

Meeting AN 08M 12/13
Date 28.11.12

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Millennium Hall, Seavington St Michael on **Wednesday 28 November 2012**.

(2.00pm – 4.35pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Pauline Clarke	David Norris	Sylvia Seal
Graham Middleton	Shane Pledger	Sue Steele
Roy Mills	Jo Roundell Greene (from 2.10pm)	Paul Thompson
Terry Mounter		

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer (North)
Chris Cooper	Streetscene Manager
Pam Harvey	Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager
Angela Watson	Legal Services Manager
Lee Walton	Planning Officer
Adrian Noon	Area Lead North/East (Development Management)
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

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

85. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

86. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Derek Yeomans.

87. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr Shane Pledger declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in planning applications 12/03513/FUL and 12/03514/LBC as he was the applicant.

88. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next meeting of Area North Committee would be a week earlier due to Christmas, and would commence at 2.00pm on Wednesday 19 December 2012 at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.

89. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

A member of the public addressed committee to convey his appreciation, and that of Curry Mallet Parish Council, to County Highways for their work at Heljar's Lane in the village and also to the SSDC Streetscene Service for their help and distribution of flood bags during the recent flooding crisis.

90. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman wished to thank all the relevant staff for their work during the recent flooding crisis. Members unanimously agreed that Area North Committee should send a letter of gratitude to those concerned.

He also reminded members that the last town and parish meeting about Neighbourhood Plans would take place on Monday 3 December.

91. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

Cllr Sue Steele, on behalf of the Beercrocombe and Curry Mallet Village Hall Committee wished to thank the Community Development Officer (North) for his assistance with the hall refurbishment. She also reported that the works were nearly completed. Curry Mallet Parish Council had also found the Neighbourhood Plan meeting useful and wished to thank the Streetscene Service for their help during the recent flooding.

Cllr Sylvia Seal reminded members that the Community Resource Centre was now located at the site of the old museum in Yeovil and re-opened on 28 November 2012.

92. Presentation by Stoke Sub Hamdon Recreation Trust (Agenda item 8)

The Community Development Officer (North) introduced Peter Hulett, Chairman of the trust and Valerie Stokes, Manager of Stoke Charity Shop. He explained that the trust had received a small grant from Area North and the presentation was an opportunity to learn about their recent work and success.

Peter Hulett gave a very informative presentation which included information about:

- The history of the trust
- The structure of the committees
- Achievements to date, including partnership investment
- Projects in the pipeline and longer term plans
- Key issues, including costs, vandalism, retaining and recruiting volunteers
- Funding
- Charity Shop – many people sceptical about setting it up but it had proved to be very successful
- Financial support to small projects in the village

Ward member, Cllr Sylvia Seal highly commended the work of the trust, and commented that the two representatives present were very good at enabling projects and seeking expert help when required.

During a short and lively discussion, members praised the work of the trust and their achievements. It was also commented that other groups or parishes would benefit from learning from their experiences.

Members thanked the representatives and the volunteers for all their work.

93. County Highway Authority Report – Area North (Agenda item 9)

The Highways Officer had tendered his apologies for the meeting. Members unanimously agreed to defer the report to the next meeting, in order that the officer could respond to any questions.

RESOLVED: That the report be deferred to the December meeting of Area North Committee.

(Voting: unanimous)

94. Performance of the Streetscene Service (Agenda item 10)

The Streetscene Manager summarised the report as shown in the agenda. He highlighted to members key points including:

- Weather conditions this summer had been challenging
- Arrangement with Martock Parish Council whereby their staff used SSDC equipment was working well.
- The Royal visit and Olympic Torch events had gone well Olympic Torch event had gone smoothly.
- During the recent, and in places continuing flooding crisis, the team had been fantastic despite working long and anti-social hours in difficult conditions.
- Litter picking along rural routes would commence when vegetation had died back.
- Program of ditch maintenance had been completed prior to the recent flooding
- In order to attract new apprentices in the future there could be a need to re-assess apprentice salaries.

The Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager gave members a brief update on the current flooding situation including:

- Streetscene staff had worked many extra hours to deliver sandbags, and had worked above and beyond the call of duty
- Around 6,500 sandbags had been distributed to approximately 500 households, of which about 3,500 sandbags had been delivered to properties in Area North.
- Gel flood bags had been used for difficult to reach properties.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to comments from members, the officers noted that:

- There had been many examples of 'good neighbours' but also examples of irresponsible behavior including the theft of sandbags.
- Outlying villages ideally needed to keep a stock of gel flood bags in an easily accessible location.
- Streetscene would commence clean up operations from the start of December
- Some communities were more active than others in the emergency planning process.
- Wash and bow waves from moving vehicles were responsible for flooding some properties.
- Muchelney was effectively cut off and was likely to be for several more days, possibly weeks. The Burnham Sea rescue boat had gone into the village that day, and together with Wessex 4x4, were ferrying people back and forth in order to get supplies.

