

MEETING JAW.02:0809
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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 Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard on **Wednesday, 18th March 2009**.

(5.30 p.m. – 8.45 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Simon Bending
Michael Best
David Bulmer
Geoff Clarke
Nicci Court
John Dyke
Jenny Kenton
Nigel Mermagen
David Miller
Robin Munday

Derek Nelson
Ric Pallister
Ros Roderigo
Anthony Shire
Jill Shortland
Angie Singleton
Kim Turner
Andrew Turpin
Linda Vijeh
Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Head of Area Development (West), SSDC
Robert Murray	Economic Development Officer, SSDC
David Norris	Development Control Team Leader (North/West), SSDC
Andrew Gunn	Deputy Development Control Team Leader (North/West), SSDC
Michael Peters	Head of Education and Individual Services, SCC
Julian Gale	Group Manager – Community Governance, SCC
Ian McWilliams	Planning Liaison Officer (Highways), 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.)

16. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th February 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

17. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Cathy Bakewell, John Sharpe and Dan Shortland.

18. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllrs. Kim Turner, Linda Vijeh and David Miller declared their personal but non-prejudicial interests in planning application no. 08/04519/FUL (the erection of a medical centre with pharmacy and formation of new vehicular access thereto) as comments had been submitted by Ilminster Town Council on which they also served as councillors.

Cllrs. John Dyke, Derek Nelson, Tony Shire and Jill Shortland declared their personal and prejudicial interests in planning application no. 08/04519/FUL (the erection of a medical centre with pharmacy and formation of new vehicular access thereto) as they were members of Somerset County Council who owned the land upon which the development would be built.

Cllr. Jill Shortland referred to agenda item 6 (Chard Regeneration Scheme – Briefing) and mentioned that she was one of the County Council members who had been appointed to the Town Team, which was one of the Chard Regeneration Scheme project management groups. Cllr. David Bulmer also referred to agenda item 6 and mentioned that the ACI (Boden Mill) factory site, which was part of the town centre site for future development, had been referred to as part of that item and he lived opposite the site. It was not considered that there was a need to formally declare an interest as the report was only for information and no decisions were being made.

19. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

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

20. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman welcomed Cllr. David Miller to his first meeting of the Committee since being co-opted as the parish representative.

21. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Briefing (Agenda Item 6)

The Head of Area Development (West) summarised the agenda report, which informed members about the work undertaken by the District Council and its partners to establish a long term vision, strategy and delivery plan for the future development of Chard.

The Economic Development Officer in further updating members mentioned that LDA Design would be exhibiting the draft vision and inviting comments during an open drop in session on Wednesday, 25th March 2009 from 12.00 noon to 6.00 p.m. The draft vision would then be presented and comments invited at the third meeting of the Chard Community Forum at 6.00 p.m. on the same day. Both events would take place at the Guildhall, Chard.

A member suggested that details of the exhibition/presentation for the above events be made available on the website. The Economic Development Officer agreed to look into whether that could be arranged.

The Committee noted the comments of a member who was pleased that the Chard Regeneration Scheme was included in discussions with the Homes and Communities Agency. The comments of a local member who indicated that it was important for Chard that the Regeneration Scheme was moved forward were also noted.

The Committee was pleased to note the progress being made with the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

NOTED.

*(Robert Murray, Economic Development Officer – (01460) 260368)
(robert.murray@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

22. Appointment of Members to Chard Area Sub-Committee (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 8)

Reference was made to the agenda report and members considered the establishment of a Chard Area Sub-Committee to oversee the delivery of Opportunity Chard 2009.

RESOLVED: (1) that a Chard Area Sub-Committee be established to oversee Opportunity Chard 2009;

(2) that the following members be appointed to the Sub-Committee:-

David Bulmer	Andrew Turpin
Jenny Kenton	Martin Wale
Nigel Mermagen	Paul Buchanan (observer status)
Robin Munday	Tony Shire (observer status)
Ros Roderigo	Jill Shortland (observer status)
Dan Shortland	

Reason: To establish a Chard Area Sub-Committee to oversee the delivery of Opportunity Chard 2009.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

23. Somerset County Council – Children and Young People’s Directorate – Service Briefing (Agenda Item 7)

The Head of Education and Individual Services (SCC) gave a presentation to brief members about the services provided by the Children and Young People’s Directorate. He explained the structure of the Directorate including the South Somerset Area Structure and the Local Service Team. He also outlined the priorities for the Children and Young People’s Plan 2009-2011.

