

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area East Committee** held as a **Virtual Meeting using Zoom meeting software on Wednesday 10 June 2020.**

(9.00 am - 10.07 am)

### **Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Henry Hobhouse (Chairman)

Robin Bastable  
Hayward Burt  
Tony Capozzoli  
Nick Colbert  
Sarah Dyke  
Charlie Hull

Mike Lewis  
Kevin Messenger  
Paul Rowsell  
Lucy Trimnell  
William Wallace  
Colin Winder



### **Officers:**

Netta Meadows	Director (Service Delivery)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Tim Cook	Locality Team Manager
Stephen Baimbridge	Specialist (Development Management)
Simon Fox	Lead Specialist (Development Management)
Paula Goddard	Specialist (Legal Services)
Angela Cox	Specialist (Democratic Services)
Michelle Mainwaring	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)
Jo Morris	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)

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

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### **161. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Area East Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and the Informal meeting of Area East Committee members held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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### **162. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)**

There were no apologies for absence.

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### **163. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

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#### **164. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 4)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the committee would be held at 9.00am on Wednesday 8 July 2020 using Zoom virtual meeting software.

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

There were no questions from members of the public present.

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#### **166. Chairman Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman advised that the Committee was now a full decision making meeting, held under the Local Authorities and Police and Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

He confirmed that voting would be by a named vote and Councillors wishing to speak should indicate using the blue 'raise hand' icon.

The Chairman also advised that the planning application 19/01840/OUT\*\* - Land North of Ansford Hill, Ansford, Castle Cary, which had been discussed at the last informal Area East Committee meeting and had been referred to the Regulation Committee with a recommendation that it be refused. The application had been refused permission by the Chief Executive, in accord with the officer's recommendation and would not be referred to the Regulation Committee.

He also advised that the two star referral to Regulation Committee for Agenda item 12: planning application 19/01593/OUT - Land at Hook Valley Farm, Part OS 0028, Lawrence Hill, Wincanton, had also been removed and the application would only be determined by the Regulation Committee if the Area East Committee proposed that it be granted permission, contrary to the officer's recommendation to refuse.

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#### **167. Reports from Members (Agenda Item 7)**

There were no reports from Members.

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#### **168. Area East - Covid-19 Community Response (Agenda Item 8)**

The Locality Manager advised the report was a summary of the support available to local communities during the current pandemic. This was an opportunity for Members to feed back any concerns or issues or examples of good practice within their communities to help with future lessons to be learnt. He said the Economic Development team were providing support to town centres to make them as safe as possible when non-essential shops were allowed to re-open the following week. Information had been sent to Town Clerks offering assistance with signage, barriers or risk assessment guides but it was reliant on the public being responsible for their own safety.

During a short discussion, members raised the following comments:

- The Chairman congratulated the Town Council and local churches in Castle Cary who had been operating a food bank and other support services for the community. He also noted that Councillor Messenger had been providing meals from his business premises.
- Councillor Capozzoli advised that he and his wife had been collecting food for the Gateway Church food bank in Yeovil.
- Councillor Trimmell advised that groups in Bruton had arranged food parcels for their community and particularly for those who were not eligible for any other assistance. A local shop had run food deliveries and a list of local takeaway food suppliers and the opening times of local shops had also been circulated to residents.
- Councillor Hayward Burt asked that Councillors be kept informed of the business grants awarded in their areas.
- Councillor Charlie Hull reported that the local GP surgeries in Northstone Ward had been delivering prescriptions to reduce the number of visitors to the surgery.

The Chairman confirmed that the Council would have to review its medium term financial plan in light of the costs of community support during Covid-19 and unless further Government funding was forthcoming, it may be that some of the regeneration work was delayed.

The Locality Manager advised that the business support programme had been very successful and Councillors had assisted in identifying businesses who had not claimed their support grant. Consultation with Town and Parish Councils would take place on the future of the community grants scheme and how it could be used more effectively. Community grants were still available and applications were encouraged.

At the conclusion of the debate Members were content to note the report.

**Noted**

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## **169. Area East Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 9)**

Members noted that the lack of a five year housing land supply was affecting development in their communities and it was requested that a discussion take place on this ahead of the review of the Local Plan.

It was also requested that the efficiency and use of the Members Portal be reviewed, although it was noted that this was under review by the newly appointed Scrutiny Specialist officer.

