

MEETING AW.13:0607
DATE 18:04:07

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held in the Main Hall, Swanmead Community School, Ditton Street, Ilminster on **Wednesday, 18th April 2007**.

(5.30 p.m. – 9.45 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Angie Singleton (In the Chair)

Stella Abbey	Martin Rawstone
Michael Best	Dan Shortland
David Bulmer	Jean Smith
Adrian Cavendish	Kim Turner (until 8.00 p.m.)
Geoffrey Clarke (from 5.45 p.m.)	Andrew Turpin (until 8.30 p.m.)
David Lamb	Linda Vijeh (until 6.15 p.m. – returned at 7.30 p.m.)
Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale
Ric Pallister (from 5.55 p.m.)	

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Head of Area Development
Bob Chedzoy	Community Development Officer
Lynda Pincombe	Senior Leisure Facilities Officer
Nigel Collins	Transport Strategy Officer
David Norris	Major Planning Applications Co-ordinator
Andrew Gunn	Deputy Planning Team Leader
Tim Bodys	Solicitor
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

141. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st March 2007, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

142. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

143. Declarations of Interest

The following members declared a personal interest in respect of the consideration of grant applications from various local organisations (agenda item 10 – Area Development Grants) as they had been appointed by the Council to serve on those organisations:-

Cllr. Martin Wale	Chard Young People's Centre Chard Recreational, Educational & Sports Trust Association (CRESTA)
Cllr. Kim Turner	Ile Youth Centre, Ilminster
Cllr. Angie Singleton	West One Youth and Community Centre, Crewkerne Crewkerne Heritage Centre
Cllr. Jean Smith	Chard and District Museum Crowshute House, Chard
Cllr. Nigel Mermagen	Chard Recreational, Educational & Sports Trust Association (CRESTA)
Cllr. Geoffrey Clarke	Crewkerne Aqua Centre
Cllr. Linda Vijeh	Meeting House Trust Management Committee, Ilminster
Cllr. Martin Rawstone	Meeting House Trust Management Committee, Ilminster (He also mentioned that his wife was a trustee of the Meeting House).

Cllrs. Angie Singleton and Mike Best declared personal interests in the application for discretionary rate relief submitted by Crewkerne Leisure Management (Aqua Centre) (agenda item 10 – Area Development Grants) because they were directors of that organisation.

Cllr. Geoffrey Clarke declared a personal interest in the application for grant submitted by Crewkerne Heritage Centre (agenda item 10 – Area Development Grants) because he was Chairman of the Heritage Centre.

Cllr. Dan Shortland declared a personal interest in the application for grant submitted by West One Youth and Community Centre, Crewkerne (agenda item 10 – Area Development Grants) because he was a Youth Worker at the Centre.

The above members indicated that they would have a prejudicial interest and leave the meeting if any discussion took place on the grant in which he or she had declared an interest.

Cllr. Kim Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application no. 07/00583/FUL (Demolition of existing houses and erection of 27 flats and 38 houses together with the provision of 94 car parking spaces, land and properties at Auckland Way and Beckington Crescent, Montague Way, Chard) as she had been appointed by the Council to serve on the main board of South Somerset Homes, of which the applicants, Yarlinton Homes, were a subsidiary. She had left the meeting before the application was discussed.

Cllrs. Mike Best and Angie Singleton declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in planning application nos. 06/04544/FUL (Conversion of redundant factory into 11 flats and 1 house, Bonsoir of London, Abbey Street, Crewkerne) and 06/04548/LBC (Demolition of modern extensions, internal and external alterations to form 11 flats and 1 house, Bonsoir of London, Abbey Street, Crewkerne) as comments had been submitted by Crewkerne Town Council on which they also served as councillors.

Cllrs. David Bulmer, Jean Smith and Martin Wale declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in planning application nos. 06/04580/FUL (Erection of 2 no. detached dwellings, land adjoining New House, Holbear, Chard), 07/00583/FUL (Demolition of existing houses and erection of 27 flats and 38 houses together with the provision of 94 car parking spaces, land and properties at Auckland Way, Beckington Crescent and Montague Way, Chard) and 07/00870/R3D (Construction of cycle path/footway link between Windsor Crescent and Mitchell Gardens (Revised Application), land at Snowdon Park, Mitchell Gardens, Chard) as comments had been submitted by Chard Town Council on which they also served as councillors.

