progress to date.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications for Area North budgets.

## Council Plan Implications

### Focus Four: Health & Communities

- Work with and lobby partners to help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities.

## Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

A reduction in the level of public transport will increase the number of car journeys and subsequently also increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

A reduction in the level of public transport will have negative impacts on the levels of access available to South Somerset residents. Unless adequate measures to mitigate are in place there is every possibility the most significant impact will fall on those least able to afford the alternatives to the bus resulting in increased social exclusion in rural areas. People living in rural locations that belong to one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and rely on public transport may be more vulnerable and disadvantaged. This is particularly significant for people with disabilities, older population, and people with childcare responsibilities who are mainly women. SCC should be taking this into account.

**Background Papers:** *None*

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## Appendix 1

### Contextual information from Somerset County Council for proposals for reduction in bus subsidies (written prior to 27 February 2012).

Somerset County Council has a budget gap of around £26m for 2012/13 so has no choice but to reduce services across all service areas to create a balanced budget.

SCC has agreed to reduce subsidies to supported bus services by about £1.53m. This leaves approximately £1.9m annual budget to continue supporting services, with an additional budget for park and ride.

The £1.53m savings include an assumed £100k to be achieved through 'consolidating contracts' rather than cutting services. There are also a number of other separate restructuring and efficiency savings for the transport service that have been agreed in setting the new budget so we are not simply cutting services when considering budgets for this service area.

It is important to note that the proposals do not affect statutory services including home to school transport for eligible pupils or adult social care transport.

The large amount of consultation feedback has given us much more detailed insight into the likely impacts and this is being used to further refine the proposals prior to the decision on 27 February to minimise any impacts.

The key points arising from the impact assessment are that the proposed service withdrawals and reductions could impact on all groups, but significantly females and older people, low income families who do not have their own transport and disability groups. The changes could affect young people, but the new budget actually increases the annual budget for the bus network that provides travel for college students in order to stabilise the County Ticket arrangements so impacts on young people will be minimised.

### Mitigating Actions

To mitigate these impacts, the proposed detailed changes in bus services that were published for consultation:

- Were carefully chosen to retain supported services in those areas with the greatest need to minimise adverse impacts;
- Protected the further education college network to minimise impacts on young people;
- Protected funding for demand responsive transport to ensure many users will still have an accessible travel opportunity where fixed route services are withdrawn;
- Took account of the availability of Community Transport alternatives.

The subsequent consultation process has enabled us to challenge operators to replace subsidised services with commercially operated alternatives and detailed discussions with operators are likely to result in a number of routes being registered commercially as we withdraw our financial support. We have also been successful in negotiating with operators to continue to operate some services largely unaltered at reduced levels of funding, and re-route some existing services where our withdrawal of funding would have created particularly significant gaps in the network. (See tables 1-4 below for details.)

We will also delay withdrawing contracted services that currently carry non-eligible school children so that those children can continue to travel by bus until the end of the academic year in July 2012.

We will continue to work with operators to resolve as many of the remaining impacts as possible.

Table 1 Services which following discussion and negotiation are now likely to be replaced commercially should the Council withdraw financial support. (No cost)

Service	Route	Recommended Response to Consultation Feedback
N12	West Chinnock - Yeovil	Operator has offered to provide a replacement service serving significant parts of these routes linked to a college bus service they intend to register commercially
30A	Taunton - Axminster	
91	Chard - Crewkerne	
9	Wiveliscombe - Wellington	An operator is proposing to restore most of this service on a commercial basis
603	Wellington - Wiveliscombe	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year Working with operator to find long term commercial solution

Table 2 Services which the Council has successfully negotiated to continue running largely unaltered but at reduced levels of funding. (No cost)

Service	Route	Recommended Response to Consultation Feedback
N6	South Somerset DRT	Negotiations with operator to continue service unaltered for 10% funding reduction rather than 16%
N8	South Somerset DRT	Negotiations with operator to continue service but with Saturday service withdrawn for 8% funding reduction rather than 16%
667	Street - Wincanton	8% reduction in contract cost agreed with operator for no reduction in service

Table 3 Services which will be replaced by re-routing nearby services. (No cost)

Service	Route	Recommended Response to Consultation Feedback
90	Chard - Crewkerne	Consultees have requested diversion of 99 service through Winsham and Clapton. Discussions with operator are currently taking place.

Table 4 Service withdrawals which will be delayed until July 2012 so that school children who use the bus but are not eligible for free school transport can continue to travel until the end of the academic year. (Total cost approximately £15.5k)

Service	Route	Recommended Response to Consultation Feedback
221	North Petherton - Blake School	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year
499	Williton - Danesfield School	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year
603	Wellington - Wiveliscombe	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year Working with operator to find long term commercial solution
9	Wiveliscombe - Wellington	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year
15b	Bridgwater – Chilton Trinity School	Delay withdrawal until end of academic year

## Appendix 2

### South Somerset District Council's response to Somerset County Council's consultation on bus subsidy reductions (January 2012)

This response summarises the concerns raised by South Somerset District Councillors, Town and Parish Council representatives at a meeting held at the South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Council offices at Brympton Way on Wed 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012. It also includes other issues raised by both SSDC members and officers arising from further scrutiny of the proposals.

SSDC has major concerns with the proposed bus subsidy reductions. These concerns include:

#### Timescale for implementation

The initial proposal was to introduce these cuts over 2 years, 2012/13 and 2013/14. The latest proposal advocates implementing the whole £1.5m savings in 2012/13. This is too quick. Allowing more time and a phased approach would enable greater opportunity for all parties – The County, District, Town and Parish councils as well as the bus and community transport operators to consider alternatives to “restructure and reshape”<sup>1</sup> and give time for these to be in place prior to withdrawal.

The fact that Parish Precepts have already been set for 2012/13 further constrains any mitigation measures that Parishes may wish to consider. Additionally comments we have received from bus operators indicate that they too have concerns regarding the ‘one-hit’ approach.

#### Taunton Park & Ride

There is concern that the current Taunton Park & Ride costs £500,000 per annum to subsidise a bespoke service when evidence suggests that these journeys do not come anywhere near break even. Other towns and cities operate through utilising journeys in the opposite direction to serve other sites and/or actually serving the Park & Ride site with other direct bus routes to the town centre. Still others look at parking charges in comparison with fares charged to ensure viability. Rather than the current operation of the Park & Ride remaining sacrosanct, SCC should consider ways of increasing the efficiency of this service and using the savings achieved to mitigate the impacts of their proposals for reductions in subsidies on other bus routes.

#### Increasing efficiency on School and Education Contracts

Whilst it is appreciated that the provision of the School Transport Network is a statutory requirement and that government guidance advocates that Further Education Transport is desirable, an assessment should be undertaken to look at increasing the efficiency of the operation of these services i.e. utilising an empty school bus on it's return journey to provide a link for some rural communities or operating some schools with a registered bus service rather than bespoke contracted vehicles. Additionally actually increasing the capacity of some vehicles on education contracts could be cost effective in enabling other passengers (e.g. 6<sup>th</sup> formers) to use these buses on payment of a reasonable fare.

#### Lack of Economic Assessment

There is also concern at SCC's admission that no economic assessment been carried out to indicate the impact these cuts would have on the economy of the area. There is a potential knock on effect for retail and service providers in our towns and rural centres as

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<sup>1</sup> Best Value Statutory Guidance - Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) September 2011



well to the operators themselves in terms of depot viability and to their workforces. Impact Assessments need to be undertaken prior to any final decisions on bus subsidy reductions being approved.

Similarly the resulting hidden additional costs of getting services out to people in rural areas will need to be considered. There is every possibility the most significant impact will fall on those least able to afford the alternatives to the bus resulting in increased social exclusion in rural areas. For this reason, whilst impacts on rural areas may not be a 'protected characteristic' for Equalities Impact Assessment this should very much be the case in rural South Somerset.

### **SCC's Methodology in assessing routes**

In Option 3 SCC indicates that they are considering routes on a case-by-case basis and as such this is preferable to the alternatives presented on options 1 & 2, which appear to discriminate against either rural or more 'inter-urban' services respectively. However whilst option 3 may appear preferable no cost benefit analysis has been shown and Town & Parish Councils need to know the specifics in order to assess the impact on their residents.

In response to questions concerning the criteria used to determine where cuts would fall SCC has indicated that they considered the overall budget, costs per passenger, coverage in the area, what needs to be safeguarded and what efficiencies the operators themselves could achieve. Unfortunately no details have been given in relation to this work and complete transparency and availability of this information will be necessary if all key stakeholders are to be able to work together to "restructure and reshape".

### **Level of cuts, measures to mitigate and potential for linking with other types of service delivery**

SSDC is concerned that some routes have been identified for complete withdrawal of funding e.g. services N11, 90, 91, 5 & 8 leaving some communities completely isolated. The N11, 90 and 91 currently operate daily Mondays to Saturdays. Whilst this level of operation is desirable, reducing the number days or times operated could still achieve significant savings. Cost details in respect of subsidies have not been given, although both services 5 & 8 only operate on one day per week and such costs are likely to be extremely low. Should these be included in SCC's list for cuts?

Similarly given that the new South Petherton doctors' surgery at South Petherton Hospital is due to open in July 2012 then the proposal to withdraw funding for service 91 will have a significant impact on a number of settlements.

There is insufficient detail on how the County Council proposes to mitigate the impacts of these proposals and to restructure and reshape as per DCLG guidance where services are or likely to be withdrawn. This work should be done in advance for any final decision (See timescale for implementation above). Part of this mitigation work will presumably be using the money recently announced by the Transport Minister Norman Baker on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to enhance or develop Community Transport and/or Demand Responsive Transport<sup>2</sup>.

SSDC would also like confirmation that SCC will be making a concerted effort to work with District, Town & Parish Councils to look at alternatives and that this effort will take

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<sup>2</sup> "To further support the establishment and development of Community Transport, the Government is making available £10 million to be distributed to 76 local authorities in England, outside London, by formula; this is a repeat of the *Supporting Community Transport Fund* announced in March 2011".

place prior to implementation to ensure that reasonable levels of accessibility are maintained.

### **Demand Responsive Services**

The map for Demand Responsive Services (DRT) shows significant gaps in DRT provision in South Somerset, despite SCC's general approach suggesting the use of DRT to compensate where journeys by conventional bus are being lost. Yet the proposals indicate that all funding will be withdrawn for the N11 and that the other DRT routes will suffer cuts of between 10% and 16%.

It is important that a safety net is in place to ensure that residents in these areas are able to access services. It is noticeable that DRT is provided largely throughout the other districts in Somerset and a comparable level of cover should apply to South Somerset.

### **Other concerns/considerations**

*The consultation makes no mention of other factors affecting local bus provision. These include:*

- SCC's reduction in % of fares reimbursement to the operators from 70% to 55% of average fares
- The Government's 20% reduction in BSOG
- The impact of subsidy withdrawal on current commercially operated routes e.g. First Avon & Somerset's intention to amend both the 54 and the 30 w.e.f. 19/02/12. Does SCC have any indication of likely similar responses from other operators?

SCC refers to seeking contributions towards bus services from new housing and commercial developments. Laudable as this is, it should be recognised that such contributions are very much in the long term (The SSDC Core Strategy is projecting to 2028) and that most development of a significant scale is likely to occur in the more urban areas. The level of such contributions will also be subject to future negotiations and agreements and must be taken in context with a raft of other measures that such new development will be expected to deliver.

