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### **South Somerset District Council**

**Draft Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at the Henhayes Centre, South Street Car Park, Crewkerne on **Wednesday 20th March 2013**.

(5.15 p.m. – 8.15 p.m.)

**Present:**

**Members:** Cllr. Angie Singleton (in the Chair)

|                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| John Dyke (from 6.30 p.m.) | Ric Pallister (from 5.35 p.m.) |
| Brennie Halse              | Ros Roderigo                   |
| Jenny Kenton               | Kim Turner (from 5.45 p.m.)    |
| Paul Maxwell               | Linda Vijeh (until 8.00 p.m.)  |
| Sue Osborne                | Martin Wale                    |

**Officers:**

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Andrew Gillespie | Area Development Manager (West)       |
| Greg Venn        | Conservation Officer                  |
| Adron Duckworth  | Conservation Manager                  |
| Paul Philpott    | Community Regeneration Officer (West) |
| Roger Meecham    | Engineer                              |
| Adrian Noon      | Area Lead North/East                  |
| Andrew Gunn      | Area Lead West                        |
| Amy Cater        | Solicitor                             |
| Jo Manley        | Policy Planner                        |
| Rob Murray       | Economic Development Officer          |
| Jo Morris        | Democratic Services Officer           |

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

### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** that the following item be considered in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under Paragraph 3: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)."

### **126. Historic Buildings at Risk (Agenda Item 1) (Confidential)**

The Conservation Officer summarised the agenda report, which outlined the work of the Conservation Team in respect of historic buildings at risk and updated members on current cases in Area West. The Committee was asked to note and comment on the report.

The Conservation Officer, with the aid of photographs, then detailed a number of examples of case work relating specifically to historic buildings at risk in Area West.

The Conservation Officer responded to members' questions on points of detail regarding specific cases.

Members requested a further update report in six months.

**NOTED.**

*(Greg Venn, Conservation Officer – 01935 462595)  
(greg.venn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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### **127. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

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### **128. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 3)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Best, Dave Bulmer, Carol Goodall, Nigel Mermagen and Andrew Turpin.

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### **129. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 4)**

Cllr. Kim Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application no. 12/03979/OUT, as three family members were employed by Daido Industrial Bearings (Europe) Ltd. which operated from an adjacent site to the application site. She indicated that she would address the Committee prior to leaving the room.

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### **130. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 5)**

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public.

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### **131. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

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### **132. Area West Committee - Forward Plan (Agenda Item 7)**

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 the Oaklands Avenue planning application was due to be considered at the April Area West Committee meeting to be held at Holyrood School, Chard. The Mount Hindrance planning application was due to be considered at the May Area West Committee meeting also to be held at Holyrood School, Chard.

**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)*

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### **133. Area West – Community Grants (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 8)**

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered applications for “tapering” revenue grants from eligible organisations in Area West for 2013/14. The report related to the fourth and final year of the tapering grant strategy.

The Area Development Manager (West) informed members that the strategy put in place to ensure local community organisations did not come to rely on an annual grant from SSDC as a source of sustainable long term core funding had been a success. All of the community organisations continued to provide benefits to their local community. He commented that he was minded to approve the grants recommended under delegated authority and was satisfied that all the organisations had met the criteria laid down in the SSSDC grants policy.

The Committee was content to approve the applications for grant set out in the agenda report. Members also indicated that they were content to delegate the decision on the award of grants to the remaining eligible organisations to the Area Development Manager (West).

**RESOLVED:** (1) that the award of grants as shown below be approved:

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Chard Museum               | £1,710 |
| Chard Young Peoples Centre | £ 883  |

(2) that the award of grants to the remaining eligible organisations be delegated to the Area Development Manager (West)

**Reason:** To determine applications received by the Council for financial assistance.

*(Voting: Unanimous)*

*(Paul Philpott, Community Development Officer (West) – 01460 260359)  
(paul.philpott@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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### **134. Flooding, Drainage & Civil Contingencies (Agenda Item 9)**

The Engineer summarised the agenda report, which provided an update on aspects of flood and water management, including recent changes to the various roles, powers and duties of land drainage. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, he informed members of the following:

- Assessment of the rainfall during 2012 and how it compared with the averages from 1981 – 2010 (2012 being 135% higher than normal)
- Principal watercourses in Area West
- Flood Risk Areas – Fluvial and surface water

- Sandbag deliveries in 2012 including the use of alternative sandbags
- Civil Contingencies Role
- Emergency Planning
- Out of Hours Service

He also referred to the Pitt Review and the lessons to be learnt from the floods of 2007, the new Flood & Water Management Act 2010, current SSDC Policies and Procedures, Routine Maintenance and Capital and Minor improvements.

