

MEETING AW.09:0809
DATE 21:01:09

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held in Merriott Village Hall, Merriott on **Wednesday, 21st January 2009.**

(5.30 p.m. – 7.35 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Kim Turner (In the Chair)

Simon Bending	Ric Pallister
David Bulmer	Ros Roderigo
Geoff Clarke	Dan Shortland
Jenny Kenton	Angie Singleton
Nigel Mermagen	Andrew Turpin
Robin Munday	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Head of Area Development (West)
Zoë Harris	Community Regeneration Officer
Robert Murray	Economic Development Officer
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader (North/West)
Linda Hayden	Planner
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

110. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th December 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

111. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Michael Best, Nicci Court and Linda Vijeh.

112. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr. Kim Turner declared her personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning application no. 08/03073/R3D (Demolition of existing building and the use of land as a public car park, Community Centre, Shudrick Lane, Ilminster) as comments had been submitted by Ilminster Town Council on which she also served as a councillor.

113. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

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

114. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to what was the last meeting of the Area West Committee before the first meeting in February of the new Joint Area Committee (comprising both District and County Councillors for the area).

The Chairman thanked those members who had attended the Council's Democracy Day event, which involved local schoolchildren, and commented that it had been an enjoyable day.

Cllr. Ric Pallister also commented that he had been impressed with the event and referred to the thought and common sense that had come from the schoolchildren involved. The Committee noted his suggestion that perhaps consideration could be given to setting up a sounding board to meet say twice a year to enable the comments of young people to be heard.

The Chairman also referred to the official launch of the Radiolink Scheme in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster, which took place on the 16th January 2009. It was noted that the scheme was aimed at helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the three towns by linking up businesses who could warn each other and the Police of anything that was going on. She also referred to the scheme having already been successful in three people having been arrested on suspicion of theft and possession of a Class A drug.

115. Police Performance and Neighbourhood Policing (Agenda Item 6)

The Committee welcomed Inspector Andy Pritchard and Sgt. Andy Lloyd to the meeting. Inspector Pritchard gave a presentation on the effect that the recent service restructure would have on Area West and set out the key objectives for the service over the next six months. Sgt. Lloyd also gave a presentation covering local issues, crime trends and initiatives.

In making his presentation, Inspector Pritchard informed members that the policing area was now aligned with the District Council's Area boundaries. He mentioned the benefits that the new approach would bring and referred to a flow chart showing the hierarchy and personnel who operated within the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams covering the Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster areas. He mentioned that, in addition to Neighbourhood Policing Teams, there was a separate Response Team for South Somerset. Reference was also made to the Policing Pledge, which applied to all constabularies in the country and set minimum standards of service, focusing on improving public confidence and reducing the perception of the fear of crime. He detailed how the pledge would impact on local services.

Sgt. Andy Lloyd then outlined the current priorities and initiatives that were specific to Area West and also those that crossed neighbourhood policing areas. He was also pleased to refer to two local officers who had won awards recently for their policing work.

Inspector Pritchard further mentioned that the refurbishment of Chard Police Station had now been completed and would be re-opened on 27th January. He referred to custodial

facilities having now been incorporated within the building, which would help keep officers in the area as they would not have to escort offenders to other facilities.

Inspector Pritchard and Sgt. Andy Lloyd then responded to members' questions and comments during which a number of matters were mentioned including the following:-

- a wish was expressed for there to be more continuity with regard to the officers that served in a local area bearing in mind the relationship that was built up over time between an officer and the local community. Inspector Pritchard commented that continuity was an issue with officers being promoted or moving on. He indicated that the force minimum for serving in an area was 2 years (3 years in his case). He felt that to have a minimum commitment of 2 or 3 years was reasonable;
- reference was made to the constabulary's call centre at Portishead and concerns expressed about incidences of non-emergency calls not being returned and messages left not being dealt with. Inspector Pritchard accepted that there were some frustrations in respect of the call centre but hopefully the Policing Pledge would help. He referred to there having been a lot of investment to make it right and felt that it was improving. He also indicated that the call centre should be able to make local appointments but he was keen to improve the ability for people to contact their local neighbourhood policing team;
- a member expressed his concern at incidents of cyclists having been stopped by the Police from going through pedestrianised areas in Taunton and referred to other towns and cities in the country having shared areas. He felt that the approach to the provision of shared areas was inconsistent. Inspector Pritchard commented that he was keen to promote cycling proficiency initiatives and any issues in the local area would be looked at;
- the view was expressed that it was not necessary to link up the Radiolink scheme in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster with the Yeovil scheme as it was felt that it would be too unwieldy. Where there was a need to include Yeovil, information could be transmitted separately;
- the comment of a member about there being a need to address issues regarding vehicles speeding at Millfield, Chard was noted;
- Inspector Pritchard indicated that a lot of work and initiatives were aimed at reducing the fear of crime. He also felt that the Policing Pledge would help in that respect. He indicated that the fear of crime outweighed the reality;
- reference was made to the notification that was given of the shifts that were to be operated by the local police team, particular reference being made to Crewkerne, and to it seeming that when people may feel that there was a need for a police presence, e.g. New Year's Eve, there was no officer allocated to be on duty. Sgt. Lloyd commented that the duty rosters were drawn up about 5 weeks in advance, however, there was flexibility and duties were allocated as appropriate and necessary. He indicated that there had been cover on New Year's Eve;
- a member queried how permanent the recent restructure would be. Inspector Pritchard commented that although he could not give a definitive time period he felt that the new structure had been widely accepted and would be in place for several years;
- members were informed that when the Chard Police Station re-opened there would be a clerk with good local knowledge on the front desk;

