

# South Somerset District Council

## Notice of Meeting



# Area West Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

## Wednesday 20th July 2011

### 5.30 pm

**The Guildhall,  
Fore Street, Chard  
Somerset TA20 1PP**

(See location plan overleaf)

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The public and press are welcome to attend.

Disabled Access is available at this meeting venue.



If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Andrew Blackburn** on Yeovil (01935) 462462  
email: [andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Monday, 11th July 2011

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*

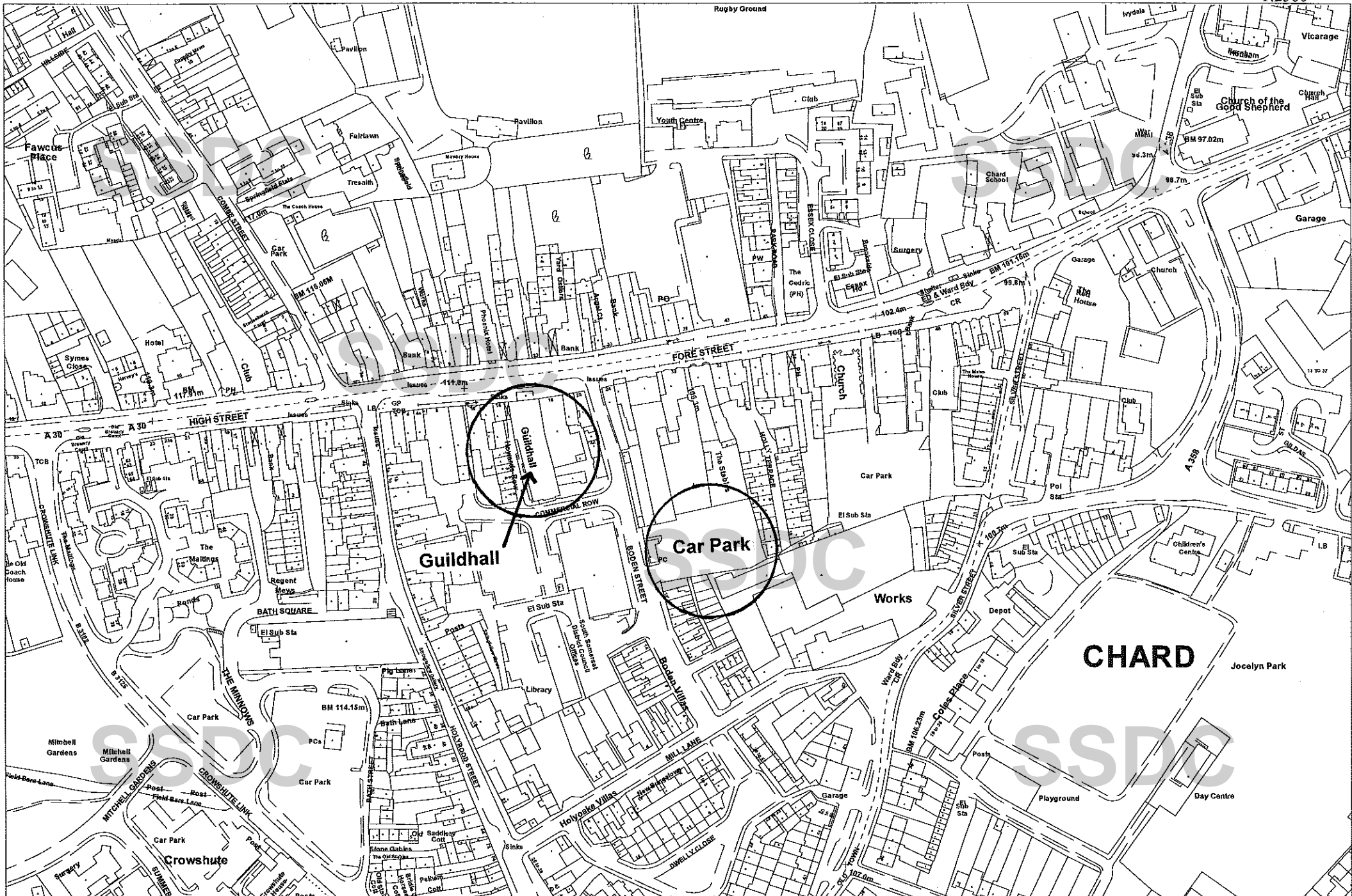


2007-2008  
Neighbourhood and  
Community Champions:  
The Role of Elected Members  
2006-2007  
Improving Rural Services  
Empowering Communities  
2005-2006  
Getting Closer to Communities

**This information is also available on our  
website: [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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## Area West Membership

**Chairman:** Angie Singleton  
**Vice-Chairman:** Paul Maxwell

Michael Best  
David Bulmer  
John Dyke  
Carol Goodall  
Brennie Halse

Jenny Kenton  
Nigel Mermagen  
Sue Osborne  
Ric Pallister  
Ros Roderigo

Kim Turner  
Andrew Turpin  
Linda Vijeh  
Martin Wale

### Somerset County Council Representatives

Somerset County Councillors (who are not already elected District Councillors for the area) are invited to attend Area Committee meetings and participate in the debate on any item on the Agenda. **However, it must be noted that they are not members of the committee and cannot vote in relation to any item on the agenda.** The following County Councillors are invited to attend the meeting:-

Councillor Cathy Bakewell and Councillor Jill Shortland.

### South Somerset District Council – Corporate Aims

**Our key aims are:** (all equal)

- Increase economic vitality and prosperity
- Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change
- Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens
- Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities
- Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers

### Scrutiny Procedure Rules

Please note that decisions taken by Area Committees may be "called in" for scrutiny by the Council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

### Consideration of Planning Applications

There are no planning applications for consideration at this meeting.

### Highways

A representative from the Area Highways Office will be available half an hour before the commencement of the meeting to answer questions and take comments from members of the Committee. Alternatively, they can be contacted through Somerset Highways direct control centre on 0845 345 9155.

### Members Questions on Reports prior to the Meeting

Members of the Committee are requested to contact report authors on points of clarification prior to the Committee meeting.

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## Information for the Public

The Council has a well-established Area Committee system and through four Area Committees seeks to strengthen links between the Council and its local communities, allowing planning and other local issues to be decided at a local level (planning recommendations outside council policy are referred to the district wide Regulation Committee).

Decisions made by Area Committees, which include financial or policy implications are generally classed as executive decisions. Where these financial or policy decisions have a significant impact on council budgets or the local community, agendas will record these decisions as “key decisions”. Members of the public can view the council’s Executive Forward Plan, either online or at any SSDC council office, to see what executive/key decisions are scheduled to be taken in the coming months. Non-executive decisions taken by area committees include planning, and other quasi-judicial decisions.

At Area Committee meetings members of the public are able to:

- attend and make verbal or written representations, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- at the Area Committee Chairman’s discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to up to 3 minutes on agenda items; and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Area West Committee are held monthly at 5.30 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month in venues throughout Area West.

Agendas and minutes of Area Committees are published on the Council’s website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)

The Council’s Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information about this Committee can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

## Public Participation at Committees

This is a summary of the Protocol adopted by the Council and set out in Part 5 of the Council’s Constitution.

