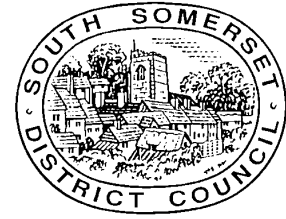


South Somerset District Council
Notice of Meeting



Area North Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Wednesday 23 January 2013

2.00pm

**The Village Hall
 Martock Road
 Long Sutton
 TA10 9NT**

(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

website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/agendas

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 15 January 2013.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)



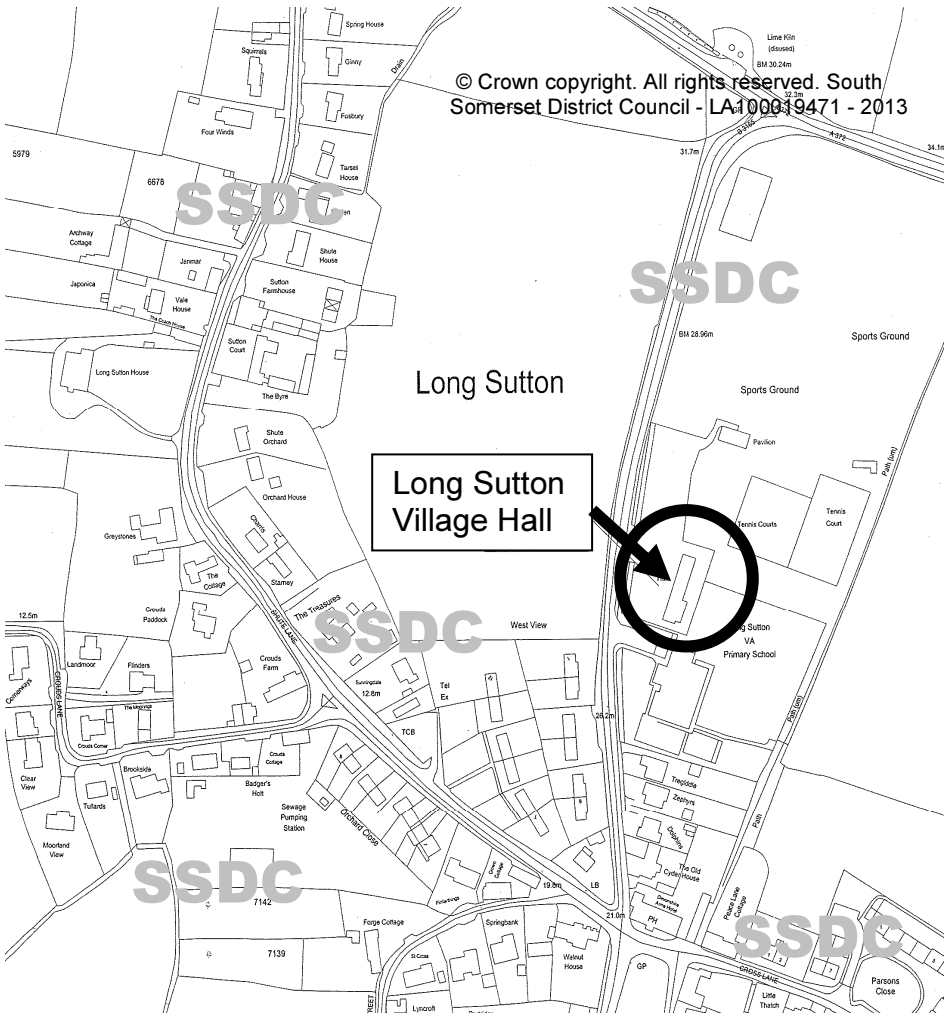
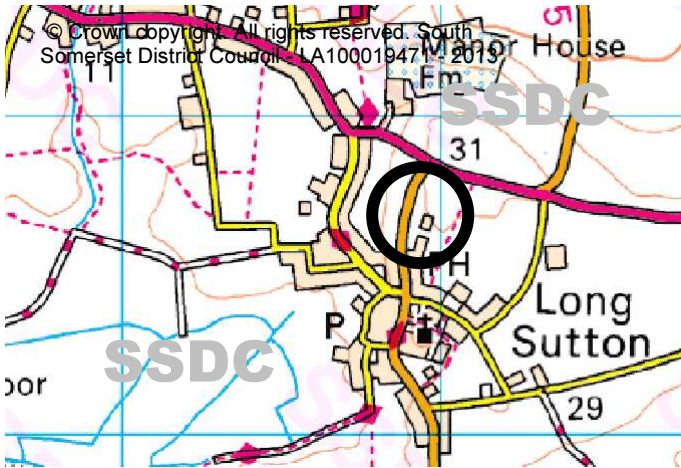
2007-2008
 Neighbourhood and
 Community Champions:
 The Role of Elected Members
2006-2007
 Improving Rural Services
 Empowering Communities
2005-2006
 Getting Closer to Communities

