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## **South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Joint Area Committee - West** held in the Shrubbery Hotel, Station Road, Ilminster on **Wednesday, 18th February 2009**.

(5.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.)

### **Present:**

### **Members:**

Cathy Bakewell	Ros Roderigo
Simon Bending	John Sharpe
Michael Best	Anthony Shire
David Bulmer	Dan Shortland
Geoff Clarke	Jill Shortland
John Dyke	Kim Turner
Jenny Kenton (from 6.00 p.m.)	Andrew Turpin
Nigel Mermagen	Linda Vijeh
Robin Munday	Martin Wale
Derek Nelson	

### **Also Present:**

Tim Carroll

### **Officers:**

David Stapleton	Corporate Director – Health and Wellbeing, SSDC
Andrew Gillespie	Head of Area Development (West), SSDC
Zoë Harris	Community Regeneration Officer, SSDC
Claire Littlejohn	Community Development Officer, SSDC
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader (North/West), SSDC
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager and Acting Democratic Services Manager, SSDC
Scott Wooldridge	Service Manager – Community Governance Team, SCC
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator, SSDC

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

## **1. Election of Chairman (Agenda item 1)**

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr. Kim Turner be nominated as Chairman of the Committee.

There being no other nominations it was

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr. Kim Turner be elected Chairman of the Joint Area Committee – West for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

(Cllr. Kim Turner in the Chair).

## 2. Election of Vice-Chairman (Agenda item 2)

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr. Robin Munday be nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

There being no other nominations it was

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr. Robin Munday be elected Vice-Chairman of the Joint Area Committee – West for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

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## 3. Agreeing to the Co-option of Parish Council Member onto the Joint Area Committee (Agenda item 3)

The Committee was asked to agree to the co-option of Cllr. David Miller as the Parish Council representative member on the Joint Area Committee. The Parish Council representative had been nominated by the Somerset Association of Parish Councils to represent the parish perspective from within Area West.

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr. David Miller be co-opted onto the Joint Area Committee – West as the Parish Council representative for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/09.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

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## 4. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Angie Singleton and from the Parish Council representative, Cllr. David Miller.

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## 5. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 5)

Cllr. Mike Best declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 – Alcohol Consumption in Public Places – Crewkerne Town) as he was Chairman of the Crewkerne Community Safety Group who had been involved in requesting the designation Order and also a member of Crewkerne Town Council who were making a financial contribution towards the costs of making the Order.

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## 6. Public Question Time (Agenda item 6)

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

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## 7. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 7)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Joint Area Committee - West.

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## 8. Joint Area Committees – Somerset County Council – Managing Expectations (Agenda Item 8)

The Service Manager, Community Governance Team (SCC) summarised the agenda report, which set the context for how Somerset County Council business would be dealt with by Joint Area Committees during the phases of their development. He referred to the report to the final meeting of the Area West Committee having heralded the introduction of the new Joint Area Committees and to a phased approach having been adopted to develop them, details of which were set out in the agenda report. Members' views on how they would like the Committees to develop would be taken into account together with local community priorities. He also mentioned that members would be briefed on County Council services as appropriate and that there were some areas that would be focused on during the next couple of months, for example, the Localities Team including Adult Social Care Services and Children and Young People's Services. This would enable members to think about how services were provided. He also referred to themed issues being looked at where there was a crossover with other agencies, such as community safety.

Officers then responded to members' questions and comments during which a number of matters were mentioned including the following:-