### Public Question Time

The period allowed for participation in this session shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

### Planning Applications

Comments about planning applications will be dealt with at the time those applications are considered, rather than during the Public Question Time session.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer’s report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional

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documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the Planning Officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The Planning Officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the Committee Chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

Town or Parish Council Spokesperson  
Objectors  
Supporters  
Applicant/Agent  
County Council Division Member  
District Council Ward Member

If a member of the public wishes to speak they must inform the committee administrator before the meeting begins of their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections and who they are representing. This must be done by completing one of the public participation slips available at the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

The same rules in terms of public participation will apply in respect of other agenda items where people wish to speak on that particular item.

### **If a Councillor has declared a personal and prejudicial interest**

Under the new Code of Conduct, a Councillor will be afforded the same right as a member of the public, except that once the Councillor has addressed the Committee the Councillor will leave the room and not return until after the decision has been made.

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# Area West Committee

Wednesday 20th July 2011

## Agenda

### *Preliminary Items*

1. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th June 2011**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, which includes all the provisions of the statutory Model Code of Conduct, Members are asked to declare any personal interests (and whether or not such an interest is "prejudicial") in any matter on the agenda for this meeting. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 10. In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under the code of conduct.

### *Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee*

The following members of this Committee are also members of the Council's Regulation Committee:

Cllr. Mike Best  
Cllr. Ros Roderigo  
Cllr. Angie Singleton  
Cllr. Linda Vijeh

Where planning applications are referred by this Committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice on Planning, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the Council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as Members of that Committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

### 4. **Public Question Time**

This is a chance to ask questions, make comments and raise matters of concern.

Parish/Town Councils may also wish to use this opportunity to ask for the District Council's support on any matter of particular concern to their Parish/Town.

Anyone wishing to raise matters in relation to items on the agenda may do so at the time the item is considered.

**5. Chairman’s Announcements**

*Page Number*

***Items for Discussion***

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<b>7. SSDC Partnerships (Executive Decision) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
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<b>9. Promoting Community Safety in Area West - Police Performance and Neighbourhood Policing .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>10. Chard – Conservation Area Appraisal and Designation of Extensions to Conservation Area (Executive Decision) .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>11. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>12. Feedback on Planning Applications referred to the Regulation Committee</b>	<b>28</b>
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<b>14. Date and Venue for Next Meeting .....</b>	<b>30</b>

**There are no planning applications for consideration at this meeting.**

<p><b>Please note that the decisions taken by Area Committees may be called in for scrutiny by the Council’s Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.</b></p>
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## Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

### **6. Area West Committee - Forward Plan**

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)  
*Agenda Co-ordinator:* Andrew Blackburn, Committee Administrator, Legal & Democratic Services  
*Contact Details:* [andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk) or 01460 260441

#### **Purpose of the Report**

This report informs members of the proposed Area West Committee Forward Plan.

#### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:-

- (1) comment upon and note the proposed Area West Committee Forward Plan as attached at pages 2-4;
- (2) identify priorities for further reports to be added to the Area West Committee Forward Plan.

#### **Forward Plan**

The forward plan sets out items and issues to be discussed by the Area West Committee over the coming few months.

The forward plan will be reviewed and updated each month in consultation with the Chairman. It is included each month on the Area West Committee agenda and members may endorse or request amendments.

To make the best use of the Area Committee, the focus for topics should be on issues where local involvement and influence may be beneficial, and where local priorities and issues raised by the community are linked to SSDC corporate aims and objectives.

Councillors, service managers, partners and members of the public may request that an item is placed within the forward plan for a future meeting by contacting the agenda co-ordinator.

**Background Papers:** None.



Notes

- (1) Items marked in *italics* are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives.
- (2) Further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area Committee, please contact the Agenda Co-ordinator; Andrew Blackburn, 01460 260441 or e-mail [andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)
- (3) Standing items include:
  - a. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports
  - b. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations
  - c. Feedback on Planning Applications referred to the Regulation Committee
  - d. Chairman's announcements
  - e. Public Question Time

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background / Purpose	Link to SSDC Area & Corporate Priorities and National Indicators (NI)	Lead Officer
17th August 2011	Area West Community Safety Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service	Report on the work carried out in the community in Area West by the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	<b>SSDC corporate plan key target area 4.0</b> Outcome: A community that feels safe. Measured by: Increasing the % of people who feel that local public services are working to make the place safer.	Marc House, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
17th August 2011	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	To update members on the current financial position of the Area West budgets	The budget is closely linked to the Corporate Plan.	Catherine Hood, Corporate Accountant Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)
17th August 2011	Stop Line Way	To update members on the current position with this project	<b>SSDC corporate plan key target area 3.18</b> Outcome: Individuals & communities enjoying healthier and more active lifestyles. Measured by: Increasing the self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being. <b>3.20</b> Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and adult participation in sport and active recreation. <b>Theme 5: Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers.</b> <b>Corporate Plan key target area 5.4</b> Increase value for money savings gained through enhanced joint working by an additional 0.5%.	Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Background / Purpose	Link to SSDC Area & Corporate Priorities and National Indicators (NI)	Lead Officer
21st Sept. 2011	Chard Regeneration Scheme	Report on progress	<b>SSDC corporate plan key target area 1.9</b> Increase overall employment rate (Somerset resident population of working age). <b>1.11</b> Outcome: A vibrant and sustainable Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Economy. Measured by: Increased local sustainability. <b>3.3</b> Increase the net additional homes provided. <b>3.5</b> Increase the supply of ready to develop housing sites.	Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West) David Julian, Economic Development Manager
21st Sept. 2011	Licensing Service	Service Update	<b>SSDC corporate plan key target area 1.10</b> Increase satisfaction of businesses with local authority regulation services.	Nigel Marston, Licensing Manager
19th Oct. 2011	Blackdown Hills Partnership Funding Agreement 2011/14	Update	<b>Theme 2: Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change. 2.0</b> Outcome: An enhanced natural environment. Measured by: Improved health of the natural environment. <b>Theme 3: Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens. 3.20</b> Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and adult participation in sport and active recreation. <b>Theme 5: Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers.</b> <b>Corporate Plan key target area 5.4</b> Increase value for money savings gained through enhanced joint working by an additional 0.5%.	Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer
19th Oct. 2011	South Somerset Local Development Framework - Draft Core Strategy	Formal consideration of responses and proposed changes	<b>Theme 1:</b> Increase economic vitality and prosperity <b>Theme 2:</b> Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change <b>Theme 3:</b> Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens <b>Theme 4:</b> Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities Strong links with Chard Regeneration Scheme	Andy Foyne - Spatial Policy Manager
19th Oct. 2011	Public Transport Provision	Update	<b>Theme 2: Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change. 2.18</b> With partners, identify options to maximise green travel by December 2009 and start one option by 2012.	Nigel Collins, Transport Strategy Officer