- a member commented that in his experience liaison with the local police team was working well. He commented that he had accompanied the Beat Manager who also kept him up to date with local issues. He hoped that the arrangements would continue;
- reference was made to the value of PCSOs attending parish council meetings. It was also commented that the PCSO covering Merriott included updates in the parish newsletter;
- reference was made to the good work being carried out in Ilminster, including the drop-in centre.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Pritchard and Sgt. Lloyd for attending the meeting to update members and for answering their questions and concerns.

The Committee agreed with the suggestion of a member that it would be useful if the two officers could attend every six months and Inspector Pritchard indicated their willingness to do so.

NOTED.

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

116. Update on the Work of the Area West Community Safety Action Panel (Agenda item 7)

The Community Regeneration Officer summarised her report on the agenda updating members on the work of the Area West Community Safety Action Panel since May 2008.

In referring to the Area West Youth Network, the Community Regeneration Officer further reported that 14 people had attended the first meeting and that it was invaluable having the PCSOs present. It was noted that everyone thought the meeting had been worthwhile and a further meeting would be held in March 2009.

The Community Regeneration Officer noted that members had not yet received a copy of the Area West Community Safety Newsletter. She agreed to arrange for members to be forwarded a copy.

The Committee noted the continuing work of the Area West Community Safety Action Panel.

NOTED.

*(Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer – (01460) 260423)
(zoë.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

117. Briefing on the Establishment of SCC/SSDC Joint Area Committees (Agenda Item 8)

The Head of Area Development (West) referred to the agenda report, which provided a summary of the agreements to date by the South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council to establish four Joint Area Committees in South Somerset District. An update was also given on work completed and planned in order for the first meeting of the Joint Area Committee for Area West to take place in February 2009.

The Head of Area Development further reported that the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) had appointed David Miller, who served on Ilminster Town Council, as the parish council representative on the Joint Area Committee.

The comments of members that some parish councils may not have received an invitation from SALC to make nominations were noted and the Head of Area Development agreed to check that matter.

Comments expressed regarding the importance of training for members and of the drawing up of a forward plan for the Committee were also noted.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the report be noted, including the arrangements for the review of phase 1, leading to the development of phase 2, as set out in the agenda report;
- (2) that it be noted that the first meeting of the Joint Area Committee – West will be held on 18th February 2009 at 5.30 p.m. at the Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

118. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Appointment of Members to the Town Team (Agenda item 9) (Executive Decision)

Prior to consideration of this item, the Head of Area Development (West) introduced Robert Murray who had been appointed recently by the Council to the post of Economic Development Officer. His role would include progressing the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered the appointment of two members to serve on the Town Team, which was being established as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs. Dan Shortland and Nigel Mermagen be appointed to serve on the Town Team being established as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

Reason: To appoint member representatives to serve on the Town Team being established as part of the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

119. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 10)

No reports were made by members who represented the Council on outside organisations.

120. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 11)

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

NOTED.

*(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

121. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 12)

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

NOTED.

*(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

122. Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 14)

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be the first meeting of the Joint Area Committee and would be held at the Shrubbery Hotel, Station Road, Ilminster on Wednesday, 18th February 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

NOTED.

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

123. Planning Applications (Agenda item 13)

The Committee considered the application 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).

08/03073/R3D (Pages 1 - 5) – Demolition of existing building and the use of land as a public car park (GR 336274/114349), Community Centre, Shudrick Lane, Ilminster – South Somerset District Council.

The Planner, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report.

In updating members, the Planner reported receipt of an e-mail from Ilminster Town Council pointing out an error in the agenda report. The Planner confirmed that it was Ilminster Town Council, and not Ilminster Forum as stated in the agenda, who were looking at a phased programme of building works to provide a clubhouse/changing room and sports hall that would then be available for community purposes. The Planner also reported the details of a letter from Swanmead Community School who had now indicated that assuming that their concerns regarding cycle/pedestrian access, emergency access and boundary treatment were met they would have no objection to the application.

In response to questions, the Planner confirmed that the new car park would be fee paying and that there would be no problems with accessing the school.

Cllr. Kim Turner, ward member, commented that she was delighted that a site had been found in Shudrick Lane for this car park. She referred to the community centre on the site not having been used in the last 18 months and therefore negotiations had been able to take place. She referred to the Council's car park survey having shown a need for additional car parking and felt that the proposals would tidy up the area. She indicated her support for the proposals, which she felt would be good for the town's economy and for people who worked in the town.

The Committee indicated its support for the application.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to conditions 1-7 and note as set out in the agenda report.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

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 Chairman