South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard on **Wednesday, 16th March 2011**.

(5.30 p.m. – 8.25 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Cllr. Kim Turner

(in the Chair)

Simon Bending Michael Best (until 7.45 p.m.) David Bulmer Geoff Clarke Carol Goodall Nigel Mermagen Robin Munday Ric Pallister Ros Roderigo Angie Singleton Andrew Turpin Linda Vijeh (until 7.20 p.m.) Martin Wale

County Council Members:

John Dyke (from 6.40 p.m.)

Officers:

Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Rob Murray	Economic Development Officer
Paul Philpott	Community Development Officer (West)
Chris Cooper	Streetscene Manager
Dave Salter	Streetscene Supervisor (West)
lan Lock	Streetscene Temporary Area West Co-ordinator
Andrew Gunn	Area Lead West – Development Control
Nick Whitsun-Jones	Legal Services Manager
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

127. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16th February 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman subject to Cllr. Robin Munday being included in the apologies for absence.

128. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Jenny Kenton.

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129. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr. Mike Best declared his personal and prejudicial interest in planning application no. 11/00109/R3D (the retention of part of Henhayes temporary car park for a period of two years, Recreation Ground, Henhayes Lane, Crewkerne) as he also served as a councillor on Crewkerne Town Council who were the owners of the land subject of this application.

Cllr. Angie Singleton declared her personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning application no. 11/00109/R3D (the retention of part of Henhayes temporary car park for a period of two years, Recreation Ground, Henhayes Lane, Crewkerne) as she was a director of Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd. who managed the Aqua Centre, which was adjacent to the site of the car park and a non-voting member of the Steering Committee for the project to build a sports and community centre (George Reynolds Centre) at Henhayes, the proposed siting of which was adjacent to the car park.

Cllr. Geoff Clarke declared his personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning application no. 11/00109/R3D (the retention of part of Henhayes temporary car park for a period of two years, Recreation Ground, Henhayes Lane, Crewkerne) as he had been appointed by the District Council to serve on, and was a director of, Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd. who managed the Aqua Centre, which was adjacent to the site of the car park.

Cllrs. Martin Wale and Kim Turner declared their personal but non-prejudicial interests in agenda item 7 regarding the Chard Regeneration Scheme – Delivery Management Structure as they were members of the Project Board.

Cllrs. Martin Wale and Dave Bulmer declared their personal but non-prejudicial interests in agenda item 8 regarding requests for capital grants, particularly in respect of the application from Chard Football Club as they were also members of Chard Town Council's Grants Committee who had awarded a grant to the organisation for the same project.

Cllr. Kim Turner declared her personal but non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 regarding requests for capital grants, particularly in respect of the application from Winsham Parish Council because she also served as a County Councillor and had awarded £500 from her community fund towards the cost of employing an architect to work on the design for the project.

130. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

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

131. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

132. Report for Area West Committee on the Performance of the Streetscene Service (Agenda item 6)

The Streetscene Manager summarised the agenda report, which informed members of the performance of the Streetscene Service in the area for the period April 2010 – February 2011.

During the ensuing discussion, the Streetscene Manager responded to members' questions and comments on points of detail. Points addressed included the following:-

- having noted that a number of National Indicators had been scrapped by the Government, a member queried whether another system would be put in place. The Streetscene Manager confirmed that he was currently working on a new performance measurement process to reflect the work that was carried out across the district and planned to base a new system on the current Local Area Quality Inspections;
- reference was made to the Local Area Quality Inspections results shown in the agenda report, particularly the poorer performance on litter and road sweeping in Chard during January. The Streetscene Manager explained that where gritting had been undertaken by the Highway Authority due to inclement weather, road sweeping was not normally carried out as this would cancel out the effect of the gritting, hence the impact on the standards of street cleaning at that time;
- the Streetscene Manager confirmed that a process of zonal cleaning was being introduced in Chard;
- the Streetscene Manager indicated that weed control was not a statutory duty but was of amenity value. He explained how this service had been provided previously with the work being split between the County Council, who generally dealt with the village and rural roads, and the District Council, who dealt with the towns. However, because of cuts in County Council budgets, the Highways Department would no longer be carrying out any highway weed control and the Streetscene Manager confirmed that the District Council would be changing its herbicide application frequency to an annual spray, rather than two applications as previously, but would include the areas that were previously managed by County Highways;
- it was confirmed by the Streetscene Manager that the monitoring of the overall standards of street cleaning and grounds maintenance by way of local site inspections in conjunction with the ward member was still continuing;
- reference was made to Dog Control Orders and a member referred to concern having been expressed when they were introduced that such orders may only apply to District Council owned recreation grounds. The Streetscene Manager indicated that the service was initially giving attention to the District Council's recreation areas and it was hoped to have those orders in place by July 2011. He indicated that consideration could then be given after July to the possibility of taking steps in other areas with Town and Parish Councils;
- the Streetscene Manager noted the comments of a member who hoped that the bollards damaged by a vehicle at the recreation ground in Winsham could be replaced and perhaps reinforced;
- a member commented on the quality of hedge cutting where a flail was used. The Streetscene Manager commented that hedges were either hand cut or cut by use