- reference was made to excepted business, especially to the current situation where Somerset County Councillors, although being able to participate in discussion, could not vote in relation to financial and planning decisions. In response to a query from a member, the officers agreed to refer back to the project group to discuss whether there was any scope to introduce a maximum level of expenditure up to which County Council members of the Joint Area Committee could be involved in voting on matters that involved District Council expenditure;
- it was suggested that it would be useful to monitor how many people came to the meetings of the Committee together with the comments they made;
- a member referred to major developments in hospital and community health services and queried whether representatives of the Primary Care Trust would attend Joint Area Committees to enable any issues that members may have to be addressed. The Chairman commented that she hoped that would be the case. The Service Manager – Community Governance Team commented that from the County Council perspective he felt that this would be a practical way forward and would be a good example of working collectively;
- reference was made to the need for presentations on County Council services including social services, education and environment;
- reference was also made to the making of planning decisions and the need for appropriate training. The Committee was informed that training sessions had been organised for 27th February and 5th March 2009 and Councillors from both authorities had been invited to attend. It was noted that it was essential for County Councillors to attend this training to enable them to participate in making decisions on District Council planning applications at Joint Area Committee meetings;
- a member referred to non-strategic County Council planning applications (Regulation 3 applications) and felt that there may be a lack of clarity on what constituted an application that should be referred to a Joint Area Committee. Another member commented that perhaps there was a need for more work between District Council and County Council planning officers to clarify the procedure. The Service Manager – Community Governance Team indicated that he would pass on the comments made.

He also commented that he was aware of some applications that were to be submitted to the Joint Area Committees South and East.

The Committee noted the information contained within the report.

**NOTED.**

*(Julian Gale, Group Manager – Community Governance (SCC) – (01823) 355025)  
(jjgale@somerset.gov.uk)*

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## **9. Joint Area Committee – West Forward Plan (Agenda item 9)**

The Head of Area Development (West) referred to the agenda report and informed members of the proposed Joint Area Committee – West Forward Plan, which included both District Council and County Council items. The Head of Area Development asked members to note and comment upon the Forward Plan including identifying any priorities for further reports to be added to it.

Upon commenting on the Forward Plan, the Committee concurred with the suggestion of a member that there be a service briefing on the work of the County Council's Localities Team at the March meeting.

It was also agreed that the report on the Somerset Highways Maintenance Programme should be presented to the April meeting to coincide with the service report on the District Council's Streetscene Services.

Cllr. Andrew Turpin referred to both the District Council and County Council having policies endorsing the principle of "Transition Communities", which involved taking action to move communities towards using less energy and resources than currently consumed. He asked whether it would be possible for a report to be submitted to update the Committee on any action that had been taken. Reference was also made to work that had been undertaken so far with regard to the possible re-opening of Chard Junction Station and he asked if an update could be provided for members.

The Head of Area Development (West) commented that where a decision was needed, a report would be brought to the Committee. With regard to general updates not requiring a decision, he commented that they would usually be circulated with the agenda as "Items for Information".

Cllr. Jill Shortland, Leader of the County Council, indicated that an audit was being undertaken at the County Council with regard to work on "Transition Communities", which was ongoing and could spill over to district level. She did not feel there was a need for a separate agenda item but if any decisions were needed a report could be brought to the Committee.

A County Council member referred to the District Council's affordable housing development programme, particularly to matters relating to the provision of rural exception sites and queried how information was reported to Committee. The Corporate Director – Health and Wellbeing reported that the affordable housing development programme within which rural exception sites were included as appropriate was reported to the District Executive every six months and annually to each of the Area Committees. He also referred to the work being undertaken in an effort to identify land that may be suitable for rural exception sites.

Reference was made to there not being a meeting in June 2009 because of the Somerset County Council elections and a member queried how planning applications that may be

due to come forward at that time would be dealt with. Cllr. Tim Carroll, Leader of the District Council, commented that applications would be submitted as necessary to the May and July meetings of the Committee and that the Head of Development and Building Control had indicated that he did not feel there would be a diminution in the service because of the cancellation of the June meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that the proposed Joint Area Committee – West Forward Plan as attached to the agenda be noted subject to the following amendments:-

- a service briefing on the work of the County Council's Localities Team be presented at the March meeting;
- the report on the Somerset Highways Maintenance Programme be presented to the April meeting.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Andrew Gillespie, Head of Area Development (West) – (01460) 260426)*

*(andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

*(Julian Gale, Group Manager – Community Governance (SCC) – (01823) 355025)*

*(jjgale@somerset.gov.uk)*

## **10. Area West 2008/9 Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 31st December 2008 (Executive Decision) (Excepted Business) (Agenda Item 10)**

The Head of Area Development (West) summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the current financial position of the Area West budgets as at the end of December 2008.

