

MEETING AW.06:1112
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South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at Horton Village Hall, Hanning Road, Horton on **Wednesday, 16th November 2011**.

(5.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m.)

Present:

Members:	Angie Singleton	(in the Chair)
	Michael Best	Sue Osborne
	David Bulmer	Ric Pallister (from 5.35 p.m.)
	John Dyke	Ros Roderigo
	Carol Goodall	Kim Turner
	Brennie Halse	Andrew Turpin
	Paul Maxwell	Linda Vijeh (from 5.45 p.m.)
	Nigel Mermagen	

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
David Norris	Development Manager
Neil Waddleton	Section 106 Monitoring Officer
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

63. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th October 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

64. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Jenny Kenton and Martin Wale.

65. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr. Dave Bulmer declared his personal interest in agenda item 9 regarding the Chard Regeneration Scheme – Progress Report for the Period April to October (2011) as he lived close to the Chard Town Centre site.

Cllrs. Kim Turner and Angie Singleton declared their personal interests in agenda item 9 regarding the Chard Regeneration Scheme – Progress Report for the Period April to October (2011) as they were members of the Chard Regeneration Scheme Project Board.

66. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

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

67. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman referred to the planning application relating to the Crewkerne Key Site and informed members that it was anticipated that it would be considered by the Area West Committee at its next meeting on 14th December 2011.

68. Area West Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 6)

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

Cllr. Andrew Turpin referred to a forthcoming meeting of the Somerset Public Transport Forum, of which he was a member, which would be looking at initiatives to address the levels of bus services in the district. The Area Development Manager (West) noted his request that details of the meeting be circulated to members. The Committee noted the comments of another member who expressed her view that there may be further cuts in bus services and was concerned about how they might affect South Somerset.

Reference was made by a member to the Crewkerne and Ilminster Community Planning Update items in the forward plan and queried why there was no item shown relating to Chard. The Area Development Manager (West) commented that the six monthly updates on the Chard Regeneration Scheme, one of which was included on the agenda for this meeting, could be regarded as the updates for Chard.

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

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

69. Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2011 (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 7)

The Area Development Manager (West) summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the current financial position of the Area West budgets as at the end of September 2011.

The Area Development Manager (West) further referred to the Neroche Project and to a grant having been allocated some time ago, which was now recommended to be returned to unallocated capital balances. He reported that the grant was now not required although the gesture of support was welcomed by the organisation at the time.

In referring to new applications for community grants from local organisations, the Area Development Manager (West) informed members that the first three applications would be submitted to the Committee's meeting in January 2012 for consideration.

Cllr. Brennie Halse commented that she had previously remarked that she felt that the usage of the play area at Snowdon Park/Mitchell Gardens, Chard had been rather low. She now indicated, however, that following promotion of the facilities in association with neighbourhood police, she was pleased to note that the use of the play area had increased greatly and felt that the scheme had been money well spent.

The Area Development Manager (West) responded to members' questions regarding the process for the submission of grants by local organisations and their subsequent consideration by the Council and he agreed to recirculate details of the process to members for their information. Reference was also made to the allocation of funding towards Community Grants by the Council and comment was expressed that it could not be assumed that money would necessarily be made available next year or in future years, which would depend on how the budgets were set by the Council each year.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the current financial position of the Area West budgets for the period ending 30th September 2011 be noted;
- (2) that the £6,000 allocated to the Neroche Project be returned to unallocated capital balances.

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

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(Catherine Hood, Corporate Accountant – 01935 462157)
(catherine.hood@southsomerset.gov.uk)

70. Area West Development Work Programme Overview 2011-12 (Agenda item 8)

The Area Development Manager (West) summarised the agenda report and presented an overview of projects in the Area West Development Work Programme 2011-12. He asked members to review the work programme and inform him if there was anything that was not on the list that they expected to see or whether there were any new items they would like the Area Development Team to look at.