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Background / Purpose</b>	<b>Link to SSDC Area &amp; Corporate Priorities and National Indicators (NI)</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
16th Nov. 2011	Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	To update members on the current financial position of the Area West budgets	The budget is closely linked to the Corporate Plan.	Catherine Hood, Corporate Accountant
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<i>Review of Area Working</i>	<i>To consider the outcome of the Area Review</i>	<b><i>Theme 5: Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers.</i></b>	
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<i>Asset Management Strategy</i>	<i>To discuss with members the principles of the SSDC Asset Management Strategy including asset transfer and the checklist now available for use.</i>	<b><i>Theme 5: Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers.</i></b>	<i>Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)</i>
<i>Twice per year.</i>	<i>Crewkerne Community Planning Update</i>	<i>For Information</i>	<b><i>SSDC corporate plan key target area 4.16</i></b> Outcome: An empowered community where all people take part in shaping their neighbourhood. Measured by: Increasing % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (NI 2).	<i>Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer Area Development (West)</i>
<i>Twice per year</i>	<i>Ilminster Community Planning Update</i>	<i>For Information</i>	<b><i>SSDC corporate plan key target area 4.16</i></b> Outcome: An empowered community where all people take part in shaping their neighbourhood. Measured by: Increasing % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (NI 2).	<i>Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer Area Development (West)</i>

Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

## 7. SSSDC Partnerships (Executive Decision)

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place & Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Alice Knight, Third Sector & Partnerships Manager  
*Lead Officer:* Alice Knight, Third Sector & Partnerships Manager  
*Contact Details:* alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01963 435061

### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to alert the Area West Committee to the findings of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, which was charged with reviewing all SSSDC partnerships, and to consider any implications relevant to Area West, of the recommendations arising from this review.

### Public Interest

SSDC works in partnership with a range of organisations, to co-ordinate activity, deliver services and, where possible, work more efficiently to tackle issues, which are relevant to more than one organisation. We maintain a Partnerships Register, which records information about each partnership and ensures they are regularly reviewed. In 2010, the Scrutiny Committee was asked to take a more detailed look at each partnership, with the aim of coming up with proposals to rationalise the number of partnerships, and improve governance and other arrangements for those remaining on the register.

### Recommendations

- (1) that Area West Committee recommend to District Executive that :
  - (a) Crewkerne Aqua Centre be removed from the SSSDC partnership register;
  - (b) the Stop Line Way Steering Group and the Blackdown Hills Partnership remain on the partnership register;
  - (c) the Chard Regeneration Scheme remains on the Partnership Register, and that the next report to Area West on the Chard Regeneration Scheme includes details of future governance arrangements;
- (2) that other relevant recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee are considered in future reports as indicated in the Area Committee's forward plan.

### Background

The original drivers for this review came from the Audit Commission, who set a requirement that SSSDC maintained a Partnerships Register and regularly reviewed the governance arrangements for each partnership. In addition, SSSDC's own Corporate Plan commits us to reviewing all partnerships to ensure they are effective and fit for purpose.

In June 2010, Scrutiny Committee established a Task & Finish Group to examine all 37 partnerships on the SSSDC Partnerships Register. It agreed a template, which included details on each partnership including costs, officer time, outcomes achieved, governance arrangements etc. Managers responsible for each partnership completed the template and presented the facts to the Task & Finish Group. All 37 partnerships on the register were assessed over the course of 6 meetings and the conclusions were presented to and endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee in March 2011.

The Scrutiny recommendations were then considered by District Executive in April 2011. The District Executive agreed that any 'area' implications of the report should be considered by the relevant Area Committee in July, before any further consideration by District Executive.

This report therefore focuses on the partnerships relevant to Area West and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee regarding these partnerships.

## Review Findings

The full report as approved by the Scrutiny Committee, including assessment of each partnership, was presented to District Executive in April 2011.

Based on data presented by each of the managers, the review established that:

*SSDC directly contributes approximately £4.3m per year to partnerships and the total number of officer and member hours spent on attending partnership meetings and their associated sub groups are approximately 4,700 hours per year.*

The Scrutiny Committee recommended that the following definition of a partnership should be adopted at SSDC:

**A partnership is a formal working arrangement involving one or more independent bodies, from any sector, who pool resources and share responsibility for agreeing and then delivering a set of planned actions and outcomes. A formal agreement is made by all partners to work together for specific outcomes.**

Taken all together the recommendations of the review will help the Council to simplify the Partnership Register and test the soundness of the overall partnership arrangements. These recommendations need to be looked at in more detail on a partnership-by-partnership basis by the relevant Area Committee and Lead Officer and consideration given to how any proposed changes can be implemented.

Since the review was commissioned, however, the wider environments in which we and our partnerships operate, have changed considerably:

- many quangos and sub regional structures have been or are being dismantled;
- new sub regional partnerships are being formed, most notable are the private sector led Local Enterprise Partnership and the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Partnership;
- there is less prescription around partnership arrangements and the cross agency targets required;
- funding that went with these requirements has been removed, un-ringfenced or substantially cut ( e.g. the scrapping of the LAA)
- Virtually all public sector bodies have been asked to cut their budgets at levels unprecedented in modern times

Overall the partnerships landscape has changed significantly, in a very short time and is still not fully in place, as the coalition government continues to shift the focus away from top down structures. It is also placing stronger emphasis on local community groups taking action to tackle issues in their own communities.

## Area West – Partnerships Reviewed

Table 1 outlines the 4 partnerships reviewed by the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group and their detailed recommendations. The potential implications, if Area West Committee agrees with the Scrutiny recommendations, are outlined below:

- **The Stop Line Way** – Scrutiny Committee recommend that
  - the Stop Line Way be retained on the Partnerships Register until the project is deemed to be complete.
  - the term complete is understood to mean completed within South Somerset.
  - the Terms of Reference be updated as a matter of urgency.
  - the liabilities for SSDC regarding future maintenance of the Stop Line Way be clarified by August 2011 and reported to Area West Committee.

A report on the progress of the Stop Line Way project that will address all these issues will be prepared shortly and an item is in the committee's forward plan.

- **Blackdown Hills (AONB) Partnership** – The Scrutiny Committee recommend that
  - this partnership remains on the register
  - annual update reports are made to Area West Committee as appropriate
  - Blackdown Hills AONB and Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB should be funded consistently - from Area West and East Committees.

Note: Financial contributions to Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB are currently made from the Countryside Budget

- **Chard Regeneration Scheme (Chard Vision)** – the Scrutiny Committee concluded that this scheme was core work of SSDC (Core Strategy and regeneration) as it could be considered to be regeneration work for Area West and therefore is not a partnership and should be removed from the register. However, a report to the Area West Committee in March 2011 on the governance arrangements reaffirmed that the Chard Regeneration Scheme will be delivered by a partnership led by SSDC and so ought to remain on the register. The next report to Area West on the Chard Regeneration Scheme will include details of future governance arrangements.
- **Crewkerne Aqua Centre** – Scrutiny Committee concluded that Crewkerne Aqua Centre is an independent body with whom SSDC has a loan agreement (monitored by District Executive). It should therefore be removed from the Partnerships Register.

## Financial Implications

None at this stage.

## Corporate Priority Implications:-

Theme 5 – Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers  
 5.4 Deliver additional savings through partnership working within and without South Somerset - 0.5% each year.

**Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)**

None.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None.