The Head of Education and Individual Services then responded to members’ questions and comments on points of detail regarding the management and structure of the Directorate and about the services provided. Points addressed included:-

- how the Local Service Team fitted into the structure and the local services provided;
- the merits of strengthening the links between social care and housing services at a local level;

- information relating to line management arrangements between the centre and the local level, it being noted that officers at County Hall set the policies and practice to ensure that the service was consistent and of high quality;
- in referring to child protection issues, Cllr. Jill Shortland mentioned that the County Council had a safeguarding team and members were informed of how it functioned;
- in response to the suggestion of a member, the Head of Education and Individual Services agreed to supply a list for members of contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of appropriate senior officers in the Children and Young People's Directorate;
- the provisions that were made for young people who were excluded from school;
- the use of restorative justice principles in schools;
- the desirability for more support and activities for children and young people in school holidays, including the availability of youth clubs;
- the age group of young people that was catered for by youth workers;
- access to transport to schools and colleges and the County Council's contribution;
- in response to a comment regarding the Chard Regeneration Scheme, the Head of Area Development (West) indicated that it was intended that the scheme would be as comprehensive as possible and that the County Council were involved.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Education and Individual Services for his informative presentation giving an overview of the services provided by the Children and Young People's Directorate.

The Committee asked that the slides that were used in the PowerPoint presentation be sent to them for their information together with a list of contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of appropriate senior officers.

NOTED.

*(Michael Peters, Head of Education and Individual Services (SCC) – (01823) 355777)
(mpeters@somerset.gov.uk)*

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

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the proposed Joint Area Committee – West Forward Plan.

The Committee was further informed of amendments to the Forward Plan and members also requested items to be included as follows:-

- the report regarding the operation of markets in Area West would now be included in the Forward Plan for May 2009 to allow the budgetary figures for a whole financial year to be taken into account in the report;
- a County Highway Service briefing was requested to be submitted in April 2009;

- a summary of grants awarded under the Somerset County Council Local Initiatives Budget was requested to be submitted in April 2009;
- the County Adult Social Care Service briefing was now to be submitted to the May 2009 meeting. A member also commented that it would be useful to consider bringing in other related partners/agencies who were involved in similar work;
- in response to a request to include an item relating to travel plans, the Head of Area Development (West) indicated that he would speak to the member concerned about that matter.

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

(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)

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

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

26. 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 Joint Area Committee – West or former Area West Committee to the Regulation Committee.

NOTED.

(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)

(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

27. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 12)

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

NOTED.

(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)

(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

28. Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 14)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held at the Henhayes Centre, off South Street, Crewkerne on Wednesday, 15th April 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

NOTED.

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

29. 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).

08/04519/FUL (Pages 1-10) – The erection of a medical centre with pharmacy and formation of new vehicular access thereto (Revised Application) (GR 335456/114376), land south west of Canal Way, Ilminster – Summervale Medical Centre and North Street Surgery.

Cllrs. John Dyke, Derek Nelson, Tony Shire and Jill Shortland, having declared their personal and prejudicial interests in this application, left the meeting during its consideration and determination.

The Deputy Team Leader, Development Control, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. He explained the material circumstances to be taken into account in determining this application, which included the suitability of the site location, the layout, scale and design of the development and the parking provision, details of which were set out in the agenda report. The Deputy Team Leader also showed images that had been provided by the applicants under the Council's appropriate protocol, which gave an impression of the development on the site from various viewpoints. It was noted that the recommendation was one of approval subject to conditions.

The Planning Liaison Officer (Highways) (SCC) referred to the means of access off the existing roundabout and commented that he was content in principle with the proposed arrangements subject to a Section 278 highway agreement being completed. In referring to the parking provision, however, he mentioned that in accordance with the Highway Authority's parking policy, which set out parking standards, the recommended number of spaces in respect of this application would be 40 (2 per consulting room) rather than the 87 proposed. He further commented that the Highway Authority would not want to see vehicles parking on Canal Way but they were bound by the standards set out in the policy.

The Deputy Team Leader and Planning Liaison Officer (Highways) then responded to members' questions on points of detail. Points raised included the importance of ensuring the safety of cyclists and pedestrians at the proposed new access; the provision of storage/shelter for bicycles, it being noted that there were certain facilities for cyclists to be provided; the possibility of a community bus service being provided; the materials to be used particularly in respect of the roof at the rear of the building; the

application of the Highway Authority's parking policy to the proposals and whether comparisons of parking provision had been made with other surgeries; possibility of the use of the car park for other community purposes including during weekends and the benefits of the two medical practices sharing accommodation.

Cllr. David Miller, although a member of Ilminster Town Council, indicated that he was speaking on his own behalf. He referred to this being a difficult application for the Town Council and commented that the medical facilities were needed but concern had been expressed about the location of the building in a sensitive area near Herne Hill. He indicated his support for the application but was concerned that the District Council had not set out the position with regard to the Section 278 highway agreement in respect of the proposed access arrangements and to it seeming therefore that nothing had been done in respect of the impact on the existing cycleway and footpath. He referred to the Town Council having expressed concerns about the safety of users of the pedestrian and cycle paths in the vicinity of the proposed vehicular access to the site. He also referred to there being a lot of use by school children and felt that the use of that infrastructure should not be eroded. He emphasised the importance of a proper crossing at the medical centre.