of a flail and he felt that generally a good job was done. He asked members, however, to let him know of any areas where they felt there were problems;

 a member referred to having attended a meeting at which there was a discussion about the reductions in Highway funding and to reference having been made to an initiative involving people volunteering to take on certain duties. The view was expressed, however, that the cost of the training needed seemed expensive and it was queried whether the District Council Streetscene Service could assist in any way, which would make it cheaper. The Streetscene Manager noted the comments made and indicated that he would be content to look at whether any help was possible.

During consideration of this item, members expressed their appreciation of the excellent service provided by the Streetscene Team.

The Chairman and Streetscene Manager referred to Dave Salter, Streetscene Supervisor, who was retiring in April after 44 years service. The Chairman spoke on behalf of members of the Committee in thanking him for the contribution he had made during his employment with the Council and wished him a happy and healthy retirement. She particularly referred to the very responsive service he had given in resolving Streetscene problems brought to his attention by members. The Streetscene Manager also paid tribute to Dave's dedication to his job. Dave thanked the Committee for their good wishes.

The Streetscene Manager introduced the members to Ian Lock, Temporary Area West Coordinator, who would be covering the Streetscene supervisory role.

The Chairman thanked the Streetscene Manager for his informative report, which was noted by the Committee.

NOTED

(Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager – 01935 462840) (chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk)

133. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Delivery Management Structure (Agenda item 7)

The Assistant Director (Economy) introduced the report and commented that the Chard Regeneration Scheme was one of the most thorough and well-worked schemes in any of the market towns and included the former ACI site and two car parks in the town centre and the key site to the eastern side of the town. He indicated that the agenda report outlined the changes that were being made to the composition of the team, including a change in the blend of skills, to move this scheme forward from a plan to its delivery stage and recognising that the scheme was a corporate priority.

The Economic Development Manager then summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the governance arrangements, the present position and the key milestones in the coming months. He emphasised that the Chard Regeneration Scheme was a corporate priority and that there was a will to see it come to fruition. He explained the governance arrangements, details of which were set out in the agenda report, during which he reported that the Assistant Director (Economy) would chair the Project Board, reference to which had been omitted in error from the report. He also indicated that community engagement would be a key part of the governance arrangements and would be the responsibility of the Area Development Manager (West).

The Economic Development Manager referred to the two elements of the scheme and mentioned that the redevelopment of the ACI site and two District Council car parks was key to the regeneration of the town centre and the enhancement of the offer Chard could make to its residents and visitors. He informed members that a development brief inviting expressions of interest would be going out during the next week and that the brief was looking for a mixed development and whole site solution. Advice had also been given that the site should be taken to open procurement to seek the best development solution. Reference was also made to looking at the key site to the east of Chard and to the need to align any development scheme to the Local Development Framework. There was a need to bring the two projects forward together and the provision of a phased development would be a key challenge. The Economic Development Manager referred to the need for high level negotiating skills and to specialist support from a consultant being looked for who could be called in when critical input was required. He indicated that this could be paid for through RDA funding and from the Planning Delivery Grant.

The Economic Development Manager referred to the key milestones being shown in the agenda report and also to the need to bring forward a full timescale. He mentioned that it was anticipated that further progress reports would be submitted on a twice yearly basis and that the next was scheduled for September when it was hoped that real progress could be reported on the delivery phase.

