

South Somerset District Council
Notice of Meeting



Area North Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Wednesday 27 March 2013

2.00pm

**The Millennium Hall
Water Street
Seavington St Michael
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 3.45pm.

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 19 March 2013.

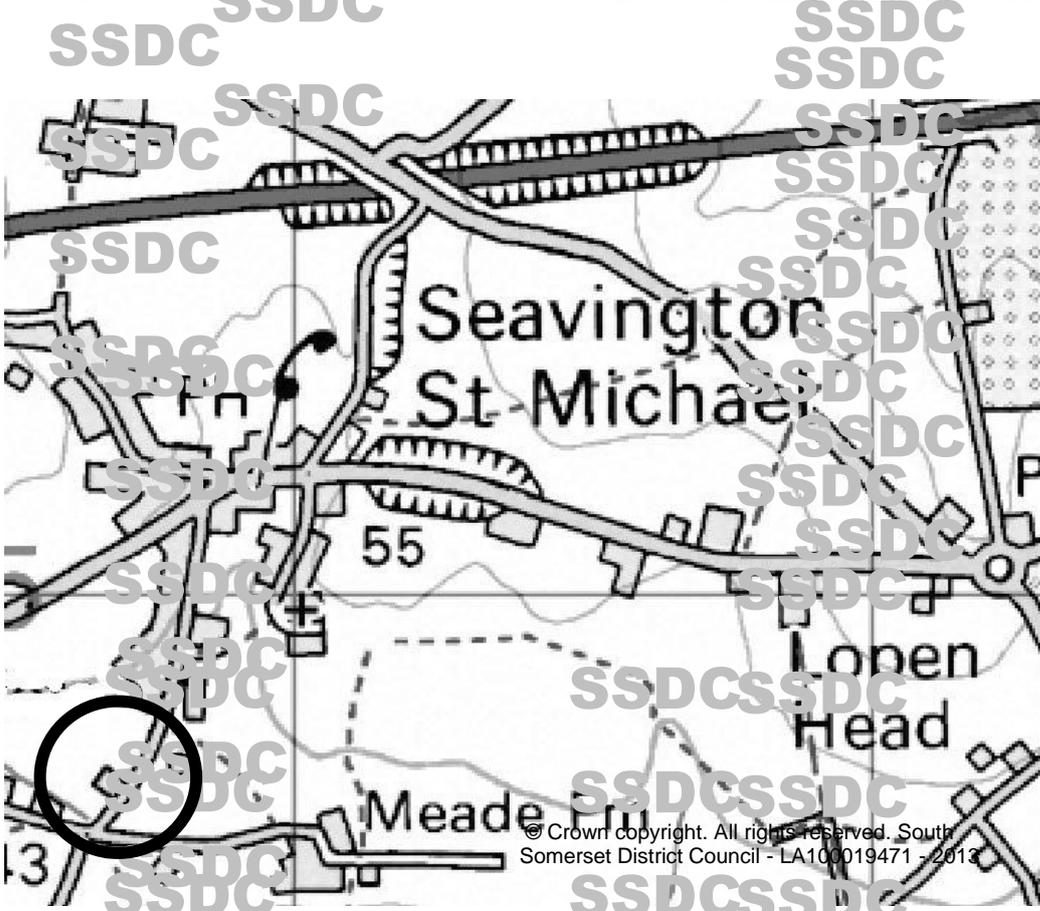
Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

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 3.45pm, 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 (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 27 March 2013

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2013**
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 24 April 2013 at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.**

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

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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>

8. Neighbourhood Policing in Area North

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

The new Neighbourhood Policing Team Sergeant for Area North, Rob Jameson, will attend the meeting for an initial introduction to local district councillors.

9. River Parrett Trail Update Report

Lead Officer: Andy Stevenson, Somerset County Council
Contact Details: astevenson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 358250.

Purpose of the report

Andy Stevenson, Volunteer Co-ordinator for Rights of Way, Somerset County Council will attend the committee to provide a brief presentation and an opportunity for discussion on the River Parrett Trail – its aims, maintenance and promotion.

Background information is provided below, and a copy of the current promotional leaflet has been circulated with the agenda papers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note and comment on the report and presentation.

Background

There are over 6100 km of public rights of way in Somerset. They are comprised of footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and a few byways open to all traffic. Several of these paths are promoted as part of popular regional or national trails, such as the Coleridge Way, River Parrett Trail, South West Coast Path and West Somerset Coast Path.

The River Parrett Trail

There is a comprehensive set of maps and directions information at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/go/km/docs/CouncilDocuments/SCC/Documents/Environment/Rights%20of%20way/RiverParrettTrailMaps%26Directions.pdf>

From the 'Visit Somerset' website:

“The River Parrett Trail can be enjoyed as a 50 mile hike over 3 or 4 days or as a series of shorter walks. The path winds gently through rolling hills and meadows, crosses the peaceful Somerset levels and Moors, and allows opportunities to explore thriving market towns and villages.

Highlights include the famous Somerset Levels, where controlled winter flooding means that the area comes alive as a feeding ground for thousands of birds from as far a field as Greenland and Russia; said to be one of the best bird-watching locations in the world. Ham Hill, the largest Iron Age hill fort in Britain, offers fabulous views of Somerset and the levels.

Award winning tearooms and pubs provide refreshment along the route and there are numerous places to stay.”

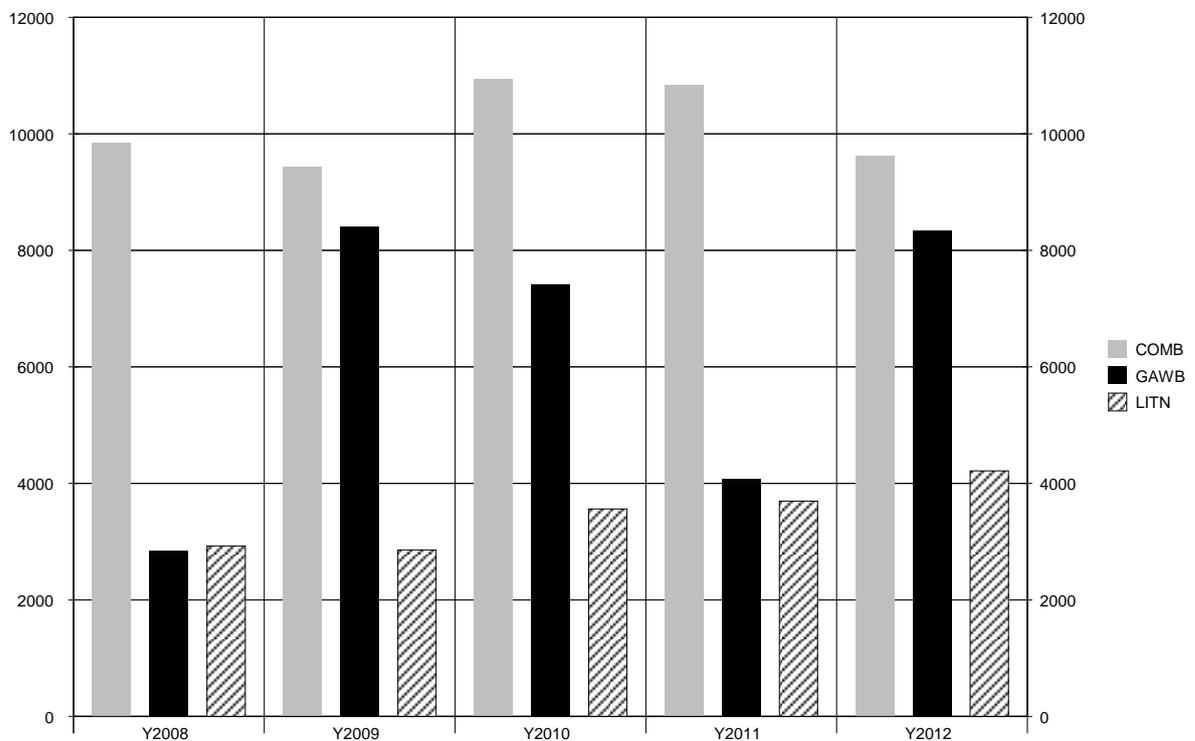
Volunteering on the RPT and the Rights of Way network:

- RPT Trail Watchers
- Parish Path Liaison Officers (PPLOs)
- Strimmer Project

Promotion of RPT:

- SCC website – maps, directions & text
- Leaflet distribution
- At Langport - interpretation / exhibition

Visitor numbers recorded on the River Parrett Trail:



COMB = Comwich GAWB = Gawbridge Mill LITN = Little Norton
Visitor numbers recorded on the River Parrett Trail

10. Countryside Services Update Report

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Health and Well Being
Service Manager: Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
Lead Officer: Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
Contact Details: katy.menday@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462522

Purpose of the Report

To update members on the work of the Countryside Service across the District over the past year and on key projects for the next 6 months.

Public Interest

This report aims to provide the highlights of the Countryside Service at South Somerset over the past year, with particular reference to the rangers based at the countryside sites. It will summarise what has been completed in terms of land management and also event delivery for the public. The countryside team manage sites at Ham Hill Country Park, Yeovil Country Park, Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, Sampson's Wood (Yeovil), Langport cycleway, Moldrams Ground Local Nature Reserve (Pen Selwood) and Eastfield Local Nature Reserve (High Ham).

Recommendation

That members note the report.