Similarly there seems to be reliance on the prediction that "many bus services will continue to be provided by commercial operators". No indication is given as to which routes this is likely to be or the long-term security of these routes if such a decision were to be taken by the operators. SSDC feels that a more realistic assessment would be 'some bus services' rather than 'many'. (Last year only 2 of the Sunday services and no evening services operated in South Somerset were continued following the withdrawal of subsidy by SCC [and one of those remaining routes is currently subsidised by Dorset]).

### **The Actual Consultation**

In terms of how the consultation has been carried out, SSDC has significant concerns with:

- The inappropriate and lack of timing for the consultation i.e. 5 weeks over the Christmas period.
- The difficulties in accessing the website especially when only a short timescale was allowed for responses.
- The quality of questionnaire. In particular the inability to expand sufficiently on issues i.e. Park & Ride
- Inadequate advertising of consultation process.

## Appendix 3

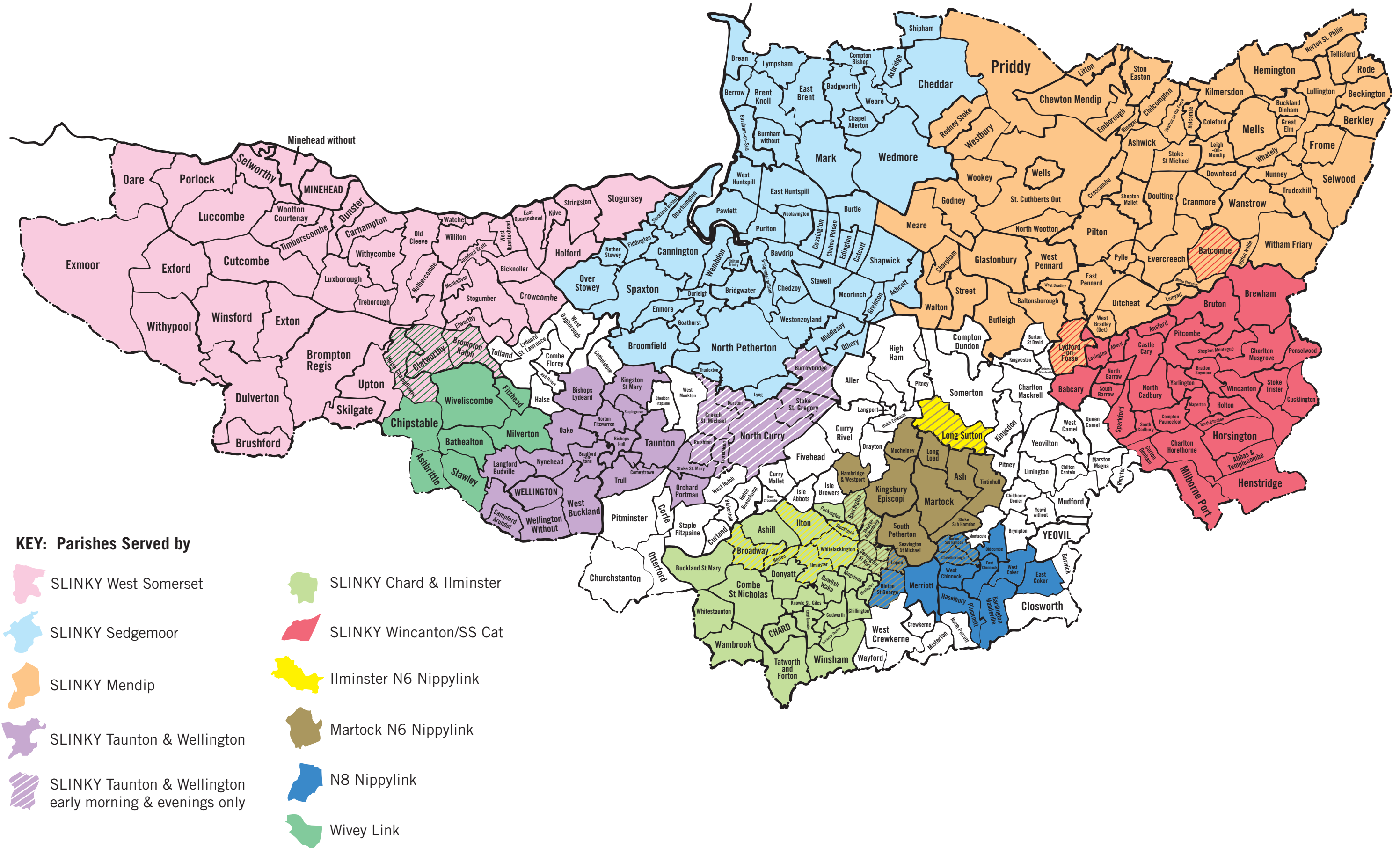
### Implications For Routes In Area North

The implications for the routes in Area North affected by these changes are shown in the table below:

Ser. No.	Route	Days	Operator	Frequency (2011/12)	Proposed Subsidy reduction	Actual Subsidy Reduction	Implications for route with effect from 28 <sup>th</sup> May, unless otherwise stated.
N6	DRT - Rural settlements surrounding South Petherton & Martock	Mon – Sat	Nippybus	Approx hourly – advance booking required	16% funding reduction	10% funding reduction	No reduction in service
N8	DRT – offers links from Lopen, Norton Sub Hamdon, & Over Stratton via fixed route West Coker to Yeovil.	Mon – Sat	Nippybus	Approx hourly – advance booking required	16% funding reduction	8% funding reduction	DRT section will not operate on Saturdays.
N9A	Martock to Yeovil.						Early journey departing Martock at 0740 to be withdrawn. However, First Bus operates the 52 over the same route with departures at 0703 and 0744 from Martock Pinnacle so this is likely to have minimal impact.
N12	Norton-Sub-Hamdon & Lopen to Crewkerne	Mon – Fri	Nippybus	2 return journeys	All funding withdrawn	All funding withdrawn	The N12 will be withdrawn. However a new service N10A will be introduced on Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> May (see below). Whilst Norton no longer has a direct link to Crewkerne there are good links to Yeovil (Service 81) and the village falls within both the N6 & N8 DRT areas.

Ser. No.	Route	Days	Operator	Frequency (2011/12)	Proposed Subsidy reduction	Actual Subsidy Reduction	Implications for route with effect from 28 <sup>th</sup> May, unless otherwise stated.
N10A (new route)	This will link Lopen to Merriott, Crewkerne and Martock, offering journeys from Seavington St Mary to Taunton.						New route beginning 28 <sup>th</sup> May (see above).
40	Yeovil to Taunton (via A North Villages)	Thurs	South West Coaches	1 return journey per week	Withdrawal of partial subsidy	Commercial decision to withdraw	Service withdrawn from 11 <sup>th</sup> June. (Service Extension 40a to Minehead on Mondays in school holidays also withdrawn)
81	South Petherton to Yeovil via Norton, Stoke, Montacute	Mon – Sat	South West Coaches	Approx hourly	Only funded journeys	No Subsidy reduction	Frequency unchanged. Service extended to South Petherton Hospital – anticipated start date 11 <sup>th</sup> June.
91	Chard, Donyatt, Ilminster, Merriott, & Hinton St George to South Petherton Hospital & Crewkerne	Mon – Sat	Stagecoach	Every 2 hours	All funding withdrawn	All funding withdrawn	Service Withdrawn - Links to hospital and new surgery from some areas an issue. However Service 81 will be extended to give links from the village (& also Norton, Stoke, Montacute & Yeovil) to the surgery/hospital. Also N6 can provide links for many outlying areas, although awareness is an issue.
665	Ilchester – Street (Via Long Sutton, Somerton & Dundon)	Thurs	South West Coaches	1 return journey per week	All funding withdrawn	All funding withdrawn	No Service
Chard & Ilminster Slinky	DRT - Connects Barrington, Ilton, Puckington, Seavington, Shepton Beauchamp & Stocklinch to Ilminster	Mon – Sat	SSVCA	08.00 to 18.00 – advance booking required	16% funding reduction	16% funding reduction	Reduction in the length of day – 08.00 – 17.00 with reduced hours on a Saturday.

# Appendix 4





Area Committee North – 25 April 2012

## 9. Area North Community Grants – Barrington Village Hall Installation of Roof Mounted Solar Panels (Executive Decision)

*Strategic Director* Rina Singh, Place and Performance  
*Assistant Director* Kim Close / Helen Rutter, Communities  
*Service Manager:* Charlotte Jones Area Development Manager (North)  
*Lead Officer:* Les Collett, Community Development Officer (North)  
*Contact Details:* leslie.collett@south somerset.gov.uk or (01935 462249)

### Purpose of the Report

For members to consider an application for financial assistance to Barrington Village Hall for the installation of roof mounted solar panels.

### Public Interest

Barrington Village Hall Committee has applied for financial assistance from SSDC. The application has been assessed by the Community Development Officer who has submitted this report to allow the Area North Committee to make an informed decision on the application.

### Recommendation

- (1) Approve the award of £3,000 to Barrington Village Hall & Playing Fields Charity towards the installation of roof mounted solar panels , allocated from the District-Wide Village Halls budget subject to the SSDC standard conditions for Community Grants (see **Appendix A**) and the following special condition:
  - a) Applicants must make provision for the future maintenance and replacement of the facilities. SSDC recommends the applicant set up a sinking fund to achieve this condition.

### Application Details

<b>Name of Applicant</b>	Barrington Village Hall & Playing Fields Charity
<b>Project</b>	Installation of solar panels
<b>Project description</b>	Panels to be fitted to the south facing roof of Barrington village hall to reduce the carbon footprint of the building and to benefit from available feed in tariffs
<b>Total project cost</b>	£10,000
<b>Amount requested from SSDC</b>	£3,000 (30%)
<b>Application assessed by:</b>	Les Collett, Community Development Officer (North)
<b>Contact details:</b>	leslie.collett@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462249



## Background Information

Barrington village hall was built in 2006 following extensive community effort. It benefits from all the requirements of the building regulations of the time regarding insulation, double glazing and other building materials. The running cost of the building is always a concern and the trustees who continue to look at ways of reducing costs along with reducing the carbon footprint of the building in order to benefit all hall users and management now and in the future.

Although one of the newest halls to be built in Area North there is a continuing programme of improvements and maintenance to be undertaken which includes the village play area.

The local playgroup operates from an upstairs room in the village hall. Events held at the hall are wide ranging with the aim of attracting residents from within the small community boundaries. It is important to the community that they support young people and are able to maintain a balanced and vibrant community.

The village hall benefits from a number of elderly and disabled users, for many the social and community events offer the opportunity to interact with others and have a social life that they may not otherwise achieve.

## Project development

The management trustees have looked at the long-term position of the village hall regarding running cost and taken into account the need to reduce costs and carbon emissions.

## Project description

The project is to design, supply and installation of 16 PV solar panels with a total output of 4kw on the south-facing roof of Barrington Village Hall. Barrington village hall has a large roof area shown below with an impression of the installation.



## Anticipated benefits and outcomes

Following completion of installation, the project will only have minimum maintenance costs and will be self-funding. The cost savings in reduced energy costs and feed-in tariff will fund any on-going project maintenance required by the system.

