

MEETING AW.08:1213
DATE 19:12:12

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at The Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster on **Wednesday 19th December 2012.**

(5.30 p.m. – 10.15 p.m.)

Present:

Members:	Cllr. Angie Singleton	(in the Chair)
	Mike Best	Sue Osborne (from 5.35 p.m.)
	Dave Bulmer	Ric Pallister (from 5.37 p.m.)
	John Dyke	Ros Roderigo
	Jenny Kenton	Andrew Turpin
	Paul Maxwell	Linda Vjeh (left at 7.20 p.m. and returned at 8.50 p.m.)
	Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Rob Murray	Economic Development Officer
David Norris	Development Manager
Dominic Heath-Coleman	Planning Officer
Linda Hayden	Planning Officer
Andrew Gunn	Area Lead West
Amy Cater	Solicitor
Jo Morris	Committee Administrator

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

88. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st November 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

89. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Carol Goodall, Brennie Halse and Kim Turner.

90. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Cllr. Andrew Turpin declared a personal interest in planning application no. 12/03387/FUL.

91. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

Mr Andy Jacobs presented a petition to the Committee signed by 180 Norton-sub-Hamdon residents stating that they would prefer that the 10 new homes for local people currently proposed for land south of Minchinton Close are transferred to the site on New Road.

Mr Rawstone asked members of the Committee when considering the Local Plan at Full Council in January to vote against the future development in Shudrick Valley, Ilminster as the majority of residents were in favour of the Canal Way site for housing growth.

92. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

93. 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.

The Area Development Manager (West) informed members that an item had been added to the Forward Plan in March regarding Flooding, Drainage and Civil Contingencies, as requested by members at the last meeting.

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

(Resolution passed without dissent)

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

94. Update Report – Chard Regeneration Scheme (CRS) (Agenda Item 7)

The Economic Development Manager summarised the agenda report and provided members with a powerpoint presentation on the progress of the Chard Regeneration Scheme. Members noted the progress made to date on a number of phased developments.

The Chairman congratulated the Area West Development Team on the work undertaken on the original Chard Regeneration Scheme.

During the ensuing discussion a number of comments were made by the Members of the Committee which included the following:

- One member would have preferred to see further information in the report on the public transport infrastructure for each phase of the development;
- With reference to the MOVA traffic signals system, it was noted that there would be a significant volume of traffic in the summer period;
- It was felt that the design of the proposed town centre buildings needed to be unique to encourage people to the town;
- Members welcomed the report and were content with the progress made. They hoped that regular updates would be submitted to the Committee in the future;

- In referring to the design of the retail outlet, a member commented that he was pleased to see the developers and landowners coming together under one agent to progress the town centre site.

NOTED

*(David Julian, Economic Development Manager – 01935 462279)
(david.julian@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

95. Area West – Reports from Members on Outside Bodies (Agenda Item 8)

Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre

A report by Cllr. John Dyke updating members on the Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre was circulated to members at the meeting.

West One Youth and Community Centre (Crewkerne)

A report by Cllr. Angie Singleton updating members on West One Youth and Community Centre (Crewkerne) was circulated to members at the meeting. She informed members that the Crewkerne Sports and Youth Activities Ltd. (CSYAL) would not be seeking a formal appointment of an Area West Committee member to its board or an 'observer'. She commented that with the approval of the Committee she wished to continue to report periodically on the activities of the George Reynolds Centre.

A Better Crewkerne & District (ABCD)

A report by Cllr. Mike Best updating members on A Better Crewkerne & District (ABCD) was circulated at the meeting.

NOTED.

96. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda Item 9)

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)*

97. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 10)

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

NOTED.

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

98. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 16th January 2013 at Merriott Village Hall.

NOTED.

*(Jo Morris, Committee Administrator – 01935 462055)
(jo.morris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

99. Planning Applications (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee considered the applications set out in the schedule attached to the agenda. The Planning Officer gave further information at the meeting and, where appropriate, advised members of letters received as a result of consultations since the agenda had been prepared.

(Copies of all letters reported may be inspected in the planning applications files, which constitute the background papers for this item).