Across the South Somerset Countryside Sites

- The largest sites have again secured 3 Green Flag Awards all in the highest scoring brackets.
- For 2012 a diverse events program was developed which included over 37 public events. From traditional guided walks to themed Halloween events; bookings via the Octagon continued to rise as our marketing continues to improve.
- An estimated 7000 visitors (children and adults) attended across the 37 events, which includes 3 large fayre events.
- Additionally an estimated 3000 people attended the special Jubilee Fayre organised for Her Majesty The Queen's visit in May to Yeovil.
- Delivery of Countryside Services is via a huge volunteer bank and activity is focused across the 3 strategic sites and Moldrams Ground LNR. Community support groups like the Steering Group and 2 "Friends of" Groups bring the annual average of frequently engaged volunteers to 50 individuals. In 2012, 1446 practical volunteer days were donated across the district (a further, if small, increase on last year). Extra days were donated by members of our community groups including Park watch.
- The Countryside team have continued to work towards delivery of all targets in their annual delivery plan which is monitored by the steering group.
- 1542 trees have been planted during the winter seasons and these include 4 Jubilee oaks at Ham Hill, Yeovil, Chard and Moldram's Ground.

- Practical land management continued including dry stone walling, hedge laying, scrub and tree stock management and grassland works, plus bin emptying and response work.
- Two new apprentices started at the Country Parks in September, there were over 55 applicants for the year-long posts. A new countryside Intern started in October as part of the district wide scheme for 9 months.
- The most frequent compliments received by the team relate to the free or cost recovery events suitable for all the family. Ham Hill and Ninesprings receive compliments about woodland and landscape management and improved accessibility.
- Work continues towards improving our web based information at www.southsomersecountryside.com and the rangers now have a Twitter account @SSDCCountryside

Challenges over the year

- Persistently wet weather, making fayre events difficult to set up and manage; although on actual event days we have been very lucky. Some smaller play schemes have needed to be cancelled due to torrential rain. Paths and bridleways across all sites have suffered in the persistently wet weather, even repair works have been hampered due to inaccessibility for site vehicles.
- Ash Tree dieback is a worrying threat to the woodlands and ash trees across the district. The rangers are fully appraised of the situation and continue to inspect the trees on our sites. Sites display posters asking the public to comply with suggested containment measures.
- In June a break in and theft from Ham Hill Country Park including grounds maintenance machinery set back the summer vegetation cutting programme.
- We experienced the usual irresponsible use of sites and vandalism at the busiest sites over the summer months.

Yeovil Country Park

- Yeovil College continue to work with the ranger team to clear the valley gardens of Ninesprings of laurel and re plant with a native woodland mix.
- The Yeovil May Fayre had a good range of stalls and free activities, due to the altered bank holidays in May we ran on a Saturday but we still had a good turn out.
- Yeovil Country Park was the focus for a visit by The Queen on May 2, with the site requiring various preparations works by the ranger team and long hours in the week running up to the event due to heavy rainfall and high winds. The team organised a special event that aimed to showcase the unique heritage, landscape and industry of Somerset, and was an event aimed at primary school children with plenty of free activities to enjoy.
- Funding work continues towards the community ranger base and wider project. The V3 project; inVolve, Visit, Volunteer has two strands, the construction of the V3 Hub and the employment of a 3 year Community Ranger post and activity programme. Applications have been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Veolia and Reaching Communities in addition to smaller local funds.
- The Friends of Yeovil Country Park are very active, fundraising and representing the park at local events and meetings. They also run a community facebook page called "Yeovil Country Park" which has proved to be a great marketing tool for events and gaining public feedback.
- The storytelling zone has been finished in Southwoods. Fairy doors, balancing beams, woodland mushrooms, a creepy tree and willow shelters all add to the natural

seating already provided. This free and great exploratory facility is popular with nursery schools and is a good base for running events like last years popular Halloween trail.

- The countryside rangers were given an award by Lufton Mencap College for their practical conservation work with the College and its students.

Sampson's Wood, Yeovil

- From autumn 2012 we entered year 4 of a significant tree management project; to stabilize the peripheral tree stock in the woodland, and veteran trees in the woodlands core.

Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve

- The July 2012 countryside event was a success. Families came and spent all day with us making clay animals, exploring the site and listening to the story teller.
- The reed bed restoration project continues: the hard work of the volunteers was evident this summer with dense lush growth.

Moldram's Ground Local Nature Reserve, Pen Selwood

- A new management plan for site has been completed. With protected dormice and great crested newts present on site the plan specifies land management works to support these populations. Copies can be provided upon request.
- The group of volunteers led on the purchase and planting of the Jubilee oak tree on site and SSDC arranged for the creation of the plaque.

Ham Hill Country Park

- Higher Level Stewardship works were delivered and a further year of capital income negotiated with Natural England funding projects like a survey of the limekiln and restoration proposals.
- Ham Hill secured a Green Heritage Accreditation Award for the first time.
- Cambridge Archaeological Unit and Cardiff University were on site July – September excavating in advance of a quarry extension. This second year of excavations broadened its search to include 3 extra trenches in the wider hill fort. The findings were very exciting and included stone built roundhouses and fortified Iron Age ramparts. www.hamhillfort.info. The importance of the finds is likely to lead to a joint Heritage Lottery bid to fund further excavations and new interpretation for the site post summer 2013 excavations.
- The Woodland Trust funded the planting of 250 trees in Pit Wood and the work was undertaken by the volunteer team.
- The Country Parks profile continues to rise as the rangers host press days for Camping and Caravanning magazine and the Daily Mail; on woodland crafts and bush craft skills. Use of the twitter feed provided powerful free advertising for events and a rapid feedback mechanism for the public using the site.
- Dormice have been confirmed on site in the eastern woodlands, supporting the current management approach to the native woodlands.
- The Ham Hill Centre continues to be used frequently by the Forest School cluster group, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and Somerset Wildlife Trust. The venue is becoming well known as a training venue for courses like outdoor first aid and working with external organisations has strengthened the teams contacts and joint working.

- The Wednesday volunteer team averages 10 -12 participants on a weekly basis and volunteer numbers are swelled by the Friends of Ham Hill support group and South Somerset Steering group. We have experienced a greater number of school and college work experience placements throughout 2012.
- Successful events in 2012 included a heritage fayre, bush craft playscheme and Christmas crafts. The surprise success was the June Jubilee beacon which attracted c.250 people and this year the rangers will arrange a bonfire in November as local residents really seemed to enjoy a peaceful gathering around a fire on the hilltop.
- District Executive approved the proposal to designate Ham Hill Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve and SSDC's Legal team now have to finalise the designation.
- A response was submitted to the recent local minerals consultation to County, specifically in relation to Hamstone and the wider implications of quarrying on the recreational and heritage landscape.

Langport Visitor Centre and Cycleway

- The Langport Visitor Centre has closed upon the retirement of our business tenant. New tenants (basket makers) have been found for the space and much of the River Parrett and Somerset Levels exhibits will remain in situ for the visiting public to view.
- The Countryside Rangers continue to manage the cycleway from Langport to Muchelney, cutting, inspecting trees and dealing with any issues.

Eastfield Local Nature Reserve, High Ham

- Butterfly Conservation are funding scrub management works on site and the planting of propagated wild thyme plants. The grassland restoration work is going well and Butterfly Conservation are confident of a large blue release in the future.
- Natural England have confirmed a 10 year Higher Level Stewardship Agreement for the site to assist in the funding of land management on site from Spring 2013.

Headlines for the next 6 months

- We await the outcomes of 3 round 1 funding bids for the Yeovil Country Park project. The outcomes of these will dictate our next steps in terms of developing to round 2 or seeking alternative funders.
- Both Country Park's management plans will be revised, which will take into account the protected species and archaeological implications for each site.
- We will work with the Environment Agency to run an educational campaign directed at school children to highlight the link between pollution in Chard Reservoir and litter and debris that is dropped in Chard High Street.
- We will explore funding options to see if money can be raised to re-design and print a new map panel for Moldrams Ground.
- Countryside will feed into the newly emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy, to ensure that all appropriate land holdings are captured in the mapping phase and biodiversity considerations inform the plan's targets.
- Countryside will represent SSDC on the new Somerset Local Nature Partnership.

Financial Implications

In 2012/13 the Countryside Service manages 650 acres of public access land comprising land designated mainly as Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves. A team of 5.8 Full Time Equivalent officers manage the sites to a net expenditure budget of £238,170. The budget includes annual income generation of £113,000.

Corporate Priority Implications

The work of the countryside service delivers for the following targets.

Corporate Plan – Focus 2: Environment

- Maintain our Country Parks, optimising the use of external funding
- Continue to deliver schemes with local communities that enhance the appearance of their local areas.

Corporate Plan – Focus 4: Health and Communities

- Maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities, optimising opportunities for external funding to promote healthy living.
- 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 reflects local needs.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

The Countryside Team are aware of the challenges faced in mitigating climate change and as a team work hard to ensure that their operations have a minimal carbon footprint. We ensure that by approaching the management of the countryside sites in a traditional manner they offer the largest carbon sink for other operations.

Annually the team plants an average of 500 trees and these are always native, ensuring they are best suited to our current climate and provide the habitats with the best chance of adapting to future climate change.

By having site based rangers travel is kept to a minimum and carbon emissions kept low. Instead of heavy use of power tools the nature of the work means that a significant volunteer work force is mobilised keeping fuel consumption low.

Annually thousands of members of the public of all ages have contact with the ranger team through organised educational events; promoting wildlife, green spaces, green living, traditional countryside management and minimising your carbon footprint.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The countryside team work hard to ensure that the countryside sites are as accessible as possible. Stiles are removed in favour of gates. An audio trail and free mobility vehicle are for hire at Ham Hill Country Park. Easy access trails are promoted at the largest sites. The website contains relevant information and assistance for planning visits and the South Somerset Disability Forum continues to advise the rangers on proposed works and projects, they also have a place on the South Somerset Countryside Steering Group.

Background papers: *None*

11. Community Health & Leisure Service Update Report

Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations and Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Health and Wellbeing
Service Manager: Lynda Pincombe, Community Health and Leisure Manager
Lead Officer: Lynda Pincombe, Community Health and Leisure Manager
Contact Details: lynda.pincombe@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462614

Purpose of the Report

This report provides an update on the work of the Community Health and Leisure Service in Area North.