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Location of meeting venue



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Area North Membership

Pauline Clarke
Graham Middleton
Roy Mills
Terry Mounter
David Norris

Patrick Palmer
Shane Pledger
Jo Roundell Greene
Sylvia Seal

Sue Steele
Paul Thompson
Barry Walker
Derek Yeomans

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 for this month's meeting will commence no earlier than 3.30pm, 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 (except December) 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 and/or 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 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or a personal and prejudicial interest

In relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, a Councillor is prohibited by law from participating in the discussion about the business on the agenda that relates to this interest and is also required to leave the room whilst the relevant agenda item is being discussed.

Under the new Code of Conduct adopted by this Council in July 2012, a Councillor with a personal and prejudicial interest (which is not also a DPI) will be afforded the same right as a member of the public to speak in relation to the relevant business and may also answer any questions, 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 23 January 2013

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2012**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Declarations of interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9. 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 any relevant 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 Terry Mounter, 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 27 February 2013 at the Village Hall, Norton Sub Hamdon.**

5. Public question time
6. Chairman's announcements
7. Reports from members

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Items for Discussion

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<p>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.</p>

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

8. Flooding Update

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations & Customer Focus
Assistant Directors: Laurence Willis, Environment
Service Manager: Pam Harvey, Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager
Lead Officer: As above
Contact Details: pam.harvey@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462303

A short verbal update will be provided regarding the current flooding situation affecting Area North.

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

9. County Highway Authority Report – Area North

Lead Officer: Neil McWilliams, Assistant Highway Service Manager, SCC
Contact Details: countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk or 0845 345 9155

(This report was deferred at the meetings of Area North Committee on 28 November 2012 and 19 December 2012)

Purpose of the report

The Report is to inform members of the work carried out by the County Highway Authority at the halfway stage through the financial year 2012/13 and what schemes are remaining on the work programme for the rest of the year.

Recommendation

That members note and comment on the report.

Report

Surface Dressing

Weather this year has been a major factor in delivering our surface dressing program. It was delayed until August, which only gave us a one month window in which to complete the work. After this time the road temperature is too unpredictable to ensure there are no surface failures.

Surface Dressing is the practice of applying a bitumen tack coat to the existing road surface and rolling in stone chippings. Whilst this practice is not the most PR friendly, when carried out correctly it is highly effective and can bring significant improvements to the highway infrastructure.

Verge Cutting

Grass cutting this year has been difficult due to the rapid growth of vegetation and as you can appreciate, our works are largely governed by resource. With a highway network exceeding 3500km in length, the size of the task is significant. The County Council therefore has a policy and procedures that are in place to ensure the work is carried out in the most safe, effective and economic way. In a world of ever increasing risk assessment and claim/liability scenarios, the policy must take into account the range of road classifications across the network and prioritises them accordingly. We were able to do 2 cuts on A and B roads together with one cut on the C and D class roads this year. The programme was largely completed by the end of September.

Winter maintenance

The preparation for this years winter maintenance programme has now started. Our salt supply for the upcoming season has been delivered to the depot. Local parishes will again be invited to collect their allocation of ten 20kg grit bags. If grit bins are being considered at new locations, can the members please confirm these positions as soon as possible as the filling of bins has now commenced. It may also be beneficial to confirm previous locations to ensure that these areas are not missed.