**Noted**

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## **170. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 10)**

The Specialist for Development Management provided Members with an explanation of the appeal decision for land at the Old Embankment, Mill Lane, Pitcombe. He advised that the enforcement notice had been quashed as there was a difference of opinion between SSDC officers and the planning inspectorate with regard the breach of the use class of the land. The officer felt the land was used for storage of the caravan and other items, whereas the planning inspector felt it was a leisure plot. He said the enforcement notice would be re-drafted and served on the land again.

Members noted the planning appeal which had been quashed by the Planning Inspectorate.

**Noted**

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**171. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Determined by Committee (Agenda Item 11)**

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

**Noted**

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**172. Planning Application 19/01593/OUT - Land at Hook Valley Farm, Part OS 0028, Lawrence Hill, Wincanton (Agenda Item 12)**

***Outline planning application for the erection of up to 210 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS), vehicular access point from West Hill***

The Specialist for Development Management advised that the main considerations were the principle of development at the site and access. He noted that the site was surrounded by agricultural land and it sloped away to the south. The Atkins development site was to the East. The application included a vehicular access off West Hill and pedestrian accesses as shown on the plan. He noted the land had been identified in the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan as visually sensitive and their policy stated that development in the identified sensitive areas would not be supported unless it was necessary to support the rural economy. He said the development would to some extent support the rural economy but it was not necessary to support that rural economy. He said the development would cause significant and permanent harm and there would be substantial adverse effects in landscape terms to the site. The proposed tree screening would take many years to mature and reduce the landscape impact. The site was not within the direction of growth for Wincanton as defined in the Local Plan. For these reasons, he concluded that his recommendation to refuse permission.

The Committee were then addressed by a representative of Wincanton Town Council. He said the Council wished to protect that site as an area of natural beauty as it enhanced the town's rural location. The additional traffic which the development would generate was a concern and the site was not within walking distance of the town centre which would mean increased demand on the limited parking. The Town Council had adopted an Environment and Ecological Plan to nurture the historical and natural beauty of the town and the proposed development was at odds with this. Health, education and local employment could not serve the development and the Town Council strongly objected to it.

The Committee were addressed by two local residents who spoke in opposition to the application. Their comments included:-

- The number of houses for Wincanton as defined in the Local Plan had already been exceeded by 201 and there were 3 other sites with potentially a further 353 houses so the Local plan target could be exceeded by 554 – 79% above target.
- Planning permission for houses already approved but not yet built totalled 170.
- Allowing the application would open the town to other speculative developments.
- Residents from this proposed site would access the town's supermarkets and the A303 through the Atkins Estate which had many sharp corners and cars parked on the road side.

One of the Ward Members, Councillor Nick Colbert, thanked the officer for his presentation and report. He said the area was highly sensitive and would be a blight on the landscape. He said that as Wincanton had exceeded the Local Plan target for housing, it should be selective in the developments approved and encourage those which included employment. He proposed that the application be refused.

The other Ward Member, Councillor Colin Winder, said the area was sensitive and the development would cause substantial harm. He referred to the 1998 Local Plan which established the new barns farm estate and said it stated that the skyline of Wincanton was to be avoided. He said this was still important today as 20 years ago. He also noted that the 2006 – 2028 Local Plan had stated that it was important that housing growth was balanced with employment growth in Wincanton and he expressed his disappointment that a policy had not been proposed on this issue. Because of this he felt reference to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) in the reason for refusal was illegal.

During discussion, Members made the following points:-

- Pleased to see the Ward Members and officer recommendation were in agreement.
- Good to see that weight had been given to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The application could be contrary to Policy TA5 due to the entrance's proximity to a bend in the road.
- Exceeding the planned number of houses from the Local Plan in the area was impacting on towns and villages.
- Concern that developers were speculative and were not considering the environmental impacts of their proposals.

It was proposed and seconded that the application be refused permission, in accord with the officer's recommendation and on being put to the vote, was unanimously agreed by Members.

**RESOLVED:** That application 19/01593/OUT - Land at Hook Valley Farm, Part OS 0028, Lawrence Hill, Wincanton be REFUSED permission for the following reasons:-

01. The site is outside the settlement of Wincanton, in a prominent location on rising land and in an identified visually sensitive area. The site is not allocated for development in the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) or identified as an area for growth. Development of this site will have a significant and demonstrably detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape, the visual amenity of the site and locality, and upon the setting of Wincanton. The application is therefore contrary to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028), Policy 1 of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Informatives:**

01. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF, the council, as local planning authority, approaches decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions

In this case there were no minor or obvious solutions to overcome the significant concerns caused by the proposals.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour of refusal)*

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Chairman