Public Interest

This report seeks to provide Area North members with a progress report on the work undertaken by the Council's Community Health and Leisure Service in the last 12 months. This report highlights specific examples of work undertaken within the area so that members can gain an understanding of how the service is creating value and making a difference for residents in their respective communities.

Recommendations

- (1) That the Area North Committee notes the content of this report.
- (2) That Members contact the Community Health and Leisure Manager, if they would like to discuss the current service delivery programme or recommend future priorities. Service planning takes place on an annual basis and draft plans for 2013/14 are being drafted and refined over the next few months.

Background

The Community Health and Leisure service covers six main areas:

- Play Development
- Play Areas / Youth Facilities
- Opportunities for Young People
- Healthy Lifestyles Development
- Sport Development
- Leisure Facility Development/Outdoor Sports Facility Management

Report

Play Development

Play Development is delivered through two services, the Community Resource Centre and the play and youth facilities team.

Community Resource Service

The service provides:

- **Community Resource Service:** There are approximately 172 community groups and 845 individual users registered from Area North. In total there are approximately 1070 groups and 5500 individuals registered.
- **Community Art Shop**
- **Community Equipment Hire e.g.** arty packs, conference and sports equipment
- **Community Scrapstore:** Collects 35 - 40 tonnes of reusable waste per year.
- **Community Playscheme Support:** For organisations running summer community playschemes.

In the school summer holidays, staff arranged for the (Yarlington) community bus to travel to Aller (a total of 49 attended), Kingsbury Episcopi (15 attended), Ilton (32 attended) to deliver free art and craft activities. In the autumn half term, the bus was sent to Aller (23 attended), Ilton (6 attended) and Ham Hill County Park (36 attended) to deliver free arts and crafts activities.

Changes at the Community Resource Centre

The Resource Centre has now moved from its old premises at Garrett Road in Yeovil to Manor Stables (former museum) in the centre of Yeovil and re-opened on 28th November 2012. The centre has been busy since re-opening.

During 2012, officers have sought, received and assessed bids for the transfer of the Community Resource Service to a third party operator in order to continue to provide the service at a lower cost to the council. It is likely that the management of the service will transfer from April 2013 although the same core services will continue to be delivered to the public.

Play Area Projects

Abbey Fields Play Area, Curry Rivel - Consultation is currently being carried out regarding the proposed improvements of this play area. The improvements proposed include installing a butterfly seesaw, extending the activity trail, refurbishing the toddler climbing frame and painting the existing equipment. It is expected that consultation will be completed in March and improvements made to the play area early this summer.

Thurlocks Play Area, Tintinhull - A topographical survey of this site has been completed and sketch designs are being developed. A consultation process will be started this spring and it is expected final designs and construction of the play area improvements will be completed this summer.

Stanchester Way, Curry Rivel – Sketch designs are being developed for this project. A consultation process will be started this spring and it is expected final designs and construction of the play area improvements will be completed this year.

Lightgate Lane South Petherton – The transformation of the play area at this site started at the end of the summer 2012 and a significant amount of play equipment has been installed. However, the historically wet autumn/winter made construction work very difficult and it was agreed to pause construction until ground conditions improved this spring. The district council is providing a capital grant of £101,778 towards the improvements and officers have given a significant amount of advice and support to the

parish council. Construction work should be completed this spring and the completed play area is expected to be one of the best in the district.

Youth Facility Projects

Langport Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – Construction of this double size, floodlit multi use games area is well underway and expected to be complete in March 2013. The district council has provided a capital grant of £51,361 towards the project and officers have provided a significant amount of advice and support. This free, open access facility will provide a major recreation resource for the local community and the floodlighting will ensure it can be used throughout the year.

South Petherton (MUGA) – Construction of this floodlit MUGA is complete with the exception of the last layer of tarmac. The district council has provided a capital grant of £48,909 towards the project and officers have provided a significant amount of advice and support. The wet autumn/winter made the ground conditions too difficult to complete the work and it was agreed to pause construction until ground conditions improved. Construction work should be completed this spring.

Compton Dundon (Youth Facilities) – With our team's support and a £5,000 grant the Parish Council successfully delivered new youth facilities on the grounds of the Village Hall. The additions included a new youth shelter and basket swing. At the same time the Parish Council installed a toddler swing, agility trail and toddler climbing frame to provide a wide range of equipment for visitors to the Village Hall.

Chilthorne Domer (Youth Facilities) – With our team's support and a £5,000 grant the Parish Council successfully delivered new combination goal for football and basketball, including all weather hard standing, at their recreation ground. An official opening was held on the 10th March 2012.

Playground Inspection Service

Annual Playground Inspections – The team carried out 13 annual playground inspections for not for profit play area providers in Area North during 2012.

Operational Playground Inspections – The team carries out 11 operational playground inspections every quarter on behalf of not for profit play area providers in Area North.

Routine Playground Inspections – The team continues to offer this service to not for profit play area providers in Area North. Ilton and Tintinhull Parish Council's currently use the service.

Playground Risk Assessments – The team carried out 11 playground risk assessments for not for profit play area providers in Area North during 2012.

Youth Development

Holiday Playscheme Awards – Martock Youth Centre and Chilthorne Domer Youth Sports Club were awarded £100 to support their holiday play activities.

Youth Development Awards – A Youth Development Award of £500 was given to Tintinhull Parish Council and Barrington Young People were awarded £500.

Gold Star Awards – To formally recognise and support volunteers working with young people, the Gold Star Awards was held this year on 30th October 2012 at the Octagon Theatre. From Area North Mark Irwin won Male Volunteer of the Year for his work with Martock Cadet Force and Langport Martial Arts Group. Paula Dowding won Female Volunteer of the Year for her work with Chilthorne Domer Youth Club and Langport & Huish Youth Club won Voluntary Group/Club of the Year.

Youth Clubs - The Young Peoples officer continues to provide advice and support to the 13 Youth Clubs that run in Area North.

CRB disclosures - 52 CRB forms have been processed to encourage more volunteers to work with young people. There is no cost to SSDC (other than officer time), in processing these applications.

Youth Work Training Workshops – As part of our teams work to support volunteers working with young people in the district we have organised several training events in 2012/13. A First Aid training day was attended by 9 volunteers and Food Hygiene Level 2 training day was attended by 13 volunteers. Both these training events were hosted at the Silver Jubilee Pavilion Chilthorne Domer. A Child Protection training day was attended by 11 volunteers of which some were from Area North and this was hosted at West Coker Village Hall.

Sports Development

District-wide Sports Specific Development:

Athletics - Continued to financially support a part time athletics coach in partnership with Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership and Yeovil Olympiads Athletics Club based at Yeovil Athletics Arena.

Startrack athletics: 121 young people attended our popular athletics camps at Yeovil Athletics Arena in 2012. 41 young people attended our spring programme during April 2012, 22% (9) of these young people were from the within Area North. 56 young people attended our summer programme during August 2012, 13% (7) of these young people were from within Area North. 24 young people attended our winter programme during October 2012, 25% (6) of these were from Area North.

Tennis – Martock Tennis Club along with 5 other tennis clubs across the district took part in the 4th South Somerset Mini Tennis Red Schools Project. The club linked with Ash and Norton Sub Hamdon primary schools, which took part in a cluster competition at the club.

Unfortunately, Somerton Tennis Club did not take part in the project as their coaching programme is provided by Service Line, who did not want to take part and delivered their own schools programme at the club. However the School Games Co-ordinator provided coaching and a competition for schools in Area North. 119 pupils from High Ham, Huish Episcopi, Hambridge, Long Sutton, Curry Mallet, Ash, Norton Sub Hamdon, Ilton and Barrington primary schools took part in the coaching and 28 pupils took part in a cluster competition.

High Ham and Ash primary schools from Area North qualified for the South Somerset Mini Tennis Red Final at Martock Tennis Club in June 2012. High Ham won the final by 2 points. The project was co-ordinated and funded by the South Somerset Tennis Development Group, which was set up by the Sports Development team in 2006.

Somerton, Martock and Tintinhull Tennis Clubs continue to be active members of the South Somerset Tennis Development Group, which meets three times a year.

South Somerset Mini Tennis Series

Now in its sixth year, the South Somerset Mini Tennis Series continues to provide winter and summer junior inter club competitions. The programme provides competitive opportunities for junior tennis players across the district. 94 (30% increase on 2010/11) took part in the Mini Tennis Winter Series 2011/12 and 149 (24% increase on 2011) junior players took part in the Summer Series, which took place from April to August 2012.

Somerton, Martock and Tintuhull Tennis Clubs in Area North are three of six clubs across South Somerset who continues to take part in the Mini Tennis Series. This Series gives junior tennis players the opportunity to compete in Mini Tennis Red, Orange, Green and Yellow tournaments across South Somerset, organised by South Somerset Tennis Development Group.

Badminton – The South Somerset Community Badminton Network (CBN), which was set up by the team in 2009 has continued to lead the development of badminton across South Somerset in partnership with key partners and Badminton England.

Between January 2012 and February 2013, some of the achievements by the Network in Area North have been as follows:

- Chief Executive of Badminton England, Adrian Christy visited on 30th March 2012 to see the work of the South Somerset Community Badminton Network as it is considered to be the best network in the South West and classified as 'World Leading'.
- Delivered a new Sportivate badminton session at Stanchester Academy attended by 39 participants aged 14-16. This was funded by Sport England and delivered by the Community Badminton Network coach. The school have now taken on the running of this club.
- Continued to deliver an early morning junior badminton session at Martock Primary School, which is now funded by the school and delivered by the Community Badminton Network coach. 16 participants attend, 12 male and 4 female.
- Huish Academy took part in the Center Parcs National School Badminton Championships 2012. The Key Stage 4 competition was played at Huish Academy in Huish Episcopi, which was attended by 8 secondary schools from South Somerset.
- Community Badminton Network Coach delivered training to 8 young people during October half term in preparation for Center Parcs event at Huish Academy in December.
- Delivered 6 weeks after school secondary badminton session at Huish Academy, this was attended by 43 participants, 32 male and 11 female. This is now run by a member of PE staff from the school.
- Delivered taster badminton sessions at Castle School (Stoke Sub Hamdon), Norton Sub Hamdon and Ash primary schools. These were attended by 70 young people, 35 male and 35 female.
- Set up a new secondary schools badminton league, which has attracted 17 teams and Huish Academy from Area North took place in January and February.