It is estimated that the CO2 emission avoided will be 3,274kg/a. The estimated annual output from the system is 3710Kwh, producing an overall annual return (as a % of installation cost) of 11.3%. The estimated life is 25 years.

By enabling the village hall to reduce its energy consumption and costs will lead to lower hire charges going forward and enable local community groups to make maximum use of the hall. At the same time the reduced dependence on fossil fuel for heating the hall and feeding solar generated electricity into the national grid will have a positive environmental impact on all local groups.

### Management and ownership

The village hall is a registered charity, owned and managed by the community operating under Charity Commission's model village hall trust scheme. The committee also has Hallmark 1 standard (an accreditation scheme for the management of community buildings operated by the Community Council for Somerset.).

Since the hall was opened the day-to-day running cost are mainly covered by the rental income from hall users and additional fundraising events. As well as these costs the trustees maintain the children's play area and play area.

In keeping with good practice and the requirements of previous grant conditions the Village Hall Committee have committed to the creation of sinking funds for future repairs and maintenance.

<b>Barrington Village Hall Allocation of monies to funds as at 31 Dec 2011</b>	<b>£</b>
Village Hall General Fund	4434.99
Tarmac Road Maintenance/Repair	2200.00
Building & Grounds and play equipment Maintenance Fund required by previous grants	16000.00
<b>Total Village Hall Funds at year end 2011</b>	<b>22634.99</b>

### Consents and permissions

Planning permission is not required for this project. Applicant will ensure compliance with building regulations as necessary.

### Project Costs

The table below shows the breakdown of the project costs.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Design, supply and installation of 16 solar panels (4kw output), mounting system, inverter, electrical circuit.	£9,555
Scaffolding	£445
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,000</b>

### Match funding

Funding Source	Amount £	Status
Parish Council	1,000 (10%)	Confirmed
Own Funds	6,000	Confirmed
SDDC	3,000	Pending
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,000</b>	

### Parish Information

Barrington is a small conservation village with a population of around 450 and home to Barrington Court, a National Trust property. It has a small primary school, which is joined with both the villages of Barrington and Ilton, a public house, church and the village hall.

Parish	Barrington
Parish population	450
No. Of Households	211
Precept 12-13	£12,600
Band D Charge 12/13	£60.86
Parish Council Contribution	£1,000

### Evidence of support for the project / consultation

An article setting out the plans and details of the project were provided through the village hall broadsheet and Parish magazine delivered to every household. It was also available on both the village and village hall websites, which contained full details. A public road show was run at the village hall where all villagers were invited to attend. Written comments received from the villagers from these actions were all-supportive of the proposals.

### Community Grants Assessment Score

Under SDDC community grants policies, funding is only recommended for projects scoring 22+

Category	Score	Maximum
A Eligibility	Y	
B Target Groups	6	6
C Project	5	5
D Capacity of Organisation	13	15
E Financial need	6	7
F Innovation	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>

## Summary and Recommendation

Barrington is a small community within Area North with no other community facility. The need to ensure a well-managed, sustainable hall is vital to the groups that use the hall and as a social meeting place for residents.

The hall is well-managed with an active fundraising programme, and has met with previous conditions to secure long term maintenance reserves. Energy saving projects of this type have local and environmental benefits.

### Recommendation:

To support the application for the full £3,000 requested.

## Financial Implications

The District-wide Village Halls grants budget originally existed to support village hall projects applying to the Joint County & District Village halls grants programme. Due to an under spend in this budget and the fact that the Joint Village Halls scheme is no longer in operation it was agreed at Corporate Grants Committee that these funds could be awarded by Area Committees to village hall projects addressing energy efficiency and disabled access. There is currently £ 28,784 left in this budget. If this application is supported, £25,784 will remain in this budget for future projects.

## Council Plan Implications

Focus two: Environment - “We want an attractive environment to live in with increase recycling and lower energy use”

Focus four: Health & Communities – “We want communities that are healthy, self reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other”

### Other Implications:

Area North priorities: SELF-HELP – we will promote greater levels of self-help to promote the sustainability of local services and facilities for all ages.

## Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

This project will reduce the annual energy consumption of Barrington Village Hall. Co2 emission avoided: 3,274kg/a. Estimated energy supplied annually by solar system input – 3373.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

This facility is open to all without distinction of political, religious or other opinions. The village hall particularly serves the needs of older and younger people.

**Background papers:** *Grant application file AN12/01*

## APPENDIX A

### Standard Grant Conditions for SSDC Community Grants

1.	The funding has been awarded based on the information provided on the application form for your application number AN/XXX For XX% of the total cost.
2.	The attached signed "Advice of Acceptance of Funding Offer" to be returned before payment is made to SSDC, Unit 10, Bridge Barns, Long Sutton, TA10 9PZ.
3.	Confirmation that all other funding sources are secured.
4.	The applicant demonstrates an appropriate Parish Council contribution.
5.	SSDC is acknowledged on any publicity and on any permanent acknowledgement of assistance towards the project.
6.	The applicant will work, in conjunction with SSDC Officers, to monitor the success of the scheme and the benefits to the community, resulting from SSDC's contribution to the project. A project update will be provided on request.
7.	Should the scheme be delayed or unable to commence within twelve months from the date of this committee, SSDC must be notified in writing.
8.	Should the final cost be less than the estimate considered by the Committee, the funding will be proportionately reduced. However, if the cost exceeds that estimate, no further funding will normally be available.
9.	SSDC must be notified of, and approve, any proposed changes to the project.
10.	The applicant will share good practice with other organisations if successful in securing external funding.
11.	Grants can only be paid for a single year and a second application is not allowed for the same project within 3 years (unless Service Level Agreement).

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

## 10. Addressing Community Priorities - Area North Development Plan 2011-12 – Outturn Report

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

### Purpose of the Report

To provide an end of year report of the work undertaken by the Area Development service on behalf of the SSDC Area North Committee to address priorities identified during April 2011 to March 2012.

*Councillors are asked to contact the Area Development Manager or other named contacts in advance of the meeting with any requests for further information.*

### Public Interest

Four SSDC Area Development teams support four Area Committees and 60 ward members to identify and address local social, economic and environmental priorities for Yeovil, the market towns and rural areas of South Somerset, in Areas West, North, South and East.

Each of the four SSDC Area Committee's seek to improve local quality of life which includes directing the work of the Area Development team, together with an annual grants budget, and a dedicated allocation of the council's capital programme.

This report provides information on the work supported through partnership working or direct investment) by the Area Development Service and Area North Committee, completed or taking place from April 2011 to March 2012.

### Recommendation

Note and comment on the report highlighting any specific current priorities within wards and parishes.

### Background

In a rural area such as Area North in South Somerset, economies of scale can be harder to achieve for public services. Building on existing partnerships, or promoting voluntary action can assist to make real improvements for local people.

South Somerset District Council aims to address this challenge, and build upon the local skills and knowledge found in local communities, through its well-established Area Working system, the Council's 'enable-partner-deliver' ethos, and its ambition "to strive to deliver an improving quality of life for all".



## 1. Introduction - Area North and SSDC Priorities 2011-12

Following the re-election of the Area North Committee in May 2011, local priorities were reviewed and agreed as follows (for further details see report to Area North Committee November 2011).

- a) **Jobs** – we will aim to add value to the economy in Area North, through promoting sustainable economic growth, assisting with the delivery of the Somerset Rural Broadband Programme, promoting tourism and enhancing the offer to visitors.
- b) **Affordable Housing** – we will assist with the delivery of affordable homes in Area North, including support to test and develop new models.
- c) **Self-Help** – we will promote greater levels of self-help to promote the sustainability of local services and facilities for all ages.

Agreement on local priorities helps direct the allocation of time and of funds held within the Area Portfolio, and act as a basis for work with SSDC services, other public agencies and communities. This might include local scrutiny of public service delivery, promoting local partnership working and supporting community engagement activities.

During 2011-12 SSDC also reviewed and published a revised Council Plan for 2012 to 2015, setting out a sharp focus on priorities and what SSDC wants to deliver within available resources.

**Appendix A** provides a summary of the SSDC Council Plan together with the links with the work of the Area Development (North) team and current local priorities set by ward members. The Council Plan can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/408146/ssdccouncilplan2012-2015.pdf>

## 2. The Area North Development Plan – 2011-12

The Area Development Plan is the means by which progress towards particular aims and projects are managed and monitored. The plan is formed primarily from the work programme of the Area Development service team, but is largely achieved through the combined efforts of many services, partners and local community organisations.

There is a wide range of work included, covering many aspects of supporting sustainable community development across Area North. (A summary of support to community led projects during 2011-12 within the Area Development Plan is included in **Appendix B**.)

Further information on the local delivery of SSDC services can be provided at a ward or parish level on request.

In summary the Area Development Service provides support for:

- The delivery of projects and initiatives that invest into local economic, social and environmental well-being. The significant majority of work supported is community led – including business groups, or in close collaboration with other services.
- Community involvement in public decision-making.
- Forming and maintaining effective partnerships and investments between communities and public services.
- Local access to services for residents, businesses and visitors through SSDC community offices and Local Information Centres; through publications and through occasional workshops and events.

The following sections highlight results from 2011-12 Area Development Plan.

### 3. Enabling and investing in services, facilities and activities for the community

There are three main ways in which SSDC assists with investment into local communities – through finding people the help they need to help themselves, through financial help and through its role as the Local Planning Authority to secure longer community benefits arising from development.

#### 3.1 Helping people help themselves

Area Development (North) offers an enquiries service to help anyone within the area seeking guidance on ways to start up or develop a local service or amenity, or seeking help to address or resolve an issue within the community. People using this service include local town and parish councillors, volunteers, as well as individuals and businesses. Ward members will also request help or information from time to time drawn from local community engagement.

*Details of last year's enquiries on a parish / ward basis can be provided on request.*

- During 2011-12 Area Development team recorded 225 enquiries mostly from community groups and parish councils. Some examples of requests for information or guidance included:
  - Purchasing, replacing / redeveloping community owned land and buildings.
  - Setting up new groups or terms of reference for local project steering groups
  - Business planning to redevelop buildings to provide community services
  - Local contacts to find ways to support a new activity.
  - Good practice / affordable ways to undertake local research and consultation
  - Feasibility for new housing / employment / services in villages
  - Funding advice for undertaking projects to promote local well-being

A number of enquiries lead on to offers of financial support from SSDC. The Area Development team will assist with identifying alternative sources of funding, and promotes local fundraising wherever possible. Town and Parish Councils are expected to contribute to community led projects in order to gain SSDC support.

#### 3.2 Financial support

- During 2011-12, **26 projects** within the year's programme, were helped with **£31,106 of grants** from Area North, with a **total project value of £133,935**. This represents an average grant of 23%. In other words for every £1 of SSDC funds, a further £4.30 was invested into the local community. (**Appendix B** refers to projects which received grant aid and further details are available on request.)

##### **Some examples are:**

- New MUGA and Community Shop in Kingsbury Episcopi.
- Isle Abbotts Village Hall refurbishment
- Additional equipment for community use in Pitney, Somerton and Curry Rivel community halls.
- Two parish lengthsman schemes – Turn Hill and South Petherton. (Final year of support confirmed.)

