

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at the **Henhayes Community Centre, South Street Car Park, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8DA on Wednesday 17 August 2016.**

(5.30 - 9.15 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Carol Goodall (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Paul Maxwell
Mike Best	Ric Pallister
Amanda Broom	Andrew Turpin
Dave Bulmer	Martin Wale

Officers:

Helen Rutter	Assistant Director (Communities)
Zoe Harris	Area Development Lead (West)
Dylan Martlew	Neighbourhood Development Officer
David Norris	Development Manager
Andrew Gunn	Area Lead (West)
Mike Hicks	Planning Officer
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
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.

37. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 20th July 2016 (Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2016, 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.

38. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marcus Barrett, Val Keitch, Jenny Kenton, Sue Osborne, Garry Shortland, Angie Singleton and Linda Vijeh. Councillor Ric Pallister had advised that he would not be able to attend the beginning of the meeting.

39. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Paul Maxwell declared a personal interest in Agenda item 14: Planning Application: 16/00865/OUT - Land off Shiremoor Hill, Merriott, as a relative lived in a property adjacent to the site.

40. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 4)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee would be held on Wednesday 21st September 2016 at 5.30pm at the Guildhall, Chard.

41. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public present.

42. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman advised that Terms of Reference had been created for the working group who were progressing the proposed Chard Work Hub and she offered to join the working group as Chairman of Area West Committee.

43. Presentation on Corporate Parenting (Agenda Item 7)

Julie Skorupka, Strategic Manager, Children Looked After and Leaving Care, and, Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services, at Somerset County Council gave an informative presentation to the Committee on "If this were my child..." - The role of District Councillors in Corporate Parenting. Mrs Skorupka explained issues faced by children in the care of the local authority, the legal and policy context and the responsibilities of all Councillors to be aware of their corporate parenting role and the impact of their decisions on children in care. She concluded by listing ways in which Councillors could assist young people leaving the care system, including work experience opportunities, foster carers given priority social housing and free access to leisure facilities for children in care.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Skorupka and Mr Wooster confirmed that:-

- Currently, there were 157 children in care from the South Somerset District area and 115 of these were placed with foster carers within the area.
- There were 41 care leavers (over 18) who were not in employment or training in the SSDC area.
- It was preferred to place children in care within the Somerset area and within their school area, however, on occasions they were placed outside of the Somerset area.
- There was no shortage of adoption families, however, most couples wished to adopt babies when there was a need for them to take older children. It was possible for foster families to adopt the children in their care.
- There was more work which could be done to prevent young people entering the care system.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked Mrs Skorupka, Strategic Manager, Children Looked After and Leaving Care, and, Mr Wooster, Director of Children's Services, at Somerset County Council for attending and providing an informative presentation to the Committee.

44. Area West Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 8)

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the proposed Area West Committee Forward Plan. There were no updates reported and Members were content to note the Area West Committee Forward Plan as presented.

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

45. Hinton St George Village Hall Community Grant (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee were addressed by Mr P Miller who spoke in support of the Hinton St George village hall grant application. He said the hall was in need of substantial improvement including a new boiler & heating system, new toilet facilities, a new front entrance, storage room and car park resurfacing. He confirmed that 81% of the total budget was in place and the grant from SSDC would be greatly appreciated.

The Area West Team Leader advised that the hall was well used with a range of regular activities held there. Although there was a long list of works to be done, it made sense to do them all at the same time.

The Ward Member, Councillor Paul Maxwell, spoke in support of the application. He said it was impressive that over 80% of the funding was secured.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were pleased to approve a grant of up to £12,432 to the St George's Hall & Playing Fields Management Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Area West Committee approved a grant of up to £12,432 from the Area West Capital Reserve to the St George's Hall & Playing Fields Management Committee, subject to the standard terms and conditions and the following additional condition:

- The Committee apply the recommendations set out in the July 2016 Access for All report.

Reason: To agree a grant towards improvements at the Village Hall in Hinton St George.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

46. Warmer Chard Project (Executive Decision) (Agenda Item 10)

The Neighbourhood Development Officer advised that the project would focus on providing home energy efficiency advice for residents in Chard and the surrounding villages. He confirmed that this was a six month project with the match funding only available until the end of the financial year, however, it was anticipated that the advice centre would continue on a voluntary basis in the future.