The Engineer apologised that the Civil Contingencies and Business Continuity Manager could not attend the meeting but was happy to answer any questions on her behalf.

The Engineer updated members on the County Flooding Summit he had recently attended in Taunton. The aim of the Summit was to look at the lessons to be learnt from the 2012 flooding and to identify the role of each organisation.

During the ensuing discussion, the Engineer noted the comments of members and responded to questions on points of detail. Points raised included the following:-

- Landowners had responsibility to maintain watercourses and there were Environmental Regulations dictating how residents should remove silt from streams;
- It was recognised that the clearance of debris coming off fields was a challenge to clear. The issue of prioritising the clearance of road gullies was discussed at the Flooding Summit and Parish Councils would be consulted as part of the process;
- Inflatable sandbags were reusable and capable of deflating to half their normal size for storage purposes. Old fashioned sandbags could normally only be used for one flood;
- A member felt that there was an element of self-help required from the parishes to recognise which ditches/gullies needed to be cleared. Some parishes were already very conscious and taking on the responsibility of checking and clearing drains.
- In the recent flooding some parishes had established local storage/collection points for sandbags and it was felt that this was an area to be expanded upon in the future, however one of the biggest issues was moving sandbags from the Lufton store. It was also recognised that there needed to be some control over distribution;
- The County Flooding Summit was a scrutiny event with the majority of follow up work being led by members and in particular scrutiny to ensure that the outcomes were appropriate for the community;
- A member commented on how well the Streetscene Team had worked with SCC in dealing with the recent flooding.

The Chairman and members of the Committee thanked the Engineer for his report.

**NOTED.**

*(Roger Meecham, Engineer – 01935 462069)*

*(roger.meecham@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

*Pam Harvey, Civil Contingencies & Business Continuity Manager – 01935 462303)*

*(pam.harvey@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

### 135. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda Item 10)

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)*

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### 136. Planning Applications (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee considered the application 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).

#### **12/03979/OUT – The erection of a mix of two, three and four bedroom dwellings and new access, Former Factory, Winterhay Lane, Ilminster – Powrmatic Ltd**

Cllr. Kim Turner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application no. 12/03979/OUT, as three family members were employed by Daido Industrial Bearings (Europe) Ltd. which operated from an adjacent site to the application site. She indicated that she would address the Committee prior to leaving the room.

The Planning Officer updated members that he had received a further letter by e-mail from the Agent, Mr Rackham, which had also been sent to all members of the Committee. He referred to the plan on page 59 of the agenda illustrating shop vacancies and confirmed that all premises were now occupied. In referring to planning permission granted for the Hort Bridge site in Ilminster, he clarified that permission had not been issued or signed.

In response to a member comment, the Planning Officer summarised the key points outlined in Mr Rackham's letter.

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

- The agent was happy to address the various issues raised by the Highway Authority;
- It was considered that there was adequate car parking provision provided and the layout was acceptable;
- Conditions could be attached to deal with ecology and drainage issues;
- The noise assessment undertaken had concluded that noise levels emitted from the Daido site were acceptable;
- Environmental Health had raised no objections, therefore, based on the evidence provided there were insufficient grounds to refuse the application on noise issues;
- Economic Development and Planning Policy had both objected to the application on the grounds of loss of employment land. A recent employment survey of businesses in

Iminster was undertaken demonstrating that there were four Iminster companies interested in relocating to the Winterhay Lane site and particularly demanded small scale units;

- It was considered that the loss of employment land significantly outweighed the five year housing land supply issue;
- There were concerns as to whether the Hort Bridge site in Iminster was deliverable and immediately available;
- The Planning Officer had indicated that he was more than willing to consider a mixed use site however members could only consider the submitted application.

