

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at **Swanmead Community School on Wednesday 16 March 2016.**

(5.30 pm - 6.50 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Carol Goodall (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Paul Maxwell
Marcus Barrett	Sue Osborne
Mike Best	Ric Pallister
Amanda Broom	Angie Singleton
Dave Bulmer	Andrew Turpin
Val Keitch	Linda Vijeh (until 6.15 pm)
Jenny Kenton	

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Jo Morris	Democratic Services Officer
Zoe Harris	Neighbourhood Development Officer
Catherine Hansford	Welfare Advice Team Leader

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

121. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 17th February 2016 (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read, and having been approved were signed by the Chairman as a correct of the proceedings subject to the following amendments in bold to Planning Application 14/02141/OUT and 15/04084/DPO – Crewkerne Key Site, Land between A30 and A356, Crewkerne

The Ward Members requested to be involved in the Discharge of Condition 3.

It was proposed and seconded to approve Recommendation A as outlined in the officer's report. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried 11 in favour and 2 abstentions. It was then proposed and seconded to approve Recommendation B as outlined in the officer's report subject to the agreement of the details of **phasing, trigger points**, highways contributions and finalised financial figures, on-site play areas, dormouse crossing and on-site landscaping with the ward members and chair. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously in favour.

122. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Garry Shortland and Martin Wale.

123. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

124. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

The Committee was addressed by Margaret Twidale, representing Springmead Surgery. She asked members to allow officers to be flexible and accept the offer of purchasing 10 parking permits on Crowshute Carpark for staff parking. She commented that the surgery had an increase in staff and that there were at least 12 spaces that were seldom used that the surgery would be willing to use. In response, the Chair advised that Cllr. Jason Baker was about to start work with Council Officers on a review of car parking in Chard and that as they work through the review Mrs Twidale would be kept informed.

125. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman reminded members that there would be a workshop on Policy SS2 at the close of the meeting.

With regard to the Scheme of Delegation, the Chairman advised that following discussions with Planning Officers it had been agreed that if a Ward Member wished to bring an item to Committee they should contact the Chair giving details of the application. A meeting would then be arranged with the Chair, Ward Member and Planning Officer to discuss the application and reasons for referral to Committee. In response to a number of member comments, it was agreed that a further discussion on the Scheme of Delegation would be held at the Area Chairs Meeting being held the following day.

126. 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.

A member queried when there would be an update on the Chard Regeneration Scheme. In response, the Area Development Manager agreed to pass on the member request at the Chard Regeneration Board meeting being held the following day.

Members were content to note the Forward Plan as attached to the agenda.

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

127. A Better Crewkerne and District (ABCD) (Agenda Item 7)

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, the Neighbourhood Development Officer gave an update on the work of ABCD and the production of a new Community Plan. She

advised that the original Community Plan was now ten years old and that it was important to find out what Crewkerne residents currently want for their town. A new Community Plan would give everyone the opportunity to have their say about the future of the town. A significant amount of consultation work had been undertaken including a household survey, focus group with Wadham School and feedback at public events. Topics covered by the survey included communication, getting about, local economy and employment, community life and greenspaces. Some of the main issues that have arisen from the consultation were a desire for a greater choice of places to eat in the evening, more evening events, particularly music and arts related activities, more markets and town centre events at the weekend, poor lighting in parts of the town, poor pedestrian crossing at the top of South Street, lack of bus shelter and inconsiderate parking on pavements. Members were informed that a Community Plan document had now been drafted and ABCD had started putting together an Action Plan of potential projects to tackle some of the issues raised. The final Community Plan with accompanying Action Plan would be produced later in the year.

The Neighbourhood Development Officer highlighted some of the projects that ABCD had been involved with including the following:

- Performance Poets Hip Yak Poetry Shack delivered a number of free poetry workshops and performed those poems live in various locations around the town centre;
- Creative Crewkerne was launched in July at a garden party consultation, aimed at engaging with Crewkerne's arts lovers;
- Pom-pom making workshops;
- Creative Crewkerne were now working on a community singing project involving a variety of singing groups in the town.

Councillor Mike Best, the Area West representative on ABCD expressed his support for the work of ABCD and commented that the projects brought together different people from different backgrounds. He thanked the Neighbourhood Development Officer, Diane Butler and all the people involved with ABCD for all their help and support.

During a brief discussion on the item, members expressed their support for the work of ABCD.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

128. SSDC Welfare Advice Work in South Somerset (Agenda Item 8)

The Welfare Benefits Team Leader provided Members with a presentation of the work of the Welfare Benefits Team. She advised that their clients were referred to them from a variety of sources both internally and externally, as well as self-referring through word of mouth. The work was very varied and included calculating client's benefit entitlement, preparing claims and representing clients at tribunals. Members were informed that the total figure secured for clients in welfare benefits payments was over 11 times more than the actual cost of the service. The team had helped their clients dispute 55 decisions at either Mandatory Reconsideration, appeal or both, 46 of which were for disability benefits. With regard to the Local Assistance Scheme, members were advised that Citizens Advice South Somerset had processed 106 applications as of November 2015. Members were informed that the Universal Credit digital roll out in South Somerset would commence in early 2017. The Welfare Benefits Team Leader highlighted that the

increase in households receiving extra help by discretionary housing payments saw a sharp increase following the introduction of the Spare Room Subsidy and the Benefit Cap. The service continued to work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that people got the right help, at the right time with the most appropriate agency.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted that:

- Lack of adequate digital access was an issue that had been highlighted for some time and was an issue that was trying to be addressed through partnership working;
- A member highlighted the amount of money a small team was bringing into the district and that the team made a huge difference to the people they worked with.

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

NOTED.

129. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 9)

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

NOTED.

130. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee would be held on Wednesday 20th April 2016 at 5.30pm at The Guildhall, Chard.

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Chairman