

MEETING AW.04:1011
DATE 18:08:10

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard on **Wednesday, 18th August 2010.**

(5.00 p.m. – 7.35 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Cllr. Kim Turner (in the Chair)

Michael Best	Ric Pallister
David Bulmer	Ros Roderigo
Geoff Clarke	Andrew Turpin
Jenny Kenton	Linda Vijeh (from 5.15 p.m.)
Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Zoë Harris	Community Regeneration Officer (West)
Rob Murray	Economic Development Officer
Jean Marshall	Spatial Policy Team Leader
Andrew Gunn	Area Lead West – Development Control
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

33. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st July 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

34. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Carol Goodall, Robin Munday, Angie Singleton and County Cllr. John Dyke.

35. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr. Mike Best declared his personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 regarding an application for a grant towards the provision of floodlighting at Happy Valley, Crewkerne as he was a member of Crewkerne Town Council who were the applicants. He withdrew from the meeting during consideration of that item.

Cllr. Jenny Kenton declared her personal and prejudicial interest in planning application nos. 10/00454/FUL and 10/00455/LBC (Conversion and extension of existing garage/workshop into one dwelling, The Phoenix Hotel, 15 Fore Street, Chard) as she was

a director of the company who had made the application. She withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the applications.

Cllr. Nigel Mermagen declared his personal and prejudicial interest in planning application nos. 10/00454/FUL and 10/00455/LBC as the applicant was the neighbouring ward member in Chard and a colleague on the Liberal Democrat Group with whom he worked closely and he felt there could be a public perception that he would be prejudiced in favour of the applications. He withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of the applications.

Cllr. Martin Wale declared his personal interest in planning application nos. 10/00454/FUL and 10/00455/LBC as he also served as a councillor on the Planning and Highways Committee of Chard Town Council and the applicant was a fellow town councillor. He did not consider this to be prejudicial to his consideration of the planning applications. Cllr. Dave Bulmer also declared his personal interest in these planning applications as he served as a councillor on the Planning and Highways Committee of Chard Town Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial to his consideration of the planning applications.

36. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

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

37. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

Cllr. Ric Pallister referred to the proposed housing development on land at Maiden Beech, Crewkerne and updated members on the latest position. He indicated that the relevant documents had been signed in respect of the Section 106 Agreement, which would trigger the contribution towards the changing room accommodation element of the proposed sports and community centre in Crewkerne.

38. Grant Application for Flood Lighting in Happy Valley, Crewkerne (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 8)

Cllr. Mike Best, having declared his personal and prejudicial interest in this item, withdrew from the meeting during its consideration and determination.

The Community Regeneration Officer summarised the agenda report, which asked the Committee to consider a request for financial assistance submitted by Crewkerne Town Council towards the provision of flood lighting for the multi-use games area and skateboard ramp at Happy Valley, Crewkerne.

In response to questions from members, the Community Regeneration Officer confirmed that the recommended grant of £8,000 was in addition to the funding that had been allocated by the Community Health and Leisure Unit. She also indicated that Crewkerne Town Council would be responsible for the costs of running and maintaining the flood lights.

Cllr. Geoff Clarke, one of the ward members, referred to there having been problems with anti-social behaviour at Happy Valley for many years and commended this project strongly to members.

The Committee indicated its support for the award of the grant and concurred with the comments of a member who hoped that suitable signage would be displayed to show that the District Council had contributed towards the scheme.

RESOLVED: that a grant of £8,000 be awarded from the Area West Capital Programme to Crewkerne Town Council as a contribution towards the provision of flood lighting for the multi-use games area and skateboard ramp at Happy Valley, Crewkerne.

Reason: To determine an application submitted by Crewkerne Town Council for grant funding.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

(Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer - 01460 260423)
(zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

39. South Somerset Draft Core Strategy Incorporating Preferred Options: Recommendations for District Executive Consideration (Agenda item 6)

The Spatial Policy Team Leader referred to the agenda report, which provided members with a review of their workshop held on 5th July 2010 to consider the emerging proposals and policies of the South Somerset Draft Core Strategy. The report sought further comments and confirmation of the recommendations to District Executive in respect of each of the draft proposals and policies. In addition to the recommendations made at the workshop, she also asked members to endorse other policies including Settlement Strategy policies SS1 and SS3-5, revised health and well-being policies HW1-HW4 and revised policy EP15 in respect of the protection and provision of local shops, community facilities and services. Additional policies emerging from review of the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy were also presented for members' consideration. In updating members she reported that the additional policy regarding Renewable Electricity Targets should now be deleted as it was covered by national policy. Members' attention was also drawn to the comments made by the other Area Workshops.