Structural Schemes Completed 2012/13

Many of the structural maintenance schemes for this year have been completed and are listed below:

Tintinhull	Head Street	Surfacing
Martock	Ashfield Park Estate	Surfacing
Somerton	West Street	Surfacing
Tintinhull	A303 Overbridge	Surfacing
Martock	Stapleton Cross	Surfacing
Huish Episcopi	Langport Road	Surfacing
Curry Rivel	St Andrews Close	Footway
Norton sub Hamdon	Skinners Lane	Drainage
Barrington	Ruskway Lane	Drainage
Stoke sub Hamdon	Stonehill	Footway

Outstanding Structural Schemes to be completed in 2012/13

South Petherton	Silver Street & Hospital Lane	Surfacing
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Deferred Schemes

Footway at Cary Way, Somerton
 Drainage at Silver Street, Kingsbury Episcopi

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

10. Somerset Minerals Plan – Preferred Options

SCC Service Manager: *Guy Robinson, Interim Minerals and Waste Policy Manager*
Contact Details: *grobenson@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 357140*
Consultation website: *http://www.somersetconsults.org.uk.*

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on developments on minerals planning policy in Somerset. The Senior Minerals Planning Officer and Interim Minerals and Waste Policy Manager will attend the meeting to give a short presentation. The presentation to Area North will provide an opportunity for any specific local issues to be raised and local knowledge gathered.

Public Interest

On 11th January 2013 Somerset County Council launched a consultation on the "Preferred Options" of the Somerset Minerals Plan, which will form part of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework. Publishing the preferred options is an important step towards adoption of new minerals planning policy in Somerset, which is a statutory requirement for the Council. The preferred options are informed by the Minerals Options consultation which closed in February 2012.

Recommendations

- 1) Note and comment on the report and presentation
- 2) Members are invited to respond individually to the consultation
- 3) Note that a formal response from SSDC will be made by the Portfolio Holder (Finance & Spatial Planning)

Main report

From quarrying of aggregates and building stone, to issues linked with minerals transport, site restoration and peat extraction, the Minerals Plan will set out the Council's approach to minerals planning until 2030. It will cover all mineral types, focusing in particular on the spatial context for extraction in Somerset, and addressing the relationship between minerals and non-minerals development.

Minerals are needed to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. Since they are a finite resource and can only be worked where they are found – which, for Somerset's aggregates, centres in the Mendip Hills – it is important to make best use of minerals and manage impacts of their extraction appropriately. The Preferred Options document contains 14 draft "Strategic" policies, plus 12 draft policies on Development Management that will help the Council to protect features that make Somerset unique; for example: landscape; biodiversity, the historic environment, water resources; and public rights of way.

The preferred options have been informed by public consultation and detailed research, and respond to requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and areas of emerging interest, such as the use of local building stone to maintain our cultural heritage and national interest in energy minerals (including the extraction of shale gas).

The consultation runs until March 8th 2013. It will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to comment on the direction of minerals policy. The results of the consultation will inform the preparation and publication of the "Pre-submission" Somerset Minerals Plan.

All relevant documents will be made available on the County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste. The County Council's consultation portal will be used to promote and disseminate the Preferred Options consultation which can be accessed via the following website <http://www.somersetconsults.org.uk>. Officers from the County Council's Minerals and Waste Policy Team will also be present at two drop in sessions (details below) where interested parties can come and talk about the consultation.

Drop in sessions:

