

MEETING
DATE 08.04.20

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area South (Informal)** held by **Video-conference via Zoom meeting software on Wednesday 8 April 2020.**

(2.07 pm - 3.35 pm)

Present:

Councillor Peter Gubbins (Chairman)

John Clark	Tony Lock
Nicola Clark	David Recardo
Karl Gill	Peter Seib
David Gubbins	Alan Smith
Kaysar Hussain	Jeny Snell
Andy Kendall	Andy Soughton
Mike Lock	Rob Stickland
Pauline Lock	

Officers:

Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Richard Ward	Monitoring Officer
Simon Fox	Lead Specialist - Development Management
Sarah Hickey	Senior Planning Lawyer
Joe Walsh	Specialist (Economic Development)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)
Angela Cox	Specialist - Democratic Services
Richard Birch	Lead Specialist (Communications, Marketing & Media)

Also Present:

Val Keitch	Linda Vijeh
Crispin Raikes	

1. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Oakes, Wes Read, and Gina Seaton.

2. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from members of the public.

4. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman noted that this was the first Council meeting using virtual meeting technology and he asked for Members, officers and the public's patience during the meeting. He advised that voting would be taken by a named vote. He reminded all that the meeting was a consultative meeting, as agreed at Council on 19th March and the recommendations of the Committee would be communicated to the Chief Executive for final confirmation.

5. Keyford Sustainable Urban Extension s106 Agreement, Application 15/01000/OUT (Agenda Item 5)

The Lead Specialist for Development Management advised that since writing his report concerns had been raised by the local MP regarding conducting council business at this time however, he said the Government had urged councils to continue decision making functions which had an economic benefit to the community. The Lead Specialist said in granting planning permissions now, developers could start on-site as soon as the current restrictions eased. He said concern had also been raised about the notice given for the meeting but the agenda had been published on the requisite date. A statement from Councillor Gina Seaton, and, a joint statement from East Coker and Barwick and Stoford Parish Councils and a resident of East Coker had been received, which he summarised.

He noted that a decision on the Keyford planning application had already been made at a meeting in December 2019 and so that decision could not be re-visited. The additional information requested at that meeting related to the Quicksilver roundabout improvements, and the cycle path improvements between Dorchester Road, Lovers Lane and Horsey Roundabout. He explained the proposed roundabout improvements and new cycle path route and the Highway Authority support for them.

In response to questions from Members, the Lead Specialist for Development Management advised:-

- The proposed cycle path from Lovers Lane to Southwoods curved downwards to deal with the gradient to the hill.
- The trigger points for the Highway elements of the scheme were at certain points in the development and would be scheduled in order of necessity as the development progressed.
- Although the Section 106 agreement was legally binding, it was always open for negotiation with the developer.
- Bringing forward infrastructure prior to a development commencing did present some practical issues of cash flow for the developer and necessity, but some highway work was essential, however, there had not been any discussion on this yet.
- There were no road improvements planned for Lovers Lane; only the cycleway.
- All Highway aspects would be subject to an audit process and safety concerns would be re-visited.

The Committee were then addressed by representatives of Barwick and Stoford Parish Council and East Coker Parish Council. Their comments included:-

- The method of discussion by an on-line meeting marginalised some people's ability to attend the meeting and potentially, 15 major developments could be granted permission in this way during the pandemic. What was the urgency to take the decision?
- The recommendation suggested that more meetings were required to finalise the development.
- The latest flow data at the Quicksilver Mail roundabout was only released 48 hours previously and did not specify the date of the week it was collected on and so was questionable.
- The Keyford development would generate 900 cars and the use of public transport was falling so most cars would be on the local road network making them busier.
- Statistics show that cycling is falling in the UK – only 2% of all trips made. Had any cycle statistics been collected in Yeovil? The money spent on the cyclepath would not reduce the traffic flow.
- The impact of the development has serious concerns for local people as the decision is being taken during the current restrictions.
- East Coker PC has consistently requested that the improvements to the Quicksilver Mail roundabout be carried out before the development commenced. The late release of the traffic flow data had not allowed a full review of the figures.
- Safety issues raised about Little Tarrat Lane and Two Tarrat Lane staggered junction had not been taken seriously and other lane closures at Placketts Lane and Paviots Lane, whilst supported by the Parish Council, had not been fully thought through and would be a future problem for local residents.