#### 3.3 Investment via s106 obligations

The programme of developer obligations, which help provide additional community facilities, has received increased recent interest. SSDC implements a detailed

monitoring and collection system, and has recently adopted revised standards for the triggering of developer obligations for community facilities as part of Local Development Framework for South Somerset.

The Area Development team will support as required the Development Management and Community Health and Leisure services to help secure contributions and re-invest against local priorities.

- The s106 Monitoring Officer will report on the progress of collecting and spend into local community facilities in June 2012. Recent examples include the completion of a new play area and open space at Old Kelways, Huish Episcopi, to be maintained by SSDC and grant awards to South Petherton Parish Council to improve local youth, play and recreation facilities.

#### 4. Community Offices and outreach work to promote and access to housing and welfare services

During 2011-12 the Area North Development service maintained two SSDC community office services in Somerton (nine hours over three days per week) and Langport (22 hours over four days per week). There was also a weekly surgery based in Martock (one session of three hours per week) as part of our support to the local volunteers working from the parish community office.

To promote services provided by SSDC through wider community engagement our Area Support Assistants can make one-off visits to local community groups and activities. Information is also supplied to community newsletters, through press releases, via ward members and parish council briefings and through occasional events and workshops.

- During the year **3143** customers chose to access SSDC services 'face to face' from one of three locations for our community office services – Somerton, Martock and Langport. An average of **31%** of all enquiries were for help with welfare benefits, housing and homelessness.
- The opening hours of the **Langport** Community Office (using shared accommodation with the Langport Information Centre) were reviewed and adjusted from 37 to 22 hours per week. (Monday to Thursday 9.00 – 2.30).
- Following the Area Review, and budget setting for 2012-13, SSDC has withdrawn the weekly surgery visit to **Martock** Community Office (wef 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012), and has proposed to withdraw the community office service in **Somerton** which is currently subject to an equalities analysis. If agreed, a date of closure will be later in 2012-13.
- The Housing and Welfare service have identified greater levels of demand for the **welfare benefit take-up** service in Area North, and will provide additional hours to meet this demand using the saved service enhancement allocation commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

*For further information on the above please contact either Teresa Oulds (Community Regeneration Officer) or Madelaine King-Oakley (Area Support Team Leader).*

#### 5. Local Information Centres

Area North supports four Local Information Centres (LICs) in Area North in Langport, Somerton, Martock and South Petherton. The LICs are staffed by volunteers, and each parish has a local co-ordinator. Volunteers are provided with training in customer service

and supporting visitor enquiries by the SSDC Tourism service. The Area North Development service monitors and supports an annual Service Level Agreement.

- In 2011-12 each Local Information Centre was supported through a Service Level Agreement, and regular contact maintained with local co-ordinators. The LICs recorded over 11,000 visitors during April to October 2011, supported by around 80 volunteers.
- A networking workshop was arranged by SSDC Area Development and Tourism services in November 2011. Groups of volunteers from each LIC attended the session held at Barrington Court. Feedback was very positive from those attended and further links have been formed between the centres themselves.

*For further information on the above please contact either Teresa Oulds or Pauline Burr. (Community Regeneration Officers).*

## **6. Access to services – transport and broadband.**

Although physical isolation and exclusion are not solely issues for rural communities - remoteness from main service centres, with poor transport connections or lack of access to IT can make these problems harder to solve.

Area North is largely rural area, although most centres have retained key amenities including GP surgeries, Post Offices and a range of shops and local services.

The new Council Plan includes the actions o: *“Work with and lobby partners to help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities” and “Support early delivery of Super Fast Broadband to rural areas by 2015.”*

**Transport** - Area North has supported the Links Community Transport service for a number of years, which covers Langport, Somerton and surrounding villages. The current three-year Service Level Agreement has ended and future financial needs will be subject to another report.

- o During 2011-12 Somerset County Council reviewed the allocation of subsidy to a number of rural bus services operating in South Somerset. A separate report is included elsewhere in this agenda.

**Broadband** - The Devon and Somerset Broadband Programme was awarded a grant from BDUK to help secure better (faster) broadband services across rural Somerset. to roll out broadband to those parts of our counties not covered (or likely to be covered) by the private sector. The project aims to deliver improved broadband (>2mbps) to every business and community across Devon and Somerset by 2015, and Superfast broadband (>24mbps) to at least 85% of the area by 2015, with 100% by 2020

- o The programme is in its early stages, with a target to secure 100% coverage by 2015. The Area Development and Economic Development service will continue to provide support to local community engagement.

## **7. Community Planning – Parish & Town Plans, Neighbourhood Plans**

The Area Development service can advise parish or town councils thinking of producing a parish or town plan through comprehensive community involvement. Help and advice is also available from groups including the Community Council for Somerset and

Somerset Towns Forum. There is no one-way to produce a plan and there is no fixed template for town or parish plan either!

For land use and spatial planning matters the new Localism Act has introduced a formal legal process to create 'Neighbourhood Plans'. SSDC will encourage town or parish councils to wait for the detailed legislation to appear before starting formally down this route. However in the meantime, advice can offered on ways to address issues through the planning system.

A total of 19 parishes in Area North have a published town or parish plan – although some were published more than five years ago.

- During 2011-12 Somerton and Martock published their refreshed town / community plans, both received support on request with their respective consultation and engagement plans and guidance on action planning.
- Tintinhull Parish Council completed a programme of consultation initially focused on local facilities and services, and now developed into a local community plan. The plan is in draft form to be adopted in the coming weeks. Aller Parish Council undertook a similar appraisal and are progressing a number of projects as a result.
- A number of parishes including Stoke sub Hamdon, Curry Rivel, Compton Dundon, High Ham and Shepton Beauchamp have expressed interest in producing or revising existing local community plans. It is anticipated that the adoption of the Core Strategy and the emerging guidance on Neighbourhood Plans will stimulate further interest.

*For further information please contact Charlotte Jones Area Development Manager or Les Collett Community Development Officer.*

## **8. Area North Affordable Housing Programme**

There is either feasibility work or active scheme development of affordable housing taking place in thirteen parishes, some as part of larger developments, some based on the 'rural exception' model. The draft Core Strategy policy SS2 – development in rural settlements has caused positive discussions within a number of rural communities, in particular to consider a mix of affordable with an element of market housing.

In the larger settlements around 99 affordable homes have been completed in the last 2-3 years in Area North, there are a further 56 with planning consent and a current application if approved includes 18 affordable homes. The draft Core Strategy indicates further growth to take place in Area North over the next few years and there will be a policy (likely to be 35%) to secure a proportion of new dwellings as affordable homes.

- A series of presentations to explain the current economic and spatial planning considerations for affordable housing was given by the Planning Policy and Strategic Housing teams at the Annual Meeting with Town and Parish Councils.
- Schemes in Long Load, Long Sutton, Ash and Norton sub Hamdon have all received additional support to maintain progress. Of note during 2011-12 is the decision to form a Community Land Trust in Norton-sub-Hamdon, and planning approval for 3 new units in Long Sutton.
- A further report on the progress of and issues raised by the Area North Affordable Housing Programme is planned for May 2012, followed by an end of year report in July 2012 to quantify recent new builds and funding allocations.



*For further information on the Area North Affordable Housing Programme please contact Jo Calvert Housing Development Officer.*

### **Neighbourhood management and community safety**

The SSDC Community Safety Officer and Community Development Officer can advise on ways to resolve or address local issues. There are various schemes and initiatives to help promote community safety – many supported by the Avon & Somerset Police – for example Neighbourhood Watch, Community Speedwatch, and Farm Watch programmes.

There has been a considerable reduction in direct budgets to support community safety, and formal partnership arrangements are under review.

- The March agenda for the Area North Committee provided an outline of the ways in which SSDC supports local community safety on a day-to-day basis and further details of current work is available on request.
- The Area North Community Safety Action Panel has been dissolved as result of reduced staffing, with new arrangements put in place for the time being to promote local partnerships and good communications.
- A report on the work of Streetscene service is due in May 2012, which includes the SSDC response to many issues covered by 'community safety' including fly-tipping, litter and graffiti.

*For more information on ways to address community safety, or to find out more about current community safety issues in your ward, please contact Steve Brewer – Community Safety Officer, or Les Collett – Community Development Officer or the Neighbourhood Policing team*

### **Promoting local economic vitality – jobs, visitors and the rural economy**

Local economic development refers to the fostering of improved trading conditions, increased and enhanced employment opportunities through business start-up and growth and the development of skills and knowledge (and earnings) within the local work force. As a local planning authority SSDC has a unique role to play within the local economy, but land use and spatial planning is not the only (or indeed the primary) tool at its disposal.

Work undertaken by SSDC – and included in the Area Development team work programme - to promote local economic development falls broadly into four main areas: town centre vitality; commercial / industrial development; visitor services and facilities (tourism); rural economic development.

The challenges of a small business / rural economy and in some cases market failure in certain areas has been and continues to be evident. The public sector may in turn offer incentives, subsidies or protections to support a sustainable economy, or may provide new ways for services to be provided (for example through social enterprise).

Some examples of current / recent initiatives aimed at local economic development include:

- Resistance to unwanted loss of employment land / premises through the planning system, promoting sustainable development.



- Seeking opportunities for business relocation / expansion and start up in a variety of settings including the re-use of 'brownfield land' and redundant buildings for commercial purposes, encouragement of community ownership where appropriate.
- Promoting access to support services for small businesses and assisting where possible with removing barriers to start-up, growth and innovation.
- Development and support to local community based tourism initiatives.
- Programmes to improve connectivity for businesses operating out of the main urban centres and use of IT for commerce and communications.
- Support to local partnerships to lead local improvements to the cultural and physical shopping / trading environment, for example Langport town centre marketing scheme led by Langport Business Association and Town Council. South Somerset Market Towns Investment Programme – visitor facilities programme ongoing.

### Looking ahead 2012-13

As well as continuing to support the progress of current community-led projects in Area North not yet completed (as shown in **Appendix B**), the following areas of work are proposed to form the work programme of the Area Development team and Area Committee for the coming year:

- Review and assess employment land allocations (within saved Local Plan and draft Core Strategy) and current state of employment land and business use within Area North. In conjunction with Planning Policy and Economic Development.
- Support for continued progress of Area North Affordable Housing Programme (With Strategic Housing and Development Management)
- Further consideration of rural transport options (with Transport Officer and Transporting Somerset).
- Support for progress of action plans for Historic Buildings at Risk (with Conservation)
- Assess local needs and opportunities to address unemployment and skills development – including young people 'not in education, employment or training' (NEETs).
- Continue to develop a programme to implement increased levels of local marketing and improve the visitor experience in Area North.
- Establish affordable partnerships promoting local access to services, community led investment and neighbourhood management in conjunction with other service providers (e.g.: Yarlinton Housing, Neighbourhood Policing team, Somerset County Council).
- Provide guidance and support to town and parish councils wishing to produce a local community plan and / or promote local development (housing, employment, community facilities) in line with the Localism Act and Core Strategy.
- Complete 2011 review of Area North Capital Programme, to make more detailed allocations in line with local and SSDC priorities.
- Further review in conjunction with Financial and Property Services, of SSDC asset portfolio in Area North.
- Completion of Lean Review of Area Development / Communities, and implementation of review of community / area offices.

### Financial implications

None from this report. The Area North budget was approved by Full Council in February 2012.