- Continued to deliver an adult badminton session at Huish Leisure Centre, which is now funded by the centre and delivered by the Community Badminton Coach. 12 participants attend, 7 male and 5 female.

The South Somerset School Games Organiser, who is based at our offices in Brympton Way, attended the Huish Community Learning Partnership (CLP) sports meeting following the departure of the School Games Co-ordinator. The organiser linked the Huish CLP, Huish Academy and Huish Leisure. The Academy and Huish Leisure have now agreed to run several sports activities for the Huish CLP, so a sporting provision remains for primary schools in the area.

Sport England Funding

Sport England recently announced National Governing Body funding for 2013 – 2017. Some sports have gained additional funding and some have lost funding. It is currently unclear whether this will have much impact locally, but we hope delivery at a district council level will be largely unaffected.

Healthy Lifestyles Development

The programme is delivered in partnership with NHS Somerset.

Healthy Workplaces

SSDC Staff:

A variety of Healthy Lifestyles initiatives have been delivered for the benefit of SSDC staff including blood pressure testing which was offered to raise awareness of know your numbers week, a weight loss challenge, stop smoking advice and support, two rounders tournaments, a dodgeball tournament, weekly rush hockey sessions, two pilates classes, stress awareness information and lunchtime health walks.

Active Aging:

Supported Yarlinton Housing Groups Schemes with their Community Core Cafes at Oak Tree House in Stoke-Sub-Hamdon and Laburnum Drive in Somerton. At both Cafes Health Testing and healthy lifestyles advice was given.

The team helped Age UK to promote and establish a Fly Fishing/Fly Tying course at Curry Mallet Village Hall.

Children's Centres:

Health Testing and healthy lifestyles advice was given at the Little Fishes Group in Stoke Sub Hamdon that is supported by the Little Marsh Children's Centre in Ilchester. We are booked in to attend the group again in March 2013. Health Testing and healthy lifestyles advice was also given at a group run at the Martock Primary School, which is also an outreach group from the Little Marsh Children's Centre in Ilchester.

Little Marsh Children's Centre was supported with their plan to deliver Buggy Walks in terms of looking at possible locations to offer Buggy Walks. Locations identified include Montacute, Long Load, and Norton Sub Hamdon. Delivery of Buggy Walks started in the Martock area in November 2012 and run on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

Health Testing and healthy lifestyles advice has been provided at a number of groups for The Level's Children's Centre in Langport to include Active Tots (twice), Fun with Ones, Little Explorers as well as the Barrington Explorers Group that the centre supports in Barrington Village Hall.

The Level's Children Centre also ran a Buggy Walk in the October half term in Somerton. We supported the leader with routes and how to do the risk assessment, and the walk was accessed by two families.

The team has promoted the Cooking Club Training that is being offered to schools to set up Cooking Clubs through the Health & Wellbeing in Learning Programme to The Level's Children's Centre in Langport. We have also trained up the two members of staff from The Level's Children's Centre and an Outreach Worker for the Children's Centres South Somerset wide with the British Heart Foundation's Active Clubs training to encourage children aged 4 upwards to be more active.

Community Based Physical Activity:

Pad-e; the online physical activity directory, has been developed by the Healthy Lifestyles Team in partnership with the Leisure Projects Officer and the GIS Team at SSDC. With over 600 opportunities listed, the directory shows activity and exercise opportunities available in South Somerset and is searchable both by activity category and postcode. The website will help to support and promote local physical activity and exercise opportunities as well as highlighting gaps in provision. Training has been offered to the Area Office staff and more information is available by visiting www.pad-e.co.uk

Funding for Learning Disability (LD) focus work has been secured which will lead into a project starting in April 2013 aimed at making activities more accessible for individuals with LD. This initiative will be South Somerset wide.

A pilot physical activity referral group for residents with a neurological condition or who are recovering from a stroke is being developed in South Somerset. This work is in partnership with the integrated lifestyles service at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, 1610 and the Physiotherapy Teams at Yeovil and South Petherton Hospitals. The aim is that a specific group called Neuroactive will be developed, referral will be through GPs and Physio teams and classes will take place with specially trained instructor at Stanchester Sports Centre. The team will be supporting this pilot with funding and promotion through their network of contacts.

Led cycle rides have been established in Area North, these take place in various venues including Curry Rivel and Langport. Rides are targeted at women and are led by a British Cycling Breeze trained instructor. Breeze is a national programme aimed at increasing the number of women taking part in social cycling.

The team have established three Active Somerset courses in Area North, Zumba at East Lambrook Village Hall, and Zumba Gold with Age UK at Somerton and Langport. The two Zumba Gold classes at Somerton and Langport continued beyond the 12 week funded period however due to illness the instructor is no longer able to lead the classes; the team are in contact with Age UK to try to find an alternative instructor. Zumba at East Lambrook continues with 10-12 attendees each week.

The team assisted County Councillor John Bailey in spending his health and wellbeing budget in Long Load, Martock and Stoke. At Long Load four 'health and wellbeing' themed taster sessions were organised with input from a community volunteer, sessions included health checks, Boccia, tai chi, and an informative talk on public health services for older people delivered by a representative from NHS Somerset. In total there were 59 attendances at the four sessions and the group now continue to meet in the village hall fortnightly taking part in Boccia, tai chi, gentle movement and stretching and dance, 20 people attended the most recent session in January. One person from the village has

since been trained to deliver health walks and is currently being supported by the team to set up health walks in Long Load and Long Sutton.

In Stoke sub Hamdon a 12 week course of Healthy Hearts Exercise Class has been delivered with 8-10 residents attending each week, the hope is that these classes will be sustained beyond the 12 week period.

In Martock a 'Yoga For Everyday Movement' course was delivered for 12 weeks, the group now continue their activity with a further 12 week healthy hearts exercise class, on average 16 ladies attend this group.

Health Walks:

Since October 2011, four residents in Area North have undertaken the Health Walk Leader training. One of these leaders is a second leader for the Health Walks – Stoke Sub Hamdon. Another leader is looking to start a group in the Long Load/Long Sutton area.

One of the individual's works at The Levels Children's Centre and delivered the Buggy Walk in Somerton. An additional Children's Centre worker from the Little Marsh Children's Centre in Ilchester is leading the Buggy Walks in Martock.

The Somerton Health Walks came to an end in April 2012 due to the volunteer who was leading the walks retiring from volunteering. We were unable to recruit a volunteer from the group of walkers. We have advertised for a leader in the Viaduct and also within our own Healthy Lifestyles Team newsletter, but so far without any success.

The Health Walks - Stoke Sub Hamdon group continue to be walk on a fortnightly basis and have increased their numbers from approximately 10 per walk to approximately 20 per walk on average. They walk in the Stoke Sub Hamdon area and often go over Ham Hill Country Park and finish at the Lighthouse Café in Stoke Sub Hamdon. These walks are on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month and more details can be found on www.southsomerset.gov.uk/healthwalks

The Health Walk Directory continues to be updated detailing all the walking groups across the district.

Flexercise (training for volunteers to lead chair-based exercise):

Flexercise is a countywide project to train up staff and volunteers to deliver chair based physical activity sessions. There are now 38 Flexercise Leaders delivering Flexercise Sessions in Area North in approximately 14 venues. These venues range from Nursing Homes, Residential Homes, Sheltered Housing Schemes, Care Homes, Day Centres and Active Living Centres.

Since October 2011, one Flexercise Workshop has been delivered in Area North with 6 individuals from Area North attending the training. Four currently trained Flexercise Leaders have attended two Flexercise Update workshops - Parachute Activities and Music, Relaxation and Stretches.

Newsletter:

The Healthy Lifestyles Team produce a quarterly newsletter that goes out to over 500 volunteers, partner organisations, instructors and individuals who are interested in the work of the team. The next newsletter is due to go out in April 2013.

Leisure Facility Development/Outdoor Sports Facility Management

Planning Applications – Between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2012, the team has provided Development Management with 40 detailed responses to planning consultation requests of which 18 (20%) were for developments in Area North. Our responses set out the leisure obligations required to make developments acceptable in planning terms.

Community Health and Leisure officers now work closely with Area Development teams to also seek contributions for community halls where need for additional provision has been identified.

A regular detailed breakdown of obligations secured is provided to area committees by the S106 Monitoring Officer and therefore this information has not been included in this report.

The team now assist the S106 Monitoring Officer to prepare his reports to ensure members receive updates on how funding is being spent/allocated.

Summary of planning obligations spent in Area North in the last 12 months

Between January 2012 and February 2013 the following S106 money has been paid or allocated to the following projects (these figures do not include any additional capital contributions that may have been allocated by SSDC):

Area of Spend	Type of Infrastructure	Project	Amount
Langport/Huish	Sports Pitches/changing	Improvement at Langport and Huish Cricket Club	£3,306.60
Langport/Huish	Youth Facilities/equipped play	MUGA at Huish and Langport Playing Fields	£18,911.68
South Petherton	Equipped play/youth facilities	New play area/MUGA at Lightgate Lane	£80,937
		TOTAL	£103,155.28

Passport to Leisure scheme - We currently have 441 live cards in circulation at present; approximately 7% (31) of cardholders live in Area North.