The Chairman confirmed that the Government had specifically confirmed that Council business should continue particularly relating to the determination of planning applications and this was now allowed to be conducted by virtual on-line meetings. The Lead Specialist for Development Management advised that the traffic flow data provided by the applicants was supported by the Highway Authority. He noted that the development was designed to encourage the future residents to use more sustainable methods of transport.

The Committee were then addressed by a representative of Keyford Landowners and a transport consultant acting for the developer. Their comments included:-

- The scheme would involve the widening of the footway on the eastern side of Hendford Hill to provide a combined footpath and cycleway and the slight narrowing of the footpath of the west of Hendford Hill and the removal of 65m of central hatching. An earlier road width marking of 6.6m had accidentally been left on the plan when it was updated and at its narrowest point, the road width would be 6.2m for a short distance on the approach to the Horsey roundabout.
- The Highway Authority supported the proposed scheme and confirmed that the road widths shown were appropriate. A topographical survey would be produced and approved by the Highway Authority before any construction took place.
- The removal of the central hatching would mean that an area where vehicles currently waited to turn right into Southwoods would be lost but the number of vehicles would be low so the impact would not be significant.

- The reallocation of existing roadspace would provide improved pedestrian and cycleway facilities was in accord with Government advice. The traffic surveys were undertaken on Tuesday 28 January 2020.
- The upper part of the cycleway link was across Yeovil Country Park and was very steep in places so the proposal was to provide a zig-zag to reduce the gradient.
- A study showed that traffic growth had been lower than predicted and the developers had committed to provide improvements to the Quicksilver Mail roundabout at the occupation or completion of 500 dwellings on the Keyford site.

One of the Ward Members, Councillor Nicola Clark, said she was disappointed the matter had been brought forward at short notice although she understood the need. She said that local residents had not been able to attend and share their views due to not understanding the technology in the time given. She agreed with Councillor Seaton's and the Parish Council comments made and expressed concern that the traffic flow data had only been available for 48 hours prior to the meeting. Both Parish Councils had asked for highway improvements to be carried out prior to the development commencing which she supported. She did not feel able to support the officer's recommendations.

During discussion, Members felt that the two areas of concern highlighted during their discussion of the planning application in December 2019 had been addressed. The recommendations to note the report and agree that officers proceed to negotiate the planning obligations were proposed and seconded.

A named vote was taken and the vote was 12 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That Area South members recommend that the Chief Executive agree to note the report and agree that officers proceed to negotiate the planning obligation on the basis of:

- a. The Quicksilver Roundabout Improvements as shown on IMA drawing IMA-17-085-040 which shall be carried out on or prior to the occupation of 500 dwellings at Keyford.
- b. The Cycle Path linking the Dorchester Road to the Horsey Roundabout be as described in Option B (via part of Lover's Lane and Southwoods) as shown on IMA drawing IMA-17-085-040 RevC and DLS drawing 5917/414 RevA. Trigger points for this element and indeed all highway elements to be negotiated.

Reason: To propose negotiation of the two Section 106 planning obligation clauses linked to the Keyford Sustainable Urban Extension.

(Voting: 12 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions)

6. iAero Centre Update Report (Agenda Item 6)

The Economic Development Specialist advised that he was involved in the iAero meetings with Somerset County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Leonardo and strong progress was being made. The centre was currently under construction on the Leonardo Airfield and the project was led by Somerset County Council. SSDC were not funding partners but had an interest in its success for the business community. The centre would provide space for innovation in the aerospace industry, including office

space and light industrial use so projects could be developed and tested. Completion was expected in summer 2020 and although current restrictions may affect this, it should be fully open early 2021. Best practice was being shared with the Exeter Science Park and other aerospace specific organisations. He concluded that further reports on the progress of the project would follow.

Councillor John Clark, as Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, said the project was important to the Council’s Economic Development Strategy although SSDC were not a funding partner. Innovation in the aerospace sector was key to the area.

There were no questions from Members and the Chairman thanked the Economic Development Specialist for attending and providing the update.

RESOLVED: That the report by NOTED.

7. Area South Forward Plan (Agenda Item 7)

It was noted that some reports on the Forward Plan would be delayed due to the current coronavirus restrictions.

It was requested that the following be brought forward to the next meeting:-

- Update on the SSDC response to the coronavirus
- Area Committees discuss the support they could offer to their communities and Parish Councils during the current virus restrictions
- The Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO’s)

Members noted the Forward Plan.

8. Planning Appeals (For Information) (Agenda Item 8)

Members noted the Planning Appeals.

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Chairman

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Date