## **Council Plan Implications**

In the main the Area Development Plan is drawn from local priorities raised by community groups, residents, local businesses and Town & Parish Councils. In consultation with ward members, time and finance provided will be directly linked to corporate priorities as set out in the Council Plan. The most likely contributions to the Council Plan actions are shown in Appendix A.

## **Carbon Emissions and Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

None directly from this report. There are a number of local initiatives designed to promote carbon reduction including support to 'Transition' volunteers. In particular where we are asked to support buildings projects, applicants are expected to assess the business case for energy efficiency and carbon reduction. Opportunities for sustainable transport and promoting local self-containment are priorities.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None directly from this report. The Area Development Plan includes a number of projects and initiatives, which actively promote equalities through removing barriers to discrimination and promoting diversity.

**Background** *Area North Development Plan 2011-12*  
**Papers:** *Local Priorities – ANC August 2011*  
*Local Priorities – ANC November 2011*

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## Appendix A - SSSC Council Plan 2012 to 2015

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/about-us/our-vision/council-plan-2012---2015/>

Extract of actions that relate the work of Area Development and the role of the Area Committee. NB: Most actions require partnerships within the various council services, between the council and other agencies and with the wider community.

<b>Focus One – Jobs</b>	<b>“We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate and support business associations and act as a point of contact for businesses and partners. Improve communications with businesses so that we are supporting them in meeting their needs and not acting as a barrier.</li> <li>• Provide targeted support for start-ups and small businesses and those with the aspiration to expand.</li> <li>• Secure land with planning permission for employment use in areas where it is needed.</li> <li>• Enhance the vitality of town centres and discourage large scale out of town retail development that has a negative impact on local centres</li> <li>• Facilitate a realistic development programme for new employment sites that have been identified in market towns by 2015.</li> <li>• Support early delivery of Super Fast Broadband to rural areas by 2015</li> <li>• Work with partners, to contribute to tackling youth unemployment.</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus Two – Environment</b>	<b>“We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver schemes with local communities that enhance the appearance of their local areas.</li> <li>• Deliver campaigns and projects that help householders and businesses (including the Council) to cut energy use and adapt to climate change</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus Three – Homes</b>	<b>“We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With partners, enable additional new homes to meet the needs of the district, including mixed housing schemes to buy or rent that are affordable</li> <li>• Work with partners to combat fuel poverty</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus Four – Health and Communities</b>	<b>“We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant, and have individuals who are willing to help each other”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities, optimising opportunities for external funding to promote healthy living.</li> <li>• Continue to provide Welfare Benefits support and advice to tackle poverty for our vulnerable residents.</li> <li>• Ensure, with partners, that we respond effectively to community safety concerns raised by local people and that the strategic priorities for policing and crime reduction in South Somerset reflect local needs.</li> <li>• Work with and lobby partners to help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities.</li> <li>• Evaluate the overall requirements of the Government’s ‘Localism’ legislation and work with communities to develop plans for their community.</li> </ul>	

### Appendix B – Programme of community led or local projects supported by SSDC Area North.

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Burrow Hill	Kingsbury Episcopi	New Community shop for Kingsbury Episcopi	£10,000 grant	The community has worked hard following a change of direction to a temporary shop building, which is planned to open by end of March 12.	Completed
Burrow Hill	Kingsbury Episcopi	New Multi-Use Games Area at Recreation Ground, Kingsbury Episcopi	£10,000 grant	Successfully installed within planned timescales and being well used by the community. The old kick wall that was removed was sold to Long Sutton and now installed in the village	Completed
Curry Rivel	Curry Rivel	Improvements to Old School Room, Curry Rivel	£1500 award	Phase 1 which was part funded by SSDC is now complete and the new floor in the utilities is now laid. Continued fundraising to complete the major project.	Completed
Curry Rivel	Curry Rivel	Local community facilities / Robert Sewers Hall.	Printing and postage costs of survey. Grant award £750	Assisted with village hall survey, which highlighted the needs of the community now being addressed by management committee. Small grant offered and orders placed. Further improvements planned for this important local facility.	Continue
Hamdon	Stoke Sub Hamdon	Refresh Stoke Parish Plan	Officer time	The Parish Council has agreed to refresh the parish plan. Delayed while Core Strategy progresses and for other local priorities to be completed.	Continue
Hamdon	Stoke Sub Hamdon	Start up of Stoke Charity Shop.	Start up grant - printing £500	This has produced a good volunteer base from the community and is attracting customers from other villages. Providing funds for the recreation trust and local projects.	Completed

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Hamdon	Stoke Sub Hamdon	Stoke Recreation Trust 5 year plan + Youth Affairs Group	Officer time £500 for BMX track	Draft plan produced by trust to be used as a working document once more detailed needs of community are established. Emerging Youth Affairs group supported by Recreation Trust. Positive progress being made.	Continue
Isle Moor	Ilton	Improvements to local community facilities	s106 and capital grants for youth, recreation and play facilities.	This is being led by the community with the support from SSDC as a recreational / development plan for Ilton	Continue
Isle Moor	Ilton	Support protection / relocation of PO & shop services	Officer time	An immediate location for a post office is not evident in Ilton. Contact being maintained with the community and Post Office Ltd.	Continue
Isle Moor	Isle Abbots	Isle Abbots village hall refurbishment	Grant awarded £5000 from District Wide village hall budget	Funding now in place for 95% of the refurbishment. The small community has worked together to fund this project and recently held a information evening for the village. Phase 1 refurbishment is expected to start in Easter 12.	Continue
Isle Moor	Fivehead	Support protection / relocation of PO & shop services	Officer time	Temporary closure of PO monitored during year. Planning consent granted for installation of shop and PO at Pub.	Continue
Langport & Huish	Langport	Cocklemoor - new pathways and disabled facilities- oversee project, source funding	Officer time	Project deferred for review of project management. Currently reviewing maintenance of existing pathway. Re-opening negotiations with EA. New project likely to be community led as part of 'Walk Langport'.	Continue

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Langport & Huish	Langport	Langport Local Information Centre - service level agreement	£500 SLA	Over 3748 visitors recorded in six months to October 2011, supported by nine volunteers. The centre is open Monday to Friday 9.30-4.30, mornings only during winter months.	Continue
Langport & Huish	Langport	Langport Visitors Centre - improvements	£10,000 allocated c/f	Signs now in place. Final elements of scheme to be delivered.	Continue
Langport & Huish	Langport	Ridgeway Hall Youth Centre	Officer time	Support provided during changes to local provision of youth workers, in partnership with SCC. Management committee employing their own youth worker from April 2012.	Completed
Langport & Huish	Langport	Town Centre - parking issues/signage and marketing scheme	Officer time	Project negotiated between SSDC, LTC and Business group. Signs for car park designed and agreed. Town gateway signs currently under consideration.	Continue
Langport & Huish	Langport	Support to Ridgeway Disabled Group	Grant award £750	Grant offered - future of group secured following changes to staffing and support.	Completed
Langport & Huish	Huish Episcopi	Refurbishment of tennis courts - Multi-Use Court	DX capital programme - £40,000. Officer time	The work on this project is underway and fundraising going well. Subject to final fundraising this is expected to be installed in the Summer 12.	Continue
Martock	Ash	Insulation to pavilion roof	Grant awarded £325	Grant awarded and project completed.	Completed



Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Martock	Martock	Moorlands Car Park improvements - lighting scheme & sculpture project in precinct	Previous grants to be completed including £2000 for precinct enhancement.	Ascertained requirements from Martock PC for lighting scheme. Work continues with Engineering Services to advise on suitable scheme	Continue
Martock	Martock	Martock LIC - service level agreement / Community Office	£500 for SLA	Weekly attendance at the Market House ceased wef 1 <sup>st</sup> April as part of SSDC budget savings. Working with volunteer group to provide information and assistance. 3000 visitors recorded in six months to October 2011, supported by 22 volunteers. The centre is open Monday to Saturday.	Continue
Martock	Martock	Martock - support to refresh community plan	Grant of £550 to support printing costs.	Plan published with action plan. M3 partnership leads delivery of a range of social, economic and environmental projects.	Completed
Martock	Martock	Martock Youth Project - Service Level Agreement (Year 3)	£3000 year 3 of 3 years for 2011-12	End of three-year SLA helped to establish the employment of a local youth worker within the community. Work continues after the end of the SLA, supported locally.	Completed
Martock	Martock	SSDC play area refurbishment at Bracey Road	SSDC capital programme c/f	New facilities installed. Local Action Group working to develop use by local community.	Continue
Martock	Martock	Martock Youth Centre - refurbishment of youth building	Grant award £3000	Grant for energy efficiency programme approved March 2012.	Continue
South Petherton	South Petherton	Community Office & Police Post / Local Information Centre	£750 via Service Level Agreement	1700 visitors recorded in six months to October 2011, supported by 24 volunteers. The centre is open Monday to Friday 10-1.	Continue

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
South Petherton	South Petherton	Parish Lengthsman	Grant award £1500	Supported with grant to secure transition to self-funding scheme for six parishes.	Completed
St Michaels	Chilthorne Domer	Recreation Trust - development of facilities and youth facilities	£12,500 Area North grant c/f from 2010-11. £5000 youth & play facilities	Refurbishment part completed. Kitchen refurbishment expected to be completed by April 12. Kick wall installed.	Continue
St Michaels	Montacute	Local planning for community facilities / services - village hall.	Officer time	Village survey underway, collating being carried out with a view to refurbish or replace village hall.	Continue
St Michaels	Tintinhull	Local planning for community facilities / services - village hall/ pub	Officer time	Plans to purchase the local pub have now been put on hold, however considerable local engagement has taken place to identify and prioritise needs for local facilities. Village Hall and recreation ground improvements planned.	Continue
St Michaels	Tintinhull	Produce a local community plan	£750 grant award	Local consultation completed and results to be published in revised plan.	Continue
Turn Hill	High Ham	Refurbishments of village hall toilets	£750 grant award	This project has now been completed and the benefits of the new toilets adding to the comfort of new users	Completed
Turn Hill	High Ham	High Ham community heritage programme	Officer time	High Ham 2012 community project - programme of workshops to interpret and record High Ham during 2012.	Continue

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Turn Hill	Aller	Aller Village Consultation / Appraisal	Officer time	Parish Council led and completed a village survey, highlighting interest in local facilities and activities. Various new projects under consideration.	Continue
Turn Hill	Pitney	New chairs for village hall	£576 grant award	Grant awarded and new chairs purchased	Completed
Turn Hill	Pitney	Marquee facilities - extension	£750 grant award	Grant awarded and marquee extension purchased and used for village events and also available to other communities for hire.	Completed
Turn Hill	Long Sutton	Turn Hill Parish Lengthsman	£2500 for year 3 (final grant)	Scheme in partnership with SCC & Long Load, Long Sutton, Aller, High Ham & Pitney Final payment made to scheme. Agreed to be locally funded from now on.	Completed
Turn Hill	Long Sutton	New Kickwall on recreation ground	Grant award £425	Kickwall purchased from Kingsbury Episcopi. Grant towards installation given and kickwall in place and being well used.	Completed
Wessex	Somerton	Support operation of LIC via service level agreement	£500 via Service Level Agreement	Volunteers attended LIC networking event.	Continue
Wessex	Somerton	Wessex Youth Club - support to management group	Officer time	Supported town council representative on Community Youth Project in partnership with SCC.	Continue
Wessex	Somerton	Support publication of town plan / local community planning	Officer time	Top ten priorities agreed by STC. Continue to assist with development of action planning.	Continue