During the ensuing discussion a number of comments were made and the officers responded to members questions. Matters raised included the following:-

- a member enquired to what extent development would be based on sustainable practices. The Economic Development Manager indicated that he would be keen to ensure that the highest BRE (Building Research Establishment) standards as possible were reached in respect of sustainability. He also commented that there would be opportunities to include sustainable transport solutions. The Assistant Director (Economy) added that when bids were assessed sustainability would be an important consideration;
- a member commented that bearing in mind that this scheme was a corporate priority, she felt that it should have been mentioned in the 'Implications for Corporate Priorities' section within the agenda report. The Assistant Director (Economy) referred to the priority for the scheme having come from the Local Investment Plan, which was designed to prioritise funding that became available to those schemes that could best be delivered. It was noted that the Chard Regeneration Scheme was the second priority within that Plan;
- although supportive of the scheme, a member, having noted that the Area Development Manager (West) was responsible for community engagement, expressed concern about the capacity of his team bearing in mind that Area West had three of the largest market towns outside Yeovil. The view was expressed that Area West should be treated differently from other areas with more investment in staffing in order to manage all three towns;
- reference was made to there having been some cynicism from members of the public as to whether the Chard Regeneration Scheme would reach fruition. Comment was expressed by members, however, that the Area Development Team had overseen the successful completion of the Chard Regeneration Framework and it was felt that the Council was in a position to take this scheme forward as a corporate priority. A member also indicated that he was encouraged by the fact that the stage had been reached where expressions of interest were being invited. Another member commented that he was pleased that the scheme was moving forward although he had some reservations about the transport arrangements on the east side of the town.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their report and members noted the amendments made to the Chard Regeneration Scheme governance and management arrangements and governance model designed to bring the required skill sets and corporate resources to the delivery phase of the project.

NOTED.

(Rob Murray, Economic Development Officer – 01935 462173) (robert.murray@southsomerset.gov.uk)

134. Area West – Requests for Capital Grants (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 8)

Prior to consideration of this item, the Area Development Manager (West) introduced Paul Philpott who had been appointed recently to the post of Community Development Officer (West).

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered grant applications submitted by Chard Football Club, Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. and Winsham Parish Council, details of which were set out in the agenda report.

The Committee noted the comments of Emma Way from Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. and Roger Beer from Winsham Parish Council who spoke in support of their respective applications.

The Area Development Manager (West) referred to the application submitted by Chard Football Club and, in response to a question, commented that, if the application were granted, he wished to amend the recommended condition relating to the Football Club clarifying the cost of relocating the new lights when the club moved, to require the club to also clarify the source of funding for such relocation.

During consideration of the applications, disappointment was expressed that a representative of Chard Football Club had not been able to attend the meeting. Some members also commented on the low amount of funding being awarded by the Parish Council in respect of the Hinton St. George Village Shop Project. Support was, however, shown by members for the grants to be awarded as recommended in the agenda report in respect of all three applications.

- **RESOLVED:** (1) that a grant of £1,000 be awarded from the Area West Capital Grants Programme to Chard Football Club towards the replacement of their existing floodlights subject to the standard grant conditions and the following:-
 - Chard Football Club clarifying the cost of relocating the new lights when the club moves and the source of funding;
 - Chard Football Club providing evidence that three quotes for the work have been sought, before the award of a grant;
 - (2) that a grant of £12,500 be awarded from the Area West Capital Grants Programme to Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. towards purchasing either the freehold or lease of the village shop subject to the standard grant conditions and the following:-

- a clawback condition be applied to Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. in case the situation should arise that results in their having to sell the business and/or premises in the near future;
- (3) that a grant of £12,500 be awarded from the Area West Capital Grants Programme to Winsham Parish Council towards the repair and refurbishment of their village green and play area subject to the standard grant conditions.
- **Reason:** To determine applications received by the Council for financial assistance.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

(Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer - 01460 260423) (zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk) (Paul Philpott, Community Development Officer - 01460 260359) (paul.philpott@southsomerset.gov.uk)

135. Cuts in Bus Services affecting Area West (Agenda item 9)

The Committee considered a motion submitted by Cllr. Andrew Turpin in relation to proposed cuts in local bus services in Area West from 17th April 2011.

Cllr. Turpin, in explaining the purpose of his proposal, mentioned that as a user of the bus service he heard of the problems that would be faced by people if the services were reduced. He referred to those problems including people having to look for alternative employment, problems for people who were divorced or separated in visiting their families, people not being able to visit relatives, hospital visiting, people not being able to shop on Sundays and a lady who would not be able to attend church. Reference was also made to people requiring the bus for links to railway stations and National Express coaches. In referring to evening services he mentioned the potential effects on employees, socialising and on students, including their trying to find work to supplement their grants. He further commented that for some people the bus was the only way of getting around. He also referred to the possibility of exploring opportunities to enable these bus services to continue such as parish and town councils that would be affected making contributions or supermarkets looking at incentive schemes.