12/03221/FUL – Erection of 10 dwellings on land adjacent to Minchinton Close, Norton Sub Hamdon – Yarlington Housing Group

The Planning Officer explained that the proposal was for the erection of 10 dwellings on land adjacent to Minchinton Close, Norton-sub-Hamdon and that all dwellings would be 'affordable'. He updated his report as follows:

- An additional letter had been received in objection to the application but raised no new issues;
- The majority of issues raised by Mr Jacobs in a letter previously circulated to members of the Committee had been addressed in the agenda report;
- With reference to the policy requirement for a sequential test, members were informed that he was not aware of any policy and that all policies had been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework;
- In response to a letter received, it was confirmed that the application would not be 'called in' by the Secretary of State;
- Since the publication of the agenda report, a final response from the Highway Authority had been received requesting 5 additional conditions and 2 informatives together with the completion of a s278 agreement to secure the off-site highway works.

During his presentation, the Planning Officer referred to the key considerations associated with the application, which included the following:

- The proposal was acceptable under policy HG9;
- With reference to other sites, there was no requirement for a sequential test. Members were only considering the site before them and there may be other sites that could be brought forward in the future;
- There was no significant impact on visual amenity;
- The impact on residential amenity would be minimal and construction traffic could be controlled by condition;
- A number of concerns had been raised concerning drainage, Wessex Water and the SSDC Engineer had both been consulted and felt that the proposal would not make the problem any worse. With reference to the concerns raised over foul

water, there would be no additional impact from 10 additional dwellings, and the impact was considered to be the same wherever the site;

- A number of concerns had been received regarding traffic approaching the site. Highways had been consulted and raised no objections to the proposal;
- The SSDC Ecologist was satisfied with the proposals.

The Planning Officer's recommendation was for approval as outlined in the agenda report subject to the following amendments (shown in bold):

That planning application no. 12/03221/FUL be APPROVED subject to:-

- a) The prior completion of a section 106 agreement (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued to ensure that:-
1. The agreed contribution to off-site play provision is secured,
 2. To ensure that all the units are affordable and remain available long term to satisfy local need as set out by policy HG9 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and
 3. **To ensure no development takes place on site until a s.278 agreement has been entered into with the highway authority to secure the off-site highway works and a copy of the agreement provided to the LPA**

5 additional conditions and 2 informatives as outlined in the Highway Authority's representation.

The Chairman informed members of the public that several members of the Committee had recently visited the site.

In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified points of detail raised by members, which included the following:

- A public transport service was available further into the village and was within a walkable distance from the proposed site;
- The applicant had been consulted and was content with the conditions proposed by the Highway Authority.

Stuart Maunder, Chairman of Norton-sub-Hamdon Parish Council spoke in support of the application and referred to the established need for housing, the site selection and consultation process undertaken. He commented that the proposal was a fully funded scheme and hoped that members would approve the application.

Richard O'Neil, Chairman of Chiselborough Parish Council commented that the Parish Council were content with the plans but would prefer the houses to be built in Bradstone rather than brick. The site was in the best position within easy walking distance to local facilities.

Andy Jacobs, an objector to the proposal commented that he was well aware of the funding window and that there was still time to get the proposal right and hoped members would want to. He referred to the issue of drainage and failure of the sewage system, which he considered to be unacceptable and should be addressed. Reference was made to the Village Design Statement and there being four separate sites identified. He commented that Norton-sub-Hamdon Parish Council did not speak for the whole village, the petition had been signed by 180 residents, which was 5 times the level of support received by the Community Land Trust. In conclusion, Mr Jacobs asked

members to defer the application in order for a sequential test to be applied and to refer the application to the Regulation Committee. During the representations made by Mr Jacobs, a number of powerpoint slides were shown to members of the Committee.

The Committee noted the comments of Elizabeth Maunder and Jennifer Harris in support of the application. Points made included the following:

- Norton-sub-Hamdon Community Land Trust (CLT) was set up to ensure that the project could go ahead and members of the CLT had to support the scheme;
- The petition submitted was confusing as the signatories were not stating whether they were for or against the current application;
- A regular bus service operated from the village 300 yards from the proposed site;
- Every possible consideration had been given to the Village Design Statement and the proposed site would offer a sense of containment;
- The majority of residents were in favour of the proposed site;
- The use of brick would match the existing houses in Minchinton Close;
- It had been suggested that the proposal was located on the wrong side of the village, the village was inclusive and there was considered to be no wrong or right side.

The Applicant's Agent, Matt Frost commented that the application complied with the National Planning Policy Framework, was in accordance with Development Plans and addressed a clear need for affordable housing. Other sites, if found to be suitable, could still be brought forward for consideration. He urged the Committee to support the application.