Area Specific work:

- Huish Episcopi Academy – Work on producing a feasibility study and business plan is being undertaken to look at developing a 3rd Generation Artificial Grass Pitch at the site. The financial viability of the project has been established and the project will now move to the next phase. This includes developing design proposals and proceeding with a planning application and public consultation.
- Tintinhull Tennis Club – Supported the club to prepare funding applications and gave technical advice, which resulted in £22k grant from Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund. The club has re-surfaced its two existing all weather hard courts and replace the chain link fencing. The new courts opened in September 2012.

Other Service Achievements

London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay – South Somerset residents helped create a special atmosphere when the Olympic Torch Relay visited the district on Tuesday 22nd May 2012. Somerton was one of four towns in South Somerset that welcomed the flame and in excess of 22,000 watched the flame in the district.

The Olympic Torch Relay was co-ordinated by South Somerset District Council in partnership with Somerton, Ilminster and Yeovil town councils and Ilchester Parish Council. The team played a key role in the co-ordination of this event locally.

E-newsletter – The team co-ordinates the production of a monthly leisure e-newsletter (which also goes to customers of the Octagon and Goldenstones). We now have just over 5,600 individuals registered to receive the newsletter, an increase of approximately 7 % in the last year.

The Year Ahead – Strategy Review

In the year ahead the team will be focusing on the review and refresh of their Next Level and Play and Youth strategies, combining them into one leisure strategy for South Somerset. Members will be invited to take part in the process to prepare a new leisure strategy.

Work has also commenced to update our playing pitch strategy and supporting data. The strategy will help to identify gaps in provision and priorities for development across the district. The information gatherer will also assist with planning consultation responses where contributions for formal playing pitches are sought. This update is being supported by Sport England and the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership at no cost to the district council other than officer time.

Financial Implications

No new implications.

Corporate Priority Implications

The work of the Community Health and Leisure service contributes to the following aims within the Health and Communities Focus of the Council Plan:

Ensure that the strategic priorities of the Somerset Health and Well-being Board reflect local needs and align council resources to deliver projects to address those needs

Maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities, optimising opportunities for external funding to promote healthy living.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Consideration is given by the service to ensure that all facilities and services are accessible.

Background Papers: None

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
24 Apr '13	Feedback from Flood Summit	To provide feedback from Flood Summit to be held in March.	TBC
24 Apr '13	The work of South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA)	A presentation to highlight the work of the by SSVCA.	Maureen Pasmore, Joint Chief Executive, SSVCA
24 Apr '13	Somerton and Langport LINKS Community Transport	Update on the service, and request for financial assistance towards service costs.	Teresa Oulds, Community Regeneration Officer.
24 Apr '13	Area North Land and Property Assets	To provide a report on land and property ownership in Area North.	TBC
24 Apr '13	Area Review Report	To provide a report on the Area Review.	Rina Singh, Strategic Director (Place and Performance) and Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)
22 May '13	Streetscene Service	Half yearly update on the performance of SSDC Streetscene Services	Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
22 May '13	Highways Authority	Half yearly report - update on SCC Highways Services.	Neil McWilliams - Assistant Highway Service Manager (SCC)
22 May '13	Appointments to Outside Bodies	New municipal year – appointment of members to working groups and outside bodies.	Becky Sanders, Democratic Services Officer

22 May '13	Revised Scheme of Delegation – Development Control Nomination of Substitutes for Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2013-14	New municipal year – appointment of two members to act as substitutes.	Becky Sanders, Democratic Services Officer
22 May '13	Area Development	End of year report	Charlotte Jones – Area Development Manager
26 June '13	Area North budgets – 2012-13 Outturn Report and Capital Programme	Report on the end of year position of Area North budgets	Catherine Hood, Management Accountant
24 July '13	Area North Affordable Housing Programme Outturn Report	To provide a report on the delivery of the Area North Affordable Housing Programme during 2012-13.	Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
24 July '13	Kingsbury Episcopi Community Shop	A presentation on the recent progress of the new community shop, following its official opening in July 2012.	Community representative from the project
<i>TBC</i>	<i>Community Youth Project</i>	<i>Update report from the Community Youth Project, whose members include Martock, Somerton, Tintinhull, the Hamdons, and Kingsbury Episcopi.</i>	

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

None

Appeals Dismissed

None

Appeals Allowed

None

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*

Planning Applications – 27 March 2013

Planning Applications will be considered no earlier than 3.45pm

Members of the public who wish to speak about a particular planning item are recommended to arrive for 3.30 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	25	MARTOCK	12/04945/ FUL	Creation of a new dairy farm.	Land at Lower Witcombe Farm, Thornhill Drove, Ash.	Mr M Cobden

Area North Committee – 27 March 2013

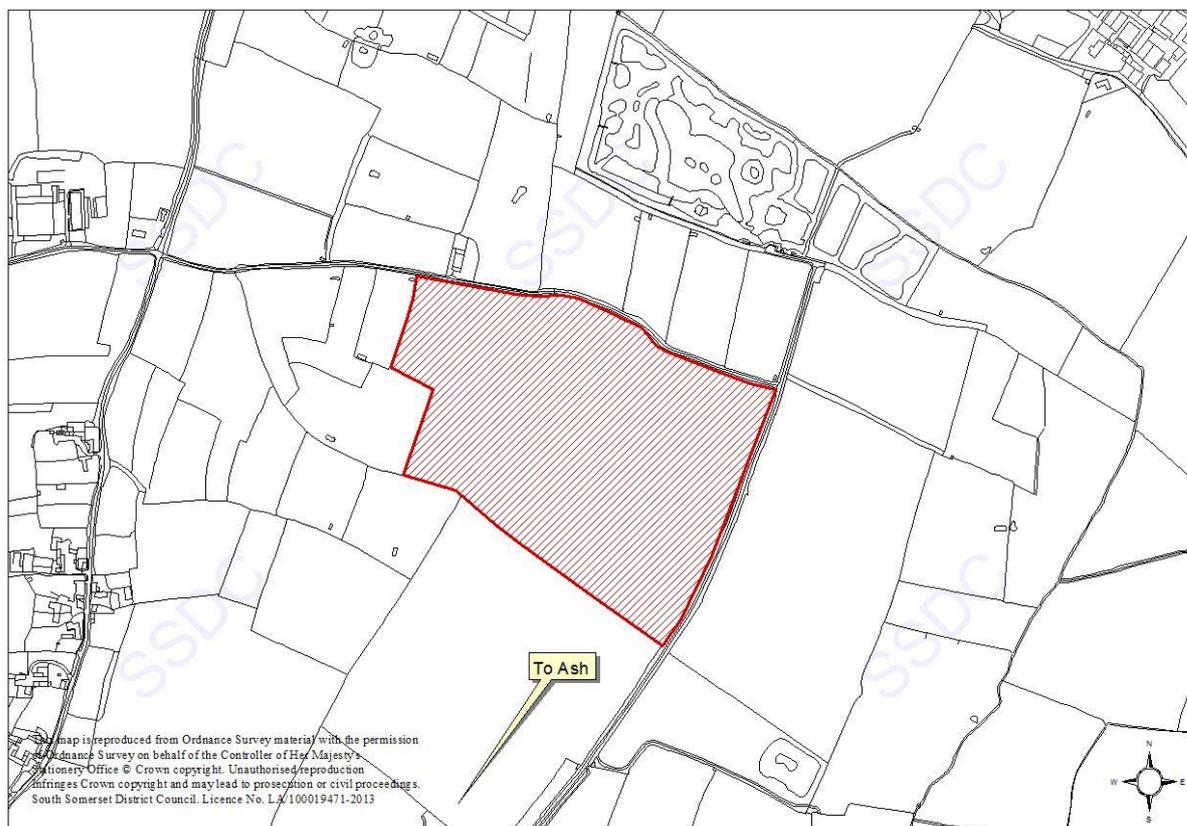
Officer Report on Planning Application: 12/04945/FUL

Proposal :	Creation of a new dairy farm (GR: 348373/121860)
Site Address:	Land At Lower Witcombe Farm, Thornhill Drove, Ash
Parish:	Ash
MARTOCK Ward (SSDC Members)	Cllr Graham Middleton Cllr Patrick Palmer
Recommending Case Officer:	Alex Skidmore Tel: 01935 462430 Email: lex.skidmore@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	22nd March 2013
Applicant :	Mr Matthew Cobden
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Harvey Dickinson Bourne Works, Collingbourne Ducis, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3EQ
Application Type :	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO AREA NORTH COMMITTEE

The size of the proposed development is such that under the scheme of delegation the application must be determined by committee.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



This application is seeking planning permission to erect a new 800 cow dairy unit in association with the existing dairy / cattle holding known as New Witcombe Farm. The application site extends across a 17 hectare site and the proposed development comprises the remodelling of a large section of the site, the erection of a cubicle building measuring approximately 330m long, milking parlour, general purpose storage building, isolation boxes, silage clamp, slurry lagoon, manure store, dirty water store, clean sand tank and attenuation pond. It is understood that the existing farmstead will operate as their calve rearing and cattle unit with all the dairy operations taking place at the new unit.

The existing farm extends to 1100 acres and is principally operated as a dairy enterprise with 470 cows and 500 calves with the existing farmstead located approximately 480m to the west of the application site. The site of the proposed new dairy is accessed via Thornhill Drove, a green lane, along which passes a public footpath (Y1/17) and is approximately 470m to the east of the existing farmstead. Part of the drove, which leads to an existing barn on the north side of the drove, has already been surfaced with concrete however the last 120m to the access of the application site has yet to be surfaced. There are three potential routes for farm traffic to get to the site, Witcombe Lane, Westover and Milton Lane, with Witcombe Lane offering the shortest route to a main road. Each of these lanes are narrow, winding single track lanes with limited passing opportunities.

