

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at The Shrubbery, Ilminster on **Wednesday 18 February 2015.**

(5.00 p.m. - 7.05 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Councillor Angie Singleton (Chairman)

Mike Best	Nigel Mermagen (until 6.30pm)
Dave Bulmer	Sue Osborne
John Dyke	Ros Roderigo
Carol Goodall	Andrew Turpin (until 6.30pm)
Brennie Halse	Linda Vijeh (until 6.30pm)
Paul Maxwell	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Greg Venn	Conservation Officer
Adron Duckwoth	Conservation Manager
Catherine Hansford	Welfare Benefits Team Leader
Emma Meecham	Planning Assistant
Andrew Gunn	Area Lead (West)
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

147. Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda Item 1)

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)."

148. Historic Buildings at Risk (Confidential) (Agenda Item 2)

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.

149. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21st January 2015 (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved were signed by the Chairman, as a correct record of the proceedings.

150. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jenny Kenton, Ric Pallister and Kim Turner.

151. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Nigel Mermagen declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 13: Planning application 14/05486/FUL 7 Court Farm Close, Winsham, as he lived opposite the property. He confirmed that he would leave the room and take no part in the debate or voting on this item.

152. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 6)

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

153. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman advised that she had received a response from the District Councils Network in reply to the Committee's letter regarding Section 106 obligations relating to the Bradfords site planning application. The letter accepted the Committee's concerns and said they were doing all they could to lobby the Government on the issues.

154. Area West Committee - Forward Plan (Agenda Item 8)

The Area Development Manager advised of the following amendments / additions to the Area West Forward Plan:-

- Report on the Ilminster Forum – verbal report from the appointed Member only.
- Two new Community Right to Bid registration applications – March 2015
- Section 106 planning obligations report – may be brought forward to March 2015

Members were content to note the Forward Plan as outlined in the agenda, together with the amendments as detailed above.

RESOLVED: That the Area West Committee Forward Plan be noted as attached to the agenda subject to the above amendments.

155. **SSDC Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset (Agenda Item 9)**

The Welfare Benefits Team Leader provided Members with a presentation of the work of the Welfare Benefits Team. She advised that their successes included:-

- The team secured eight times the cost of the service in additional welfare benefits for clients.
- The Team had a 96% success rate of welfare benefit cases taken to Tribunal level.
- The outreach service in Area West was very well attended.
- The team had saved 7 tenancies and maintained a further 35.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau were now based at Petters House in Yeovil and were working in partnership with the Welfare Benefits Team.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted that

- SSDC had more households affected by the Benefit Cap, Spare Room Subsidy and households in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments in Somerset because it had a higher and denser population.
- The amount of Spare Room Subsidy depended upon an individual's circumstances.
- Tenants affected by the Spare Room Subsidy who were willing to downsize their property were given priority on the housing register and could also claim a Discretionary Housing Payment, which could be a one-off payment or could be an ongoing payment.
- Universal Credit would be introduced in South Somerset on 20th April and it was estimated that around 100 claimants would be affected in the first year.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked the Welfare Benefits Team Leader for attending and providing an informative presentation.

NOTED.

156. **Area West Development Plan and Budget Progress Report (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 10)**

The Area Development Manager drew Members attention to the list of projects being supported by the Area Development team and the grants awarded. He noted that Members had earlier allocated £5,000 towards a feasibility study of 7 – 13 Fore Street, Chard however, the cost of the study had increased to £7,500 so a further £2,500 was recommended to be allocated to the project.

In response to a question, the Area Development Manager confirmed that the ground investigation work at Forton, commissioned by Area West Committee, would be completed shortly. This would inform the best course for delivery of community facilities so it was prudent to keep the funding allocation until the outcome of that work was known.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the current Area West Capital Programme and Reserve be noted;
 2. That a further £2,500 be allocated from the Area West Reserve towards the costs of the study of 7 – 13 Fore Street, Chard; and
 3. That the current position on community grants and other project budgets held by Area West be noted.

Reason: To note the current Area West Capital Programme and to agree an allocation from the Area West Reserve.

(voting: unanimous in favour)

157. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of two planning appeals, which had been dismissed.

NOTED.

158. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined by Committee (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications to be determined by the Committee.

159. Planning Application 14/05486/FUL - 7 Court Farm Close, Winsham (Agenda Item 13)

Application Proposal: Alterations to existing dormer window, formation of additional dormer window to front elevation and the erection of car port.

(Councillor Nigel Mermagen, having earlier declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room during consideration of this item).

The Planning Assistant introduced the report with the aid of slides and photographs and summarised the details of the application as set in the agenda report. She advised that two further letters of objection had been received, citing the detrimental effect upon the area and the precedence which it would set in a conservation area. The key considerations were visual amenity, impact on conservation area, highway safety and residential amenity and her recommendation was to grant permission subject to conditions.

In response to questions from Members, the Planning Assistant and the Area Lead Planning Officer confirmed that:-

- No additional fences or walls were permitted in the Close under the original planning permission.
- Building Regulations would not be required to carry out the work.

- The Conservation Area pre-dated the building of the Close.
- The proposal would still be acceptable in planning terms if it was within the designated Conservation Area.

The Committee were then addressed by Mr J Stevens and Mr J Chance in objection to the application. Their comments included:-

- The 41 listed monuments in the village were under threat from the principle of the development.
- The proposal would not solve the issue that the existing garage was too small. The existing garage could be extended or remodelled instead.
- The proposed car port would be a substantial structure with an infilled gable.
- The SSDC design guide said that garages and car ports should be 1m back from the front of a property.
- The car port could be fenced in and used for other purposes.

The Committee were then addressed by Mr M Taylor, Agent for the applicant. His comments included:-

- The existing front elevation of the property lacked design and balance and the existing dormer window was out of balance.
- The two proposed dormer windows were within ratio and would be constructed using bespoke materials. To prevent any overlooking, they could be glazed with obscure glass.
- The car port would be a bespoke architectural feature built with oak posts and a slate roof and would enhance the property.

The Ward Member, Councillor Sue Osborne, said that no-one had any issue with the two dormer windows but the car port was a problem in the small cul-de-sac. She said if the Committee were minded to support the application then there should be no more gates or enclosure permitted around the car port.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Some Members felt the dormer windows were an improvement in the Close and there were no valid reasons to refuse the application whereas others felt the proposal set a precedent in a Conservation Area and the strength of local opposition should be taken into account. It was proposed and seconded to approve the application, subject to an additional condition to ensure that the car port would not be enclosed by any fence, wall or structure without express planning permission, and, on being put to the vote, was carried (voting: 6 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions).

RESOLVED: That permission be granted for the following reason:-

01. The proposals, by reason of scale, location, design and materials do not adversely affect visual amenity, residential amenity or highway safety in accordance with the aims and objectives of saved policies ST5, ST6 and EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the National Policy Planning Framework Chapters 7 and 12.

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans Drawings No 510/14/A, 510/14/B, 510/14/C and 510/14/D.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the proper interests of planning.

3. The carport hereby permitted shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicle in connection with the attached dwelling

Reason: In the interests of highway safety to accord with saved policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order) no alterations, including enclosing the two open sides, shall be made to the car port hereby approved without the express grant of planning permission

Reason: To preserve the setting of the conservation area in accordance with saved policy EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

(voting: 6 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions)

160. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee would be held on Wednesday 18th March 2015 at The Guildhall, Chard.

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Chairman