The Planning Officer's recommendation was for refusal.

The Policy Planner addressed the Committee with regard to the planning policy objection to the proposed development. Points raised included the following:

- The evidence presented as part of the survey work demonstrated reasonable prospects for the site being used for employment purposes;
- The Winterhay Lane had good access to broadband adding to the reason to prevent total loss of the site;
- The survey identified four companies interested in small office space in Iminster, who were then further contacted by the Community Regeneration Officer. All of the companies had indicated that if the site was for mixed use they would be interested in taking a scheme forward;
- The proposal was contrary to the principles of promoting balanced communities and sustainable development;
- Planning Policy had always supported a mixed use scheme on the site.

The Economic Development Officer addressed the Committee with regard to SSDC's Economic Development Team's recommendation of refusal. He also responded to some of the points raised in the Agent's letter. Reference was made to the survey work undertaken, other sites in Iminster and the key aspect of the SuperFast Broadband upgrade.

In response to questions, members were informed that the current application site was not allocated in the Local Plan.

Mr Stuart Rackham, Agent, representing Pegasus Group informed members that considerable pre-application discussions had taken place and that he had also met with the Parish Council on several occasions. He stated key policy ME6 which seeks to protect loss of employment land where it would have a significant adverse effect on employment opportunities and referred to the alternative Hort Bridge site allocated within the Local Plan. Reference was also made to the site being marketed for six years, NPPF and the reuse of brownfield sites, emerging policy and the shortfall in the five year housing land supply. He also referred to the weight of the survey work being misinterpreted.

Mr Nigel Jones, Agent, representing Chesterton Humberts referred to the marketing of the site and commented that no single developer had come forward to look at the site. He commented that the site was not viable and would therefore not come forward for employment use.

Mr Nick Lumber, Applicant, representing Powrmatic Ltd. informed members of the history and nature of the business. The business had consolidated onto one site at Hort Lane having less impact on the residents of Winterhay Lane. He commented that money from the sale of the land would be re-invested back into the business in order to aid future

expansion plans, remain competitive and secure existing and new employment opportunities.

Ward Member, Cllr. Kim Turner commented that there was demand for small employment units in Ilminster and it was not known when the other allocated site would be delivered. She also expressed concerns relating to the effect of the proposed housing on the adjoining business including the potential of noise complaints from residents, which could result in the loss of a major employer in the town. Reference was also made to schools being under increasing pressure from the proposed housing development and other developments in the town.

During the ensuing discussion, the majority of members supported the officer's recommendation and made a number of comments which included the following:

- There was a need to create sustainable and balanced communities;
- There would be further housing land allocated through the emerging Local Plan;
- The site was immediately available and deliverable for employment use;
- The site was well related to existing and future housing;
- The site offered easy access to the A303 and A358;
- The Council was not far short of the 5 year housing land supply target;
- There was already a sufficient number of houses in Ilminster;
- Impact on local schools capacity.

Members against the officer's recommendations referred to the following issues:

- There had been a number of letters received in objection to the development however loss of employment land was not a major concern to local residents;
- There were no noise concerns with regard to the adjacent employment premises;
- There was lack of interest from objectors;
- The Town Council approved the application;
- The car parking issue had been addressed;
- The issue of school capacity was a problem across the whole of Somerset;
- The site had been well marketed and was viable for housing.

The Area Lead (North/East) advised members that the para.123 of the NPPF seeks to prevent existing businesses becoming constrained by restrictions put on them by changes in nearby land uses since they were established. This could form the basis of refusal. The case officer stressed that there was no objection on the basis of residential amenity from the Environmental Protection Officer.

It was proposed and seconded to refuse the application as per the Officer's recommendation. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried 6 in favour and 2 against.

**RESOLVED:** That planning application no. 12/03979/OUT be REFUSED as per the officer's recommendation detailed in the agenda report.

*(Voting: 6 in favour, 2 against)*

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

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April at Holyrood School, Chard.

**NOTED.**

*(Jo Morris, Democratic Services Officer – 01935 462055)*  
*(jo.morris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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Chairman