During discussion, Members were supportive of the project and asked that the title include the surrounding villages to encourage wider participation. It was also requested that an evaluation report be presented to the Committee at the end of the financial year.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were pleased to approve a grant of up to £7,260 to the Centre for Sustainable Energy to deliver the Warmer Chard project.

RESOLVED: That the Area West Committee approved a grant of up to £7,260 to the Centre for Sustainable Energy to deliver the Warmer Chard project from the Area West Community Grants budget.

Reason: To agree to support the Centre of Sustainable Energy and Home Energy Centres 'Warmer Chard' project.

(Voting: 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

47. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee noted the appeal that had been allowed as outlined in the agenda report.

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

The Committee noted the schedule of planning applications to be determined by Committee.

49. Planning Application: 16/02400/FUL - The Old Weighbridge, Station Road, Crewkerne (Agenda Item 13)

Application Proposal: Erection of a conservatory to provide additional seating for café.

The Planning Officer introduced the report and with the aid of slides and photographs and summarised the details of the application. He noted that the applicant had provided additional supporting information and had confirmed that the lease would be extended and the conservatory would be removed if the current owners ceased to occupy the building. Three further letters of support had been received including one from South West Trains. He advised that his recommendation was to refuse the application because of the adverse impact upon the historic entrance to the railway station and Grade II listed station.

In response to questions from Members, the Planning Officer confirmed that:-

- Planning Policy EQ3 stated that heritage assets should be conserved and enhanced
- The weighbridge was not a listed building in itself but was part of a group of buildings related to the listed railway station.
- The distance from the weighbridge to the railway station was in excess of 100 metres.

County Councillor John Dyke spoke in support of the application. He said the weighbridge building was not listed and was distant from the conservation area. There was a public need for the café to serve local residents and rail passengers and to remain viable it needed to enlarge its seating area.

The applicant, Ms A Brewer Swain also spoke in support of the application. She said the numbers of customers had quadrupled in two years and the café provided a safe waiting environment, toilet facilities and ample parking. What it did not provide was plenty of seating and customers often had to be turned away because of a lack of space. The proposed new conservatory would also allow disabled access.

During a brief discussion, Members felt that the historic view of the railway station had already been diminished by the new road entrance and better views of the station could be seen further up the road. It was proposed and seconded that the planning application 16/02400/FUL be granted permission, contrary to the officer recommendation, as the development would not harm the character and appearance and setting of the nearby listed railway station building. On being put to the vote, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: that planning permission 16/02400/FUL be approved, contrary to the officer recommendation, for the following reason:

The application does not harm the character and appearance and setting of the nearby listed railway station building.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

50. Planning Application: 16/00865/OUT - Land off Shiremoor Hill, Merriott (Agenda Item 14)

Application proposal: Outline application for residential development (approximately 30 dwellings.) and access from Shiremoor Hill.

(Prior to consideration of this application, Councillor Paul Maxwell declared a personal interest as a relative lived in a property adjacent to the site. He also noted that his previous comments on the application had been published on the Council's website, however, he would now consider the application with an open mind).

The Area Lead Planning Officer presented his report to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that since writing his report, 3 further letters from members of the public had been received which reiterated previous concerns on the updated site access plans. He noted that Condition 11 of approval should be deleted as there was no proposed service road and Condition 14 should be amended to add in "and 43 metres to the south". He further noted that the applicant had agreed the transfer of some open land to the north of the site to the Parish Council however, this was a separate legal agreement and would not be secured through the planning permission.

In response to questions from Members, the Senior Legal Executive and the Area Lead Planning Officer confirmed:-

- The gifting of land to the Parish Council did not meet the criteria to be included as part of the Section 106 Agreement for the site and so it was a separate contractual agreement between the owner and the Parish Council.

- It was proposed that 35% of the properties would be social housing.

The Committee were then addressed by Mr I Hall of Merriott Parish Council. He said that they had looked carefully at the plans and were in favour of the development. Other possible sites in the village were not available for development and since the nursery in the village had closed, the traffic was reduced. There was a memorandum of understanding with the owners to control the future use of the gifted land.