Mr. Adam Kennedy, a supporter of the application, expressed his view that the parking spaces would be used and that the Highway Authority's parking policy was wrong in this case. He was concerned that if there were insufficient spaces, people would park on Canal Way. He also referred to many people who were ill being only able to get to the medical centre by car. He referred to the facilities being needed and to the development being in the right place with the right amount of parking spaces.

Dr. Alan Wilson also spoke in support of the application. He did not think that there was any dispute about the need for modern medical facilities in Ilminster and referred to the growing population. He mentioned that the new centre would also accommodate varied practitioners including training doctors and medical students in addition to health visitors, midwives etc. He also commented that it was hoped to attract major practitioners from hospitals. He explained the reasons why the current North Street Surgery site was not fit for purpose. In referring to the application, he commented that there were no immediate plans to merge the two practices although there would be a joint facility for minor surgery and the proposed pharmacy would be a joint dispensary.

Mr. Paul Eminson, also a supporter of the application, referred to the location of the building to the rear of the site with the parking at the front being preferable as it ensured that the consulting rooms were in a quiet and private place without the noise from the parking of cars and pedestrians walking by. He also felt that it was important to keep public activity to the front of the building for security reasons and that a landscaped car park at the front would be better for residents.

The applicants' agent, Mr. Simon Rutter, referred to the application being the culmination of 9 years work with 13 other sites having been investigated. In referring to the building quality he referred to sites in other towns and villages to which the proposals were similar. With regard to the location of the building to the rear of the site, he mentioned that this was preferable for clinical, practical and aesthetic reasons. In referring to the parking provision, he felt that the Highway Authority recommendation did not take account of the staffing and other needs on the site.

Cllr. Kim Turner, one of the ward members, commented that there had been much consultation with regard to a new medical centre in Ilminster for which there was a community need. She referred to the applicants' agent having mentioned that 13 other sites had been looked at but had not been found to be suitable. She referred to this site on the south west side of Canal Way being reasonably close to the town centre with the approach to it being level, encouraging walking and cycling. She felt that the site was

suitable for a medical centre. In referring to the position of the building on the site, she had felt that it should be located nearer the houses on Canal Way but having heard the comments made about noise and privacy she could understand the views expressed in favour of the proposed location. With reference to the parking provision, she indicated that she did not agree with the comments of the Highway Authority and felt that the number of spaces was acceptable, especially if the centre expanded in the future. She also suggested that some community use of the car park could perhaps be explored. Reference was made to the busy nature of the area around the proposed vehicular access to the medical centre and to the impact the access may have on the use of the cycleway and pedestrian routes. She hoped that ward members and the Town Council could be consulted on the arrangements proposed. She also had some concerns with regard to the materials proposed to be used in respect of the roof at the rear of the building and felt that there should be further discussions on that issue. In principle, she indicated that she agreed with the officer's recommendation and hoped that members would support the application.

Cllr. Nicci Court, also a ward member, indicated her support for the application. She also highlighted the busy nature and safety aspects of the area around the proposed access. She further commented that the roofing materials needed to be in keeping and that she felt that the location of the building on the site would be appropriate for the privacy of the consulting rooms.

During the ensuing discussion, other members also indicated their support for the application. Comment was expressed that the proposed facilities were needed and would benefit Ilminster. It was further mentioned that 13 other sites had been looked at but had been found not to be suitable. It was considered that this current site was suitable and gave the facility the capability to expand. The parking provision of 87 spaces was also considered to be acceptable. Support was also shown for the proposed location of the building to the rear of the site.

Reference was made, however, to issues that had arisen during the meeting including the importance of addressing safety aspects relating to the impact of the proposed access on the existing cycleway and pedestrian path. It was noted that the means of access off the existing roundabout would be dealt with as part of a Section 278 highway agreement and members requested that the details to be included in the agreement be subject of consultation with the District ward members, County Division member and Town Council.

Reference was also made by members to the Travel Plan and it was noted that the plan attached to the agenda was only a draft at this stage. A suggestion was made that covered facilities could be provided for bicycles. Encouraging walking, cycling and car sharing was also mentioned as was the possibility of the use of the car park for community purposes. The comments of a member that a community bus service may be able to be provided in the future was noted by the Committee. Members asked that the details of the Travel Plan be subject of consultation with the local members and Town Council.

Members further referred to the materials to be used, particularly with regard to the roof at the rear of the building, concerns being expressed about the use of profiled sheeting. Again, the Committee asked that the materials to be used be subject of consultation with the local members and Town Council.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to:-

- (i) conditions 1-12 and Informative Note 1 as set out in the agenda report;

- (ii) an additional condition requiring that the means of access off the existing roundabout be submitted for approval, such works to be subject to a Section 278 highway agreement;
- (iii) the access arrangements to be included in the Section 278 highway agreement, the details to be included in the Travel Plan and the approval of materials being determined by the Head of Development and Building Control in consultation with the District ward members, County Division member and Town Council.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(David Norris, Development Control Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)
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Chairman