

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held at the **Long Sutton Village Hall** on **Wednesday 23 September 2015**.

(2.00 pm - 4.00 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Shane Pledger (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Crispin Raikes
Neil Bloomfield	Jo Roundell Greene
Adam Dance	Dean Ruddle
Graham Middleton	Sue Steele
Tiffany Osborne	Derek Yeomans
Stephen Page	

**Officers:**

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Adrian Noon	Area Lead (North/East)
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
Nick Head	Planning Officer
Teresa Oulds	Neighbourhood Development Officer (North)

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

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**59. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

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**60. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sylvia Seal.

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**61. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

At the time the item was discussed, Councillor Dean Ruddle declared a personal interest in Agenda item 15: Planning Application 15/03374/FUL: Lawrences Farm, West End, Somerton, as a member of the Somerton Town Council who had submitted comments on the application. He clarified that he was not a member of the Planning Sub-Committee who had submitted the Town Councils representations.

**62. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 4)**

Members noted that the next meeting of Area North Committee was scheduled for 2.00pm on Wednesday 28 October 2015 at the Edgar Hall, Somerton.

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**63. Public question time (Agenda Item 5)**

Mr P Thompson, a resident of Over Stratton, stated that Wessex Water were due to close the road through the village from 5<sup>th</sup> October to carry out essential maintenance, however, there had been no communication on how essential services like carers visiting the elderly, emergency vehicles or refuse and recycling vehicles would be able to access properties during this time. He asked if the Ward Members could assist in communicating information to residents.

The Vice Chairman advised that residents should have right of access to their properties during the works and he suggested contacting the County Councillor for further information.

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**64. Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman advised that he had recently attended the opening of the new youth park at High Ham and the all-weather grass pitch at Huish Academy. He said both facilities were first class and he was pleased to note that the all-weather grass pitch was already very popular with many bookings.

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**65. Reports from members (Agenda Item 7)**

Councillor Sue Steele reported that Ilton had benefitted from two SSDC play days arranged during the school holidays and asked the committee to note her thanks to Stewart Talbot for his work. She further reported that she had recently been delighted to open the newly refurbished play area in Ilton, for which she thanked Rob Parr, the Senior Play and Youth Facilities Officer, for his work in overseeing the completion of the project.

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**66. Grant to Montacute Village Hall for Village Hall Accessibility Project (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 8)**

The Neighbourhood Development Officer introduced the report and outlined the refurbishment work which had already been carried out at the hall and the final project to improve wheelchair accessibility and upgrade the disabled toilets. She said that the Parish Council had promised 41% of the cost and local fundraising had increased this to 49%. She asked that Members support a grant for the remaining amount of £4,830.

The Committee were then addressed by Julia Furney, the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. She said there was huge community spirit to complete the project with many people donating their time for free. In response to a question regarding internet provision, she confirmed that the hall benefitted from a digital projector and laptop facilities and had many bookings through Somerset County Council for training courses.

Following a brief discussion, Members were fully supportive of the project and unanimously agreed the grant funding.

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £4,830 be awarded to Montacute Village Hall towards the cost of essential improvements to the village hall, the grant to be allocated from the Area North Programme for Local Priority Schemes, subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (Appendix A).

**Reason:** To enable Montacute Village Hall to complete the work to improve access to the hall (Montacute Village Hall Accessibility Project).

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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**67. Strode College Community Education Advisory Committee - Appointment of a Member (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 9)**

The Area Development Manager stated that the Strode College Community Education Advisory Committee met 4 times per year and she asked that someone with an interest in Community Education volunteer to represent SSDC.

Councillor Crispin Raikes indicated that he was willing to represent SSDC on the Committee and this was unanimously confirmed by Members.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Crispin Raikes be appointed to serve on the Strode College Community Education Advisory Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2015-16.

**Reason:** To appointment a representative from SSDC to the Strode College Community Education Advisory Committee.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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**68. Assessment of Nominations Under Community Right to Bid - Former School Site and Playing Field - Barrington (Agenda Item 10)**

The Area Development Manager advised that although the report was for information, it was the first Community Right to Bid application which new Councillors had experienced and this was an opportunity to ask questions.

The Ward Member, Councillor Derek Yeomans, outlined the difficulties which had been experienced in establishing exactly who owned the land and the school buildings as they were a valuable site within the village and it was hoped to preserve them so they could not be sold for development.

The Area Development Manager confirmed that for the purposes of the nomination Somerset County Council were the landowners of the playing field and the school buildings were owned by a Trust. She also confirmed that the template for presenting completed assessments would be checked to include the named landowner in future.

Members were content to note the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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**69. Area North - Priorities for the Area Development Plan - 2015/16 (Agenda Item 11)**

The Area Development Manager provided Members with a power point presentation of draft priorities for the area as identified in the report and suggested that an informal workshop be held to discuss these and more detailed local work across the area which the committee could support through its budgets and influence.

In response to questions from Members, the Area Development Manager advised that the Market Town Investment Group (MTIG) were focussing on economic development at the current time and its funding came partly from the District Executive capital programme and partly from the Mary Portas High Street Innovation Fund.

During a short discussion, Members agreed to hold an informal workshop to further discuss their future local priorities. The preferred timing was early to mid November. The Area Development Manager noted that the report back would follow on from the workshop as soon as practicable. The date would be confirmed shortly.

**RESOLVED:** That the Area North Committee agreed to:

1. hold an informal workshop to further discuss local priorities
  2. note that a final set of priorities and a mid-year update on the Area Development Plan and budget position would be presented to the committee in November 2015.
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**70. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12)**

The Area Development Manager (North) advised that a presentation on the Licensing Service would be added to the Forward Plan for the December meeting and also a Countryside Service report and an update from the Police would be added at a future date. She confirmed that no date had yet been agreed for the Conservation Service including the listed buildings at risk report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Area North Committee Forward Plan be noted.