A member suggested an alternative form of wording for the motion, which he felt would be more likely to be supported by full Council. Cllr. Turpin indicated that he was content to accept the wording and to change his motion accordingly. He proposed the motion, which was seconded by Cllr. Martin Wale.

During discussion, comment was expressed that the cuts on bus services affected the whole of the district and not just Area West and that the services that were proposed to be cut were those with least use. It was commented, however, that no one had looked at the consequential impact of those cuts. It was also understood that bus operators were saying that some routes may become less viable when other services were cut. Reference was also made to the concessionary fares scheme, which was being transferred from the District Council to the County Council on the 1st April 2011, the discretionary element of which funded services such as the 'Slinky bus' community transport service, which it was hoped that the County Council would retain.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried as set out below.

RESOLVED: that it be recommended to full Council that:-

- this Council acknowledges Somerset County Council's need to make revenue savings;
- (2) this Council regrets Somerset County Council's intended implementation of the bus service cuts across South Somerset from 17 April 2011 in the absence of:
 - detailed service usage data
 - a detailed equalities impact assessment
 - user profiling, including employment
 - public consultation
 - a consequential impact assessment on other linked bus services
 - an assessment of alternate options
 - comprehensive impact assessment of the County Council supported bus route cuts alongside additional commercial service cuts
- (3) this Council urges the County Council to defer implementation of any cuts to the funding support for bus services until that consultation and impact assessment is completed and the required savings identified through that process;
- (4) this Council requests confirmation that the discretionary element of the Concessionary Fares scheme, currently funded from within South Somerset's budget being transferred to the County Council on 1st April 2011, will be retained to meet rural need where no scheduled bus service currently exists.

(12 in favour, 0 against)

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

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

The Committee concurred with the comments of a member who suggested that a report be submitted to the Committee in due course to update members on the situation with regard to cuts in bus services.

RESOLVED: that the Area West Committee Forward Plan as attached to the agenda be noted subject to the above comments being taken into account.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

137. 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.

138. 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)

139. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)

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

The Committee concurred with the comments of a member in congratulating the planning officers on their good success rate in defending appeals against the refusal of planning permission.

NOTED.

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

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

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at Horton Village Hall, Hanning Road, Horton on Wednesday, 20th April 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

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

141. Planning Applications (Agenda item 14)

The Committee considered the application 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 application file, which constitutes the background papers for this item).

Prior to consideration of the planning application, at the request of the Chairman, those members who had declared interests at the beginning of the meeting in respect of this planning application (details of which are set out in minute 129 above) did so again

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bearing in mind that those members of the public who had attended the meeting for the planning application may not have been present at the beginning of the meeting.

11/00109/R3D – The retention of part of Henhayes temporary car park for a period of two years (GR344363/109664), Recreation Ground, Henhayes Lane, Crewkerne – South Somerset District Council.

Cllr. Mike Best, having declared his personal and prejudicial interest 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. He reported the comments of Crewkerne Town Council who had confirmed that it was their policy to note applications where they had a vested interest. He also confirmed that the application would not need to be referred to the Regulation Committee. The Area Lead West, in referring to the car park survey attached to the agenda as appendix A, reported that he had been informed earlier in the day that the Town Council had carried out a survey over a longer time period but he had not seen that information. He mentioned that the car park occupancy survey referred to in appendix A had been provided by the Council's Property Services Unit. The Area Lead West, in explaining the details of the comparisons made in the occupancy survey, mentioned that concerns had been raised by the Council's Transport Strategy Officer about the impact on long stay parking provision should the Henhayes Car Park be lost. It was also recognised that a long term solution needed to be found. The Area Lead West further mentioned that the Waitrose Car Park had not been included in the survey as Waitrose had not agreed to its use for long stay parking and was short stay only.

The Area Lead West, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. He referred to the key considerations being the need for the car park, impact on sports/recreation use and highway issues. It was recognised that a long term solution was required but, in the meantime, it was recommended that a further two year temporary permission be granted subject to the condition set out in the agenda report.

In response to a question from a member, the Area Lead West confirmed that some spaces in the Henhayes Car Park would be lost if the proposed sports and community centre on adjacent land went ahead.