Cllr. Patrick Palmer (Chairman of Area North Committee) spoke in support of the application and referred to the priority need for rural housing. He also referred to the site being identified approximately 6 years ago and commented that local residents had only raised objections in the last 6 or 7 months. Reference was made to both Parish Councils supporting the scheme and the relevant agencies consulted had raised no objections.

Cllr. Sylvia Seal (Ward Member for Norton-sub-Hamdon) commented that the Parish Council and the Community Land Trust had worked in excess of 12 years to bring the proposal forward. They had conducted themselves in a professional way and consulted SSDC legal for clarification as appropriate. The Parish Council had worked extremely hard for the community in providing facilities such as the village hall, sports facilities and play equipment. Without affordable housing, the village was in danger of losing facilities such as the local shop and school.

Cllr. John Bailey (County Councillor for Norton-sub-Hamdon) referred to the Housing Needs Survey and the need for affordable housing. He felt that there should be no delay in progressing the scheme and no increase in costs. He fully supported the application and would wish to see the houses provided to those people who had replied to the survey.

Cllr. Cathy Bakewell (County Councillor for Chiselborough) informed members that Norton-sub-Hamdon would be back in her Division from 2013. She referred to there being a lot of synergies between Chiselborough and Norton-sub-Hamdon and children from Chiselborough attended the school in Norton-sub-Hamdon. She regularly attended Chiselborough Parish Council meetings and no objections had been received from local residents. She fully supported low cost housing, considered the site to be appropriate and urged members to support the application.

The Solicitor confirmed that the Area West Committee was the correct Committee to determine the application and that there was no requirement for it to be determined by the Regulation Committee.

Ward Member, Cllr. Ric Pallister commented that there was a strong level of support from the community for the proposed development and it was possible that other areas within Norton-sub-Hamdon could be brought forward. There would be a mixture of shared ownership and rented accommodation and the design of the scheme was the best that could be achieved with the available funding. He commended the Community Land Trust for supporting the scheme and for collaborative working with the Parish Council. In conclusion, he considered there to be no planning reasons to refuse the application and therefore fully supported the recommendation to approve the application.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the Planning Officer's amended recommendation. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/03221/FUL be APPROVED subject to:-

- a) The prior completion of a section 106 agreement (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued to ensure that:-
 1. The agreed contribution to off-site play provision is secured,
 2. To ensure that all the units are affordable and remain available long term to satisfy local need as set out by policy HG9 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and
 3. To ensure no development takes place on site until a s.278 agreement has been entered into with the highway authority to secure the off-site highway works and a copy of the agreement provided to the LPA
- b) The following conditions and notes:

Those outlined in the agenda report and in addition:

- 1) No works shall commence on the development hereby permitted until details of the proposed off site highway works shown on drawing nos. 80504-101A and 80504-102A received 16 November 2012 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such works shall then be fully constructed in accordance with the approved plan, to an agreed specification before the development is first brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

- 2) The proposed estate roads, footways, footpaths, tactile paving, verges, junctions, street lighting, sewers, drains, service routes, surface water outfall, vehicle overhang margins, visibility splays, accesses, carriageway gradients, drive gradients and car parking shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with details to be approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing before their construction begins. For this purpose, plans and

sections, indicating as appropriate, the design, layout, levels, gradients, materials and method of construction shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

- 3) The proposed roads, including footpaths and turning spaces where applicable, shall be constructed in such a manner as to ensure that each dwelling before it is occupied shall be served by a properly consolidated and surfaced footpath and carriageway to at least base course level between the dwelling and existing highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

- 4) The gradients of the proposed drives to the dwellings hereby approved shall not be steeper than 1 in 10.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

- 5) Provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway, details of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Notes:

- 1) Having regard to the powers of the Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980 the applicant is advised that the creation of the new access will require a Section 184 Permit. This must be obtained from the Highway Service Manager, South Somerset Area Highway Office, Mead Avenue Houndstone Business Park, Yeovil, Tel no 0845 345 9155.
- 2) The developer should note that the works on or adjacent to the existing highway will need to be undertaken as part of a formal legal agreement with Somerset County Council. This should be commenced as soon as practicably possible, and the developer should contact Somerset County Council for information, Tel No. 0845 345 9155.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

12/02126/FUL – The erection of a doctors surgery with attached pharmacy, the conversion of existing farm buildings into 12 No. residential units, the erection of 12 No. dwelling houses and the erection of garaging and associated works, Moorlands Farm, Moorlands Road, Merriott – Mr Adrian Coats

The Planning Officer updated members that the Council's Ecologist was content with the mitigation plan and had recommended a number of conditions. He also informed Members that a representative from the Highway Authority had been asked to attend the meeting but had sadly declined the invitation. The Planning Officer with the aid of slides and photographs summarised the details of the application as set out in the report and referred to the key considerations associated with the application.