144. Public Participation

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public, representatives of parish/town councils or county councillors.

145. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman referred to this being the last scheduled meeting of the Committee before the elections and thanked Stella Abbey, Vice-Chairman, and members for their support during her Chairmanship. She wished members well and also said farewell to Cllrs. Stella Abbey, Adrian Cavendish and David Lamb who would not be standing for re-election.

Cllr. Stella Abbey referred to the affordable housing scheme that had been completed by the Hastoe Housing Association in Winsham and commented that such schemes were needed to enable young families and children to remain in villages. She encouraged members to have a look at the scheme.

146. SHINE (Somerset) Ltd. (Agenda item 6)

The Head of Area Development summarised the agenda report, which informed members about the formation of SHINE (Somerset) Ltd., it being noted that SHINE was an acronym for Social and Health Initiatives Enterprises.

The Committee noted the report.

NOTED

*(Andrew Gillespie, Head of Area Development (West) – (01460) 260426)
(andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

147. Arrangements for Future Community Forum Events (Agenda item 7) (Executive Decision)

The Community Development Officer summarised the agenda report, which informed members of suggested arrangements and proposals for holding future community forum events in Area West. The Community Development Officer also informed members of possible funding arrangements for future community forum events.

During the ensuing discussion, the officers responded to members' questions. A number of comments were also made and points raised included the following:-

- in response to a question regarding parishes surrounding the market towns being involved in future forum events, it was confirmed that the forums would be based on the existing Community Planning Partnership areas. A member mentioned that one of the Community Planning Partnership areas included some parishes within Area North and the other two areas had some parishes outside the County. This issue was noted by the officers;
- reference was made to the need to ensure that sufficient funding was available given that surrounding parishes and villages were to be included in future;

- it was confirmed that future forum events would be held on a separate evening from the ordinary meetings of the Area West Committee;
- a member expressed concern that the next event would not be held for six months. The Community Development Officer acknowledged the comment made but indicated that given the staff resources available he felt that this was a realistic timescale;
- it was confirmed that good publicity would be given for future forum events;
- in referring to the pilot community forum that was held in Chard, a member thanked the officers for a successful evening.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the Committee approve the holding of community forum events in Crewkerne and Ilminster in the autumn of 2007 and a further forum in Chard in the spring of 2008;
- (2) that a further report be submitted to the Area West Committee later in the year outlining the full arrangements for the forum including the proposals for establishing Area West Sub-Committees.

Reason: To agree proposals for holding future community forum events within Area West.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Bob Chedzoy, Community Development Officer – (01460) 260359)
(bob.chedzoy@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

148. Update on Transport Issues in Area West (Agenda item 8) (Executive Decision)

The Transport Strategy Officer summarised the agenda report, which updated members on general transport matters and on the work programme currently being carried out that either specifically related to Area West or where wider schemes were likely to impact on Area West. The Committee was also asked to consider the potential for further enhancements to bus service 60/61 with the provision of low floor wheelchair accessible buses.

The Transport Strategy Officer, in updating members, referred to the proposal for a national concessionary fares scheme, which would apply to any local bus journey across England and Wales irrespective of where the passholder lived. He reported that he was not able at this stage to update members further on that matter because the date for the second reading of the Concessionary Bus Travel Bill in the House of Commons had not yet been set. He anticipated, however, that the scheme would be introduced from 1st April 2008.

In referring to the Slinky Bus Service, he reported that there had been a slight increase in passengers in March to 481 compared to 462 in February.

The Transport Strategy Officer further reported that the parking voucher scheme for blue badge holders, part of the District Wide Parking Strategy, had been brought into operation on 16th April 2007.