- An emergency grant scheme for flood victims had been announced by Somerset Community Foundation – further information was available from www.southsomerset.gov.uk

The officers also acknowledged further comments made by members including:

- Tyres were being fly tipped in some obscure places in Wessex ward
- The can do attitude of the Streetscene Team was commendable
- Somerset Waste Partnership should also be thanked for their work during the flooding crisis – the daily bulletins had been very informative
- Blanket warnings by Environment Agency had not been helpful. Phone calls in the early hours had only caused further panic.
- Parishes needed to learn from the recent events and from the previous committee report about flooding and civil contingencies.
- Parishes needed a supply of portable 'road closed' signs as many cars had tried to go through flooding only to become stuck.

Members thanked the Streetscene Manager for the excellent work of the Streetscene Service, and thanked all the staff for their commitment and work during the recent flooding crisis.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
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Pam Harvey, Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager
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95. Area Development Plan – Area North – 2012-13 – Update Report (Agenda item 11)

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report as shown in the agenda, and with the aid of Powerpoint slides she:

- Reminded members of the Area North priorities
- Provided an update on the town and parish council workshops about Neighbourhood Plans
- Referred to implementation of the Localism Bill
- Gave brief updates on affordable housing schemes in progress, changes to hours of community offices from January, Martock job club and Walk Langport.
- Showed examples of projects that had been completed with grants from Area North:
 - Martock Youth Centre – energy efficiency and refurbishment
 - Curry Rivel Village Hall – energy efficiency and improvements
 - Ilton Youth Club
- Provided an update on the current position with regard to the Somerset Levels and Moors programme, South Petherton information Centre, and the Connecting Devon & Somerset project

During a short discussion, one member expressed their disappointment that the Choice Based Letting information still did not appear on site boards at affordable housing developments, as this had been a recommendation of a Scrutiny review.

The Area Development Manager (North) informed members that a brief update report on the Langport Visitor Centre would be made to the next meeting.

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
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96. Area North 2012/13 Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2012 (Agenda item 12)

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report as shown in the agenda, and noted that she had no further updates to give about the current financial position of the Area North Committee. In response to members questions, she clarified:

- That it was unlikely that any progress would be made before the financial year end regarding the Community Play Schemes from the Corporate Programme. She advised that the lack of progress should be challenged at District Executive.
- The Somerset County Council Warden Scheme might be able to provide funding of up to £3,000 for Lengthsman type schemes, where parishes were clustered.

Members were content to approve all the recommendations as indicated in the agenda report.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that the following be noted:

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

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*Nazir Mehrali, Management Accountant
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97. Area North Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 13)

The Area Development Manager (North) updated members that the Planning Obligations report would now be in January. She reminded members that as discussed earlier in the meeting, the deferred Highways report would be requested for December and there would also be an update report on the Langport Visitor Centre at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

*Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
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98. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 14)

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
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99. Planning Applications (Agenda item 15)

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).

12/03395/FUL – Erection of a boundary wall together with a detached garage at March Cottage, Marshway, Curry Mallet. Applicant: Mr N Dove.

The Planning Officer updated members that a further observation from the applicant had been received which noted that given the recent rainfall the need for a wall along the highway also had a functional purpose.

He highlighted to members that the house was listed building. The Conservation Officer had no objection to the wall and garage. The application was before committee as the Highway Authority's recommendation was to refuse the application mainly due to poor visibility resulting from the location of the garage and its relationship to the lane. The officer report detailed the officer's considerations, including that the application was supported by the Parish Council and that the location was on an unclassified road where traffic speeds were likely to be slow. The officer recommendation was to approve the application.

Supporter, and parish councillor, Mr G Townrow commented that the property had started to deteriorate until 2010 when improvements by the current owner started. He and the parish councillor were very supportive of the proposal.

Ward member, Cllr Sue Steele, commented it was a cottage that had been at risk and could recall a garage being at the property in the past. The junction had adequate visibility and traffic travelled slowed at that point. She could see no reason to refuse the application.

There being no further debate, it was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and conditions, as detailed in the agenda report. The vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning application 12/03395/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer recommendation and conditions as detailed in the agenda report

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

12/03608/FUL – Installation of a sliding 5 bar gate at Ashleigh Villa, Langport Road, Somerton. Applicant: Mr A Wheller.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda which was before committee due to Highway Authority objections. He noted that a previous scheme had been approved without a gate. The proposal followed refusal for 1.8m high timber gates of a solid design, which had been installed but since removed from the site. The current proposal for consideration would replicate the appearance of the adjoining property's five bar gates, but would be a single gate structure capable of sliding sideways.

The Highway Authority objection was based upon obstruction to visibility and that the gate would not be set back sufficiently to allow a car to pull off the road. The Planning Officer considered that the current proposal had significantly reduced the height of the gate and as no longer of a solid construction, the impact regarding visibility had been significantly reduced. The officer recommendation was to approve the application.

The Area Lead clarified that this was ultimately a regularising application. It was considered that the proposal would not cause enough of an adverse impact on visibility to warrant recommending refusal on highway safety grounds.