The redline site is a single large field that occupies a relatively low position within the landscape and has a gently sloping gradient rising towards the middle of the field. The field is bounded by native hedgerows and appears to have last been used to grow maize. An overhead power line passes through the field which will need to be relocated to facilitate the proposed development. There are also two high pressure gas pipelines that pass close to the site, one to the north and the other to the south and the site is located within the middle consultation buffer zone for these pipelines. At the time of the visit there was a large mound of spoil deposited towards the western side of the field.

The site is located close to a number of designated wildlife sites including RAMSAR, SSSI, RSPB reserve and County Wildlife sites located to the north / northeast/west of the site.

The nearest residential properties to the site include an agriculturally tied bungalow approximately 370m to the west, properties located within the hamlet of Witcombe approximately 490m to the west and a farmstead approximately 690m to the northeast. Lower Witcombe Farm, which is the last property in Witcombe en route to New Witcombe Farm, is grade II listed and is visible from the site.

RELEVANT HISTORY

There is no planning history in respect of the application site. The following details relate to the existing farmstead:

12/04552/FUL: Erection of an extension to a livestock building. Permitted.

12/03665/AGN: Notification of intent to erect an extension to an agricultural building to house straw and machinery. Permission required 2012.

97/02192/AGN: Notification of intent to erect a cattle shed. Permitted.

91067/C: Erection of agricultural buildings and use of an existing access. Permitted.

91067/B: Erection of agricultural dairy buildings including two silage barns, two cow buildings, loose boxes, bull pen, milking parlour and dairy and alterations to existing access. Permitted.

91067: Erection of an agricultural dwelling. Permitted.

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.

The development plan comprises The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review and the South Somerset Local Plan (2006). The policies of most relevance to the proposal are:

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan:

STR1 - Sustainable Development
 STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages
 Policy 1 – Nature Conservation
 Policy 5 - Landscape Character
 Policy 9 – The Built Historic Environment
 Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development
 Policy 13 – Locally Important Archaeological Remains
 Policy 19 – Employment and Community Provision in Rural Areas

South Somerset Local Plan:

ST3 - Development Areas
 ST5 - General Principles of Development
 ST6 - The Quality of Development
 EC3 - Landscape Character
 EC4 – Internationally Important Sites
 EC5 – Nationally Important Sites (SSSI)
 EC6 – Locally Important Sites
 EC7 – Networks of Natural Habitats
 EC8 – Protected Species
 EH5 – Development Proposals Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
 EH12 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential and Other Areas of Archaeological Interest
 EP2 - Pollution and Noise
 EP3 – Light Pollution
 EP4 – Building Waste
 EP7 – Potential odour generating developments
 EP9 – Control of other Potentially Polluting Uses
 EU6 – Culverting
 ME8/9 – Hazardous Installations
 CR9 – Public Rights of Way and Recreation Routes

National Planning Policy Framework:

Part 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy
 Part 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural
 Part 4 – Promoting sustainable transport
 Part 7 - Requiring good design
 Part 8 – Promoting healthy communities
 Part 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 Part 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Part 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

CONSULTATIONS

Ash Parish Council: No objection, but there are some concerns about increased traffic.

Long Load Parish Council (adjoining parish): No comments received.

Tintinhull Parish Council (adjoining parish): No comments received.

Area Engineer: No comment.

County Highways: (latest comments) No objection. The additional information provided adequately addresses my previous concerns, I therefore recommend the application be approved subject to a condition to secure the provision of the proposed passing places (as detailed on drawing number 30 dated 07/03/2013) which should be constructed and completed prior to the new dairy unit being first brought into use. Please also include an informative in relation to requiring a Section 278 agreement prior to any works being carried out to the public highway.

Previous comments – Based on the Transport Statement (TS) provided with the original submission the highway authority objected to the application due to the estimated doubling in in farm traffic and the narrow, poorly aligned approach roads which have few passing places. No off-site mitigations measures were proposed within the initial TS to ameliorate the situation, consequently the highway authority considered the proposal to be harmful to highway safety and recommended the application be refused.

National Grid: No objection.

NGT Transco: Concern on access route.

Wessex Water: The site lies within a non sewered area. New water supply connections will be required to serve the proposed development.

Environment Agency: No objection to the revised Flood Risk Assessment dated 06/03/2013 subject to conditions relating to:

- A Farm Waste Management Plan;
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan; and
- A contaminated and clean surface water run-off drainage scheme.

They also recommended a number of guidance notes and informatives.

Environmental Protection Unit: In their initial comments they recommended that an odour modelling survey be undertaken and a scheme of lighting be provided prior to the determination of this application. These details have since been provided by the applicant and Environmental Protection have confirmed that they are satisfied with both the lighting scheme and with the odour survey provided and that odours from the development should not be a problem for the occupiers of nearby residential properties.

Natural England: The protected species survey has identified that great crested newts may be affected by this application. It is advised that further survey effort is required in accordance with the great crested newt mitigation guidelines and you should request additional information from the applicant.

Natural England deem that airborne emissions resulting from the proposed development are unlikely to have any significant effect on the nearest SSSI. If any are associated

slurry wastes are to be spread on fields adjacent to Wet Moor or any other sensitive designated sites as a result of this dairy unit then we suggest stipulating that the Code of Good Agricultural Practice (CoGAP) be adhered to and that a 10m buffer zone should be established excluding the spreading of wastes around any sensitive sites.

SSDC Ecologist: I am satisfied with the submitted ecological appraisal which identifies various potential issues. Great crested newts have been found at two ponds within 250-500m to the east of the site and it is possible that they are using the hedge and ditch network bordering the site as their main terrestrial habitat. There is a spoil heap on the site which could also be used by newts and which is likely to be subject to clearance of other development impact and a short section of boundary hedge to be removed. There is some potential therefore for the development to impact upon the newts

The development is unlikely to impact upon newts associated with known breeding ponds, but there is a small risk of newts, associated with other unsurveyed ponds in the vicinity, being present and impacted. The numbers present and impacted by development is likely to be very low and unlikely to be detrimental to the favourable conservation status of the species. I therefore do not consider that there is justification to delay the application in order to undertake further surveys (which could take until May 2013 to complete) but I do recommend a condition requiring further survey and assessment, and if necessary a method statement to minimise any risks of harm to newts.

The survey also identifies a main badger sett just outside the application boundary and several outlier setts along the boundary and there is potential for some harm to occur during construction. A condition is therefore recommended requiring the survey of the badgers setts at each significant stage of ground works.

Royal Society for the Protection for Birds: No comments received.

Tree Officer: Notwithstanding the Landscape Officer's comments I note that the submitted tree planting scheme lists all three available options (e.g. bare-rooted, root-balled or container grown) in relation to the larger sized trees. By virtue of their large sizes, such trees are especially vulnerable to drought-stress when newly planted and I would be grateful if it could be clarified that the larger trees be container-grown.

Landscape Officer: This site is agreed as being the best available site given the local landscape constraints with rising ground to the south and the presence of two gas mains passing close to the farm. Land to the south / southwest overlook the site, over which run a number of rights of way, whilst property along Witcombe Lane, which include a number of listed properties, will have a prospect of this unit. Beyond the immediate surround the site is obscured from wider view by landform and the succession of hedges and willow lines that intervene in low-trajectory views across the moorland. Hence other than from local receptors the visual impact is negligible. Locally however the proposal represents a substantive change in landscape and is potentially adverse, consequently there is a need for substantial and commensurate landscape mitigation in the form of woodland and hedgerow planting to intervene views and to provide an appropriate context for the development.

The landscaping proposal includes tree and hedgerow planting around the site and two substantial woodland blocks to break up the main views. The landscape layout and species composition is acceptable as is the proposed contouring of the site. The alignment of the buildings is sympathetic to the topography, however, the length of the cubicle building will appear incongruous and needs to be broken up visually for example by creating steps in its roof form. The proposed materials are acceptable.

The silage clamp is to be cut into the ground at the site's eastern end, this is acceptable provided the cut occurs at least 3.5 metres from the existing hedge and a hedge protection plan is implemented.

In conclusion, I do not see any undue impact upon the settlement or listed building settings, nor is the visual impact upon local receptors significantly adverse once mitigation is in place. Should the application be approved I would seek that the following be secured:

- An amended roof profile of the cubicle building;
- The proposed planting scheme to be undertaken within the first dormant season following completion of the ground formation works, in accordance with drawing number 495/01 P1;
- Ground modelling to accord with the details set out on drawing number 495/01 and 495/02; and
- A hedge protection proposal to be submitted prior to commencement.

In respect of revised drawings of the cubicle building it is considered that these amendments overcome earlier concerns in respect of the cubicle building.

County Rights of Way: There is a public right of way (PROW) that runs along the access to the site. The proposed works must not encroach on the width of the footpath and the health and safety of walkers must be taken into consideration during works. SCC will not be responsible for putting right any damage occurring to the surface of the footpath resulting from vehicular use during or after works to carry out the development. It is an offence to drive a vehicle along a public bridleway unless the driver has lawful authority to do so.

SSDC Rights of Way: No objection. The surface of Thornhill Drove is the responsibility of SCC so the applicant will need authorisation for any surfacing works of the drove, for example the continuation of the concrete track to the development site. It is recommended that the gate at the entrance to the drove be removed.

As the development is of an agricultural nature the possible offence under the Road Traffic Act of taking a motor vehicle onto a footpath or bridleway does not seem to apply.

Conservation Officer: Agrees with the views of the landscape officer.

County Archaeologist: The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential and there is a record of ridge of furrow on the Historic Environment Record as well as roman finds in the area, therefore the proposal is likely to impact on a heritage asset. There is currently insufficient information contained within the application on the nature of any archaeological remains to properly assess their interest. I therefore recommend that the applicant be asked to provide further information on any archaeological remains on the site prior to the determination of the application. This is likely to require a desk-based assessment and a field evaluation as indicated in paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

REPRESENTATIONS

Written representations have been received from ten local residents expressing the following observations and concerns:

- Increased traffic along narrow, winding lanes which have few passing opportunities.