Ward	Parish	Action / objective	SSDC Resources 2011-12	Results / comments	Completed or Continue in 2012-13?
Wessex	Somerton	Insulation of new hearing loop and PA system for Edgar Community Hall	Grant award £750	Hearing loop & PA system now installed to the benefit to all hall users and public meetings	Completed
Wessex	Somerton	Recreation ground shelter	Grant award £750	Grant application approved for new shelter on the recreation ground	Continue
Wessex	Somerton	Ladysmith Memorial Hall (Parish Rooms) – Develop use of meeting room.	Grant award £180 Grant award £600	Two projects were supported - frequent community / tourism events at Parish Rooms and the installation of WiFi.	Completed

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

## 11. 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.

### Recommendations

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](mailto: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
23 May '12	Appointments to Outside Bodies	New municipal year – appointment of members to working groups and outside bodies.	Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator (North)
23 May '12	Revised Scheme of Delegation – Development Control Nomination of Substitutes for Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2011-12	New municipal year – appointment of two members to act as substitutes.	Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
23 May '12	Support for small-scale local affordable housing schemes	To provide an update on the progress of current schemes	Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North) / Jo Calvert, Strategic Housing Officer / David Norris Development Manager
23 May '12	Streetscene Service	Half yearly update on Streetscene Service	Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
23 May '12	Highways Authority	Half yearly report - update on Highways Services.	Neil McWilliams- Assistant Highway Service Manager (SCC)
27 June '12	Area North budgets – 2011-12 Outturn report and Capital Programme	Report on the end of year position of Area North budgets	Nazir Mehrali, Management Accountant
27 June '12	S106 six monthly Monitoring Report	Update report on the progress of collection and expenditure of developer obligations arising from development in Area North.	Neil Waddleton, S.106 Monitoring Officer
25 July '12	<i>Developing local tourism</i>	<i>A discussion/report on current and potential initiatives to promote local tourism.</i>	<i>Co-ordinated by Pauline Burr Community Regeneration Officer</i>



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Background / Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s) SSDC unless stated otherwise</b>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Draft Asset Management Strategy</i>	<i>Draft Asset Management Strategy – the plan that sets out the council's future approach to retaining or disposing of assets.</i>	<i>Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance)</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Historic Buildings at Risk</i>	<i>Update report. (This is likely to be a confidential item.)</i>	<i>Ian Clarke – Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services.</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Presentations by previously supported projects.</i>	<i>To promote learning from the success of local projects supported by Area North, suggested presentations include Stoke sub Hamdon Charity Shop, and Chilthorne Domer Pavilion. (Past presentations include Stoke All Saints Church Lighthouse project and The Seavingtons Community Shop.)</i>	<i>Les Collett, Community Development Officer (North)</i>

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

## 12. 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**

11/03676/FUL – Erection of a dwellinghouse on land adjoining Laurel Cottage, Main Street, Barrington.

### **Appeals Dismissed**

10/04403/FUL – The installation of a 11kW wind turbine on an 18m tower on land at VRS, Badgers Cross Lane, Somerton TA11 7JB

### **Appeals Allowed**

None

The Inspector's decision letter is shown on the following pages.

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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2012

**by K D Barton BA(Hons) Dip Arch DipArb RIBA FCI Arb**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 20 March 2012**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/11/2166714**

**VRS, Badgers Cross Lane, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7JB**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by David Smith of VRS against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
  - The application Ref 10/04403/FUL, dated 19 October 2010, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2011.
  - The development proposed is the installation of an 11kw wind turbine on an 18m tower.
- 

## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Effect on Safety in Terms of ATC Radar at RNAS Yeovilton

2. A tower and turbine have been erected on the site but the Council states, in a letter dated 23 January 2012, that it is not the same as that the subject of this appeal which would be around 24.8m from ground to tip of blade. The turbine erected is in the region of 19m from ground to tip of blade.
3. Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) for the Ministry of Defence has consistently objected to the appeal proposal since 4 November 2010 but has indicated that it would not object to a turbine less than 11m from ground to tip of blade. It is accepted by both parties that the proposed turbine would be in line of sight to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) radar and Secondary Surveillance Radar (SSR) at RNAS Yeovilton and would be seen by the radar. A report for the appellant includes a number of accepted errors but maintains that any radar shadow would be small, and that most of the Doppler effects could be filtered out. However, DIO assesses each application on its merits and only objects when an impact is unmanageable.
4. Turbines create 'false' aircraft returns that have to be treated as real. The erected turbine has been detected on the radar at RNAS Yeovilton appearing as a 'legitimate' target and so has been the subject of a Stop Notice. The Watchman ATC radar filters out ground clutter and traffic but cannot filter out turbines as the blade tip speed is high enough to exceed any 'speed' filtering. The radar return from a moving turbine blade is a stationary echo and radar with a digital video processing facility can suppress such returns. However, the Watchman radar at Yeovilton does not have this facility. Although the

appellant considers that the turbine would not be in a critical radar sector and that most air traffic operates without a radar service, the Navy considers the location to be in an area of significant ATC operations and when weather conditions are unsuitable for visual flying radar is used. In addition, both the Deconfliction and Traffic Services provided are radar services. Reference has been made to range azimuth gating (RAG) this has the effect of desensitising radar systems by blanking out a portion of radar coverage over an area. Using RAG at such a short range to the airfield would be detrimental to the safety of operations. The taller appeal proposal would also appear on the radar and the impact would not be manageable.

5. An addendum to a report for the appellant includes calculations and concludes that the probability of interference with the Yeovilton SSR would be extremely remote. DIO has not had an opportunity to comment on these calculations but accepts that confusion between returns from aircraft and other objects on the SSR is highly unlikely. However, it notes that multi path reflections of transmissions could be caused by wind turbines up to a range of 16km from an SSR site. Misidentification or mislocation of aircraft could apply and potentially have flight safety implications. This lends weight to the conclusion on the effect on the ATC radar.
6. In support of the proposal, reference has been made to a number of other turbines. Each case involves unique circumstances such as turbine height, rotor diameter, location, terrain, radar cover, proximity to assets and operations, and flight patterns and movements. In any event, the turbine at Houndstone Business Park does not paint on the radar or appear as a legitimate target. Goonhilly Down Wind Farm close to RNAS Culdrose was deemed manageable when assessed by MOD as the radar patterns were not affected. These examples would not justify allowing this proposal. The fact that MOD has, in the past, withdrawn objections when pressed on technical matters differs from this case where it has consistently objected to the proposals. The appellant has referred to a 2003 study by QuinetiQ but several other trials have since been carried out and knowledge of the effects on radar are now much more developed.
7. Mitigation in the form of a radar absorbent coating has been suggested but this is an immature technology where some trials have not been successful and it is not considered acceptable. The appellant has also offered a transponder sited at the wind turbine, on a mast high enough to achieve line of sight to the SSR, as a solution but this is not part of the appeal proposal and has not been the subject of consultation. It has not, therefore, been considered in determining this appeal. Although the appellant states that there could not have been an MOD objection in place as the Council's Planning Officer was recommending approval, the report to committee recommends refusal. Although Yeovil Westland Aerodrome/Agusta Westland saw no reason to object it does not represent or speak for MOD or RNAS Yeovilton.
8. Some Councillors considered that there was no latitude to ignore the opinion of RNAS Yeovilton as consultee but each case should be considered on its own merits without discretion being fettered. The erected turbine appears on the radar at RNAS Yeovilton and cannot be satisfactorily managed or mitigated. The larger turbine proposed in this appeal would raise similar problems. Notwithstanding the objectives of the *Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy*, the *Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1* and *Planning for*

*Growth*, and the climate change context, the 'interference' created would not be outweighed by the benefit of generating renewable energy. In the interests of flight safety the appeal is dismissed.

*K D Barton*

INSPECTOR

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

### 13. 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 April 2012

### Planning Applications will be considered no earlier than 3.30pm

Members of the public who wish to speak about a particular planning item are recommended to arrive for 3.20 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	45	HAMDON	12/00129/ FUL	Alterations and rear extensions to the dwelling including the installation of a first floor side window.	Coverdale, Montacute Road, East Stoke.	Mr & Mrs T H Fryer
2	49	ISLEMOOR	12/00264/ FUL	Erection of a two storey extension to rear of dwellinghouse, erection of a porch to front of dwellinghouse and creation of new driveway and vehicular access.	3 Manor Farm Cottages, Lovers Street, Curry Mallet.	Mr G Adams
3	54	TURN HILL	12/00324/ LBC	Installation of a 15 panel solar p.v. array on south roof elevation and two additional conservation rooflights on north roof elevation, replacement of existing defective roof timbers and general internal repairs and improvements	The Old Mill, Bineham Road, Knole.	Mr R Marriage

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

## Officer Report on Planning Application: 12/00129/FUL

<b>Proposal :</b>	Alterations and rear extensions to the dwelling including the installation of a first floor side window (GR: 349104/117340)
<b>Site Address:</b>	Coverdale, Montacute Road, East Stoke
<b>Parish:</b>	Stoke Sub Hamdon
<b>ST MICHAELS Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Mrs. Jo Roundell Greene (Cllr)
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Lee Walton Tel: (01935) 462324 Email: lee.walton@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	9th March 2012
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr & Mrs T H Fryer
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	David Parkin 4 Wilton Road, Yeovil BA21 5XP
<b>Application Type :</b>	Other Householder - not a Change of Use

### REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is referred to the committee at the request of the Ward Member with the agreement of the Area Chairman to enable the comments of the neighbour(s) to be fully debated.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



Coverdale was built in the 1950s and is constructed in red brick under a hipped tiled roof. It is the fifth from last property at the eastern end of a long stretch of roadside ribbon development on the south side of the main road.

The proposal seeks a part single, part two-storey rear extension with an attached flat-topped garage. The existing dwelling is modestly proportioned being 6 metres deep and 9.2metres wide. The two-storey extension measures 6 metres deep by 4.7metres alongside a ground floor extension measuring 5.7metres by 3.9metres. The eaves of the two-storey extension stand at 5.5metres and match those of the existing dwelling although with a reduced ridge with a hipped roof design facing the rear garden.

## HISTORY

None.

## 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 accords significant weight to 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:

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

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development

Policy STR6 Development Outside Towns, Villages and Rural Centres.

Save policies of the South Somerset Local Plan:

Policy ST5 - General Principles of Development

Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development

Policy ST3 Development Area

Regard shall also be had to:

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012):

Chapter 6 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

8 and 9

## CONSULTATIONS

**Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council** - The majority of the development is at the rear of the existing house and therefore has no impact to the area. However, this development does double the ground floor.

**County Highway Authority** - no observations.

**Area Engineer** - No comment.

## REPRESENTATIONS

One objection has been received:

- Site plan inaccuracy. Note: A revised plan has been received that clarifies the relationship.
- First floor side window impact with overlooking and loss of privacy. Note: A revised plan has been received that shows this to be obscure glazed and now serves a bathroom.
- Loss of morning sunlight
- Scale of development, depth of two-storey extension
- Sense of enclosure
- Harmful to living conditions

## CONSIDERATIONS

There is no objection in principle given the site's location and the type of development sought; namely, an extension to a dwelling. Accordingly the main considerations concern character and appearance and impact on neighbours. A revised block plan was submitted to take account of the inaccuracies in the original to show the relationship between the application site and The Croft.