During the ensuing discussion, comments expressed included the following:-

- reference was made to item 15 regarding Chard Working Men's Club and the Area Development Manager (West) confirmed that the building was not listed and that the Council was working with the owners to encourage them to address the condition of the façade of the building;
- the Area Development Manager (West) noted the comments of a member with regard to the former Balfours shop in Fore Street, Chard, which had been run down and, although it had not been re-let, some action had been taken and its appearance tidied;
- in response to a comment, the Area Development Manager (West) indicated that the reference to the Chard Regeneration Scheme in item 20 regarding the Stop Line Way development had been included in error. He mentioned, however, that the Stop Line Way did form a significant part of the scheme in that it ran through the industrial part of Chard and formed an important link for people on foot or on a

bicycle. He confirmed that there was work ongoing outside of Chard in connection with the Stop Line Way.

The Committee was content to note the details of the report.

NOTED.

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

71. Chard Regeneration Scheme – Progress Report for the period April to October (2011) (Agenda item 9)

The Economic Development Manager summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the recent progress with the Chard Regeneration Scheme, particularly the period between March to October 2011.

The Economic Development Manager referred to the Chard Regeneration Scheme being in its implementation phase and involved two main areas of focus, which were running concurrently, comprising the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA) and the Town Centre Regeneration Site.

In summarising the details contained in the agenda report regarding the CEDA, the Economic Development Manager further referred to the viability report, which was being prepared pulling together all the market evidence, developer/land owner consultations, proposed delivery steps and progress made to date. He indicated that the finalised viability report would be submitted to the Planning Inspector in order to satisfy them that the Council had a robust business plan to enable the CEDA to be taken forward. The report would be completed by 2nd December 2012.

The Economic Development Manager then referred to the town centre site and in summarising the agenda report referred to a number of expressions of interest in developing the site having been submitted. Subsequent assessment of the expressions of interest had resulted in two viable proposals that could be considered. He further commented that the current economic climate had restricted the variety of options submitted for the development and although it was hoped that there would be a range of proposals put forward, it was evident that supermarkets were currently the drivers of redevelopment schemes. He mentioned that there was no new funding within the District Council to put into the scheme, which must pay for itself and if possible, provide a capital receipt for the project partners. He referred to both developers having come forward with different designs, ideas and capital receipts but each scheme was underpinned by a supermarket development. The Economic Development Manager then explained the details of each of the two proposals for members' information. In response to questions, he reported that there had been full involvement from the Highway Authority and that there would be some issues that would need to be addressed before the planning application was submitted. He also indicated that a number of issues had been raised through the public consultation process, some of which were typical development control matters, and that as the process moved forward there would be a need to ensure that as many of these issues as possible were addressed before the planning application was made.

The Economic Development Manager, in referring to the selection process, referred to a robust process having been agreed with the Council's Procurement and Risk Manager, which he outlined to the Committee. It was also noted that the public consultation event had been attended by over 200 people. He further indicated that the Project Board would make a decision on the preferred developer at its meeting on the 6th December 2011,

following which a report would be submitted to District Executive on 5th January 2012 for ratification of the final decision. Both developers had indicated that they would be able to deliver their schemes by 2014.

The Assistant Director (Economy) referred to the interest in Chard being good news with both schemes representing considerable investment. It would now be down to the Project Board to see if the submitted proposals achieved the objectives. He also referred to the Chard Eastern Development Area, which was equally important to progress.

During the ensuing discussion, a number of comments were made and the officers responded to members' questions on points of detail. Points raised included the following:-

- reference was made by a member to the current local plan referring to the provision of a transport interchange in Boden Street being appropriate and necessary and queried to what extent such provisions could be made as part of these proposals. The Economic Development Manager indicated that transport was one of the issues that the Highway Authority had raised and such details would be a matter that could be discussed with the developer;
- it was noted that one of the schemes made provision for public toilets although in either case there would be a need to ensure that there were adequate facilities;
- a member referred to there having been some public feedback expressing the view that a supermarket was not wanted as part of the town centre site proposals. The Economic Development Manager indicated that a number of people had referred to that during the public consultation event and that he had made them aware of the arguments in respect of its inclusion;
- reference was made to the range of goods that may be sold by a supermarket and to the need to consider any restrictions that may be appropriate. The Assistant Director (Economy) commented that there may be difficulty in restricting goods in development control terms but he felt that as landowners, the Council could exercise more weight in that respect;
- a member referred to one of the proposals including an hotel and the Economic Development Manager confirmed that the developer had indicated that they had an interested party for its provision;
- the Economic Development Manager gave comparisons of the size of the retail floor space between the two proposals and existing supermarkets to give members an idea of their size;
- the Economic Development Manager informed members how the comments arising from the public consultation would be picked up. He indicated that the comments were being examined and those that were significant would be presented to the Project Board when they made the decision on the preferred developer;
- a member felt that there was a need to be aware that another supermarket may introduce a very competitive element between the new and existing supermarkets, which would not help independent retailers in the town;
- the officers noted the comments of a member who referred to concerns about the space around the Methodist Church and about the town being busy at school leaving times;
- a member questioned whether the wider Chard vision for economic and community regeneration would be encompassed as part of these proposals. The Economic