Thursday 24th January 2013

1pm – 7pm
Peter Street Rooms
Peter Street
Shepton Mallet
BA4 5BL

Thursday 21st February 2013

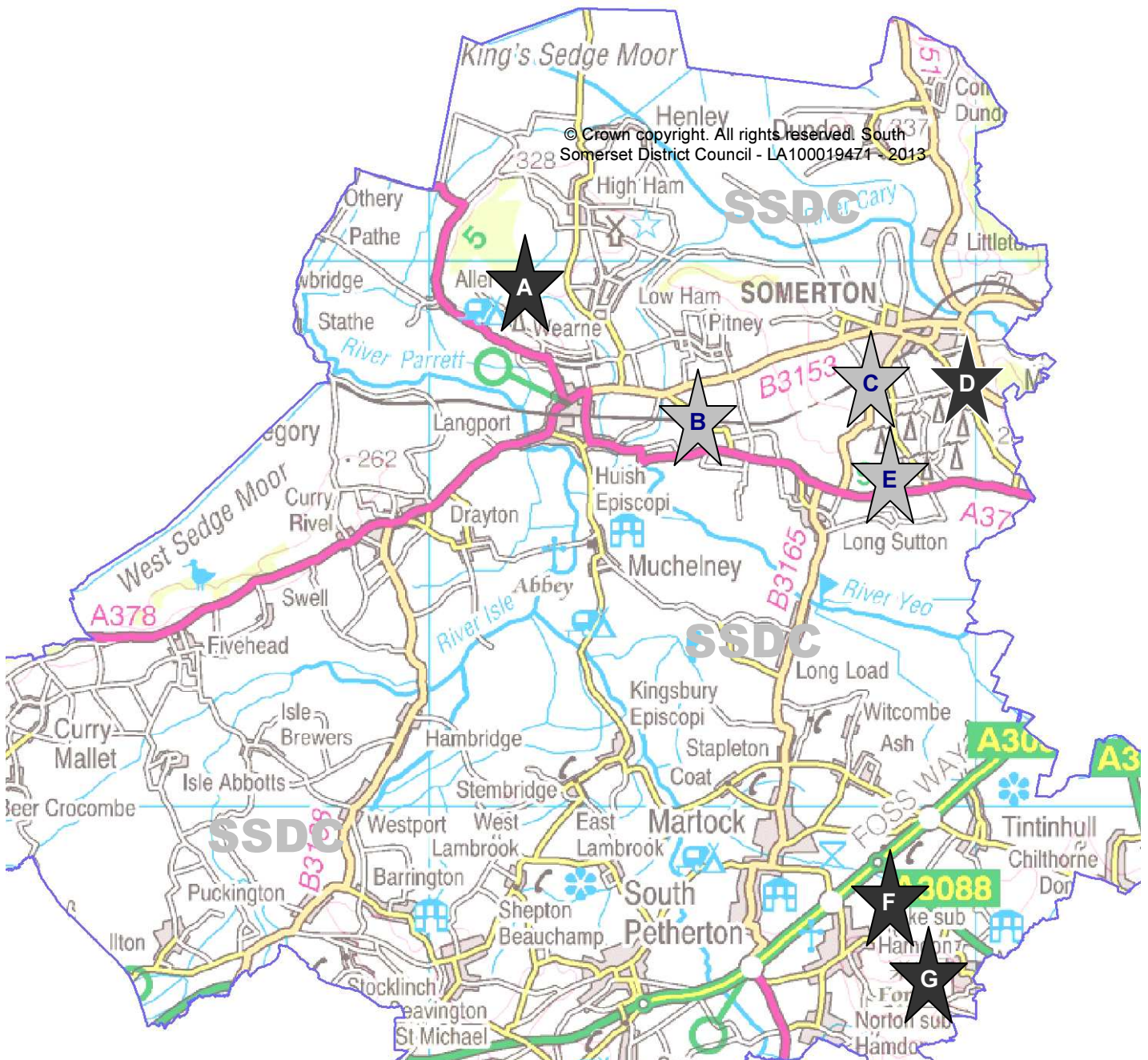
12 noon – 7pm
Stuckey Room
Great Bow Wharf
Bow Street
Langport
TA10 9PN

For more information please contact Guy Robinson, Interim Minerals and Waste Manager on 01823 357140 or grobinson@somerset.gov.uk

Attached is a map showing the locations of current active and dormant quarries in Area North.