Mr R Davis, agent, commented that the gate was wanted for privacy along the busy walkway and the gate design would replicate that of the neighbouring property.

Ward member, Cllr Pauline Clarke, noted that the town council were not in favour of the proposal. She sought assurance that the gate would be of a five bar design. To which the Area Lead confirmed the design would be conditioned.

Ward member, Cllr David Norris, did not consider the gates would make accessibility any more dangerous.

There being no further debate, it was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and conditions, as detailed in the agenda report. The vote was carried 10 in favour with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: That planning application 12/03608/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer recommendation and conditions as detailed in the agenda report

(Voting: 10 in favour, 1 abstention)

12/03357/FUL – The erection of a single storey side extension at Rose Cottage, Bineham Road, Knole. Applicant: Mr D Turpin.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda. An objection had been raised by the Highway Authority as the existing parking and turning area would be reduced thereby preventing easy movement on and off the highway. The Planning Officer was of the opinion that there was no restrictive condition to prevent the reduction in available space, so without the need for planning permission a significant portion of the driveway could be obstructed with an outbuilding.

It was highlighted that the applicant also proposed some improvements to the existing access including widening it and lowering of the adjacent boundary, and such works needed to be balanced against the Highways objection.

The Conservation Officer had raised an issue with the design and presence of the canopy on the extension. The Planning Officers view was that the proposal was well screened from the surrounding area and was not considered to be so harmful as to warrant refusal of the application.

Ward member, Cllr Shane Pledger, commented that it was a very quiet lane and could not see any highways issues to warrant refusing the application.

There being no further debate, it was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and conditions, as detailed in the agenda report. The vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That planning application 12/03357/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer recommendation and conditions as detailed in the agenda report

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

(Cllr Shane Pledger having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest left the room for the presentation and consideration of 12/03513/FUL and 12/03514/LBC)

12/03513/FUL – Alterations, repair and extensions to existing dwelling and the erection of a new dwelling at Canterbury Farm, High Street, Aller. Applicant: Mr S Pledger.

(Applications 12/03513/FUL and 12/03514/LBC were presented together)

The Planning Officer introduced the application as shown in the agenda and updated members on two late observations:

- the County Archaeologist requested a condition to secure an archaeological evaluation
- County Highways previous comments equally applied.

The Planning Officer explained that there was an urgency to this application, with works on-going on site that already have consent, for stabilising works to a listed building that is on the Council's Buildings at Risk Register. The proposal was opportunity to bring the property back into use. It was considered there was a proven need for a new dwelling to support the works to safeguard the listed building and the District's Valuer had accepted that such a case existed. The Conservation Officer supported the location and design of the proposed new dwelling, as well as the detailed finishes to the listed building including an extension to the footprint of the structure that was removed at some point in the recent past.

Neighbour concerns had been considered in detail in the officers report. It was considered that the retention of the boundary walls and the new dwelling, that was part single and part two storey, did not have any significant detrimental impact on the nearest neighbours.

Mr S Travers, agent, commented that renovation of the property was well overdue, but costs of works could not be recouped from the sale of the listed building alone. The new dwelling would be sited where an old barn had been and the design reflected this. Windows on the proposed new dwelling had been positioned to address neighbour amenity. He noted that Economic Development agreed with the figures and the parish council acknowledged the proposal was a way forward.

During the ensuing discussion, members raised several comments including:

- Good to see the farmhouse was being renovated
- Concern about height of new dwelling and impact on properties in Peddles Close
- Proposal went against policy
- Detailed financial information should be available
- Nearest property in Peddles Close was gable ended.
- Existing boundary wall was high

In response to comments, the Planning Officer clarified that only a bathroom window on the proposed new dwelling would overlook properties in Peddles Close. The application stated the boundary wall was up to two metres high, but on the application site it was higher. The Area Lead noted that a councillor was correct to comment that the officer report should also say that the application was before committee as the proposal was outside the settlement area and a departure from a policy.

The Legal Services Manager advised members that they did need to take the overall financial position into account because the application was being presented as 'enabling development', but the exact details would not normally be made public. She reminded members that an expert observation on the financial position was included in the officer report in the agenda.

It was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and conditions, as detailed in the agenda report, and subject to an additional condition for an archaeological evaluation. The vote was carried 8 in favour with 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That planning application 12/03513/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer recommendation and conditions as detailed in the agenda report, and subject to an additional condition for an archaeological evaluation.

(Voting: 8 in favour, 2 abstentions)

12/03514/LBC – Alterations, repair and extensions to existing dwelling and the erection of a new dwellinghouse at Canterbury Farm, High Street, Aller. Applicant: Mr S Pledger.

This application was discussed in conjunction with the previous application 12/03513/FUL and comments made on that application also refer to this application.

It was proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and conditions, as detailed in the agenda report, and on being put to the vote was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That listed building consent application 12/03514/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer recommendation and conditions as detailed in the agenda report.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

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Chairman