Development Manager commented that he would work hard with the preferred developer to make sure that the regeneration issues were addressed where possible but ultimately there would be a balance to be struck. The Assistant Director (Economy) commented that although keeping the whole plan in mind, in terms of officer input, there was a need to initiate a project to get the momentum going;

- in response to questions regarding the Chard Eastern Development Area, the Assistant Director (Economy) indicated that a model was being worked on to ensure that the road infrastructure was provided and not just the housing development. He stated it was possible that the Council may need to consider the use of compulsory purchase powers. Members were also informed that the Chard Eastern Development Area would form part of the Core Strategy, which was to be considered by the Area Committee in the new year.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their report and the Committee noted the progress made with the Chard Regeneration Scheme since March 2011.

NOTED.

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

72. Section 106 Obligations (Agenda item 10)

The Section 106 Monitoring Officer summarised the agenda report, which provided information on Section 106 agreements relating to Area West. It was noted that agreements containing financial contributions were included within the monitoring report and that if members required any information on other Section 106 agreements they should contact the Section 106 Monitoring Officer direct.

During the ensuing discussion, the Section 106 Monitoring Officer answered members' questions on specific points of detail relating to particular Section 106 agreements mentioned in the monitoring report attached to the agenda. The officers also noted comments and responded to a number of questions regarding the monitoring of Section 106 agreements generally. Points addressed included the following:-

- reference was made to the status column within the monitoring report and members noted the purpose of that column as described by the Section 106 Monitoring Officer. The Section 106 Monitoring Officer noted the suggestion of the Chairman that the name of the lead officer responsible for the action should be included in that column;
- a member referred to the proposed MOVA traffic control scheme for the traffic lights at the junction of the A358/A30 in Chard and enquired when the work may be carried out to implement the scheme. The officers informed the Committee that, although there had been a delay, it was anticipated that the system would be implemented in January 2012;
- reference was made to the situation where money had already been collected and held by the Council but had not yet been spent in accordance with the terms of the agreement and to the potential in those circumstances for it to be returned to the developer. It was questioned whether the monitoring system incorporated a trigger to ensure that monies were spent at the appropriate time and in accordance with the terms of the agreement. The Section 106 Monitoring Officer reported that the

system allowed a forecast of dates, which acted as a trigger point to ensure that action was taken at the appropriate time. He further reported that when money was received the Council's finance team was informed of its receipt and what it was for;

- members referred to the way in which contributions from developers for leisure and recreation facilities were sought and applied as part of the planning obligation process. The Chairman referred to the Assistant Director (Health and Wellbeing) wishing to hold a briefing session for members to update them on the process of seeking and applying developer contributions for leisure facilities, which it was hoped to hold in January next year;
- reference was made to a number of trigger points shown in the monitoring report being based on the number of residential units occupied and the Section 106 Monitoring Officer informed members on ways in which those numbers may be verified.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Section 106 Monitoring Officer be noted and the actions taken in respect of the monitoring of Section 106 obligations be endorsed.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

*(Neil Waddleton, Section 106 Monitoring Officer – 01935 462603)
(neil.waddleton@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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

Cllr. Linda Vjeh referred to Chard Museum and reported on its activity during the last season. She informed members that there had been 1,868 visitors to the museum including 10 school parties. Visitor payments had amounted to around £3,500 and the museum had 50 volunteers. Initiatives had included an antiques valuation day and the museum had also benefited from sponsorship from a local caterer. There had also been over 4,000 visitors to the museum's website.

NOTED.

74. 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)*

75. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 13)

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of a planning appeal that had been received.

NOTED.

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

76. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 14)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 14th December 2011 at 5.30 p.m. at the Henhayes Centre, Crewkerne.

NOTED.

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

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Chairman