During the ensuing discussion, a number of comments were made including the following:-

- a member commented that residents of Buckland St. Mary and Combe St. Nicholas did not seem to be aware of the availability of the Slinky Bus Service. The Transport Strategy Officer commented that a leaflet had been produced about the service and he agreed to speak to the Accessible Transport Officer at Somerset County Council and the operator to follow up the concerns expressed about the publicising of the service;
- concerns were expressed that the Council had increased parking charges but had not yet introduced civil parking enforcement in respect of on-street parking. It was felt that this was misguided as the higher charges may increase the numbers of people who would try to park on-street. Reference was made to there being little on-street parking enforcement in Chard at present and therefore the problem would get worse;
- reference was made to car park season tickets for employers and comment expressed that businesses were not aware of the scheme. The Transport Strategy Officer reported that he did not believe that there had been additional publicity. He agreed to speak to the Principal Engineer responsible for car parks about that matter;
- the Transport Strategy Officer confirmed that an official launch of the Slinky Bus Service would go ahead in due course;
- the Transport Strategy Officer confirmed that he would ask Car Park Operations to make details of the voucher scheme for blue badge holders available on the internet;
- concerns were expressed about the poor condition of some of the buses used on local bus services. The Transport Strategy Officer reported that buses had to be properly maintained and meet certain standards set by the Traffic Commissioners. There was little pressure that the District Council could exert with regard to this matter;
- reference was made to the location of bus stops during the closure of Ditton Street in Ilminster whilst highway works to introduce a one-way system were being undertaken. Concern was expressed by a member about the safety of the location of the bus stop by the Library. The Transport Strategy Officer agreed to pass on those concerns;
- the comments of a member who referred to bus service 30 sometimes getting held up in Taunton and, therefore, missing the railway connection were noted. The Transport Strategy Officer mentioned that it may be desirable to split the service, however, that was unlikely bearing in mind the large increase in costs that would be involved;
- reference was made to the national concessionary fares scheme and the Transport Strategy Officer commented that he was not in a position at present to estimate its cost to the District Council. He would be attending a meeting in the near future about the scheme;
- a member mentioned that some residents did not have parking provision on their property and therefore had to park on the side of the road. The Committee noted his suggestion that there should be some form of permit introduced to enable them to use the public car parks;
- in response to concerns expressed by members, the Transport Strategy Officer confirmed that where new ticket machines had been installed they were Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. Where the machines were not DDA compliant, people who were disabled should not be charged. Particular reference was made by a member to the car park machine at Crowshute, Chard, which could not be used by the disabled because it was located within raised paving. The Transport Strategy Officer agreed to take up that issue with the Principal Engineer responsible for car parks;

- a member referred to train services, particularly from Crewkerne Station and commented that the timetable had changed which had meant a reduction in the service provided. He also mentioned that the manning of the station had been reduced and although an automatic ticket machine had been installed, he felt that it was too complicated to be useful. The Committee expressed its support for the comments made and asked that the Transport Strategy Officer explore the possibility of an officer from Network Rail/South West Trains attending a future Area West Committee to discuss issues raised including access to train services, timetabling and station facilities. The Transport Strategy Officer commented that he would take up the issue concerning the ticket machine separately with South West Trains;
- members indicated their support for the provision of low floor buses for service 60/61 (Ilminster, Chard and Crewkerne to Yeovil).

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the report of the Transport Strategy Officer be noted;
- (2) that the Transport Strategy Officer undertake further work to move forward the possible provision of low floor buses for service 60/61 (Ilminster, Chard, and Crewkerne to Yeovil) in liaison with Transporting Somerset (SCC) and Stagecoach;
- (3) that, in liaison with Transporting Somerset (SCC), the Transport Strategy Officer explore the possibility of an officer from Network Rail/South West Trains attending a future Area West Committee to discuss issues raised by members, including access to train services, timetabling and station facilities.

Reason: To note the latest position with transport issues in Area West, to agree further work being undertaken to move forward the possible provision of low floor buses on service 60/61 and to explore the possibility of an officer from Network Rail/South West Trains attending a future Area West Committee.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Nigel Collins, Transport Strategy Officer – (01935) 462591)
(nigel.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

149. Progress of the Ilminster Forum and Community Plan (Agenda item 9) (Executive Decision)

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the success of the Ilminster Forum Open Day held on the 3rd March 2007 and gave an update on the Community Plan for Ilminster and surrounding area.