**Background Papers:**     *Scrutiny Agendas & Minutes June 2010*  
                                  *Scrutiny Agendas & Minutes March 2011*  
                                  *Detailed submissions from managers and notes of each Task & Finish*  
                                  *Review group meeting, Sept 2010 – Feb 2011*  
                                  *District Executive Agenda & Minutes April 2011*

**Appendix 1 – Recommendations from Scrutiny Committee for Partnerships in Area WEST**

Partnership	Recc from Scrutiny - REGISTER	Recc from Scrutiny – DETAILS	Area/District-wide	Update/Comments/ DX recommendation	Action Required (lead officer)
The Stop Line Way	Retain	Keep on register until project deemed complete within South Somerset. Terms of Ref need urgent updating. Ongoing maintenance liabilities for SSDC to be clarified by August 2011 and reports to Area West Cttee.	West	<i><b>DX referred to Area West for consideration</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Terms of Reference</li> <li>Clarify and agree ongoing maintenance liabilities for SSDC</li> <li>Report to Area West Committee in August 2011 (Andrew Gillespie)</li> </ul>
Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership	Retain	Monitoring and future funding awards to be decided by Area West Committee	West	<i><b>DX referred to Area West for consideration</b></i>	Annual report and funding request to be considered by Area West Committee (Andrew Gillespie)
Chard Regeneration Scheme (Chard Vision)	Remove	Remove from register – not a partnership – core regeneration work in Area West	West	<i><b>DX referred to Area West for consideration</b></i>	Area West to consider Scrutiny Committee recommendations in July (Andrew Gillespie)
Crewkerne Aqua Centre	Remove	Not a partnership – loan agreement, monitored by District Executive	Area West/District-wide	<i><b>DX referred to Area West for consideration</b></i>	Remove from Register (Steve Joel)



Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

## 8. Community Justice Panel (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place & Performance)  
 Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities)  
 Service Manager: Alice Knight, Third Sector & Partnerships Manager  
 Lead Officer: Alice Knight, Third Sector & Partnerships Manager  
 Contact Details: [alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk) or 01963 435061

### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is for members to consider allocating a financial contribution of £2,500 to the South Somerset Community Justice Panel.

### Public Interest

The South Somerset Community Justice Panel (SSCJP) operates across the district to resolve issues of low level crime and anti-social behaviour. The project operates a form of restorative justice whereby local volunteers and criminal justice professionals are brought together to decide on what action should be taken to deal with incidents of antisocial behaviour. The panel brings together victims, offenders and their supporters face to face to deal with the consequences of an offence, and decide collectively how to repair the harm.

### Recommendations

That Area West Committee allocate £2,500 of one-off funding to the South Somerset Community Justice Panel to enable the project to continue through 2011/12, from the Area West Service Enhancement budget.

### Background

The South Somerset Community Justice Panel (SSCJP) project was set up in 2004 in response to public perception of low police numbers and the closure of the local Magistrates Court in Chard. The local newspaper ran a campaign called Bring Justice Home; the initial intention was to get the court re-opened. Local councillors explored the possibility of setting up a local panel to deal with low level antisocial behaviour. After discussion with various agencies, agreement was reached and a steering group was set up to take it forward.

### The Role of Community (Restorative) Justice Panels

A range of restorative justice practices now operate around the country, and the techniques are well recognised as effective means for dealing with low level crimes and antisocial behaviour. Support for the establishment of Community (Restorative) Justice Panels operating at a town or neighbourhood level feature strongly in both *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government* and the Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*, both issued by the coalition government in 2010.

The SSCJP was the first in the UK of its kind, and has been cited by the Government as an excellent example of effective practice. The project operates a form of restorative justice whereby local volunteers and criminal justice professionals are brought together to decide on what action should be taken to deal with incidents of antisocial behaviour.

The panel brings together victims, offenders and their supporters face to face to deal with the consequences of an offence, and decide collectively how to repair the harm. Victims tell offenders how they've been affected; offenders have a chance to take responsibility and make amends.

## **The Role of SSCJP in South Somerset**

Since the early success of the pilot, the project has been rolled out across the district and panels now operate in each of the 4 SSDC areas (and is also expanding across the County in Frome, Taunton and Wellington). The panels are made up of trained community volunteers, and most cases are referred either by the police or local Housing Associations.

The project is managed by a full-time manager, a seconded full-time police officer and a part-time co-ordinator, who report to a strategic management group made up of partner agencies.

In 2010/11, the SSCJP:

- received 92 cases
- 7 cases were referred from Yarlington Housing and 85 from Avon & Somerset Police
- Offences included assault, arson, criminal damage, neighbour disputes, public order offences, threatening behaviour, possession of cannabis, racial harassment, TWOC, violence against the person, affray, ASB, parking dispute, theft with violence to secure entry, burglary, damage to motor vehicle, hate crime, malicious communications, public indecency, shoplifting and verbal abuse
- Supported a team of 45 trained volunteers
- Trained the majority of PCSO's in South Somerset, together with response officers/beat managers who have completed the full 3-day and some the basic training
- Expanded geographical coverage with new panels being set up in Frome, Taunton and Wellington

To ensure that the restorative justice practices remain credible and robust, training of volunteers is delivered by 2 qualified trainers accredited by the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP), including an intensive 3 day course followed by a 1 day advanced practice module.

The process strongly indicates that by working with the community and managing conflict and tensions, repairing harm and building and strengthening relationships, individuals and communities become far better equipped at managing conflict and reducing levels of antisocial behaviour.

- Victims of crime are given a voice in a safe, controlled environment, where they can express the affect the crime had on them. They are better equipped to 'move on' from the incident itself and are less likely to re-criminate
- By allowing the person causing the harm to understand how their actions had affected the victim and the community, they are able to take responsibility for their actions, make amends and are less likely to re-offend
- The community has more faith in the justice system, and is able to witness the process and results

## Results

- Re-offending rates for individuals going through the CJP process stand at **3%** compared to 64% going through the court system and 71% going through Community Orders (probation)
- Victim satisfaction levels with the process stand at between 90-95%
- Feedback from Yarlinton Housing and the Police is very positive. They recognise that the CJP can produce savings of up to **75%** on the costs of cases, particularly in officer time. In addition they find that the outcomes of using CJP enhance the community's understanding and satisfaction of the services they provide.
- Figures for crime and anti-social behaviour in South Somerset have dropped over the past 4 years
- The SSCJP has generated much interest both locally and nationally for the innovative way it deals with conflict, works with volunteers and for the results it produces.
  - The previous Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, and present Attorney General, Baroness Scotland, have both expressed support for the SSCJP
  - In 2005 the SSCJP received an award from Avon & Somerset Criminal Justice Board for outstanding achievement in engaging local communities in the criminal justice system
  - In 2006 the SSCJP received the SCC Chairman's Award for Engaging Local Communities.
  - The model is also cited in the Home Office Guide for using Restorative Justice (2006) and quoted in the All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group enquiry into Justice in Communities (2009)
  - In 2010 the CJP received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In 2010 a PhD Student, Jac Armstrong, carried out an evaluation of the experiences of the victims of crime who were then referred to the SSCJP. The results show very positive feedback with high levels of satisfaction from victims. The report will be published in August 2011.