Quarries in Area North

(Active and dormant)



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Parish	Ward	Map Ref	Quarry Name	Status
Huish Episcopi	Turn Hill	A	Bowdens Lane Quarry, Bowdens Lane, Langport, TA10 0QL	Active
Long Sutton	Turn Hill	B	Downslade, Hermitage Road, Upton, Long Sutton, TA10 9NW	Dormant
Somerton	Wessex	C	Badgers Cross, Badgers Cross Lane, Somerton, TA11 7JF	Dormant
Somerton	Wessex	D	Ashen Cross, Ashen Cross Road, Somerton, TA11 7HR	Active
Somerton	Wessex	E	Appledoor Field, Langport Road, Long Sutton, TA11 7JD	Dormant
Stoke Sub Hamdon	Hamdon	F	Ham Hill North, Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon, TA14 6RW	Active
Montacute	St Michael's	G	Ham Hill South, Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon	Active

Please note – placement is indicative only!

Area North Committee - 23 January 2013

11. SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Health and Well Being
Service Manager: Kirsty Jones, Housing and Welfare Manager
Lead Officer: Catherine Hansford, Senior Housing Support Officer, Welfare Benefits
Contact Details: catherine.hansford@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462737

Purpose of the Report

To update and inform Members on the work of the Welfare Benefit Team for the financial year 2011/12, across the district and specifically within Area North.

Public Interest

The report gives an overview of the work of the Welfare Benefit Team within the Council showing progress to date and how the work achieves multiple added value for South Somerset.

Recommendation

- 1) Members are invited to comment on the report.
- 2) Members are asked to approve the allocation of £8,000 from the Area North Reserve to fund the continuation of additional welfare benefit take-up advice by the Housing and Welfare Service, within Area North for a further year from April 2013.

Background

Arising from our own assessment of poverty in the District in 1996 and later work done on benefit take-up for the Somerset County Council Poverty Commission in 1998, the Council decided to back a three year Welfare Benefits Take-Up Campaign for South Somerset. This was a pilot designed to test what we as a District Council could achieve, by both tapping into our own resources (primarily via Community Advisers in community offices) and enabling more take up work in other sectors through practical support and identification of external funding.

This initiative, managed in partnership with South Somerset CAB, was resourced with a sum of £100,000 over the three year period commencing April 2000. This enabled SSDC to employ a Welfare Benefit Officer based in the Social Inclusion Team. In response to demand the service grew and by 2001 the existence of the welfare benefits programme supported and complemented the introduction of the Verification Framework into Housing Benefits, giving Members and officers increased confidence that deliberate fraud would be tackled whilst maintaining a safety net for supporting vulnerable people.

When the Social Inclusion Unit ceased to exist, the Welfare Benefit Team transferred to the Housing and Welfare Section - which has resulted in even closer working with the housing teams to prevent the loss of tenancies.

What does the Welfare Benefit Team consist of?

Due to the 20% increase in the number of cases in 2008/9, coupled with the economic downturn, it was agreed that the team could be increased by one full-time post for a period of two years. Hence the Welfare Benefits Team currently consists of the equivalent to 2.5 full time permanent and 1 x temporary full time Welfare Benefit Advisers who are responsible for undertaking casework for clients, identifying their welfare benefit entitlement. During 2009/10 and 2010/11 the caseload continued to increase considerably as a result of the ongoing pressures related to the economic crisis.

The staff works across the whole of South Somerset offering home visits as appropriate. They assist in preparing claims, representing clients at Appeals, up to and including Social Security Commissioners level, and representing clients at Tribunal hearings.

Since June 2012, one day's work a week has been funded by the Area North budget for welfare advice to Area North residents. This means that claimants are seen quicker than previously.

Addressing Need

The DWP has outlined data on the various income-related benefits that were not claimed. The latest figures, which refer to 2009-10, include:

- Up to 620,000 people failing to claim up to £2bn in income support, and employment and support allowance
- Up to 1.6 million people failing to claim up to £2.8bn in pension credit
- Up to 1.1 million people not claiming up to £3.1bn in housing benefit
- Up to 3.2 million people missing out on up to £2.4bn in council tax benefit
- Up to 610,000 people failing to claim up to £1.95bn in jobseeker's allowance

Nationally up to £12.7 billion of means tested benefits were **unclaimed** in 2008/9 (representing 85% take up of available benefits). This compares with £9.99 billion of means tested benefits unclaimed in 2006/7. At that time, using estimates supplied by the Office of National Statistics, this indicated that up to £26.6 million was going unclaimed by the people of South Somerset. An assumption can therefore be made that the then unclaimed figure of £26.6 million for the people of South Somerset will now be considerably higher.