Cllr. Kim Turner, one of the ward members, spoke on behalf of the Chair of the Ilminster Forum who had been unable to attend the meeting. Cllr. Turner informed members that the public Open Day on 3rd March 2007 had been very successful and many comments from members of the public had been received on local issues. She further commented on the progress with the residents' questionnaire, which would be used to inform the feasibility study on the possible provision of a swimming pool. The Forum was also hoping to find out information on what facilities were available in the town provided by various local organisations, which would also enable an assessment to be made of whether there was a need for any new facilities to be provided.

The Committee concurred with the comments of Cllr. Kim Turner in congratulating the Ilminster Forum on their progress with the development of the Community Plan.

RESOLVED: that the development of the Ilminster Forum and Community Plan projects be noted and supported.

Reason: To note and support the development of the Ilminster Forum and Community Plan projects.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Bob Chedzoy, Community Development Officer – (01460) 260359)
(bob.chedzoy@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

150. Area Development Grants (Agenda item 10) (Executive Decision)

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered applications received by the Council from local organisations within Area West requesting financial assistance for the financial year 2007/08. The Committee also noted the details of a revenue grant approved by officers under the Scheme of Delegation.

The Committee noted the comments of representatives of some of the organisations concerned who spoke in support of their application for a grant. The comments of a member of the public in support of one of the applications were also noted.

During the ensuing discussion, a member referred to there being significant differences in the level of funding obtained from the local community, including from parish and town councils, by some of the organisations applying for a grant from the District Council. Comment was expressed that, although being content to approve all the grant applications this year, in the future the Council should be looking at match funding. It was also suggested that where local organisations were applying for grants to cover the payment of rent to the District Council, consideration could be given to the organisation having full repairing leases in respect of the buildings they occupied. It was suggested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to enable members to discuss the guidance given next year to local organisations applying for grants from the Council.

Members took the applications en bloc and were agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: (1) that financial assistance be awarded as indicated below and in accordance with the standard grant conditions and details outlined on pages 13-25 of the agenda:-

Chard and District Museum	£10,000
Crowshute House, Chard	£12,500
West One Youth & Community Centre, Crewkerne	£3,889
Meeting House, Ilminster	£3,730
Chard Young People's Centre	£5,459
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	£4,120
CRESTA	£5,061
Crewkerne Aqua Centre	£9,235
Ile Youth Centre, Ilminster	£4,169
Hinton St. George Village Hall	£8,405
Winsham Football Club	£7,878
Merriott Bowling Club	£12,500
Tatworth Playing Fields	£12,500
Forton Rangers Football Club	£12,500

- (2) that the revenue grant approved under the Scheme of Delegation in respect of Donyatt Village Plan Steering Group be noted;
- (3) that £2,163 be allocated from the Area West Reserve to the Area West Revenue Grants budget;
- (4) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to enable members to discuss the guidance given next year to local organisations applying for grants from the Council.

Reason: To determine applications received by the Council for financial assistance.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Bob Chedzoy, Community Development Officer – (01460) 260359)
(bob.chedzoy@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

151. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 11)

This item had been placed on the agenda to give an opportunity for members who represented the Council on outside organisations to report items of significance to the Committee.

Cllr. Andrew Turpin referred to the Chard to Ilminster Cycleway, which he commented was very popular. He particularly referred to the Stonemasons Pub at Ilminster, which was doing well from the movement of cyclists along the cycleway.

NOTED.

152. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 12)

There was no feedback to report as there were no planning applications that had been referred recently to the Regulation Committee.

NOTED.

*(Andrew Gunn, Deputy Planning Team Leader – (01935) 462192)
(andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

153. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of planning appeals lodged.

*(Andrew Gunn, Deputy Planning Team Leader – (01935) 462192)
(andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

154. Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 15)

The Committee noted that there was no meeting scheduled to take place in May because of the elections and, therefore, that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held at Crowshute House, Crowshute Link, Chard on Wednesday, 20th June 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

NOTED.

