

Meeting AN 04M 12/13  
Date 22.08.12

### **South Somerset District Council**

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Millennium Hall, Water Street, Seavington St Michael on **Wednesday 22 August 2012**.

(2.00pm – 5.15pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Pauline Clarke  
Graham Middleton  
Roy Mills  
Terry Mounter

David Norris  
Shane Pledger  
Jo Roundell Greene  
Sylvia Seal

Sue Steele  
Paul Thompson  
Derek Yeomans (to 5.05pm)

**Officers:**

Charlotte Jones  
Sergeant Christian Wells  
Madelaine King-Oakley  
Angela Watson  
David Norris  
Adrian Noon  
Angela Cox

Area Development Manager (North) (to 3.30pm)  
Avon and Somerset Police  
Area Support Team Leader (North)  
Legal Services Manager  
Development Control Manager  
Area Lead North/East (Development Management)  
Committee Administrator

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

---

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

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

---

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Barry Walker.

---

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

There were no declarations of interests.

---

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

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area North Committee would commence at 2.00pm on Wednesday 26 September 2012 at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.

---

## 50. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public.

---

## 51. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

---

## 52. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

There were no reports from Members.

---

## 53. Promoting Community Safety in Area North (Agenda item 8)

Sergeant Christian Wells of Avon and Somerset Police provided the Committee with a short presentation on current police and community safety issues in the area. He said that the crimes reported figure of 5,465 across the whole of the East Somerset Police District was less than the previous year and whilst the number of people brought to justice was also slightly down, this reflected the fewer crimes to deal with. There had been 681 crimes reported within Area North which per head of population and geographical area was very low.

Sergeant Wells also advised that the two main challenges facing the police in the area were burglaries to residential dwellings and burglaries of non-residential dwellings (sheds, outbuildings etc). He urged the public to record serial numbers of valuable items so that any stolen property recovered could be returned to its owners. Sergeant Wells concluded by providing Members with a list of the Police Beat Managers and the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) responsible for policing in Area North.

During discussion it was noted that there was an open afternoon at Yeovil Police Station on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, to which all Councillors were welcome.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Wells for attending and providing an informative report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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

---

## 54. Area North Community Office Service (Agenda item 9)

The Area Support Team Leader (North) provided Members with a short update on the information provided to the community following the closure of the Somerton Community Office, the excellent customer service provided at the Langport Community Office and the proposed changes to the Housing and Council Tax benefits which would impact upon customer visits to all community offices.

In response to a question from Councillor Mounter, the Area Development Manager (North) agreed to provide full details of the current cost of the community office service.

During a brief discussion, members felt that the community office service was vital as not all members of the public may be able to cope with the proposed on-line completion of Housing and Council Tax Benefit forms.

The Chairman thanked the Area Support Team Leader (North) for her comprehensive report and asked her to pass on the thanks of the Committee to her Customer Service staff for their work in assisting the public and adapting to the change in office location.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

*Madelaine King-Oakley, Area Support Team Leader (North)  
madelaine.king-oakley@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462174*

---

## **55. Area Development Plan – Area North – 2012/13 update report (Agenda item 10)**

The Area Development Manager (North) advised that the main detail of the report was contained in Appendix B. She provided members with a short power point presentation, reminding them of their agreed Area priorities: Jobs, Housing and Self Help and she displayed photographs of the recently opened Kingsbury Community Shop and the new tourism signs recently installed at the Cartgate picnic area.

The Chairman thanked the Area Development Manager (North) for her comprehensive report and presentation.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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

---

## **56. Area North 2012/13 Budget Monitoring Report for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 (Agenda item 11)**

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report to Members and advised that:-

- the budget savings had been achieved for the year.
- the Area Development service was currently undergoing an efficiency review.
- a report on the proposed signage programme supporting the local economy in the area would be presented to Committee in September as part of the area capital programme.

In response to questions from Members, the Area Development Manager advised that:-

- The service level agreements (SLAs) with the four Local Information Centres were agreed annually and they provided a valuable service to visitors and a useful outlet for SSDC tourism publications.
- She would make the final payment to Somerset County Council for the Cocklemoor bridge upon receipt of the signed access agreement with Somerset County Council.
- There was currently no grant support to the Links Community Transport service. However, if they required assistance with the purchase of a replacement vehicle then they could apply for a capital grant.

During discussion it was noted that some of the schemes appeared to have not progressed at all and it was requested that details of match funding and an estimate of how close to completion the projects were could be provided in future.

The Chairman thanked the Area Development Manager (North) for her report.

**RESOLVED:** That Members:

1. Noted the current financial position on Area North budgets
2. Noted the position of the Area North Reserve as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012
3. Noted the position of the Area North Capital Programme for 2012/13 to 2016/17 (Appendix A) as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012
4. Noted the position of the Play & Youth capital investment programme in Area North (Appendix B)
5. Noted the position of the Area North Community Grants budget, including the details of grants authorised under the Scheme of Delegation by the Area Development Manager in consultation with the ward members.

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

---

## **57. Area North Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 12)**

Members requested that:-

- A workshop be held for Parish Councils to help them understand and appreciate the implications of the new Localism Act 2011
- A report on the Somerset Water Management Partnership be added to the Forward Plan

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan be noted.

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

---

## **58. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)**

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

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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

---

## 59. Planning Applications (Agenda item 14)

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

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

### **12/01495/FUL – Application for the development of a foodstore, associated infrastructure, access, parking and landscaping at Paull & Co Ltd site, Coat Road, Martock. Applicant: Tesco Stores Ltd.**

The Planning Officer advised that there were a number of updates to the report, one of which was a letter received from GVA Consultancy on behalf of the Co-operative supermarket group on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012, in which they questioned the weight given to the use of the site under the Certificate of Lawfulness in the Committee report. Having consulted the Legal Services Manager, it was recommended that the application be deferred until the September meeting of the Committee to allow time to fully address the points raised in the letter.