In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified points of detail raised by members, which included the following:

- Cost implications dictated the materials used for the proposed Doctors surgery and was for members to consider;
- The TRICS data included in the report did not include the pharmacy, however there would be an element of independent trips to the pharmacy;
- Vehicles leaving the proposed site would be able to turn left and right. The issue had been raised with the Highway Authority and they had considered the revised scheme to be acceptable. The road would be single track and priority would be given from the south.

Members expressed their disappointment that no highway representative was available to comment at the meeting.

The Committee then noted the comments of Roger Cooke, N Thornton-James and Caro Paine in objection to the application. Views expressed included the following:

- Concerns over severe impact on residential amenity;
- It was felt that there should only be 1 detached house;
- Concerns relating to over development;
- The planting of trees was visually pleasing;
- The size of the development had become much larger since consultation;
- No screening of bin stores;
- None of the issues raised by the Parish Council and the community had been addressed;
- Concerns over 'inevitable' traffic problems;
- Concerns of overlooking and invasion of privacy;
- It was felt that the barns should be completed before the new build.

The Committee were then addressed by Iain Hall, Ann Lawrence, Cate Le Grice Mack and Dr Roger Gilson in support of the application. Their comments included:

- Renovation of the barns was welcome;
- The size of the development prevented suitable landscaping and if one property were to be removed suitable landscaping could be achieved;
- A condition should be included for permanent landscaping in order to screen and enhance the development;
- In terms of financial contributions, it was felt that sport should be a priority;
- Merriott was in desperate need of a surgery and funds earmarked were in danger of being lost;
- The site was convenient for walking;

- A public meeting had been attended by approximately 200 people who all voted in favour of a doctors surgery;
- The plans sought to provide a mix of housing and it was hoped that some element of 'affordability' could be achieved;
- The timescale had been forced upon the applicant as the PCT would cease to operate from March and it was unlikely funding would be offered from a central fund and the site would also be lost;
- Residents supported the need for a doctors surgery in the village;
- The proposed location was ideal.

The Applicant's Agent, Ian Cox considered the proposed development, which focussed upon a sustainable development opportunity to bring back the use of the farm buildings alongside the potential to create a health centre to be an extremely beneficial scheme. The farm buildings were in bad condition and therefore the costs were intensive. He explained that several months had been spent negotiating the scheme and that on-going discussions would continue with regard to landscaping and buffering. He asked members of the Committee to support the application.

Ward Member, Cllr. Paul Maxwell thanked the Planning Officers for working hard on the planning application, which he considered to be extremely important for Merriott. He commented that the application delivered a long desired goal of a surgery, which would be a convenient service for the residents of Merriott. He referred to the conversion of the farm buildings, which he felt could be an attractive feature. Reference was also made to a number of the houses located on higher ground requesting a number of landscape conditions. In terms of planning obligations as referred to on page 75 of the agenda, Cllr Maxwell felt that Option D offered the best option for affordable housing. He also felt that the £45,000 should be allocated towards local sport. Reference was also made to the need for phasing of the development and that the surgery should be commenced at an early stage of the development.

During the ensuing discussion a number of comments were made by members, which included the following:

- Disappointment was expressed over the design of the surgery;
- It was suggested that phasing of the development should take place and that the preferred chronology should be Doctors Surgery, Farm buildings and then new build housing. It was acknowledged that phasing of the development would need to be negotiated;
- Members requested that if a suitable agreement on the phasing of the development could not be reached the application should be referred back to Committee;
- It was felt that the land should remain available for a surgery for up to 10 years;
- Members requested that the £45,000 contribution should be spent in Merriott towards the provision of youth and sport;
- Members requested additional landscaping conditions;
- Members expressed disappointment over the proposed highway access to the site and would prefer separate entrance and exit routes;
- It was hoped that best endeavours could be used to bring forward additional units for affordable housing;
- It was suggested that siting of the bin store and screening should be negotiated including clear signage.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the officer's report subject to:

- Additional ecology conditions and enhanced landscaping conditions;
- A Section 106 Agreement to be agreed in consultation with the Ward Member and the Chair of Area West Committee to address:
 - Phasing of the development (Doctors Surgery, Farm Buildings and then Housing);
 - If the Doctors Surgery failed to be developed in accordance with the agreed phasing the site should be kept available for a Doctors Surgery for 10 years;
 - Option D was the preferred S106 package with contributions to be spent in Merriott rather than strategically;
 - That the applicant use best endeavours to work with the Home Communities Agency (HCA) and a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to obtain grant funding;
 - That the application be referred back to Committee if phasing of the development could not be agreed.

On being put to the vote the proposal was carried 8 in favour and 2 against.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/02126/FUL be APPROVED as per the Officer's recommendation subject to:-

- a) The prior completion of a Section 106 planning obligation to be agreed in consultation with the Ward Member and Chair of Area West Committee (in a form acceptable to the Council's Solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued to cover the following items/issues:
 - 1 The provision of affordable housing with the applicant using best endeavours to obtain grant funding;
 - 2 A contribution towards the local provision of sport, play and youth facilities in Merriott as set out in Option D in the Officer's report;
 - 3 Phasing of the development;
 - 4 The site of the Doctors surgery should remain available for the provision of a Doctor's surgery for 10 years should the surgery not be developed in accordance with the agreed phasing.
- b) The conditions outlined in the agenda report plus additional ecology conditions and enhanced landscaping conditions.

(Voting: 8 in favour, 2 against)

12/03387/FUL - Change of use of land to B2 (General Industrial) and the erection and installation of concrete batching and mixing plant (Revised Application), Land Former Goods Yard Chard Junction Station Road Chard Junction – Mr Dean Gardiner

Cllr. Andrew Turpin reiterated his personal interest in the application.

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the report and referred to the key considerations associated with the application.

In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified points of detail raised by members, which included the following:

- New build associated with the application would be for a small office building;
- The site was previously in industrial use and was associated with coal use;
- Chapters 1 and 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework supported applications of this type;
- SSDC's Environmental Protection Unit was responsible for controlling the process of concrete batching and the applicant would be unable to operate without a permit;
- A clean up restriction would not normally be conditioned;
- There was no requirement to consult SSDC's Economic Department, as the proposed development was classed as industrial development.

The Committee then noted the comments of David Gordon and Mr H N Best, in objection to the application. Views expressed included the following:

- There were no overall plans for the movement of freight;
- The re-opening of the station should not be inhibited and the site should remain available for the future possibility of freight use;
- If the proposed growth development in Chard was achieved, there would be more demand for railway use over the next 20 years.

Mr Brian Darch spoke in support of the application and commented that the aggregate sand to be used by the cement works would come from a mile up the road.

The Applicant's agent, Roy Lewis commented that the development was a good use of the land and if the company failed the land would still be viable with no impact on the environment. The access road and parking would enhance the area and if the application was approved the business would supply local builders.

Ward Member, Cllr. Andrew Turpin referred to the importance of providing effective transport and felt that the site could be used as an opportunity for providing the community with a rail service, the station could potentially serve 20,000 people within a 3 mile radius. Reference was also made to evidence that the demand for rail use was growing and should be borne in mind when looking at potential station sites. He also believed that there was an increasing demand to move freight by rail.

During the ensuing discussion, a number of members supported the application and felt that the installation of concrete works would improve the site. Reference was made to the comments in the report that if in future the station were to be re-opened, it would be situated away from the proposed application site. Comment was also expressed that the track was unsuitable for freight use and would require massive realignment and there was no robust evidence for need.

One member against the application supported the views of the objectors and felt there should be no development on the site which could prevent the re-opening of the station.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the Planning Officer's recommendation. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried 9 in favour and 2 against.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/03387/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer's recommendation and subject to the conditions outlined in the agenda report.