- Over the past year current levels of farm traffic has been intolerable on occasions with frequency, speed and noise being an issue as well as damage to the road surface, verges and drainage.
- Harmful impact upon other road users, especially walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Increased mud and slurry left on lane making road conditions hazardous.
- The applicant should be made to clean the road, maintain ditches and culverts and cut verges and hedges on a regular basis.
- The plan to pump slurry away from the farm rather than being taken away by tankers must be proven.
- Traffic should not be taken through Milton.
- Traffic flow should be spread evenly between Witcombe and Milton.
- Passing places should be installed along Witcombe Lane.
- There should be a restricted speed limit for farm vehicles.
- Dirty water run-off into local water courses.
- Concerns about farm odours and flies.
- Concerns about mosquitos following the problems of last summer.
- Will fields that have previously been used for grazing now be used to grow crops which could impact on adjacent residents in terms of quality of life, outlook, smells from muck spreading and wildlife.
- Harm to local wildlife includes badgers, bats and great crested newts and potential contamination of local nature reserves (Ashmead Lake Nature Reserve).
- Question the validity of the ecology survey as there are many more bird species in the area than that reported in the survey. Otters are also in the locality.
- There should be a planting scheme including semi-mature trees to screen the new buildings.
- This is an area of outstanding natural beauty.
- It would be better if the new farm were sited on higher land further up Witcombe Lane where it would be more out of sight, away from the low-lying waterlogged land and easier to reach by farm traffic.

Written representations have also been received from the Ash Public Path Liaison Officer who notes that a public footpath passes along Ash Drove and Thornhill Drove that lead to the application site and question what provision has been made for walkers given that milk lorries and other large farm traffic would take up the width of the proposed road.

APPLICANTS CASE

The proposed development is sought in response to the reduced profit margins resulting from the low milk price and increased production costs over the past 5 years or more and the applicants state that to remain financially viable the dairy herd needs to expand. Under the current proposal the dairy operation will be relocated to the new unit whilst the existing farmstead will be used to house dry cows, in-calf heifers and young stock.

The applicant states that the existing buildings are over 40 years old and it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet more stringent animal welfare and environmental regulations and customer standards. They do not see the refurbishment and extension of the existing farmstead however to be either a practical or feasible option due to the cost and disruption such refurbishments would cause and due to a mains gas pipeline which passes immediately to the north of the existing unit. The provision of the new dairy unit will enable the holding to address the animal welfare and environmental concerns, will increase the holdings resilience both financially and in terms of meeting likely forthcoming regulation requirements, in particular such as for the storage and disposal of

farm waste.

It is understood that the applicants have carried out a consultation exercise with the residents of nearby Milton and have written to them stating that they will no longer take farm traffic through the hamlet following this application.

CONSIDERATIONS

The application site is greenfield land and is located in the open countryside. The proposal is seeking to create a new dairy unit in association with the existing dairy holding known as New Witcombe Farm and includes the provision of an extensive range of buildings and structures so that the holding can expand from 400 to 800 dairy cows and to enable their calf rearing operations to be brought back to the farm. The proposal is sought in order to improve the viability and resilience of this farm enterprise both financially as well as in terms of meeting more stringent animal welfare and environmental legislation. Part 3 of the NPPF offers clear support to the development and diversification of agricultural businesses in rural areas. Clearly land-based operations such as the proposed dairy unit need to be located in the countryside, as such the principle of the proposed development in this location is considered to be acceptable.

The key issues in respect of this application are set out as follows:

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

This proposed development relates to the provision of more than 20,000 square metres of built development and, whilst dairy farming does not usually fall within the category of intensive farming, in this instance the cows will spend most of their time under cover in a relatively small space and is therefore considered to be intensive in nature. Under such circumstances the proposal requires an EIA Screening Opinion as set out within Part 1c of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

Prior to the submission of this application the applicants requested an EIA Screening Opinion to determine whether an EIA would be required. On assessing the proposal against the criteria set out within Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations and having sought the views of the Environment Agency, English Nature and SSDC's Ecology, Landscape and Environmental Health Officers it was determined that the potential effects of the proposed development were not so significant as to require an EIA.

Flood risk / drainage, storage and disposal of farm waste

The application site is not located in an area that is known to be at risk of flooding, however, due to the size of the proposed development a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was required as part of this submission to demonstrate that drainage matters would be addressed in a sustainable manner and to safeguard against flooding and contamination in the locality.

Whilst the Environment Agency initially objected to the application based on the initial FRA supplied, the applicant has since submitted amended details that satisfy their concerns. On the basis of the revised FRA the Environment Agency has withdrawn their earlier objection subject to a number of conditions relating to the provision of a Farm Waste Management Plan (to deal with the storage and disposal of effluent and dirty water), a Construction Environmental Management Plan (in respect of the slurry and

silage storage facilities) and a Dirty and Clean Water Drainage Scheme. Provided these conditions are imposed it is considered that the adequate measures will be put in place to safeguard the development against increased run-off and potential contamination concerns and that it will not cause any undue risk to the quality of the local water courses.

Ecology

The application site falls partly within the consultation buffer zone for an RSPB reserve and is relatively close to other wildlife / habitat sites including a RAMSAR site, SSSI and County Wildlife Sites.

SSDC's Ecologist raised the issue of ammonia emissions and nitrogen deposition that can arise from some types of large scale intensive agricultural units and which could impact harmfully on some of these nearby designated sites. Whilst an emissions survey has not been provided Natural England has noted that airborne emissions drop away quickly in the atmosphere and are of the opinion that given the distance from the development to the nearest SSSI and RAMSAR sites that the proposal is unlikely to have any significant adverse effect in this regard. English Nature has noted that the Code of Good Agricultural Practice should be adhered to by the applicants and that a 10m buffer zone should be established excluding the spreading of wastes around any sensitive sites, matters that can be dealt with by an informative note.

An Ecology Survey accompanied this application. The findings of the survey has been questioned by several local residents, however, SSDC's Ecologist is satisfied the commissioned appraisal and is of the opinion that it is thorough in scope. It is noted that Great Crested Newts (a European Protected Species) have been recorded at two ponds a short distance to the east of the application site, there are also a number of other ponds in the area (outside the site) that have not been surveyed for newts. Newts spend the majority of their time on land using hedge and ditch networks and only use ponds for breeding. The majority of the hedge and ditch network surrounding the application site will be retained and not subject to any direct or significant development impacts, however, a short section of hedge will be removed to form a new access to the site and there is a spoil heap and area of ruderal vegetation that are likely to be cleared and could potentially be used by newts. As such whilst the council's Ecologist does not consider there to be sufficient justification to delay the application for further survey work to be undertaken they recommend that a further survey and along with any necessary mitigation is secured by pre-commencement condition.

The Ecology Survey also identified the presence of badgers in the area including a sett just outside the application boundary and outlier setts along the boundary. The Ecologist therefore also recommends a condition requiring a survey of the badger setts during the construction phase of the development.

Hazardous Installations

There are two high pressure gas pipelines that pass close to the site, one to the north and one to the south. The National Grid have raised no objections to the proposal and it is understood that the development should not affect access to the pipelines for maintenance purposes or result in any health and safety concerns.

Traffic implications and highway safety

A number of local residents have expressed concern in respect of the likely increase in traffic resulting from the proposed development noting the narrow, winding nature of the

approach roads and the lack of adequate passing places. Specific concerns relating to the frequency, speed and noise of farm traffic and the build-up of mud and slurry on the roads over the last year has been raised and the adverse impact this has had on the road surface, verges and drainage as well as the safety of other road users. There has also been a request that the applicant be made to carry out a regular program of road cleaning and maintenance of ditches, culverts, verges and hedge cutting and the construction of additional passing places along Witcombe Lane.

In the applicant's Transport Statement it was stated that the proposed development would result in the two-fold increase in the on-site dairy and calf-rearing / cattle operation and lead to an increase in full-time staff numbers (full-time) from six to 14 and could result in a doubling of traffic movements to the farm compared to that existing. They further noted that whilst the farm was a 24 hour, 7 day a week operation that the majority of movements, in particular deliveries, vet visits and staff movements etc, tended to occur during the core working hours of 05.00 – 17.50 Monday to Friday. On this basis they estimated that there would be 67 two-way movements on weekdays which worked out at 5.5 two-way movements per hour during these core hours and a much reduced number outside these times. It is understood that the majority of traffic visiting and leaving the farm approach along Witcombe Lane.

The application site is approached via Witcombe Lane to the south and Milton Lane and Paynes Lane to the west, all three of which are narrow, winding, single track lanes that have limited passing places. Given the significant increase in traffic identified by the transport assessment and the substandard nature of the approach roads and lack of any mitigation measures the highway authority initially objected to the proposal. In response to these concerns however the applicant has proposed the construction of a number of passing bays along Witcombe Lane and Thornhill Drove and has submitted a supplementary addendum to the Transport Statement setting out an overall increase of 8 x two-way HGV movements per month.

Whilst the proposal is likely to generate a significant increase in small vehicle movements to the site, in particular staff cars, given the relatively modest overall increase in large vehicle movements and the provision of off-site passing places the highway authority has dropped their earlier objection. The access via Thornhill Drove onto the public highway to the west raises no visibility concerns and the proposal incorporates a satisfactory level of parking.

With regard to a neighbour's request for the applicant to undertake a regular maintenance scheme of the local highway network, to include road cleaning, maintenance of ditches and culverts etc, such a requirement is not considered to be reasonable or necessary. Many of these issues are in any case covered by separate legislation to planning which places a responsibility on the relevant landowner / road user to ensure the highway network maintained in a safe condition.