*(Andrew Blackburn, Committee Administrator – (01460) 260441)
(andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

155. Planning Applications (Agenda item 14)

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

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

06/03184/COU (Pages 8-13) – Change of use to B1 industrial (GR 347391/109700), The Workshop, Manor Buildings, New Street, North Perrott – S. Saunders.

The Major Applications Co-ordinator reported that since the agenda report had been written and the recommendation made, a letter had been received from the Highway Authority referring to the B1 use and amending their recommendations in respect of this application.

The Major Applications Co-ordinator now recommended that, as the amended comments of the Highway Authority had been received very recently, consideration of the application be deferred to enable those comments to be considered. He also suggested that a representative of the Highway Authority be present at the meeting when this application was discussed.

RESOLVED: that consideration of this planning application be deferred for consideration of the Highway Authority's most recent comments.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

07/00870/R3D (Pages 42-44) – The construction of cyclepath/footway link between Windsor Crescent and Mitchell Gardens (Revised Application) (GR 331706/108336), land at Snowdon Park, Mitchell Gardens, Chard – SSDC.

The Committee noted that this application had been withdrawn.

NOTED.

05/02172/OUT (Pages 1-7) – Erection of agricultural workers dwelling (GR 328884/108657), land at Drakes Farm, Higher Wambrook – Messrs. G.S.N. & J.L. Dyer.

The Major Applications Co-ordinator summarised the details of the application and reported that the recommendation was one of refusal for the reasons set out in the agenda report.

Cllr. David Lamb, ward member, indicated his support for the officer's recommendation of refusal. He referred to the appraisal carried out by the University of Exeter giving overwhelming evidence that there was no justification for a new agricultural worker's dwelling in the countryside in this case.

The Committee agreed that the application should be refused in accordance with the officer's recommendation.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development is unacceptable because the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the evidence submitted satisfactorily demonstrates that there is a functional and financial need for a new dwelling in the countryside for occupation by an agricultural worker contrary to Policy HG15 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 and PPS 7.
2. The proposed development is unacceptable because the application site is located in an isolated position separated from the remainder of the farm and exacerbation of building aggregation arising from the spread and separation of the built elements, which would result in an undesirable intrusion of built form detrimental to the character of the local landscape, visual amenities of the area and natural beauty of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to Policies ST3, ST5, ST6, EC2 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006, Policies STR6 and 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review adopted 2000 and PPS 7.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

06/04544/FUL (Pages 14-20) – Conversion of redundant factory into 11 flats and 1 house (GR 344038/109833), Bonsoir of London, Abbey Street, Crewkerne – Bonsoir of London Ltd.

06/04548/LBC (Pages 21-27) – Demolition of modern extensions, internal and external alterations to form 11 flats and 1 house (GR 344038/109833), Bonsoir of London, Abbey Street, Crewkerne – Bonsoir of London Ltd.

The Deputy Planning Team Leader summarised the details of the application and reported that the recommendation was one of approval for the reasons set out in the agenda report. He referred to one of the key issues being the loss of employment buildings and land and mentioned that the Council's Economic Development Officer was of the view that the loss of this site would not present a significant loss of employment opportunity to the locality. With regard to the impact of the proposed development on the character of the listed buildings, the Council's Conservation Manager had indicated that he was satisfied with the proposals subject to conditions.

In updating members, the Deputy Planning Team Leader reported that he had received an e-mail from the applicant's architect responding to comments of the Council's Conservation Architect and giving additional information about their proposals. He also reported the receipt of further comments from the Highway Authority who had indicated that negotiations were moving forward regarding the highway requirements.

The Chairman referred to comments that had been received from three people who had expressed concern about the recommendation of approval to convert the premises into residential use and did not feel that any effort had been made to market the buildings for employment use. They had also indicated that they had expressed an interest in using the buildings for either community or employment use, the details of which were noted by the Committee.

The officers then answered members' questions on points of detail regarding the proposals. Points raised included whether the premises should be marketed for employment use, how many commercial properties were actually available in Crewkerne at present and the percentage of the building that may be available for employment use.