## View from Other Agencies

### Avon & Somerset Police

There is strong support for the SSCJP from the police because of the significantly low re-offending rates and the recognised savings in dealing with cases outside of the court system. The police are also currently considering their future commitment to the SSCJP and are examining what future support they will be able to give, including the officer role (due to retire in January 2012), as well as any future core funding. Chief Inspector Sean Williams has been given the lead on CJP and stresses that the police recognise the benefits of CJP for the following reasons:

- Cost savings – dealing with cases through CJP is significantly cheaper than through the courts
- Re-offending rates – significantly lower than other methods in the criminal justice system
- Offenders avoid 'criminalisation'
- Customer satisfaction – over 90% of all victims are satisfied with the process
- Potential expansion – the Police would like the CJP to roll out across the Avon & Somerset Force Area. As the project expands there will be benefits of economies of scale, which will further reduce costs on a case-by-case basis.

The police believe strongly that CJP is 'the way forward' in terms of dealing with low level criminal behaviour and ASB. Ideally, while SSCJP has been devolved across South Somerset and into other parts of Somerset and indeed the country, there is still work to be done to develop it further across Somerset.

"Without question it is the way forward in terms of dealing with local issues and the beauty of CJP is that it does not criminalise anyone unnecessarily. By entering this process, the victim has the opportunity to face the other party and thus the satisfaction levels immediately become much higher. It also means that there is a far better chance of a long term solution and less chance of re-offending". *Inspector Jackie Gold*

### **Yarlington Housing Group**

Yarlington are very supportive of the SSCJP and have committed £10,000 per year for 3 years (including 2011/12). The tangible benefits of the CJP for Yarlington include:

- Effective dealing with local issues at a local level
- Significant financial savings, through avoidance of court costs
- Keeps people in existing properties rather than having to move due to neighbour disputes
- Very positive feedback from tenants involved in the process
- Community confidence that issues are dealt with quickly and effectively

Currently Yarlington is the only Housing Association contributing financially to the project but there is potential for other Housing Associations to contribute. Plans are in place to raise awareness amongst these other providers. There could be an option of Housing Associations 'buying in' the service on a case by case basis. Meanwhile Yarlington envisage ongoing support to the SSCJP.

### **SSDC Review**

Despite the SSCJP being recognised as good practice by the Government, the Green Paper has only provided indication that programmes were being developed. Any Act of Parliament would be in late 2011. Approaches to the Ministry of Justice in 2010 to provide further project funding for 2011/12 have not resulted in any commitment from the government.

The project is currently run by a full time manager, part time co-coordinator, a full-time police secondment and 45 trained volunteers. The manager and co-ordinator are 'hosted' by SSDC and are based in SSDC's Area West offices in Chard.

Funding has been short-term and in April 2011 SSDC was asked to consider financial support towards the project running costs. Other funding had come to an end and the staff employed were put at risk of redundancy.

Some funding was committed from other agencies and SSDC offered £10k of 'bridging' funding to enable the project to continue on the condition that a review of SSDC future support was carried out before any further funding requests were considered. The review to include:

- 1) Cost analysis to cover cases dealt with and costs per case
- 2) Fit with other RJ practices across the District and in each area (to include an options appraisal considering if the work of the team could be continued in a different way by mainstreaming through partner organisations)

- 3) Risk assessment of closure including impact on beneficiaries, SSDC finances and reputation
- 4) Set out the prospects for long term, sustainable funding of the CJP, so that SSDC Area Committees can consider the use of short term, transition or other funding to enable this to happen

## 1) Cost Analysis

The project is currently run by a full time manager, part time co-ordinator, a full-time police secondment and 45 trained volunteers. Staff are currently located in SSDC offices at Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard (which includes 'below the line' recharges of approx £5,000 pa for payroll, IT and invoice payments, currently picked up by Area West Development).

The overall costs of the SSCJP are as follows:

2011/12 Draft Budget	Budget (£)	Total (£)
<i>Above the line costs</i>		
Salaries (inc. on-costs)		
Manager	36,000	
Part-time Coordinator	14,000	<b>50,000</b>
Travel and subsistence	1,000	1,000
Volunteer expenses	2,500	2,500
Printing and stationery	300	300
Hire of premises for Panel meetings	200	200
Volunteer training	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Budget required</b>		<b>55,000</b>
<i>Below the line costs</i>		
Full time police secondment (currently funded by police)	45,000	
Office space, IT and payroll support (currently provided by SSDC)	5,000	

The project supports 45 volunteers who each contribute an average of 8 hrs per panel. 2 volunteers per panel = 16 hrs per panel x 92 panels = 1,472 hours per year x minimum wage = **£8,832** of hidden costs per year.

NB. in March 2011 the CJP incurred a redundancy of the Assistant (full-time) Manager. The remaining staffing structure is the minimum required for effective operation.

### Benchmarking Costs

The Local Government Association published a "cost of crime" table for benchmarking purposes. It gives the national average unit costs of dealing with each crime as:

Criminal Damage £612  
 Common Assault £648  
 Theft £720  
 Commercial criminal damage £890

with other costs for other cases being considerably higher.

By way of comparison, the average unit cost per case for the Community Justice Panel is around £130 - see appendix on pages 20-21.

## **2) Other Restorative Justice Practices in South Somerset**

### **2a) Low level, 'on the spot' resolution**

In minor, street-level incidents, the Police may encourage offender and victim to resolve things 'on the spot.' Whilst in the past the Police have been encouraged to use restorative justice techniques themselves for low level crime and antisocial behaviour (even as far as having a round-table 'panel'), they are now instructed to refer all suitable cases to the SSCJP as this is recognised as the most credible and effective tool for resolving issues.

### **2b) Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)**

An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) is an early intervention made against individuals who are perceived to be engaging in antisocial behaviour. Though they may be used against adults, almost all ABCs concern young people.

The contract, drawn up and agreed upon by the agencies concerned in consultation with the individual, contains both negative and positive conditions, detailing behaviour the individual will cease to partake in and what activities the individual will pursue to change their behaviour. They were frequently used as evidence to support an application for an Antisocial Behaviour Order.

Yeovil Crime Reduction Partnership carries out Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for low level theft, antisocial behaviour and some first offences such as shoplifting. These are carried out in Yeovil, Chard and Sherborne. ABCs can also be issued by police and PCSOs to restrict people's activities and movements. The scheme has seen 56 offenders accept an ABC since 2009; of these 55 have been successful in that they do not re-offend. The ABC would involve a ban from premises, which lasts for six months and covers 106 town centre premises. The ban is lifted if the offender signs a contract promising not to repeat their bad behaviour.

ABC's can be an effective tool which police use across the county, but where a more victim-oriented response is needed they will refer to the CJP, and are increasingly raising awareness of officers in Yeovil (and across the force area) of the benefits of CJP as this they consider to be the main tool for restorative justice.

### **2c) Restorative Justice in Schools**

In 2008/09 Somerset County Council ran a comprehensive programme of restorative justice in secondary schools across the county. 2 full-time co-coordinators trained teachers in RJ techniques and schools were offered support as they integrated RJ into their own policies and practices.