During the ensuing discussion, a member referred to the free car parking initiative in the three towns in Area West for the two Saturdays before Christmas and mentioned that the signs advertising the free parking had not been noticed by some members of the public. He was of the view that the signs should be displayed more prominently in any future Christmas free parking initiative.

Reference was also made by a member to the vandalism that had occurred to the ticket machine at the Essex Close Car Park in Chard and to the length of time the machine had now been out of operation. He hoped that the ticket machine would be repaired or replaced as soon as possible to minimise the loss of income.

A member referred to the flooding incidents that had occurred at Donyatt and mentioned that there may be a need to bring something forward on that matter.

The Head of Area Development noted the comments made.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that the current financial position of the Area West budgets for the period ending 31st December 2008 be noted;
  - (2) that the balance of £1,020 unused funding for free Christmas car parking be returned to the uncommitted Area Reserve;
  - (3) that the remaining amount of £791 in respect of the Merriott Flood Relief Scheme be returned to the unallocated capital balance and the same amount be allocated within the Area Reserve;

- (4) that £870 be allocated from the unallocated capital balance to fund the balance of capital grants from the 2007 Community Forums.

**Reason:** To review the allocation of resources as part of the monitoring of the Area West Development Revenue Budgets, Area West Capital Programme and Area West Reserve.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

*(Catherine Hood, Management Accountant, Financial Services – (01935) 462157)  
(catherine.hood@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## **11. Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 – Alcohol Consumption in Public Places – Crewkerne Town (Executive Decision) (Excepted Business) (Agenda item 11)**

Cllr. Mike Best, having declared his interest in this item, left the meeting during its consideration.

The Community Regeneration Officer summarised the agenda report, which informed members of the outcome of the consultation that had taken place in respect of a request that the Council make an Order relating to alcohol consumption in certain public places in Crewkerne Town. The Committee was asked to authorise the making of the Order designating the area referred to in the agenda report pursuant to Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

Cllr. John Dyke, whose County Division included Crewkerne, supported the Designation Order being made. He also supported the proposed areas in respect of which the Order would apply.

Other members also supported the Order, comment being expressed that a similar Order made in respect of areas in Chard had been successful.

In response to a question, the Community Regeneration Officer commented that the areas for inclusion in the Order had been identified by the Police and, given the experience in Chard, it was not expected that the Order would drive any nuisance associated with the drinking of intoxicating liquor beyond the designated area. It was also noted that there would be discretion with regard to enforcement of the Order during organised events such as carnivals.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that an Order relating to alcohol consumption in public places in Crewkerne Town be made designating the area referred to in the agenda report and identified on the plan attached at page 18 of the agenda pursuant to Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001;
  - (2) that the Order take effect on the 6th April 2009;
  - (3) that up to £1,500 be allocated from the uncommitted balance in the Area Reserve towards the costs of the Order.

**Reason:** To make a designation Order relating to alcohol consumption in public places in Crewkerne Town.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

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## **12. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 12)**

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. Kim Turner referred to the Ile Youth Centre and commented that it was doing extremely well at present. She referred to the drop-in centre, which was being run on Wednesdays from October to March between 7.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. for young people of 14 years and above. She thanked the District Council for the grant of £4,500 that was awarded to the Youth Centre at the Opportunity Ilminster event held in November 2007, towards the establishment of the drop in centre.

In response to a question from a member with regard to the appointment of representatives on outside organisations generally, the Committee was informed that the District Council and County Council would both need to appoint their own representatives separately to organisations rather than the Joint Area Committee appointing representatives from amongst its District and County members. A member commented that this may lead to some duplication with more than one member from the Joint Area Committee serving on the same organisation. The Committee concurred with the comments of a member who suggested that there must be some potential for rationalisation and the Head of Area Development (West) noted the request that this issue be explored.

**NOTED.**

*(Andrew Gillespie, Head of Area Development (West) – (01460) 260462)*  
*(andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## **13. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 13)**

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)*

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## **14. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 14)**

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

**NOTED.**

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

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**15. Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 15)**

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Joint Area Committee would be held at the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard on Wednesday, 18th March 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

**NOTED.**

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

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Prior to the close of the meeting, the Head of Area Development (West) introduced Claire Littlejohn who had been appointed recently by the Council to the post of Community Development Officer.

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Chairman