Progress to date

District Wide

- During 2011/12 the Welfare Benefit Team undertook casework for 956 clients across South Somerset, achieving an annual income for clients of £1,796,386.
- In addition, clients received a total of £296,551 in lump sums, giving a combined total of £2,092,937 (at 01/11/12). Please note that these figures are provisional due to the time lag involved in benefits being awarded/clients confirming their award, and we would expect these figures to show a further increase over the coming months.
- Based on the total figure of £2,092,937 this work levered in welfare benefit payments 16.6 times more than the actual cost of the service! This compares well with last year's figure of 12.
- The total annual income achieved for clients represents an ongoing annual income figure and as such is likely to continue on a recurring basis. The effects of this on the local economy should not be overlooked.

Within Area North

- During the period 2011/12, we dealt with 148 cases, generated **£34,358 in lump sum payments** and achieved an **increased annual income of £274,345**.
- Due to the additional temporary funding, one day a week was allocated to cases from Area North. This accounted for **28%** of the casework in Area North – 41 cases – even though it was only in place for 8 months of the financial year.
- The proportion of the Area North work generated by the additional funding equates to **£86,436.84 which represents an overall additional household income 8.6 times more than the cost of the additional hours**.
- The Area North Committee funded continuation of this additional day (using funds available for service enhancements) and the team member has been in place since June 2012. This is **in addition to** the work carried out with residents who would normally be helped as part of the core work of the welfare benefits team.

Saved and Maintained Tenancies

Saved Tenancies are those cases which would have resulted in the loss of the tenancy but for the intervention of the Welfare Benefit Team. Maintained Tenancies are those where the Welfare Benefit Team has undertaken a significant amount of work with the clients towards assisting in the successful maintenance of the tenancy.

The figures for Saved and Maintained Tenancies across the district for 2011/12 are 21 and 44 respectively. We believe these figures are likely to increase due to the effect of the time lag from commencing work with a client to finishing working with them.

The cost to SSDC of dealing with a homeless application is likely to be in the region of £2700 per family: the 23 x tenancies saved by the intervention of the Welfare Benefit Team equates to a potential saving of £62,560. It is also arguable that further potential savings were made by the 44 x Maintained Tenancies, as it is highly probable that a number of these would have progressed to the stage of loss of tenancy without early intervention.

Out of the 956 clients we worked with we helped take 134 to appeal. Of these 45 were successful. Unsuccessful appeals automatically proceed to a tribunal but we also pick up some cases that are already at tribunal stage. We took 77 cases to Tribunal and won 65 of them – an 85% success rate so far. These cases result in clients receiving considerable backdated lump sums and significant increases in income. It's also worth noting that a number of appeal and tribunal cases are still on-going so these figures should show a significant increase as cases are closed. A small number of cases have been escalated to the Upper Tier Tribunal (Commissioner level).

These figures are reflected in national statistics, showing that Welfare Benefits is becoming more complex – with more decision being changed following a tribunal hearing than being revised by the DWP.

Case studies can be found in Appendix 1.

**The assumption that the cost to SSDC of dealing with a Homeless Application is approx. £2720 per family is made up as follows:*

Processing Homelessness application (3 days x Officer and Admin time): £280

Housing family pending decision – 3 weeks at £580 per week: £1740

Ongoing Housing Solution – deposit guarantee, rent in advance, fees, etc (e.g. loss of interest, proportion of bad debt, debt recovery costs): £700

Achieving Multiple Added Value

Apart from putting money in the pockets of those who need it, there is widespread added value from this work, including that described below.

Working with the Homelessness Team we assist in preventing loss of tenancies. In addition to the potential direct savings to SSDC identified earlier in this report there are other associated savings. In 2004 the estimated cost for a two child family if an eviction took place without a homeless application being made was £3563. The wider social costs in relation to education and health services were estimated to be £4896. (Somerset Community Legal Service Partnership: County Court Project). In addition the emotional impact on clients not receiving such assistance will be considerable.