However the County Council no longer operate the programme and the co-ordinator posts no longer exist. As a result, the use of RJ is now patchy across Somerset.

Some schools have maintained the practice and retain the skills amongst teachers who went through the training, eg. Ansford in Castle Cary. In other schools, close working with the local PCSO has ensured that RJ is used on a regular basis to deal with particular incidents, eg. Holyrood in Chard.



It is widely recognised that use of RJ with school children can have longer term benefits. Not only are they less likely to become involved in crime, they also become familiar with RJ from a young age and are therefore more likely to embrace the process when they are older. In Swansea, a programme of RJ has been rolled out across all primary schools in the local authority area, with evidence already indicating significant improvements in the behaviour of students as they move up to secondary school.

There may be opportunities for SSCJP to offer training for schools based on the 'Writing Wrong' programme.

### 3) Risk Assessment of Closure

- Victims of crime and antisocial behaviour would be significantly disadvantaged in that they would be less satisfied in the way the crime was dealt with, more likely to retaliate and also more likely to suffer from stress or depression as a result of the crime committed against them
- If the CJP were to close, approx 100 cases per year would be referred to the courts instead of through the CJP
- The offenders would be 60-70% more likely to re-offend, than had they gone through the CJP
- The specialist training and expertise of 45 volunteers and PCSOs would be lost
- Communities would feel less involved in tackling local issues of antisocial behaviour
- 2 members of SSDC staff would be made redundant at a cost to SSDC (there is currently £14,000 in reserves)
- There would be a negative impact on SSDC reputation – the CJP has been a highly regarded, high profile initiative in South Somerset at very little cost so far to the local authorities
- Without SSDC support, the project would likely continue until March 2012. However, with a small amount of one-off bridging funding, the long term sustainability of the project should be secured.

### 4) Funding

- At the outset, the Home Office, GOSW, and Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership, provided funding of £60,000 to pilot the project until March 2006
- The successful completion of the pilot stage led to further Home Office Funding and M&SSCSP funding to support the project through to 2010. This together with £4,000 from Area East Community Safety Action Panel enabled the roll out of panels to Ilminster, Crewkerne and Area East.
- Additional funding has been secured along the way from the Accelerated Neighbourhoods Partnership Fund, which enabled further roll out of panels in Yeovil, Somerton and Frome Area and maintained the service up until March 2011.
- Somerset County Council provided £7,000 in 2009 to support the production of a DVD.

Other support has been provided in kind by Avon & Somerset Police through a full time officer secondment (at a cost of approx £45,000 pa) and by SSDC through "pay and rations" support and office accommodation (at a cost of approx £5,000 pa). Financial and

operational support from the main agencies has been vital to the success of the project, particularly in the pilot/development phase.

**For 2011/12, the following funds have been confirmed:**

£1k Crimebeat  
 £10k Yarlington  
 £10k Medlock Charitable Trust  
 £10k SSDC reserves  
 £2k Pat Ripley Trust

Avon & Somerset Police has committed the costs of their secondment until January 2012.

In addition, at least £5k should be generated in income via consultancy/training fees from the IIRP.

**Funding Gap**

	2011/12	Sources of income (committed)	Total (£)
Total Budget required			100,000
Police (secondment)		45,000	
SSDC (reserves)		10,000	
Yarlington		10,000	
Medlock Charitable Trust		10,000	
Crimebeat		1,000	
Pat Ripley Trust		2,000	
Consultancy fees (projected)		5,000	
<i>Charitable trusts/grants and further consultancy fees (target)</i>		17,000	

Avon & Somerset Police are currently considering if any further funds can be committed for 2011/12 to ensure the continuation of the project and support the proposals in the Business Plan, which would see the project develop and roll out across the county.

**The Future**

Due to the success so far of the SSCJP and the positive feedback from both victims, offenders and agencies, it is the intention of the SSCJP to have restorative justice practices available and offered, where suitable, to all victims of crime and those harmed by antisocial behaviour across Somerset.

The SSCJP Business Plan includes the following strategy:

1. to further expand Justice Panels
2. to increase the use of Justice Panels therefore making it even more cost effective
3. to offer and deliver training and consulting to other areas
4. to achieve charitable status (N.B. Now achieved – June 2011)
5. to obtain sufficient funding that enables the project to continue on a firmer footing



There is a drive nationally to have Community Justice Panels (or 'Neighbourhood Justice Panels) across England and Wales. In 2012 the Government is planning to introduce Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to ensure greater accountability to the public. It is the intention that the PCCs would manage and distribute all relevant community safety funding across the Avon and Somerset area. However it is unlikely that the PCC will be in a position to allocate any funds to community safety projects/initiatives until April 2013. Whilst the SSCJP would seem to be a likely fit with future priorities for funding, there is no guarantee, and this is still 2 years away.

However £250,000 of Home Office funds will be allocated to Somerset in 2012/13, and with the new formation of a County-wide Community Safety Team, there is a possibility that funds could be passed on to the SSCJP in 2012/13. **A good case will need to be put forward** for this including strong evidence of the benefits of the SSCJP to the range of agencies in the Somerset Community Safety Partnership.

There are fears that we will see an increase in reported crime as the period of austerity the country finds itself in continues. There will be increased demands on services the partner agencies provide, particularly the police. The CJP will be an integral part of alleviating this pressure and the police and Yarlinton are planning to actively promote the use of CJP as a crucial tool in their aims to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, and resolve local disputes.

With sustainable funding the CJP will be able to increase the number of volunteers recruited and trained, and increase the number of cases that are referred.

As the programme rolls out across Somerset, approaches should be made to the other local authorities, including Mendip District Council, Frome Town Council and Taunton Town Council. Panels have now been set up in Taunton Deane and Wellington, with TDBC committing £15k to each Panel. Other Housing Associations should be contacted.

It has always been envisaged that the project would be "floated off" as a charity. Charitable status has now been achieved and this will open up further funding opportunities from trusts and foundations in addition to those currently being explored.

The recent assessment of the SSCJP carried out by the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager recommended the following:

- Area Committees each consider requests of £2,500 of 'bridging' funding from area budgets with funding being ring fenced to support work within South Somerset. This being **one-off funding** to support the CJP through 2011/12 to enable the project to continue whilst other funding is secured.
- Officer support is given to helping the CJP prepare quality materials to support funding applications and in preparation for the incoming Police Commissioner in 2012.
- Discussions are held with county-wide colleagues at an early stage about allocating funds from the government's Community Safety funding for 2012/13.
- Further promotion of the training/consultancy skills with a target of generating £10-£15k per year.
- Offering training package to schools (such as the Writing Wrong programme) to generate further income.