The Spatial Policy Team Leader also highlighted the further work and other matters to be taken forward by the Spatial Policy Manager and his team that were identified during the course of the member workshops, details of which were set out in the agenda report. She also mentioned that although there was broad agreement amongst members of the different areas on key policies and proposals there were some areas of concern raised where there was some difference of view on substantive matters and she explained that those issues would be included within the report to District Executive and be covered in the ongoing consultation process.

The Committee then went through the appendices to the agenda report and the Spatial Policy Team Leader answered members' questions on points of detail. A number of comments and amendments to some of the recommendations were also made including the following:-

Appendix B – Area West Councillor Workshop

Vision, Settlement Hierarchy and Settlement Discussion

Chard Sub-Group

- In referring to the recommendations to District Executive under this sub-heading, a member commented that there was a need to ensure that the necessary key infrastructure and employment land was phased in as the housing growth evolved. A discussion ensued when a member commented on the potential difficulties of this approach and the need to strike the right balance, reference being made to the need for the economics of developments to be favourable to enable the delivery of the appropriate infrastructure. Reference was also made to the position with community infrastructure levies, which had been proposed by the previous Government but would not now go forward and the rules would be changing.

The Spatial Policy Team Leader reported that Settlement Strategy Policy SS4 dealt with the co-ordination and delivery of the necessary infrastructure. She also referred to the comments regarding infrastructure levies and indicated that a consultation document had been received relating to those issues and to the emphasis being on co-ordinated working by all infrastructure providers together with the co-location of resources. She also mentioned that currently the Council had to produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the evidence base in respect of the Core Strategy.

The Committee agreed that an additional recommendation be made to District Executive relating to the need to ensure infrastructure and employment delivery alongside housing growth;

- reference was made to one of the comments of the Chard Sub-Group relating to re-opening Chard train station and the Committee concurred with the comments of a member that the reference should be to the re-opening of Chard Junction Station and that the comments should also include a reference to the provision of an effective public transport interchange and cycle track to Chard;

Crewkerne Sub-Group

- the comment “N.B. needs to be fully serviced” be deleted;
- the second recommendation to District Executive be amended to read “If the key site fails to come forward growth of Crewkerne should be restricted to existing commitments only.”;
- reference was made to the use of the terms Market Towns and Local Service Centres, about which a brief discussion ensued. It was recognised that there had been much discussion about this matter in the past and the Spatial Policy Team Leader commented that the team was mindful of the differences of opinion with regard to the terminology;

Theme Discussion

Economic Prosperity

- reference was made to policies regarding economic prosperity and, in response to a question, the Spatial Policy Team Leader explained what was meant by local shops and primary shopping frontages. The Committee agreed that an additional

recommendation be made to District Executive with regard to the need to review the policy regarding the protection of retail frontages;

- the Committee noted the comments of a member who, in referring to ‘hidden’ employment commented that many people worked from home but there was little information on the actual numbers of people choosing to work in that way;

Transport and Accessibility

- the reference to “Smart cars” in the feedback on policy TA1 should read “Smart cards”;
- reference was made to the comment regarding subsidising bus fares and to that involving two aspects, i.e. the subsidising of bus routes to help commuting and the concessionary fares scheme for the over 60s. The Committee noted the comments of a member who referred to the huge funding issues involved with the concessionary fares scheme, which was to be transferred from the District Council to the County Council next year. He expressed his view that subsidised bus routes should come ahead of free bus passes but it seemed that the Government would not allow it;
- the “v” at the beginning of the comment “cycling and walking encouraged” in the feedback on policy TA4 be deleted;
- a member referred to the comments in respect of policy TA4 and remarked that there was a need for parish councils to look at precepting for links to a small bus interchange. The Chairman commented that there may be difficulty in parish councils progressing such initiatives bearing in mind the Government’s suggestion regarding the introduction of the use of local referendums to veto excessive Council Tax increases.

The Committee agreed that an additional comment be included in the feedback in respect of policy TA1 that local parish councils should work together on local transport initiatives;

- concern was expressed about the congestion caused in both Ilminster and Chard when more than one bus arrived at the same time at the main bus stops. It was suggested that there should be better co-ordination of bus timetables so that buses did not arrive at the same time. The Committee agreed that the comment in the feedback in respect of policy TA4 be expanded to cover bus timetable co-ordination in respect of Ilminster as well as Chard;
- reference was made to policy TA7 and concern was raised by a member about the lack of definitive parking standards but it was considered that the current policy was suitable for the draft consultation document.