### **Character and Appearance:**

Although large, with the ground floor area doubling the existing floor area, the extension and increased scale, including the two storey element are considered acceptable with no detrimental effect on character and appearance of the existing dwelling.

### **Neighbour Amenity:**

The occupants of The Croft consider the two-storey extension results in the loss of morning sunlight as seen from the half landing on the staircase and kitchen window; and refers to a sense of enclosure compounded by their other neighbour's dwelling that is set back in its site that presents a large blank wall and blocks evening sunlight. The neighbour's rear garden is full of mature planting that reduces light levels; the location of the proposed two storey extension is on the other side of adjacent garages and, with this degree of separation, the proposed development is not considered to have any unduly harmful impact on the neighbours garden area and rear outlook.

The main impact is on the flank openings that serve a toilet, landing and kitchen. The kitchen window is alongside a single storey projection attached to the corner rear elevation of the neighbour's dwelling. There would be a 7.5metre gap between the kitchen side window and the proposed extension.

The kitchen window is already compromised by an original side / rear addition to the neighbour's own building. While there would be some loss of outlook this is not considered sufficient to warrant refusal of the application. Any further impact arising from the proposed extension on other windows would not be so significant as to justify withholding planning permission.

### **Other Matters:**

The neighbour has questioned: Why the two storey and single storey elements cannot be reversed to remove the two storey further away from their property. This would have the advantage of being located alongside the adjacent neighbour's dwelling that is set

back from the road and with a blank flank wall no harm would prevail. While this would be a possible solution such a scheme does not form part of the current application. The applicants have given reasons why such a scheme is not practical for them. A decision therefore needs to be based on the proposal before us, rather than a possible alternative.

**Conclusion:**

Notwithstanding the comments received the two-storey extension would not unduly overshadow or lead to an unacceptable loss of light. The two-storey extension is not considered overbearing given the space between the buildings and any impact on neighbours is not considered sufficient to warrant the refusal of the application.

**RECOMMENDATION****GRANT CONDITIONAL PERMISSION**

01. The proposal, by reason of its size, scale and materials, respects the character of the area and causes no demonstrable harm to residential amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

**SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location plan and roof plan, and Proposed received 12 January 2012, Block Plan received 8 March 2012, and floor plan, Elevations received 1 March 2012.  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
03. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3, Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (including any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) the first floor windows in the west elevation shall be glazed in obscure glass and shall be of a design not capable of being opened below a height of 1.7m above the finished floor level of the floor to which they relate. Thereafter, the said windows shall be retained and maintained in the approved form.  
Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain adequate control over such detail, in the interests of neighbour amenity and loss of privacy, further to policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

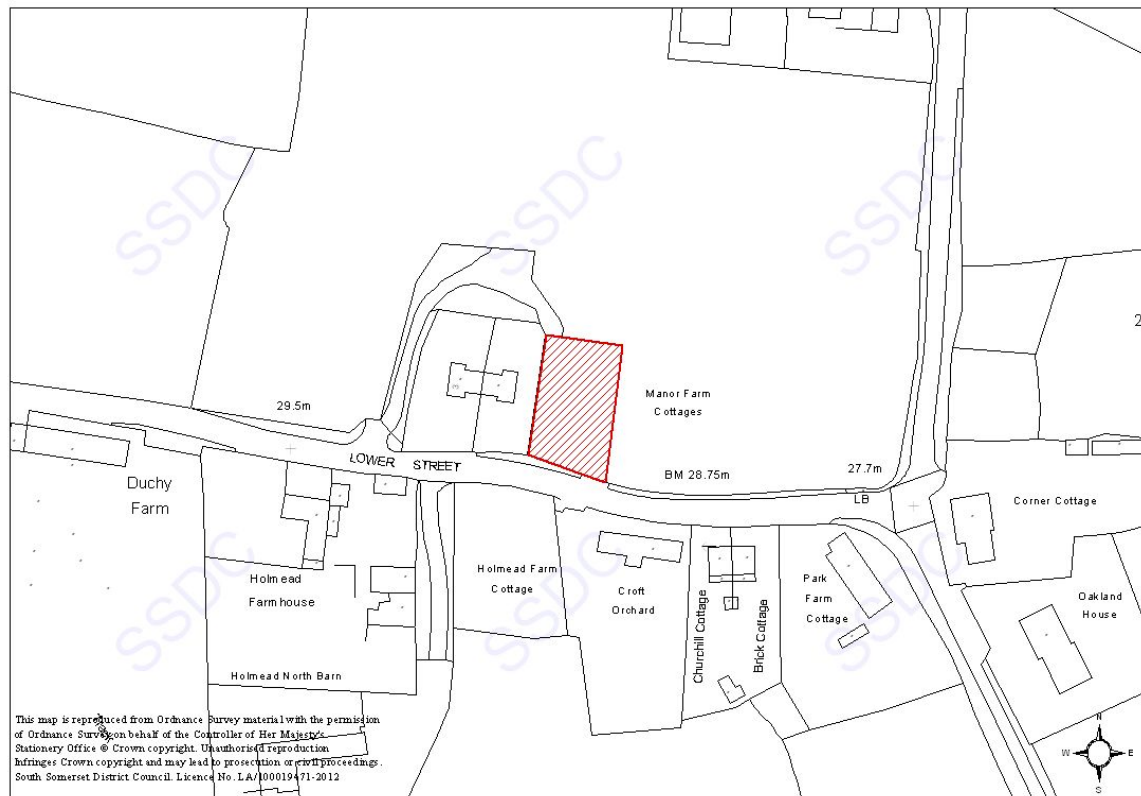
## Officer Report On Planning Application: 12/00264/FUL

<b>Proposal :</b>	Erection of a two storey extension to rear of dwellinghouse, erection of a porch to front of dwellinghouse and creation of new driveway and vehicular access (GR:333139/121234)
<b>Site Address:</b>	3 Manor Farm Cottages, Lower Street, Curry Mallet
<b>Parish:</b>	Curry Mallet
<b>ISLEMOOR Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Ms Sue Steele (Cllr)
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Dominic Heath-Coleman Tel: 01935 462643 Email: dominic.heath-coleman@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	26th March 2012
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr Giles Adams
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	
<b>Application Type :</b>	Other Householder - not a Change of Use

### REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is before the committee as the recommendation for approval is contrary to an objection from the County Highway Authority on highway safety grounds.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a two storey extension to the rear of the dwellinghouse, the erection of a porch to the front and the formation of a new driveway and vehicular access. The property is a two storey detached house constructed of brick, with timber window frames and clay tiles on the roof. The house is located close to various residential properties, agricultural buildings, and open countryside. The extensions will be constructed of materials to match the existing building, with a rendered rear elevation. The driveway will be constructed of tarmac and gravel.

## HISTORY

None recent.

## 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.

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan  
STR1 - Sustainable Development  
Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006)  
ST5 - Principles of Development  
ST6 - Quality of Development

## CONSULTATIONS

**Parish Council** - The Council, mindful through local knowledge of the circumstances relating to the vehicular usage of Lower Street, have no concerns regarding the access as proposed in the application.

**SCC Archaeology** - No objections

**SSDC Technical Services** - No comment

**County Highways** - Concern expressed over the maintenance of existing verges and highway land. The highway authority go on to state:

*"Therefore it is essential that the splays are included within the red line of the application site and notice is served on the Highway Authority if the splays include highway land. If it is not included within the red line, no condition can be imposed and/or enforcement action taken in the event of non compliance.*

*Notwithstanding the above, in the case of this proposal the splays considered appropriate by the Highway Authority cannot be provided.*

*The amendments to the parking/turning area are noted and accepted by the Highway Authority.*

*Taking the above into consideration, I would recommend refusal of the application for the following reason:*

- *The proposal is contrary to Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted April 2000) since the proposed access to the Lower Street, does not incorporate the necessary visibility splays which are essential in the interests of highway safety."*

The highway officer states that they are aware that the LPA may choose to approve the scheme contrary to their recommendation and suggest the use of a number of conditions and notes on any permission issued.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None received.

## **APPLICANT'S CASE**

*"...people driving along this road, do so with the obvious knowledge that any oncoming cars they encounter are likely to be in the middle of the carriageway, therefore vehicles will only be travelling at 15-20mph max. Street lighting and general suburban street furniture is completely missing from this area, reinforcing the rural nature, indeed the vast majority of any vehicles travelling are local destination traffic rather than passing through and it is unlike many larger villages in this respect."*

*"...for our use, it would be hugely safer than using the existing access. Surely we should all be striving to improve safety, rather than forcing us to use a very poor access. The existing access was not created by us, and the long term residents of Nos 1 and 2 Manor Farm Cottages have one vehicle per household. With our two cars using a new access this would reduce the use of this clearly substandard access by over 50%."*

*"I have been using the existing hugely substandard access several times a day for the last 15 years and although I fully acknowledge the visibility is poor (looking left), one never feels particularly concerned by this as cars coming from the left have just negotiated a series of narrow bends and are only travelling very slow. As long as one nudges out slowly, there is no problem. The visibility on the new access we propose would be 20 times better than this existing access."*

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed extension, driveway, and vehicular access would not have any significant impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

### **Visual Amenity**

The proposed extension, driveway, and vehicular access are considered to be appropriate in terms of material and design and are therefore not considered to cause demonstrable harm to the character of the area.

### **Highways**

The county highway authority was consulted as to the potential impact of the proposal on highway safety. They have raised serious concerns with the proposal and recommend

refusal on the grounds that the proposed access does not provide the visibility splays necessary to maintain highway safety.

The applicant has put forwards a strong case as to why in this particular situation the normal visibility requirements of the highway authority should not apply. The parish council supports him in this opinion. He argues that although the speed limit is 60 mph; traffic in reality moves far slower than this due to the nature of the road. This assertion is borne out by observation on site. He also argues that the current access serves three properties, but if permission is granted it will only serve two properties and the remainder of the traffic will transfer onto the new access. There will therefore be no net increase in use, it will just be spread over two substandard accesses instead of one, and he argues that the new access will better than the existing in terms of visibility.

Given the limited nature of the use of the access to serve only a single residential unit, it is considered that the arguments put forwards by the applicant are persuasive and in this case outweigh the concerns of the highway authority.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Permission be granted for the following reason:

01. The proposal, by reason of its size, scale and materials, respects the character of the area, and causes no demonstrable harm to residential amenity or highway safety in accordance with the aims and objectives of Policies ST6 and ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006) and Policies STR1 and 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan.

## **SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: GA/102 received 23 January 2012 and GA/104 received 29 February 2012.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be those as identified within the planning application and no other materials unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006) and Policy STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National park Joint Structure Plan.