The link between health and wealth needs to be acknowledged. The Acheson Report specifically recommended benefit take up as a measure to tackle health inequalities.

Both the payment to the individual clients and the payments to SSC/SSDC contribute to increased spending in the local economy.

Provision of advice around Welfare Rights to ensure people claim all they are entitled to has been shown to have large economic benefits to local communities. A report in Scotland ("Extending Scottish Input – Output Systems", McNicoll) found that for every £1 million of benefits recovered the local multiplier effect generates 36 full time jobs in the local (Scottish) economy. On this basis, last year approximately 65 jobs could potentially have been created or sustained as a consequence of this work.

Within Area North this equates to about 11 jobs – three of which were as a result of the additional hours.

The welfare benefit work also supports that of the Private Sector Tenancy Support post, working with clients to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to, thereby assisting them in successfully maintaining their tenancy.

The advice we provide also helps some of our clients get back on their feet again and encourages them to be pro-active as we try to empower and avoid over dependence.

Impact of additional work carried out in Area North

The additional one day's work a week between August 2011 and April 2012 resulted in the following benefits to local residents.

- 41 more cases (28% of the casework in Area North).
- An additional £86,436.84 generated, representing a benefit income 8.6 times the cost of the additional hours.
- Using the multiple added value argument, an extra three jobs were funded.

This additional work has continued since June 2012, funded by Area North, and there is every reason to assume the advantages to residents would continue during the forthcoming year were the work to continue. It is clear that the enhanced service has made a difference and councillors are asked to consider agreeing funding its continuation for the financial year 2013/14.

Financial Implications

The unallocated Area North reserve currently stands at £23,920, if the additional balance of £8000 is approved the remaining reserve will be £15,920.

Corporate Priority Implications

Works towards corporate themes (Corporate Plan 2009-12)

Theme 1: Increase economic vitality and prosperity

Theme 3: Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens

Looking to the future (Council Plan 2012-2015):

Focus 3: Homes

Focus 4: Health and Communities

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

The work within the Welfare Benefit Team brings us into daily contact with vulnerable clients, people with disabilities and non-English speaking communities. We also work with the Community Link workers who are available to assist us with translating and interpreting.

Background Papers: *none*

Appendix 1

Client Case Study 1

A Community Psychiatric Nurse for the Community Mental Health Team approached Welfare Benefits after Robert and Anne's landlord threatened to evict them, due to rent arrears.

The couple had no knowledge of claiming benefits, and were not even receiving tax credits for their three children.

For months, they had been relying on the goodwill of family for food and help with their bill however, as well as their rent arrears; they had substantial council tax arrears too.

Anne had severe difficulties with walking and Robert was suffering from severe depression which had meant that he had not been able to work for six months. Their only income at this time was the child benefit for the children (£47.10 per week) and the assessment rate for Employment and Support Allowance (£105.95 per week).

We assisted the couple to claim a backdated award of Council Tax Benefit and Child Tax Credits.

We also helped them claim Disability living Allowance - both were given appropriate awards so no appeal work was necessary.

As a consequence of the extra income the tenancy was saved and the couple were able to stay in the property and maintain their financial independence from family.

Client Case Study 2

Daniel and his partner have a young daughter and, whilst he has been keen to work he could not hold down a full time job due to his uncontrolled epilepsy. As Daniel could not be left alone with his daughter, his partner was unable to work either. In addition to that, due to the government changes in Tax Credits, he was no longer able to claim a top up of Working Tax Credits for the part time work he did. They were struggling financially and were signposted to us by the Children's Centre.

We identified that Daniel should be entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA). We helped him complete the forms but he was, unfortunately turned down. He had a very good case and we gathered a lot of supporting medical evidence for him and represented him in an appeal. The Disability and Carer's Service still did not change their decision and the case went to a tribunal hearing. On the day of the hearing, we presented Daniel's case and after just a few minutes of questions for Daniel, the Tribunal unanimously overturned the decision and gave him an award of DLA at the middle rate which equated to an additional £49.30 plus a lump sum back payment of just under £2000.