The representative of Crewkerne Town Council, Mr. S. Andrew, commented that the Town Council remained of the view that it was premature to approve the residential use of this building. He referred to it being the largest employment building in the town centre with the two main blocks being substantial. The Town Council felt that the buildings could be used for employment use and that there should be more attempt made to find uses of that kind. It was felt that the buildings should not be given up entirely for residential use.

The Committee noted the comments of Mr. J. Stokes in objection to the application. On a matter of detail, he did not feel that the access was wide enough for vehicles to get to the rear of the premises. He referred to the economic viability of the premises not having been tested and was of the view that marketing of the property was a logical way to test the proposition that there may be a significant loss of employment use. He referred to this type of space being critical and to there being nothing else like it in Crewkerne or elsewhere. He felt that the location should be looked at on its merits. Reference was made to the six page list referred to by the Economic Development Officer outlining the currently available employment units in the town and he commented that it was flawed fundamentally. In going through the list he referred to a number of premises being no longer available, being outside of Crewkerne or having been duplicated within the list. He felt that this highlighted that the information was not robust. He also referred to companies that he knew were interested in the premises and had been undocumented.

The applicant's agent, Mr. N. Jones of Humberts Commercial, commented that the reason the factory had closed was because it was unsuitable for modern commercial premises. He mentioned that there was not a policy that said that the premises had to be marketed. He referred to District Council officers and independent consultants appointed by the Council having indicated that it would not be economically viable to bring the premises into use. He commented that enquiries had been received regarding the premises but they had been from residential developers with another firm indicating that the building was not suitable for employment use. He felt that the only way to have some employment units was to cross-subsidise. Reference was made to there being no objections from neighbouring properties and to the building being suitable for residential use having lost its economic life for employment. He urged the Committee to support the application.

The Deputy Planning Team Leader commented that bearing in mind that there was a lot of local feeling about this application and that there was some possible interest in the building, he suggested that the application be deferred to enable a meeting to take place with the applicant's agents and interested parties to discuss the use of the building.

Cllr. Angie Singleton, one of the ward members, commented that she would prefer to defer the application as suggested by the Deputy Planning Team Leader. She commented that Bonsoir was a manufacturing business but that was not what was being looked at now. She also indicated that the Barley Yard development was a mixed development, not all residential. Reference was made to the Council's consultant's report and she explained why she was of the view that it did not have any substance. She also expressed disappointment if officers had made their recommendations regarding this application on the basis of that report. She referred to the building being a unique property in the town centre and to there being nothing comparable. She was of the view that the employment opportunities it offered would be attractive, especially for office accommodation. She felt strongly that the market had not been tested and questioned how the viability for employment use could be assessed without such a test.

Cllr. Mike Best, also a ward member, indicated his support for the comments of Cllr. Angie Singleton. He referred to the list of supposedly vacant employment units in the town being disappointing. He was of the view that there was a need to provide employment opportunities as well as housing. He indicated that he could not support the approval of this application.

Cllr. Geoff Clarke, also ward member, expressed his view that if the premises were commercially viable someone would have come forward. He felt that the application should be approved.

A full discussion ensued during which reference was made to the interpretation of the relevant policies applicable to the retention of the employment use of premises. Reference was also made to the robustness of the information and evidence available regarding whether the loss of this site would present a significant loss of employment opportunity to the locality, including the Council's consultant's report and the list of currently available employment units in the town.

In response to questions from members, the officers commented that should members wish to refuse the application it would not need to be referred to the Regulation Committee in this case. There would be a need, however, to have clear and robust reasons to refuse the application. If the matter was deferred, it was commented that the applicant could take it as a deemed refusal and could appeal.

Members were of the view that there was insufficient information available to make a decision at this meeting. It was commented that there were sufficient discrepancies in the information presented to justify a deferral of the application. Members also felt that the independent consultant's report should have been made available to them.

The majority of members considered that the application should be deferred as it was felt that up to date robust information was not available in relation to the economic viability of the premises for employment or mixed development use. It was felt that there was a need for the evidence put forward by the Economic Development Officer regarding this application to be justified.