The Committee noted the comments of Mr. B. Hartshorn in objection to the application. He referred to the last time this application was discussed and to it having been implied that it would be the final time that an extension would be considered but a further application had now been submitted. He referred to the occupancy survey of the car parks provided with the agenda report, which he felt was limited, and to there being a more comprehensive survey that was carried out by Crewkerne Town Council, the data from which the District Council did not have. He explained the reasons why he was of the view that the existing car parks could absorb the capacity and referred to Crewkerne Town Council having indicated that there would be no shortage of capacity if the Henhayes Car Park was lost. Reference was also made to there being a covenant on the land on which the temporary car park was situated relating to it being protected for recreational purposes only.

The Committee noted the comments of County Councillor John Dyke. He expressed his view that from personal experience the Henhayes Car Park was extremely well used and that it had been difficult to find parking spaces in other car parks. He referred to the District Council having tried to find an alternative in conjunction with Somerset County Council and commented that at that time the usage of the car parks was highest in the district. He understood that alternative solutions were being looked at and commented

that in an ideal world he would not want to see Henhayes used but he felt there was no alternative at present.

Cllr. Angle Singleton, one of the ward members, referred to this being a continued short term measure until a long term solution could be found. She referred to the car park strategy carried out by the District Council and to the need in Crewkerne having been looked at over a long period of time and included the development of the proposed key site. She referred to numerous attempts having been made with landowners to find an alternative solution for the provision of long stay parking but they had not reached fruition. She also felt that the survey mentioned by Mr. Hartshorn backed up the need for long stay parking provision. She commented that there were spaces in the Waitrose car park but they were short stay and referred to attempts having been made to negotiate with Waitrose for long stay parking without success. She also felt that there was a need to change the signing in some of the car parks in order to change people's parking habits. Cllr. Singleton indicated that she would feel more passionately about the use of the land if the use of the Henhaves Recreation Area by the community had been affected by the temporary car park in this location but she did not feel that had been the case. She also mentioned that the Trustees of the Henhaves Centre wanted the car park to remain. She commented that the area taken up by the car park was really a thoroughfare and, therefore, it did not matter whether it was an area of hardstanding or grass as there was plenty of space for leisure use. She indicated her support for the application and reiterated that there was a commitment to find a long term solution.

Cllr. Geoff Clarke, also a ward member, concurred with the comments of Cllr. Singleton. He also referred to the efforts to find land for long stay parking and to the practicality of requiring space in that area when the proposed sports and community centre was built. He supported the grant of a temporary permission for two years during which he felt that a better picture would emerge including the key site development.

During the ensuing discussion, the Legal Services Manager advised that the covenant referred to earlier in the meeting was not a material consideration and should be disregarded in determining this planning application.

Varying views were expressed by members. A member commented that he would not support the application on the basis of the potential for another permitted development as he felt that it was a separate issue. The view was also expressed that the land should not be taken from the recreation area even if it were not used as such. Disappointment was expressed that a long term solution had not been able to be found and that another application was before the Committee. Reference was made to there being a problem with the provision of long stay parking, which could have an impact on employment and it was felt that efforts to find an alternative solution should be intensified.

In conclusion, the majority of members were of the view that the application should be granted for a further temporary period of two years. It was commented, however, that every effort must be made to find a long term solution to the long stay parking provision in Crewkerne including negotiations taking place with Waitrose with regard to their providing long stay parking provision within part of the store's underground car park. Reference was also made to looking at the Travel Plan submitted by Waitrose as part of the planning approval for the store to see if it was being complied with and whether it covered parking for their own staff. It was also asked that improvements to the car park signing in the town be carried out as soon as possible. In addition, members asked for a report to be submitted to the Committee in 12 months, or earlier if possible, to enable members to review the progress being made in seeking a long term solution in respect of the strategic need for the provision of long stay car parking in Crewkerne. In response to a question, the Area Lead West confirmed that these matters could be included as informative notes on the decision notice.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted for a temporary period of two years ending 1st February 2013 subject to condition 1 as set out in the agenda report and the inclusion of the following informative notes on the decision notice:-

- that every effort be made to find a long term solution to the long stay parking provision in Crewkerne including negotiations with Waitrose with regard to their providing long stay parking provision within part of the store's underground car park;
- that the Travel Plan submitted by Waitrose as part of the planning approval for the store be examined to see if it was being complied with and whether it covered parking for their own staff;
- that improvements to the car park signing in the town be carried out as soon as possible;
- that a report be submitted to the Committee in 12 months, or earlier if possible, to enable the Committee to review the progress being made in seeking the replacement of the temporary Henhayes car park and a long term solution in respect of the strategic need for the provision of long stay car parking in Crewkerne and that an item is to be included in the Area West Committee's forward plan.

(8 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention)

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

Chairman