Town Visions and Proposals

The Spatial Policy Team Leader further referred to Town Visions and Proposals policies TV3-TV5 in respect of Chard, which were not discussed at the workshop but were set out in the relevant section of Appendix A.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the notes of the Area West Workshop on the Draft Core Strategy held on 5th July 2010 be affirmed subject to the amendments mentioned above being taken into account;
- (2) that the recommendations set out within the notes of the workshop be endorsed as the Committee’s formal recommendations on the

principal proposals and policies of the draft Core Strategy subject to the amendments mentioned above being taken into account;

- (3) that the Settlement Strategy policies (policies SS1 and SS3-5) and the Town Visions and Proposals relating to Chard (policies TV3-TV5), not discussed at the workshop, as set out within Appendix A be noted and endorsed;
- (4) that the Health and Well-being policies tabled for consideration at the workshop (Appendix F) be endorsed;
- (5) that the revised policy EP15 set out in Appendix G be endorsed;
- (6) that the additional policies proposed for the draft Core Strategy emerging from review of the revoked Regional Spatial Strategy (Appendix H) be endorsed subject to the deletion of the proposed policy regarding Renewable Electricity Targets.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

*(Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager – 01935 462650)
(andy.foyne@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

40. Chard Regeneration Scheme Workshop (Agenda item 7)

The Area Development Manager (West) summarised the agenda report, which provided members with information about the workshop that was held on 5th July 2010 to confirm the continued support by local councillors from all three local authorities serving Chard for the proposed master plans for the Chard Regeneration Scheme. The Committee noted that elected members had offered their continued support for the Chard Regeneration Scheme approach.

The Area Development Manager further commented that the scheme constituted a framework rather than detailed plans and represented the best approach drawn up by the Council's consultants to solve the issues regarding a growth plan for Chard.

During the ensuing discussion, a member referred to the impending demise of the Regional Development Agency and the uncertain future and comments were expressed by members that there was a need to keep this scheme to the forefront.

In response to a question, the Area Development Manager confirmed that the public exhibition of the work would take place on Saturday, 11th September 2010.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Area Development Manager (West) regarding the Chard Regeneration Scheme Workshop held on the 5th July 2010 be noted.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

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

41. Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th June 2010 (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 9)

The Area Development Manager (West) summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the current financial position of the Area West Budgets as at the end of June 2010.

The Area Development Manager referred particularly to the recommendation to make a contribution of £3,000 towards subsidised town centre Christmas parking in Area West, which he hoped the Committee would support.

The Committee indicated its support for subsidising town centre Christmas parking in Area West and concurred with the comments of a member that it be ensured that good publicity was given and that there was good signage and a physical barrier at the ticket machines to make people aware of the initiative.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the current financial position of the Area West budgets for the period ending 30th June 2010 be noted;
- (2) that £3,000 of the amount set aside to underwrite community grants within the Area Reserve be re-allocated to subsidise town centre Christmas parking in Area West.

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, Corporate Accountant - 01935 462157)
(catherine.hood@southsomerset.gov.uk)

42. Area West Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 10)

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

RESOLVED: that the Area West Committee Forward Plan as attached to the agenda be noted.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

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

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

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

At the request of Cllr. Linda Vjeh, the Committee agreed that her report regarding Chard Museum be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

44. 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 by the Committee to the Regulation Committee.

NOTED.

*(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

45. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)

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

NOTED.

*(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

46. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 15)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at the Henhayes Centre, off South Street, Crewkerne on Wednesday, 15th September 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

NOTED.

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

47. Planning Applications (Agenda item 14)

The Committee considered the applications set out in the schedule attached to the agenda and the Planning Officer 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).

10/00454/FUL (Pages 1-7) – Conversion and extension of existing garage/workshop into one dwelling (GR 332201/108611), The Phoenix Hotel, 15 Fore Street, Chard – JAK Rentals Ltd.

10/00455/LBC (Pages 8-12) – Conversion and extension of existing garage/workshop into one dwelling (GR 332201/108611), The Phoenix Hotel, 15 Fore Street, Chard – JAK Rentals Ltd.

Cllrs. Nigel Mermagen and Jenny Kenton, having declared their personal and prejudicial interests in this application, withdrew from the meeting during its consideration and determination.

Prior to summarising the details of the application, the Area Lead West updated members and clarified that the application had been referred to the Committee because Cllr. Jenny Kenton was a director of the company who had submitted the application. He also clarified that one of the main planning considerations to be taken into account was the impact of the proposed development upon a listed building and the conservation area and not, as stated in error on page 4 of the agenda report, upon the "wall of a listed building". He also reported that he had received a further e-mail from one of the objectors reiterating concerns about the window on the northern elevation of the proposed development overlooking their property. The Area Lead West, in referring to one of the objectors having expressed concern about a lack of notification, confirmed that neighbours had been notified in good time about the application. He further clarified that should this application be granted it would not set a precedent in terms of a previous application for 20 dwellings on land nearby to this site.

The Area Lead West, with the aid of slides and photographs, then summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. He referred to the key considerations to be taken into account including the impact of the proposed development upon the listed building and conservation area, impact upon neighbouring amenity and provision of parking. He further reported that the recommendation was one of approval subject to conditions as set out in the agenda report.