For the above reasons and provided the proposed passing places are secured by condition, the proposed dairy unit is not considered to raise any substantive highway safety concerns.

Residential amenity

The proposed dairy unit is situated in a relatively sparsely populated area with the closest residential properties located in nearby Witcombe (approximately 490m to the west). Other nearby properties include a bungalow located adjacent to the existing farm unit to the west which is an agriculturally tied property and a neighbouring farm to the northeast. A number of local residents have raised concerns about the generation of

odours and flies as a result of the new dairy unit.

The Council's Environmental Health officer has confirmed that they are satisfied with this assessment and that the proposal should not result in any significant odour concerns for local residents. Whilst the proposed scheme will lead to an accumulation of muck, slurry and dirty water on site and is therefore likely to give rise to an increase in flies and other insects and vermin, given the distance of the site from the nearest protected buildings the proposal is unlikely to result in an unacceptable nuisance in this regard. For the same reason the on-site activities resulting from the proposal should not result in any unacceptable levels of noise or other disturbance to local residents.

Visual amenity and landscape impact

The proposed development covers a 17 hectare site and incorporates the erection of 20,000 square feet of built form, including a cubicle building measuring approximately 330m in length, and is of a scale that cannot be described as being strictly commensurate with the character and pattern of the local landscape features and existing built development. The application site, however, occupies a relatively low position within the landscape and whilst there are near-views of the site, in particular from the rising ground to the south and the public footpath that passes along Thornhill Drove, it is obscured from wider view. A comprehensive landscaping scheme forms part of this submission and includes some remodelling of the application field to aid how the new buildings sit within the site and a substantive planting scheme including reinforcing the existing field hedgerows and the planting of blocks of woodland on the southern side of the development. The roof form of the long cubicle building has also been amended to include stepped breaks along its length in response to the Council's Landscape Officer's comments. Following this revision and subject to conditions to secure the landscaping scheme the proposed development is not considered to raise any substantive visual amenity or landscape harm.

The Council's Environmental Health officer has confirmed that the detailed lighting scheme that has been provided by the applicant is satisfactory and the proposal should not generate a level of light pollution that would be unduly harmful to the rural character of the locality.

Public footpaths

The site is accessed via Thornhill Drove along which passes a public footpath. Neither the County Council's or SSDC's Rights of Way Officers have raised any objection to the proposed development or the use of the public right of way as a means of access to the site. It is noted that part of the drove has already been surfaced with concrete but that the proposal includes a requirement for a further 120m of the drove to be similarly surfaced in order that a suitable means of access to the site be achieved. There are no objections to the principle of the proposed surfacing works, however, the applicant will need to apply to carry out these works to County Rights of Way.

The Ash Public Path Liaison Officer has questioned what provision will be made for walkers along Thornhill Drove with particular reference to where walkers are expected to stand to allow vehicles to pass given the narrow width of concrete track (3m). As part of the development the applicant is proposing the formation of a passing place part way along the drove between the public highway and application site and along much of the route there is a grassed verge and a number of gateways where there is space to stand. Whilst the amenities of walkers using this ROW will undoubtedly be affected by the increased traffic along the drove the proposal should not result in any obstruction to these users or result in any substantive health and safety concerns.

Archaeology

There is a record of ridge and furrow and roman finds in the area and the site is considered to lie in an area of high archaeological potential. No archaeological assessment has to date been made of the site and County Archaeology considers that there is a potential for the proposal to adversely impact on a heritage asset and has therefore requested that a survey of the site be undertaken prior to the determination of the application. At the time of writing this report the applicant had submitted a desk-based study and was in discussions with County Archaeology as to what other information was required. County Archaeology's comments in respect of the desk-based study have yet to be received and the following recommendation is made subject to their further comments and recommendations. An oral update in the respect will be made.

Several of the properties located along Witcombe Lane are listed properties, including Lower Witcombe Farm which is visible from the application site, however, given the distance of this property from the site the proposal is not considered to harm its setting. The Conservation Officer has raised no objections.

Conclusion

The proposed dairy unit represents a significant investment in the rural economy which, in principle, should be supported under the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, subject to the consideration of the site specific impacts. It is considered that the increased traffic that would arise could reasonably be accommodated on the local road network subject to modest off-site improvements which the applicant is will to undertake. In terms of the immediate environment it is accepted that reasonable precautionary measures would safeguard ecological and amenity interests and that appropriate surface water drainage measures could be put in place.

Accordingly subject to appropriate conditions to ensure suitable mitigation measures are agreed and implemented it is not considered that the any undue harm would arise

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to no objection being raised by the county archaeologist planning permission be granted.

Justification

The proposed dairy unit would make an important contribution to the rural economy without significant adverse impact on highways safety, ecology, visual or residential amenity or the environment. As such the proposal complies with the policies contained with the National Planning Policy Framework.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

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:

- Site Location Plan – 01920 / 01 received 24/12/2012;
- Site Plan – 01920-00-E /01 received 08/03/2013;
- Landscape Sections – 495/02 P1 received 24/12/2012;
- Cubicle Building (Elevations) – 01920-01-C / 03-C received 08/03/2013;
- Cubicle Building (Elevations) – 01920-01-C / 04-C received 08/03/2013;
- Cubicle Building (Plan) – 01920-01-A / 01 received 24/12/2012;
- Cubicle Building (Plan) –01920-01- A / 02 received 24/12/2012;
- Isolation Boxes (Plan and Elevations) – 01920-02-A / 01 received 24/12/2012;
- Storage Building (Plan and Elevations) – 01920-04-A / 01 received 24/12/2012;
- Straight Store (Plan and Elevations) – 01920-05 / 01 received 24/12/2012;
- Silage Clamp (Plan and Elevations) – 01920-06 / 01 received 24/12/2012

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

03. The scheme hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless particulars of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the rural character of the locality in accordance with Policies ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. There shall be no means of external illumination / lighting other than that set out within the external lighting scheme, including the written specification and following plans received 08/03/2013, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority:

- Storage Building – 01920-04-B / 01-B;
- Cubicle Building – 01920-01-B / 03-B;
- Cubicle Building – 01920-01-B / 04B;
- Parlour Building – 01920-03-B / 01-B.

Reason: To safeguard the rural character of the locality in accordance with Policies ST6, EC3 and EP3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. The development hereby permitted shall not be first brought into use unless the passing places detailed on drawing number 30 dated 07/03/2013 have been constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety to accord with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan and Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

06. The development hereby approved shall not be commenced unless a Farm Waste Management Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in full accordance with the approved details and agreed timetable and shall thereafter be permanently complied with unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Part 11 of the NPPF and Policy EP9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

07. The development hereby approved shall not be commenced unless a Construction Environmental Management Plan, incorporating construction details of the slurry and silage storage facilities, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in full accordance with the approved details and agreed timetable, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Part 11 of the NPPF and Policy EP9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

08. The development hereby approved shall not be commenced unless a detailed scheme for contaminated and clean surface water run-off, include details of the surface water run-off limitation scheme, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall clarify all final construction details and levels/specifications for the sites water management system, and shall also specify the intended future ownership and maintenance provision for all drainage works serving the site. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved programme and details and shall thereafter be permanently retained and maintained in this fashion, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in accordance with Part 11 of the NPPF and Policy EP9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced (including any ground works, site clearance, or creation of new accesses) unless a further survey and impact assessment for great crested newts has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Unless the survey and impact assessment concludes negligible risk of harm to great crested newts, a Method Statement detailing measures for the avoidance of harm, mitigation and compensation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved Method Statement shall be implemented in complete accordance with its contents, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect legally protected species of recognised nature conservation importance in accordance with Policy EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations 2010.

10. No development hereby approved shall take place until details of an outline for a phased programme of badger protection measures has been submitted to an approved in writing by the local planning authority. Subsequently prior to, and within 2 months of, commencement of each significant stage of ground works, a survey for badger setts will be undertaken by a competent person, and if any are present within 30 metres (including on adjoining land) of the area of activity, the works shall not commence until a method statement for the protection of badgers has been produced and any necessary Natural England licences have been obtained. The method statement shall be implemented in full.

Reason: For the conservation and protection of legally protected species in accordance with Policy EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

11. The planting scheme detailed on drawing number 495/01 P1 received 24/12/2012 shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season following the completion of the ground formation works that form part of the development hereby permitted. For a period of five years after the completion of the planting scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a health weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species, or by appropriate trees or shrubs as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the rural character of the area in accordance with Policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

12. The ground modelling works that form part of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in full accordance with the details set out on drawings numbered 495/01 P1 and 495/02 P1 received 24/12/2012.

Reason: To safeguard the rural character of the area in accordance with Policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless a Hedge Protection Plan has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Hedge Protection Plan.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development makes a satisfactory contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the rural character of the area in accordance with Policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

14. Any conditions reasonably recommended by the County archaeologist to safeguard the archaeological potential of the site.

Informatives:

01. The developer is advised that works will not be permitted to commence on the public highway until a Section 278 Highways Agreement has been signed agreeing to the off-site highway improvements to serve the site.
02. Please be aware of the guidance and notes set out within the Environment Agency's comments dated 13/03/2013, a copy of which is available on the Council's website.
03. The applicant's attention is drawn to the advice set out within the notes set out within the National Grid's consultation response dated 06/02/2013 with regard to the high-pressure gas pipelines that pass close to the application site, a copy of which is available on the Council's website.
04. The applicant's attention is also drawn to the Code of Good Agricultural Practice (GoCAP) for the disposal of slurry wastes and is reminded that a 10m buffer zone should be established excluding the spreading of wastes around any sensitive ecological sites.
05. Please note the comments made by County Rights of Way dated 21/01/2013 in respect of any disruption to the public footpath that bounds the site, a copy of which is available on the Council's website.