RESOLVED: that consideration of these planning applications be deferred for two months to enable up to date robust information to be available in relation to the economic viability of the premises for employment or mixed development use and to enable the evidence put forward by the Economic Development Officer to be justified.

(1 against, 1 abstention).

06/04580/FUL (Pages 28-31) – The erection of 2 no. detached dwellings (GR 332771/107463), land adjoining New House, Holbear, Chard – Winsham Development Company Ltd.

The Major Applications Co-ordinator summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. In updating members he reported the comments of the Highway Authority who had indicated that they had no objection to the application subject to a condition that the road within the application site, up to its connection with the private lane, be constructed to an adoptable standard. He also recommended the inclusion of an additional condition in any permission regarding the storage of refuse on the site. The Committee noted that his recommendation was one of approval subject to conditions including those mentioned above.

The Committee noted the comments of Mr. M.J.B. Harris, Mrs. I. Glynn and Mr. M. Glynn in objection to the application. Views expressed included the following:-

- the access lane was narrow with poor visibility onto the main road;
- there were accesses onto the private lane, which was unadopted, and although it had traffic humps that did not solve the problem of increased traffic;
- not enough room for all the refuse bins and no street lighting;
- any new dwellings would exacerbate problems already experienced in the locality;
- this application should be deferred to await the development of the key site from where access could be made;
- the proposed dwellings would cause overlooking and loss of privacy;
- if the application were granted there should be conditions imposed on the hours of work for construction activities, an amendment to the colour of materials and two properties affected should be compensated;
- any further new development in this locality should be deferred until better access is available;
- concerns were expressed about the way this application had been dealt with by the Planning Unit, comment being expressed that several different officers had dealt with applications in this locality and responses to queries had not been received.

The applicant's agent, Mr. P. Dance, referred to the principle of development on this site having been established by the earlier outline approval. He referred to having sympathy with some of the issues raised and commented that the applicants were content with the recommended conditions regarding the new road within the site being constructed to an adoptable standard and in respect of the storage of refuse. He did not feel that there would be any amenity issues as a result of these proposals.

Cllr. Dave Bulmer, ward member, referred to this being a difficult site. He mentioned that although the entrance to Holbear may look wide enough, there was a pinchpoint further up the lane and it became narrow. There was a problem relating to waste in respect of properties further up the lane. He mentioned, however, that vehicle movements had been worse than at present and had involved heavier farm vehicles rather than cars. He mentioned that visibility could be difficult. He further commented that the principle of development had already been established and that the impact on other properties was mainly in connection with the collection of refuse. He indicated that he was inclined to support the Planning officer's opinion.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to outline permission having been granted and to there being no planning grounds to refuse the application. Comment was expressed, however, that the gathering of refuse bins outside someone's gate was unacceptable and it was felt that the waste service should be able to deal with that matter.

In response to questions from members, the Major Applications Co-ordinator clarified that only the road within the site to where it joined the private lane would be constructed to an adoptable standard and not the rest of the private lane. He also indicated that it would not be appropriate to link matters concerning this locality with the key site at this stage.

The Committee indicated its support for the granting of the application as recommended by the officers. In addition, however, it was felt that a condition should be included regarding the hours of work for construction activities and that the materials to be used should be in consultation with the ward member.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that planning permission be granted subject to conditions 1-7 as set out in the agenda report and to additional conditions including the road within the application site, up to its connection with the private lane, being constructed to an acceptable standard, adequate provision being made for the storage of wheeled refuse bins on the site and in respect of the hours of work for construction activities;
- (2) that the materials to be used be delegated to the Head of Development and Building Control in consultation with the ward member.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

07/00346/OUT (Pages 32-35) – Erection of 1 no. dwelling and alterations to existing access (GR 344624/109877), Elsinor, Mount Pleasant, Crewkerne – The Executors of the Estate of Elsie Lillian Hole.

The Deputy Planning Team Leader summarised the details of this application as set out in the agenda report and reported that the recommendation was one of approval subject to conditions.