The Area Lead West then answered members' questions on points of detail. Points addressed included the ceiling height of the room in the roof space, the distance between the proposed development and the objectors' properties and the reasons for the roof lights being fixed shut, which had been agreed with the applicant following comments expressed by a neighbour about overlooking.

The Committee noted the comments of the applicant's agent, Mr. N. Manning, who referred to the ceiling height of the room in the roof of the extension having been subject of discussions with the planning and conservation officers in order to keep the building subservient and the roof shape to the same pitch as that existing. With reference to the roof lights in the extension he mentioned that the lower light was well above head height and the upper lights were well above shoulder height. He referred to the existing building being listed in association with the listed hotel and to the design of the proposed development maintaining the style and character of the existing building. He referred to ample car parking being available and to there also being access through to other properties. He mentioned that the ceiling height of the room in the extension was not an issue in terms of building regulations and that the roof lights would be obscure glazed. There would also be a large opening window at the end of the room allowing plenty of ventilation. Reference was made to the garage being currently in private use and to the garden being an unkempt space and he felt that a dwelling would be a more appropriate use. He remarked that the original application had gone through several changes in liaison with planning and conservation officers and he felt that this was a good compromise, which would make a worthwhile addition to the location.

Cllr. Martin Wale, ward member, referred to it having been clarified that the decision on this application would not set a precedent in respect of a previous application for residential development on land nearby to the site. In referring to the application before the Committee he felt that the highways issues were important. He mentioned that had the application been for 4 flats to which the Highway Authority, although not objecting, had misgivings, he would have had difficulty but now that the number of units had gone down from 4 flats to 1 dwelling he felt that the proposals were acceptable. He also felt that if the resident of the nearest dwelling had objected the issues raised may have had more weight but they had not indicated any misgivings. He further expressed his view that the area allocated for parking should be clearly marked. In summary, he felt that the reduction in the number of units was good and remarked that the Highway Authority had not objected. He felt that the applications should be approved.

Cllr Dave Bulmer, a local member, indicated his support for the ward member's comments.

During the ensuing discussion, other members also indicated that they felt that the proposed development was acceptable and that the applications should be granted. The Committee concurred with the views of a member who commented that bearing in mind the height of the roof lights it was unnecessary for them to be obscure glazed or fixed shut. The Committee agreed that an additional condition should be included requiring details of the roof lights to be submitted for approval.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that planning application no. 10/00454/FUL be granted subject to conditions 1-12 as set out in the agenda report and to the inclusion of an additional condition requiring details of the roof lights to be submitted for approval;
- (2) that listed building consent be granted in respect of application no. 10/00455/LBC subject to conditions 1-8 as set out in the agenda report and to the inclusion of an additional condition requiring details of the roof lights to be submitted for approval.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

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Chairman

Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Minute 43 refers)

Report from Cllr. Linda Vijeh

CHARD MUSEUM REPORT – JUNE 2010

After attending a recent meeting of the Trustees of the Museum I have the following to report:-

The Opening evening, held on 1st May was deemed a great success, which along with recent publicity has resulted in a flurry of new 'Friends', bringing the current total to 111. Leaflets are also being used to form an ongoing part of the Friends Appeal to keep momentum going.

Chard Town Council, at their meeting on 14th June, agreed to grant a sum of £1,000 to the Museum, which will enable them to now access the £6,840 promised by SSDC for the coming year. These sums will enable the Museum to continue operating for a further 12 months.

A grant is also being sought from the Carnival Committee in exchange for the Museum hosting an exhibition on the history of the Chard Carnival to coincide with this year's event.

Consideration is being given to a variety of cost saving measures, including a review of the security arrangements offered by Chubb in comparison to local security providers.

The Chard in Bloom committee have offered to fund the cost of holding a flower display at the Museum to coincide with the Museum's 40th Anniversary weekend, 3rd and 4th July. Over the weekend admission hours will be extended and free entry to the museum widely publicised using a range of marketing methods, and liaison with local hotels and leisure venues.

Visits by school groups continue to be actively sought, as is the use of the 'history boxes' which are a valuable aid to learning.

A county funded research report has been carried out by MLA into the place of volunteers for museums and libraries within Somerset.

A free stall was offered at the annual Winsham Fair but was unable to be accepted due to lack of volunteer manpower and transport.

The signs within the town for 'Chard Museum' are dirty and not in the best condition. The County Councillor is to be approached with regard to their maintenance.

For 2011 it is the intention to open a month earlier, in time for the Easter school holidays, and for longer hours, in an effort to generate more income.

Further suggestions have been made with regard to possible catering facilities at the Museum but this was not met with much enthusiasm in terms of its viability.