(Voting: 9 in favour, 2 against)

**12/03902/FUL - Change of use from agricultural to a mixed use of agricultural and deer rescue centre to include the erection and siting of associated building (Retrospective), Mahe Farm, Dunsham Lane, Wayford – Mr & Mrs B Titchener
It was proposed and seconded to approved**

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the report and referred to the key considerations associated with the application, which included the following:

- The proposal was acceptable in terms of landscape impact;
- The site was extremely well hidden with no impact upon residential amenity;
- The application represented an acceptable form of farm diversification;
- In order to recognise that levels of activity at the site may increase, a condition requiring the centre to run on an appointment only basis was being proposed.

In response to a member question, the Planning Officer confirmed that there were no risks associated with the change of use. The application was classed as ‘major major’ as the site was over 2 hectares.

Ward Member, Cllr. Sue Osborne spoke in support of the application and felt the proposal supported all relevant policies.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the Planning Officer’s recommendation. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/03902/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer’s recommendation and subject to the conditions outlined in the agenda report.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

12/03892/FUL - Installation and operation of a 2.41 hectare solar farm and associated infrastructure, including PV solar panels, mounting frames, inverters, transformers, fencing and pole mounted security cameras, Land at North Perrott Fruit Farm, Willis Lane, North Perrott – Mr Nick Boyle

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. In updating the report, she informed members that Conditions 9 and 15 were no longer required and that the applicant had requested 6 months to be added on the duration of the planning permission to allow decommissioning of the site.

The Planning Officer referred to the key considerations associated with the application, which included the following:

- The main issue related to the land being classified as Grade 2 and that Policy EC1 allowed sustainability considerations to outweigh the agricultural land value;
- In referring to the landscape character and visual amenity, the proposed development site would be well screened and the array would tie in with the linear character of the surrounding area;
- In terms of residential amenity, the proposal would not result in any direct overlooking or noise and disturbance;

- The Ecological Survey found no evidence of badger setts within the vicinity of the site. A number of conditions had been proposed to assess any new activity and to protect hedgerows;
- The Highway Authority was content that the construction phase was for a limited period and did not consider it reasonable to raise an objection.

In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified points of detail raised by members, which included the following:

- With reference to the comments raised by the CPRE as outlined on page 107 of the agenda report, it was noted that Policy EC1 of the Local Plan and National Policy Planning Framework was not prescriptive and that policy supported the proposals where the land would not permanently be lost;
- Issues associated with land maintenance including the grazing of sheep could form part of the Management Plan;
- The applicant could reapply for planning permission after 25 years.

Mr H N Best representing the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) referred to the land being in the category of 'Best and Most Versatile' and the importance of food production and that it was a mistake to throw away the land. He also referred to solar panels only producing power during daylight.

The Applicant, Penny Laurenson explained that the provision of a solar farm on the site was an excellent opportunity without resulting in permanent removal of the land. It was the intention for the proposed development to be constructed within 6 weeks and once completed maintenance would be minimal. The additional six months would allow for decommissioning of the site at the end of the 25 year period. She referred to the maintenance of the site and explained that the land would be mown 4 times a year and there would be specific contractors appointed to maintain the site. She commented that sheep grazing could not be considered as the landowner did not own any sheep.

Ward Member, Cllr Ric Pallister expressed his support for the application. He commented about the need to encourage farm diversification and stated that the Fruit Farm was struggling in the current climate and that the proposal would allow the business to continue operating.

During the ensuing discussion the majority of members expressed their support for the application. They felt that the proposed site was situated in an ideal location; it was well screened and could be returned to agricultural land in the future.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the Planning Officer's amended recommendation to remove Conditions 9 and 15 and the addition of 6 months on the duration of planning permission. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried 10 in favour with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/03892/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer's recommendation and subject to the conditions outlined in the agenda report subject to the removal of conditions 9 and 15 and an additional 6 months on the duration of the planning permission.

(Voting: 10 in favour, 1 abstention)

12/03794/FUL - Alterations, erection of two storey rear extension and porch to principal elevation, Avill House, Chaffcombe, Chard – Mr Adrian Noon & Marie Ainsworth

The Planning Officer, 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 and commented that the proposal would not result in any harmful overlooking or loss of privacy and there had been no objections from any neighbouring property. The Officer's recommendation was for approval.

Ward Member, Cllr. Sue Osborne expressed her support for the application and commented that the proposed extension was no different from other previously approved extensions.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the application as per the Officer's recommendation. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED: That planning application no. 12/03794/FUL be APPROVED as per the officer's recommendation and subject to the conditions outlined in the agenda report.

(Voting: unanimous)

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Chairman