As a result of Daniel's DLA he was classed as a disabled worker which meant that he was awarded Working Tax Credits at the rate of £126.22 per week. His partner, who provided the supervision and care, was able to claim Carer's Allowance in recognition of her responsibilities and this was an additional £55.55 per week.

Overall, their annual income was increased by the sum of £12015.64, which not only maintained their tenancy but also helped Daniel and his family get back on their feet again.

Client Case Study 3

Jonathan is a 29 year old single man with mild learning disabilities. Whilst he has lived alone for many years, he always managed his financial affairs with support from his mother. When Jonathan's mother passed away bills and forms mounted up and he fell into six months of arrears with his rent because he had failed to return several housing benefit forms. Jonathan was getting some help from other family with the arrears, but this was causing significant strains in relationships. Our advisor worked collaboratively with the revenues and benefits team to secure six month backdating for the Housing and Council Tax Benefit, so Jonathan was able to pay back his family and deal with his arrears. Jonathan had barely any furniture in his flat so we were able to help him with a community Care Grant application. The award allowed him to buy some basics like a fridge and seating for the living room. Jonathan was referred for support to Nova Scarman (now "people can") to help maintain his tenancy.

Client Satisfaction Forms – just a few of the comments received over the year:

"The help and advice given was exceptional. He genuinely empathized with my situation and did the best to help me."

"What can I say – (he) is so caring and always on hand – so tireless in what must be such a stressful and demanding job."

"(Her) conduct throughout was quite exemplary. Thank you!"

"(she) was most helpful and understanding. She is a credit to the service."

"Words can't describe how appreciative I am. She is kind, patient and understanding but, above all, has an excellent knowledge of the legislation. If it were not for (her) the result probably would not have been in my favour and my health would have been detrimentally affected. Thank you for providing this service and my caseworker is a real asset to SSDC."

"I don't think I would have managed without this service and am so grateful to all the staff involved. Thank you!"

"I am so very grateful for all the help that was given to me and all the support. I can't thank you enough."

"I feel the help that (she) has given us has changed our lives. A credit to SSDC and Somerset."

"I would like to thank (her) for the sympathetic way she handled my case. I was so frightened when they cut my benefits. What a superb lady!"

"(She) is brilliant at her job and always has respect and understanding for me, which isn't always easy!"

***All names used are fictitious**

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

12. 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.

Recommendation

Members are asked to: -

Note and comment upon the 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

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
27 Feb '13	S.106 Planning Obligations / Developer Contributions – Six monthly update 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
27 Feb '13	Quarterly Finance Report	Quarterly report on the position of the Area North Development budget, including community grants and the capital programme.	Jayne Beevor, Group Accountant
27 Feb '13	Area Development Plan	An update report on the recent work of the Area Development (North) service against ward / area priorities.	Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
27 Mar '13	Community Health & Leisure Service	Service update report.	Lynda Pincombe, Community Health & Leisure Manager
27 Mar '13	Countryside Service	To provide a report on the work of the SSDC Countryside Service over the past year.	Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
27 Mar '13	River Parrett Trail	To receive an update report on the status, condition and marketing of the River Parrett Trail.	Andy Stevenson, Environment Directorate, Somerset County Council
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Huish Episcopi Leisure Centre – revised management agreement</i>	<i>To present for approval the revised management / grant agreement between Huish Episcopi Leisure Centre and SSDC</i>	<i>Steve Joel Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being)</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Somerset Water Management Partnership</i>	<i>To learn more about the work of SWMP and its current priorities.</i>	<i>Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)</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>Community Safety/Neighbourhood Policing</i>	<i>To provide an opportunity for discussion of issues affecting community safety in Area North.</i>	<i>Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North) TBC – Avon and Somerset Constabulary</i>

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

13. 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

12/00520/FUL – Land west of Clematis, Upper Pitney Road, Pitney TA10 9AF.
Erection of two dwellings and garages together with formation of vehicular accesses.

12/02815/FUL – Moor View, 3 Church Street, Drayton TA10 0JY
Installation of a dormer window on north elevation of garage.

Appeals Dismissed

None

Appeals Allowed

None

Area North Committee – 23 January 2013

14. 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