04. No works shall commence on the development until the visibility splays in which there should be no obstruction greater than 900mm, and as denoted on drawing no. GA/104, have been fully provided to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

05. Before it is first brought into use, the proposed access over the first 5m of its length, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel), in accordance with details, which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

06. The area allocated for access, parking and turning on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times and shall not be used other than for the parking and/or turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

07. Any entrance gates erected shall be hung to open inwards and set back a minimum distance of 5m from the highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

08. Before the access is first brought into use provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway details of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, before being installed.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

09. The gradient of the access shall not be steeper than 1 in 10.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy 49 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

#### **Informatives:**

01. Having regard to the powers of the Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980 the applicant is advised that a Section 184 Permit must be obtained from the Highway Service Manager, Yeovil Area Office, tel 0845 3459155.
02. As advised during the consultation period of the application, it should be noted it is not the responsibility of the Highway Authority to maintain the approved visibility splays in relation to private development proposals and this will be the responsibility the Applicant and subsequent owner/occupier of no. 3 Manor Cottages. Prior to any works being carried out in respect of the formation of the splays (which will involve the cutting back/removal of a third party hedges and their encroachment over/on highway land) and thereafter ongoing maintenance, contact will need to be made with the Area Highway Office at Yeovil, on 0845 3459155, with regard to an appropriate licence for working on the public highway.

Area North Committee – 25 April 2012

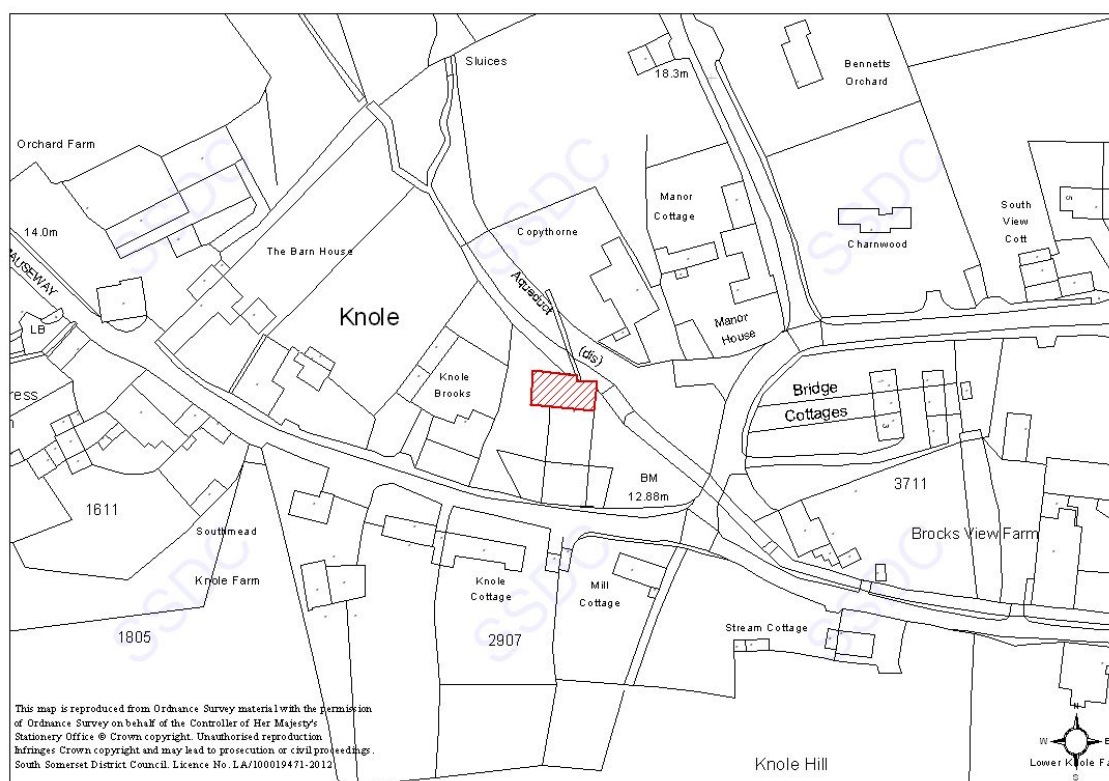
## Officer Report On Planning Application: 12/00324/LBC

<b>Proposal :</b>	Installation of a 15 panel solar p.v. array on south roof elevation and two additional conservation rooflights on north roof elevation, replacement of existing defective roof timbers and general internal repairs and improvements (GR: 348296/125128)
<b>Site Address:</b>	The Old Mill, Bineham Road, Knole
<b>Parish:</b>	Long Sutton
<b>TURN HILL Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Mr S Pledger (Cllr)
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Dominic Heath-Coleman Tel: 01935 462643 Email: dominic.heath-coleman@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	5th April 2012
<b>Applicant :</b>	Mr Roger Marriage
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	Mrs Marie Louise Green 61 The Park, Yeovil BA20 1DF
<b>Application Type :</b>	Other LBC Alteration

### REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is before the committee, at the request of the ward member and with the agreement of the area chair, to enable the comments of the conservation officer to be debated.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The proposal seeks consent for installation of a solar array to the south elevation roof slope, the installation of two additional rooflights on the north elevation, the replacement of existing defective roof timbers and general internal repairs and improvements. The property is a two-storey semi-detached house constructed of natural stone, with a clay tiled roof and painted timber window frames. The house is a Grade II listed building and is located close to a variety of residential buildings. The property is not within a development area and is within a conservation area as defined by the local plan.

## RELEVANT HISTORY

11/04973/FUL - The erection of a sheep proof fence - Application permitted with conditions 17/01/2012

06/00059/LBC - Erection of external staircase, installation of 4 no. rooflights, alter pitch and reroof garage, erection of a Nib wall, form flood inundation relief works and internal works for upgrading accommodation - Application permitted with conditions 07/07/2006

## POLICY

Section 16 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act is the starting point for the exercise of listed building control. This places a statutory requirement on local planning authorities to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Chapter 12 - Conserving and Enhancing Historic Environment is applicable. This advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Whilst Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning Act is not relevant to this listed building application, the following policies should be considered in the context of the application, as these policies are in accordance with the NPPF:

### Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan  
STR1 - Sustainable Development

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006)  
ST6 - Quality of Development  
ST5 - Principle of Development  
EH1 - Conservation Areas  
EH3 - Alterations to Listed Buildings



Guidance Documents:

English Heritage - "Micro-generation and Historic environment" 2008

English Heritage - "Small Scale Solar Electric Energy and Traditional Buildings" 2008

## CONSULTATIONS

**Long Sutton Parish Council** - Supports the application.

**Area Engineer** - No comment

**SSDC Conservation Officer** -

*"This proposal relates to a listed building in a conservation area. The building is converted mill with attached house, this part being the mill part. The application relates to a number of alterations including the installation of Solar PV panels.*

*The proposal relates in part to PV panels. English Heritage have provided two advice notes: 1) Micro-generation and Historic environment, and 2) Small Scale Solar Electric Energy and Traditional Buildings.*

*The area of roof to be used would be on the south side of the rear wing which is at the north end of the building facing the road. This brown/terracotta clay tile roof is visible from the road.*

*English Heritage's policy is clearly stated in the Micro Generation booklet with criteria to be dealt with in any application set out on page 3. No information has been submitted in this respect. The Small Scale ,.... and Traditional Buildings booklet advises that with regard to orientation. In my view, the proposal would also fall foul of the advice on orientation given by English Heritage in the second booklet which is that it is "generally not considered sympathetic to a building's appearance to have solar panel or other equipment fixed to any of its main elevations i.e. the face or faces seen from the principal view point, towards which it is mainly viewed."*

*The impact is compounded by the fact that it would be black panels on a clay roof which would increase their prominence.*

*I have been round the entire conservation area and can find no other panels on public view. You will be aware that we have approved a large number of installations in a historic context, but this is one where I cannot see a way forward that would work for the building.*

*Overall I consider the panels, which would be clearly visible from a public road, set on a clay roof, to be detrimental to the architectural interests of the listed building; that they would not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, and would also be contrary Policy ST4 of the Local Plan. The application also does not address the criteria laid down by EH and therefore fails to be justified.*

*Roof lights: This is a long narrow room with little natural light. I am happy with the proposal to increase the number of roof lights as proposed, but would suggest less uniformity in size and position.*

*Dry lining: The issue here is about character. It is not clear what the previous use of this area was, as there is no discussion of the impact of this in the Design and Access Statement. As it is part of the mill, it may have been stone, lime washed stone or*



*plastered onto the stone, depending on use. I am not opposed to improving the insulation where we can, but would like some more information with regard to the character of the building, and whether any part of the walls can be left exposed. I attach another booklet from EH with advice on insulating stone walls for information purposes."*

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

One letter of objection received from the occupier of a neighbouring property. The objection is raised on the grounds that the solar panels are unsightly and should not be permitted within a conservation area.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

The conservation officer was consulted in regards to the impact of the alterations on the character and setting of this listed building and the surrounding conservation area.

### **Solar Panels**

The conservation officer noted that the application does not address any of the criteria laid down by English Heritage in their guidance documents relating to solar panels in the historic environment.

He has noted that the solar panels will be situated on an elevation that, whilst not the principle elevation of the property, is clearly visible from the road and the surrounding conservation area. He has stated that their prominence will be further increased by the fact that they will be black panels sited on a clay roof. He concludes that the panels would be detrimental to the architectural interests of the listed building; that they would not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, and would also be contrary Policy ST4 of the Local Plan. The application also does not address the criteria laid down by English Heritage and therefore fails to be justified.

### **Roof Lights**

Two rooflights have already been approved to the north elevation of the property as part of a listed building consent approved in 2006. The current proposal is for an additional two rooflights to the north elevation. The conservation officer has indicated that he has no concerns with the principle of supplementing the number of rooflights to this elevation, but they would better respect the character of the building if they were to be less uniform in their size and position. As the application currently stands the proposed rooflights are not considered to respect the character of the listed building. However, it is noted that this could be easily resolved with a minor alteration to the scheme to reduce the uniformity of the rooflights in terms of size and position.

### **Internal Alterations**

Again the conservation officer is concerned about the lack of justification within the application for the dry lining of the living room. He has stated that he is not opposed to the principle of improving the thermal characteristics of the building, but would need to see a more detailed justification put forward by the applicant. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires that the applicant to "...describe the significance of any heritage assets affected...sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance." In terms of the impact of the dry lining of the walls no such assessment has been put forwards with the application.

The conservation officer has not raised any other concerns with the proposed internal alterations.

## Conclusion

As, the opinion of the conservation officer is considered to hold considerable weight in applications of this nature, it is considered that the proposed solar panels and rooflights would be detrimental to the architectural interests of the listed building and would not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area contrary to the provisions of the NPPF and policies EH3 and EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006). It is further considered that the applicant has failed to provide adequate justification for the solar panels and dry lining of the property in terms of the English Heritage guidance on solar panels within the historic guidance and paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

As such the application should be recommended for refusal.

## RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

01. The proposed solar panels by reason of their position and design would be detrimental to the character of the listed building and would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, contrary to the provisions of the NPPF and policies EH3 and EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).
02. The proposed rooflights by reason of their uniform position and size would be detrimental to the character of the listed building contrary to the provisions of the NPPF and policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).
03. The applicant has failed to justify the proposed solar panels and dry lining including an understanding of the significance of the building as a heritage asset, or to assess the impact of the proposal against such an understanding contrary to paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

## Informatives:

01. The applicant should be aware that it is considered that the second reason for refusal could be easily overcome with only a relatively minor amendment to the scheme to reduce the uniformity of the rooflights in terms of size and position.
-