Members were in agreement with the officers proposal.

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 12/01495/FUL be DEFERRED to the September meeting of the Committee for the presentation of an updated officer report to fully address concerns raised by the GVA Consultancy letter of 17/08/12.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

### **12/01573/FUL – Change of use of land for the siting of one mobile home, one touring caravan and the erection of one utility/dayroom at Land OS 2461, Middle Way, Compton Dundon. Applicant: Mr S Lovridge.**

Members were updated by the Planning Officer that a local resident had commissioned the CLA to present a report on the points made in the officers report. The planning officer provided members with a verbal response to the points made in the CLA report.

The Planning Officer then read out a letter from Sally Woodbury, the Agent representing the applicant, who could not be present at the meeting, in support of the application. She pointed out the difficulty in finding suitable sites, its close proximity to the village which was encouraged by the Government and asked that permission be granted to enable a young couple to have a home.

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs, then summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. He proposed an amendment to condition 6 regarding access to the site as he felt that given the existing surface of the access road, it was excessive to insist that the access to the site be tarmaced. Therefore he proposed the removal of the words (with tarmac) from condition 6 of approval.

Mr G Jones, Chairman of the Parish Council, said the Parish Council objections were clearly laid out in the report. He referred to a planning appeal decision detailed elsewhere in the Agenda and he said that although both applications appeared similar, each should be considered on their own merits.

The Committee were then addressed by Tony Doyle, Diana Napper, Andy Kemp-King, Allyson Dore, Barry Sutton, Angie Castle, Jerry Castle, Simon Dore and Angie Roberton, all local residents who spoke in opposition to the application. Their comments included:-

- Planning policy presumed against such sites unless there was an overriding need.
- A septic tank is proposed to deal with sewerage but no details have been submitted.
- The steep access track to the site was only a farm track which was flooded for much of the year and any increase in traffic would churn it up.
- Contrary to the officers report, nearby Trays Farm used a rear entrance to the farm rather than drive along Compton Street.
- The application would have an adverse impact upon the landscape, particularly from the Polden ridge above and no amount of screening would hide it.
- The site was not sustainable as there was no village school or other facilities and there were few employment opportunities locally.
- Two rare species of butterfly were to be found in the field and on the hill above the site.
- Barn owls had been nesting in a shed on the site and there were voles in the field, both of which would be affected by the application.
- SSDC had a target of providing 18 gypsy or traveller sites by 2020 and already 80% had been identified.
- The justification for the application appears to be based on meeting targets.

The Planning Officer responded to the points raised by the public speakers, many of which he said were either not supported by the various professional officers comments, were not material planning considerations or were not sufficiently overriding to refuse the application.

One of the Ward Members, Cllr David Norris stated that the access track to the site was unsuitable and there were a lack of local services. He referred to several gypsy and traveller planning policies which he said the application did not meet. The conditions for the provision of a water supply and installation of a septic tank should be prior to any occupation of the site and also a condition to deny the use of an electricity generator at the site should be considered. He also questioned whether refuse vehicles would be able to reach the site to remove household waste.

The other Ward Member, Cllr Pauline Clarke spoke in opposition to the application. She said that no amount of screening would conceal the site from the footpaths on the hillside above it. She also questioned the use of a septic tank at the site as it sloped upwards and any run off could affect neighbouring land.

During a lengthy debate, varying views were expressed, although the majority of Members felt that the location of the application off a narrow steep track was unsuitable and unsustainable. It was also felt that it would cause harm to the rural landscape and the lack of detail on the supply of water, electricity and the treatment of sewerage was inadequate. It was proposed and seconded to refuse the application. Further debate ensued and it was suggested that the application be deferred to seek firm details on the infrastructure proposals. However, the Planning Officer cautioned against deferring the application if it was the intention of the Committee to seek firm reasons for refusal.

The Legal Services Manager advised Members to be very clear on their reasons for refusing the application if they were minded to in case of any subsequent appeal on the decision.

The proposal to refuse the application because of harm to the rural landscape, unsuitable access road and insufficient detail on the supply of water, electricity and the treatment of sewerage, was then put to the vote and carried (voting: 7 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention).

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 12/01573/FUL be REFUSED contrary to officer's recommendation for following reasons:-

1. The proposed use of land for the siting of one mobile home and one touring caravan and the erection of utility/day room would constitute an incongruous and alien development that would result in serious harm to the rural landscape character of this locality. Such harm would not be outweighed by the benefit of providing an additional pitch to meet the identified need. As such the proposal is contrary to saved policies ST5, ST6, EC3 and HG11 of the South Somerset local Plan, the policies contained within the National Planning Policy framework and the advice contained in the Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, March 2012.
2. The approach roads leading to the site are of restricted width and poor alignment, with substandard junctions, considered unsuitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development. The proposal therefore does not meet the requirements of saved policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National park Joint Structure Plan Review (April 200) and saved policies ST5 and HG11 of the South Somerset Local Plan, the policies contained within the National Planning Policy framework and the advice contained in the Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, March 2012.
3. It has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the site can be adequately drained or provided with suitable foul water drainage, drinking water supply or electricity. In the absence of evidence to the contrary it is considered that the proposal would not provide an adequate level of amenity for future occupiers and might adversely affect the amenities of the locality by reason of noise from generators. As such the proposal is contrary to policies ST6, EU3, EU4 and HG11 of the South Somerset local Plan, the policies contained within the National Planning Policy framework and the advice contained in the Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, March 2012.

*(Voting: 7 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention)*

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

.....  
*Chairman*