- SSDC continues to provide accommodation, IT support, management and payroll support up to **March 2013**, to enable the smooth transition to charitable status and for the organisation to become self-supporting.
- SSDC provides officer support as the SSCJP establishes itself as a charity; SSDC consider member representation on the SSCJP board as an observer.
- Officer support to SSCJP with seeking other sources of funding including:
  - agencies operating in Mendip to enable work to continue in Frome, including Mendip District Council and Frome Town Council
  - Taunton Town Council and Wellington Town Council for the development of the panels in Taunton and Wellington
  - Housing Associations – raise awareness of the benefits of the SSCJP, as well as request for funding; explore option to purchase service on a case by case basis
  - Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
  - Yeovil and Chard Town Councils
  - Further contributions from A&S Police
  - Yapp Charitable Trust – provide repeat/core funding for charities working with those at risk of repeat offending
  - Other local grant making trusts

### Financial Implications

If the recommendation is supported, £17,500 will remain in the Area West Service Enhancement budget for 2011/12.

### Corporate Priority Implications

4. Ensure Safe, Sustainable and Cohesive Communities

4.13 Increase the number and scope of restorative justice panels in the district by 2011.

### Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None.

### Equality and Diversity Implications

- Increased access to the justice system

#### **Background Papers:**

*Review of SSDC support for Community Justice Panels, (Area Chairs, June 2011)*  
*South Somerset CJP Business Plan, May 2011*  
*IPPR New Directions in Community Justice, 2005*  
*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders, Home Office 2010*  
*The Lean Community Safety Partnership – A guide to making your partnership more efficient, effective and productive, LGA 2010*

# Community Justice Panel



## Monitoring Report for the South Somerset Area Chairs Meeting 30th March 2011

These statistics show the current status of the four South Somerset Community Justice Panels up until March 2011. The Community Justice Panel regularly monitors the cases received for the type of offence, gender, location, age, referring agency and the outcome. It also includes the cost analysis. Unless otherwise indicated all cases result in an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC).

	Area West since 2006	Area North since 2009	Area East since 2009	Area South since 2010	Total
<b>Cases received</b>	222	38	37	7	<b>304</b>
Police referrals	207	33	32	6	<b>278</b>
Yarlington referrals	13	5	5	1	<b>24</b>
Other referrals e.g. SSDC	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>					
Police ABC's breached	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Housing ABC's breached	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Unresolved/returned to the Police	17	2	5	3	<b>27</b>
Unresolved/returned to Housing	4	1	0	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Case received by offence type</b>					
Assaults	93	17	15	0	<b>125</b>
Criminal Damage	44	6	9	0	<b>59</b>
Public Order Offences	7	1	3	0	<b>11</b>
Arson	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Neighbour Disputes	31	5	5	4	<b>45</b>
Dog nuisances	1	0	2	0	<b>3</b>
Theft	14	0	0	1	<b>15</b>
Anti Social Behaviour	3	0	0	1	<b>4</b>
Violence against secure entry	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Threatening Behaviour	2	1	1	0	<b>4</b>
Harassment	5	1	1	0	<b>7</b>
Violence against a person	1	1	0	0	<b>2</b>
Malicious communications	5	3	0	0	<b>8</b>
Cannabis	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Hate Crime	2	1		0	<b>3</b>
Air Weapon	1	1	0	0	<b>2</b>
Driving Offences	13	0	0	0	<b>13</b>
<b>Costs</b>					
Cases with 1 offender or victim	192	31	27	7	<b>257</b>
Average Cost per case					<b>£129</b>
Total Cost					<b>£42256</b>

	<b>Area West since 2006</b>	<b>Area North since 2009</b>	<b>Area East since 2009</b>	<b>Area South since 2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cases with more than 1 offender or victim	30	7	10	0	<b>47</b>
Average Cost per case					<b>£139</b>
Total Cost					<b>£6533</b>

**Valerie Keitch, South Somerset Community Justice Panel, March 2011**

Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

**9. Promoting Community Safety in Area West - Police Performance and Neighbourhood Policing**

*Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)*  
*Assistant Director: Helen Rutter (Communities)*  
*Service Manager: Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)*  
*Lead Officer: Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)*  
*Contact Details: andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01460 260426*

This item relates to the active promotion of Community Safety in Area West.

Inspector Jackie Gold and Sgt. Andy Lloyd will attend the meeting and give a short presentation on local issues, crime trends and initiatives.

**Background Papers:** None

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Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

## 10. Chard – Conservation Area Appraisal and Designation of Extensions to Conservation Area (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
 Assistant Director: Martin Woods (Economy)  
 Service Manager: Dave Norris, Development Manager  
 Lead Officer: Adron Duckworth, Conservation Manager  
 Contact Details: greg.venn@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462595

### Purpose of the Report

To approve the recently prepared Conservation Area Appraisal and to formally designate an extension to the conservation area.

### Public Interest

This report proposes the adoption of the Conservation Area Assessment for Chard, and alterations to the conservation boundary. Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Chard Conservation Area was first designated in 1973. The District Council is required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This can be achieved through conservation area appraisals. In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the conservation area's character. Appraisals are therefore essential tools for the planning process and to manage informed intervention. They will provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for the relevant development plan policies and development control decisions and will form the framework for effective management of change. The appraisal should provide the District Council and the local community with a clear idea of what features and details contribute to the character of the conservation area and how these may relate to the wider proposals for regeneration.

### Recommendations

- (1) Approve the Chard Conservation Area Appraisal;
- (2) formally designate extensions to the Chard conservation area;
- (3) advertise the extension to the designated area in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- (4) commit £200 from the area budget to cover the cost of statutory advertising.

### Background

#### Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are areas of **'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'**.

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to identify appropriate parts of their areas, to designate them as conservation areas *and to keep them under review*.

Historic areas are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for the conservation and enhancement of areas of architectural and historic interest is well established. By suggesting continuity and stability, such areas provide points of reference in a rapidly changing world: they represent the familiar and cherished local scene. Over 9000 have been designated nationally since they were introduced in 1967 and there are now 88 in South Somerset.

Designation is a matter for local (Area Committee) decision and is the principal means by which a local authority can apply conservation policies to a particular area.

Chard conservation area was first designated in 1980 and has not been reviewed since that date.

## Report

South Somerset District Council, in partnership with SWRDA, has commissioned a '**Chard Regeneration Framework**' with the primary aim of producing a series of historical, planning and transportation studies and translating these into one design-led solution for the development of Chard. One of the elements was the production of an up-to-date, comprehensive appraisal of the existing conservation area, assessing the historic core's historic assets and understanding current problems and opportunities, and feed this information into the wider Regeneration Plan.

This review process has led to this recommendation for alterations and extensions to the designated conservation area shown on the attached maps. As stated above, it is a duty of the local planning authority to review conservation area boundaries from time to time and the proposed modifications are considered to be appropriate. The Appraisal and the proposed extensions have been consulted on with all properties to be included in the extensions consulted. Chard Town Council have replied with no comments. The proposal has been modified as a result of comments and suggestions.

3 letters were received in response to notification.

One was from a volume house builder concerned that an area of land they owned would have an increased area of undeveloped land which would lie within the conservation area. They felt there was no justification. A reply was sent with further justification and no further comment has been received.

Two letters were received from householders:

One was of the view that the area was of no merit and they rejected any further restriction on what they choose to do to their property, a reply was sent outlining the changes that a conservation area brings to a property, and explaining why the area was considered appropriate for designation. No reply has been received.

The second also stated concern that her property was not of any merit, and as part of a review which also took into account the views of internal consultees, her house and the three adjoining were removed. The lady has been informed of this change.