The representative of Crewkerne Town Council, Mr. S. Andrew, commented that the Town Council were not happy with the principle of the development of this site. He referred to the site being situated on the main entrance to the town and opposite fine Victorian houses. It was not felt appropriate for the building to be at the top end of the site but rather it was considered that it would be better at the bottom. The Town Council was also of the view that the parking provision should be between the two dwellings. He referred to this being an important site on the approach to the town and commented that the Town Council would like to see a more sympathetic design.

The applicant's agent, Mr. P. Dance, commented that he had formulated the layout having regard to the levels and the need to utilise the existing access to the site. He indicated that he had looked at an access between the two dwellings but the gradient had meant that it would not be possible. It was proposed that there would be turning space and two parking spaces for both the existing and proposed dwelling. He mentioned that the site was not visible from the A30 and although he recognised that this was an important approach to the town he did not think that much of the development would be seen. He indicated that he would not want to take the development much further down as this would involve a tall wall and there may be problems with subsidence. He referred to the site being within development limits, not in a Conservation Area and to the Highway Authority having accepted the access.

Cllr. Mike Best, one of the ward members, commented that the dwelling's amenity space would be restricted by the layout presented. Although there may be problems with locating the building further down, he felt that if it could be done it would fit in better with the existing dwellings.

Cllr. Angie Singleton, also a ward member, commented that she had hoped that the agent would enter into a dialogue after the Town Council meeting. She indicated her support for the comments of the Town Council. She expressed the view that the whole plot could take more than one dwelling if it was looked at as a whole with perhaps the demolition of the existing building. In referring to the location of the site she felt that the proposals could be so much better, especially if the plot was treated as a whole. She was of the view that the proposed position of the dwelling and parking was unacceptable and hoped that the applicant's agent would look at it again.

During the ensuing discussion, the majority of members were of the view that the proposals would constitute an inappropriate development that would have an adverse impact on the setting and character of the area and on the amenity of both the existing and proposed dwellings. Given the importance of the impact any development could have on the locality it was also felt that a full application should be submitted for this site.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be refused because the proposals constitute an inappropriate development that will have an adverse impact on the setting and character of the area and on the amenity of both the existing and proposed dwellings.

(2 against).

07/00583/FUL (Pages 36-41) – Demolition of existing houses and erection of 27 flats and 38 houses together with the provision of 94 car parking spaces (GR 332622/108191), land and properties at Auckland Way, Beckington Crescent and Montague Way, Chard – Yarlington Homes.

The Deputy Planning Team Leader summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report and reported that the recommendation was one of approval subject to conditions.

The Committee noted the comments of Mr. D. Pritchard in objection to the application. He expressed concerns about overlooking and loss of privacy. He further referred to disturbance during demolition and construction works. He was also concerned that it may take five years to develop the site.

The applicant's representative, Mr. J. Shaw, referred to issues concerning overlooking and privacy having been taken into account. He also mentioned that the building time was expected to be about 39 weeks. He mentioned that the proposals would go a long way to meet a chronic shortage of housing accommodation and that the Planning officer's report dealt with the policy and other issues regarding this development, which he commended to the Committee.

Cllr. Dave Bulmer, ward member, indicated his support for the application especially bearing in mind the shortage in housing accommodation. He was of the view that the proposals were better than the existing dwellings but expressed concern that they had been vacant for some time whilst the plans had been drawn up. He was also of the view that the appearance of the proposed dwellings would be a great improvement over what was there now. He referred to having a little concern about the refuse collection details and questioned where wheeled bins would be kept. He suggested that the Council should work together with the applicants to engender a sense of community within the new

development. He welcomed the off-site play provision and suggested that discussions should take place with the applicants as to what the residents may like. He referred to the pieces of land that would be left and asked who would maintain them. Although noting that there would be 94 parking spaces he commented that people may still park on the roads which were narrow around the site. Overall, he welcomed the proposals and indicated his support for the officer's recommendation.

In response to some of the comments made by the ward member, the applicant's representative clarified that where there was a shared space it would be managed by the company and a service charge made to the residents. Landscaping would also be dealt with by the company.

The Committee indicated its support for the proposals and agreed that the application be granted in accordance with the Officer's recommendation.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to conditions 1-15 as set out in the agenda report.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

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Chairman