The Committee were then addressed by Mr J Bowman, Mr M Davies, Mr J P Hartley, Mrs P Hobbs, Mr T Hobbs, Mr G McPherson and Ms J Taylor who all spoke against the proposed development. Their comments included:-

- There was a strong statement for maintaining the land as open space for the benefit of the community.
- Currently 60 houses were being built in the village on brownfield sites.
- Although the development proposed 35% affordable houses it did not mean that they would be built.
- The land transfer may never take place unless there was a legally binding agreement through the planning application.
- Existing water run-off from the land would be exacerbated by housing.
- A guarantee that the affordable housing element would be built should be put in place.

The Agent for the applicant, Mrs C Knee, said the objectors comments had been addressed by the planning officers. The development would make financial contributions to the school and local infrastructure and would include affordable housing. She confirmed the applicant was agreeable to planning permission being held back until the transfer of the community land was completed.

The Ward Member, Councillor Paul Maxwell, advised that the site was part of the medieval centre of the village and should be preserved. There was no guarantee of the transferred land being for community benefit and allowing the development would mean a 10% increase in the number of houses in the village if added to the developments already under way.

During the discussion, varying views were expressed. Concern was expressed that the transfer of the community land may not happen as it could not be tied to the planning permission. The Senior Legal Executive said the application should be determined on its merits and she cautioned against deferring the application to wait for the land transfer to be agreed.

Following further discussion, it was proposed and seconded that the planning application 16/00865/OUT be deferred for further information on the viability of the site relating to the proposed 35% affordable housing. On being put to the vote, this was carried 6 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: that planning permission 16/00865/OUT be deferred to a future meeting of the committee for further information on the viability of the site relating to the proposed 35% affordable housing

(Voting: 6 votes in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention)

51. Planning Application: 16/02689/FUL - Land at Oxenford Farm, Oxenford Lane, Dowlish Wake (Agenda Item 15)

Application proposal: proposed erection of a new agricultural (cubicle) building to house livestock and erection of an extension to existing implement/ store building.

The Planning Officer presented his report to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that the Parish Council supported the application and no objections had been received.

Following a brief discussion, it was noted that the application was before the Committee as one of the applicants was a District Councillor. It was proposed and seconded that the planning application 16/02689/FUL be granted permission and on being put to the vote, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: that planning permission 16/02689/FUL be approved, for the following reason:

01. The proposed development by reason of its design, siting, materials and use will meet an agricultural need and will not cause any adverse harm to the visual amenity of the area, residential amenity or to highway safety. The proposal is in accord with Policies SD1, TA5 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2015) and Chapters 3 and 11 of the NPPF.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

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 not be commenced until 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: To protect the amenity of the area to accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

03. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Drawings numbers: OBP10A, OBP9A, OBP7, OBP6OPB4, OBP5, OPB3, OBP2, OBP1.

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

Informatives:

01. The County Rights of Way Officer has advised the following:
Development, insofar as it affects a right of way should not be started, and the right of way should be kept open for public use until the necessary diversion/stopping up Order has come into effect. Failure to comply with this request may result in the developer being prosecuted if the path is built on or otherwise interfered with.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

52. Planning Application: 16/02690/FUL - Land at Oxenford Farm, Oxenford Lane, Dowlish Wake (Agenda Item 16)

Application proposal: erection of an agricultural (cubicle) building (retrospective).

The Planning Officer presented his report to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. He advised members that although the application was retrospective, the building was considered acceptable.

Following a brief discussion, it was noted that the application was before the Committee as one of the applicants was a District Councillor. It was proposed and seconded that the planning application 16/02690/FUL be granted permission and on being put to the vote, this was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: that planning permission 16/02690/FUL be approved, for the following reason:

01. The development by reason of its design, siting, materials and use will not cause any adverse harm to the visual amenity of the area, residential amenity or to highway safety. The proposal is in accord with Policies SD1, TA5, and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2015) and Chapters 3 and 11 of the NPPF.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. Notwithstanding the time limits given to implement planning permission as prescribed by Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), this permission (being granted under section 73A of the Act in respect of development already carried out) shall have effect from the 4th July 2016.

Reason: To comply with Section 73A of the Act.

02. The development hereby approved relates to the following submitted and approved drawings :
OBP9B (block and roof plan), OBP8 (Floor plan and south west elevation) and OBP10B (Location Plan).

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

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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Chairman