The principal extensions are the better brick terraces along Combe Street and Crimchard, including the cemetery; Holly Terrace and the Holyrood Lace Mill, and nearby terraces to Boden Street; and land to the south of High Street, West of the Crowshute Link; Park Road, and land around and including the relatively recently listed Church of the Good Shepherd. The principal removal is to the west of Manor Farm and the Church,

where there are modern houses. Various other minor additions and removals are proposed largely to reflect better the extent on the burgage plots and to account for modern development.

Members are now asked to formally designate the extension areas and to approve the appraisal, with amended conservation area map, so that it can be put into use as guidance in planning and development matters.

A map showing the existing and proposed extensions to Chard Conservation Area is attached to this agenda at page 26.

The Chard Conservation Area Appraisal (Final draft) has not been printed because it is a large document. A copy can be found with the Area West Committee agenda published on the Council's website.

### **Financial Implications**

Cost of statutory advertising requirement - approximately £200.

### **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

Contributes to Corporate Aims 4 'Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities' and 5 'Promote a balanced natural and built environment'.

### **Carbon Emissions and Adapting to Climate Change Implications**

No implications arising from this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

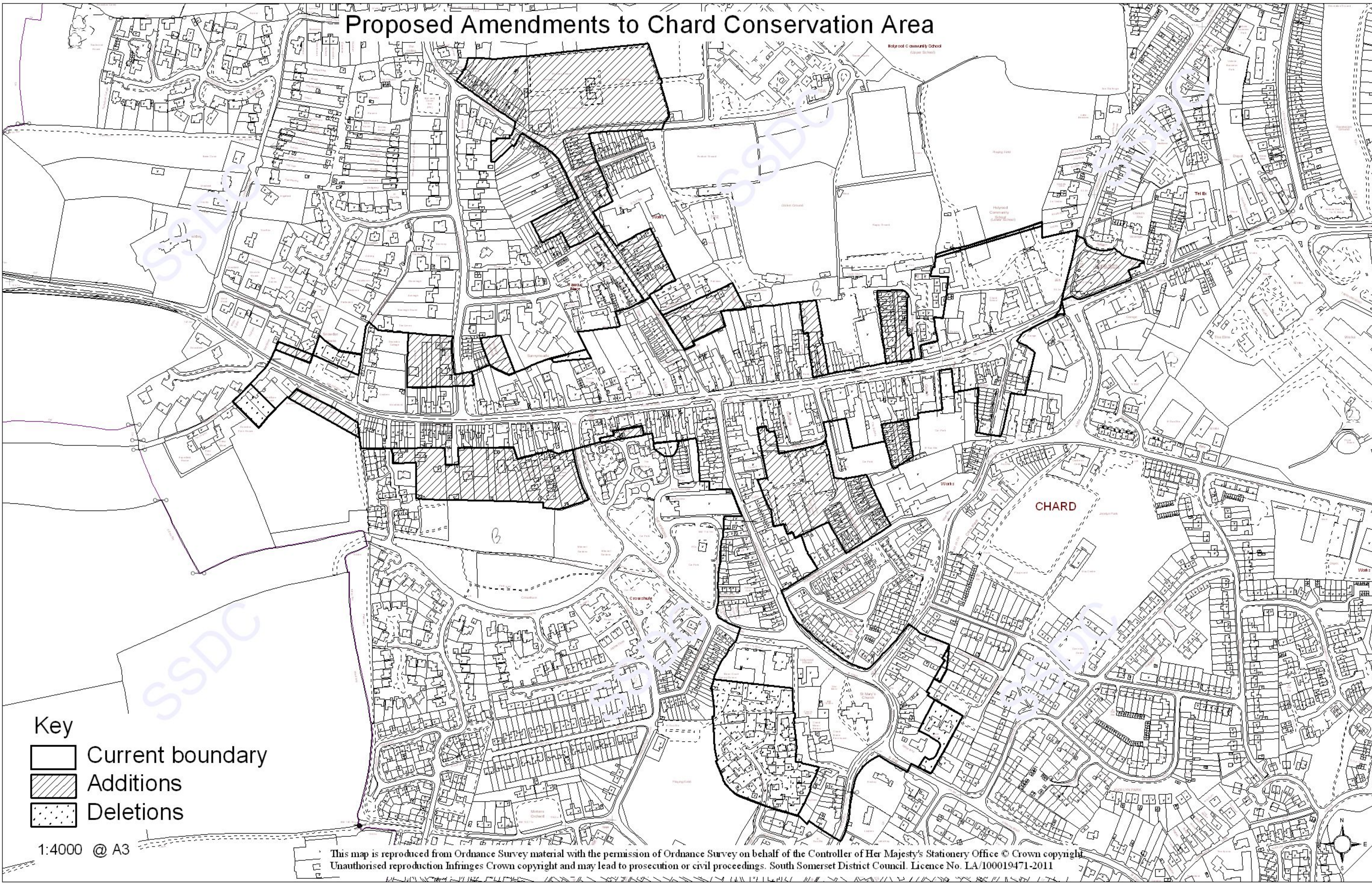
None.

**Background Papers:** *Conservation Area Designation File  
Chard Conservation Area Assessment.*

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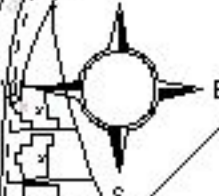
# Proposed Amendments to Chard Conservation Area



- Key
- Current boundary
  - Additions
  - Deletions

1:4000 @ A3

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Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

## **11. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations**

This is an opportunity for members who represent the Council on outside organisations to report items of significance to the Committee.

Members are asked to notify the Chairman before the meeting if they wish to make a report.

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Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

**12. Feedback on Planning Applications referred to the Regulation Committee**

There is no feedback to report on planning applications referred to the Regulation Committee.

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## Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

**13. Planning Appeals**

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Martin Woods (Economy)  
*Service Manager:* David Norris, Development Manager  
*Lead Officer:* David Norris, Development Manager  
*Contact Details:* david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462382

**Purpose of the Report**

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

**Recommendation**

That the report be noted.

**Background**

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the Committee.

**Report Detail****Appeals Lodged****Written Representation**

**Crewkerne** – The erection of a detached dwellinghouse, Orchard View, Pulmans Lane – Mr. David Webster – 11/00431/FUL.

**Appeals Dismissed****Written Representation**

**Whitestaunton** – The erection of an agricultural building (revised application), land at Higher Beetham Farm, Higher Beetham – Mr. Kevin Parris – 09/04232/FUL.

Delegated Decision – Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter and decision on an application for costs made by the applicant (award refused) are attached at pages 29-33.

**Appeals Allowed****Informal Hearing**

**Hinton St. George** – The use of land for 2 no. private gypsy/traveller pitches and associated works, land OS 4154 Merriott Road – Ms. R. Cathcart – 10/03055/FUL.

Delegated Decision – Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 34-45.

**Background Papers:** Application file – 11/00431/FUL, 09/04232/FUL & 10/03055/FUL.

Area West Committee – 20th July 2011

**14. Date and Venue for Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, 17th August 2011 at 5.30 p.m. Venue to be arranged.