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**71. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 13)**

Members noted the report that detailed recent planning appeals which had been lodged, dismissed or allowed.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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**72. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined By Committee (Agenda Item 14)**

Members noted the schedule of planning applications to be determined at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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**73. Planning Application 15/03374/FUL - Lawrences Farm, West End, Somerton. (Agenda Item 15)**

***Proposal: Erection of 3 dwellings and associated parking (revised scheme to withdrawn application 14/03026/FUL)***

The Planning Officer presented the application as detailed in the agenda, noting that the site already had permission for 8 dwellings, of which 6 were completed. The proposal was to change a single storey bungalow into two semi-detached houses and change the orientation of one further house. He confirmed the Highway Authority were happy with the parking and access arrangements and his recommendation was to approve the application.

Mr R Harris, a local resident, spoke in opposition to the application. He said the changes proposed to plot 1 would have a detrimental effect on the properties opposite and would loom over nearby bungalows. He asked if permission was granted, that a condition be included to ensure the site was completed within 1 year.

Mr J Michell also spoke in opposition to the application. He disagreed with the officers report and its conclusions and said the 6 properties already built should not be used as a yardstick for the remainder of the development.

One of the Ward Members, Councillor Steven Page, said the original application for 8 dwellings was acceptable but he expressed his concern that an additional dwelling would be overdevelopment of the site. He also expressed concern at the use of render for the external walls.

Councillor Dean Ruddle, the other Ward Member, said the proposed two storey semi-detached properties would have an overbearing effect on the houses opposite.

The Area Lead Planning Officer clarified that, whilst the 6 properties were under construction, the builder had chosen to install loft conversions which had been regularised during the build. The existing 6 properties must be considered as a yardstick to the current application in regard to height and materials.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Some Members felt that there was sufficient land and good access whilst others felt that houses would be overbearing on the bungalows and houses opposite.

It was proposed to refuse permission, contrary to the officer recommendation, because the increased level of development would have an adverse impact upon neighbouring properties and is contrary to Policy EQ2. This recommendation was seconded and on being put to the vote, was carried (voting: 7 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention).

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 15/03374/FUL be REFUSED, contrary to the officer recommendation, for the following reasons:

The proposal by reason of the increase level of development and the layout and height of the dwellings would have an adverse impact on the streetscene and the amenities and outlook of the neighbouring residential properties. As such the proposal is contrary to policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028.

*(Voting: 7 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention)*

At the conclusion of the vote, Councillors Jo Roundell Greene, Crispin Raikes and Derek Yeomans asked that it be recorded that they did not vote against the officer's recommendation.

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**74. Planning Application 15/03046/FUL - Former Environment Agency Depot, Back Lane, Curry Rivel. (Agenda Item 16)**

It was noted that this application had been withdrawn from the Agenda.

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**75. Planning Application 15/01151/FUL - Land Adj. Hillside Farm, West Henley Road, High Ham. (Agenda Item 17)**

***Proposal: The erection of an agricultural workers dwelling adjacent to Hillside Farm***

The Planning Officer reminded Members that they had deferred the application two months previously for further financial information on the viability of the farm. The Economic Development Officer had reviewed the accounts and confirmed that there was adequate need for the dwelling. He confirmed the business was viable and should be supported and that it was in accord with Local Plan policy HG9.

Mrs M Wilkins, a nearby neighbour, said her property would be closely overlooked as the proposed house would look directly into the bedrooms and bathroom of her property. She said if the house was turned to face the yard then the overlooking would be reduced.

The Ward Member, Councillor Shane Pledger, said the neighbours objections may be overcome with planting to screen the overlooking.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Some Members felt that the dwelling was justified in the officer's report and that farming businesses should be supported whilst others felt it would set a precedent and a temporary accommodation permission could have been sought. Concern was also expressed at the design of the dwelling.

The officer's recommendation to approve permission was proposed and seconded, and, on being put to the vote, an equal vote was recorded. The Chairman used his casting vote in favour of granting permission. (Voting: 6 in favour, 6 against with the Chairman's casting vote in favour).

**RESOLVED:** That planning application 15/01151/FUL be APPROVED, as per the

officer recommendation, for the following reasons:

The proposal, by reason of its proven need, satisfies the criteria for agricultural workers dwellings and respects the character of the area without resulting in any demonstrable harm to visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety or the environment in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies SD1, HG9, TA5, TA6 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to the following conditions:

01. 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.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans drawings numbered 006/001 received 11/03/2015 and 006/100A received 16/04/2015.

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

03. The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture, as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or in forestry or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority would not have been prepared to grant planning permission but for the dwelling being essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise in accordance with policy HG9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless particulars of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity to accord with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. The internal ground floor levels of the dwelling hereby permitted and the ground levels shall accord with the details set out on drawing number 006/100A received 16/04/2015, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity to accord with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

06. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, foul and surface water drainage details to serve the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved drainage details shall be completed and become fully operational before the development hereby permitted is first brought into use. Following its installation such approved scheme shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of environmental health and to ensure the site is adequately drained to accord with policy EQ7 of the South Somerset

07. The areas allocated for parking and turning shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the purpose of parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking is provided and maintained to meet the needs of the development in accordance with policy TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

08. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to this dwelling without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: To restrict the size of the dwelling to that justified and approved to accord with policy EQ2 and HG9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no garages or other outbuildings shall be erected within the application site without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: To restrict the size of the dwelling to that justified and approved to accord with policy EQ2 and HG9 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

*(Voting: 6 in favour, 6 against with the Chairman's casting vote in favour)*

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Chairman