

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West (Informal)** held at the **Virtual Meeting** using **Zoom meeting software** on **Wednesday 20 October 2021**.

(5.30 - 6.33 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Jason Baker (Chairman)

Mike Best	Tricia O'Brien
Dave Bulmer	Sue Osborne
Brian Hamilton	Oliver Patrick
Ben Hodgson	Garry Shortland
Val Keitch	Linda Vijeh
Jenny Kenton	Martin Wale
Paul Maxwell	



Officers:

Debbie Haines	Locality Team Leader
Jo Morris	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
John Hammond	Specialist - Principal Planner
Kirsty Larkins	Director (Service Delivery)
Nathan Turnbull	Locality Officer

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

41. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th September 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

42. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Robin Pailthorpe.

43. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

44. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 4)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee would be held on Wednesday 17th November 2021 at 5.30pm and would be a virtual meeting using Zoom on-line meeting software.

45. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public present at the meeting.

46. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman reminded everyone present that in order to enable members to continue holding remote, virtual meetings, Full Council had agreed in April to amend part of the Council's Constitution to allow its remote meetings to function as consultative meetings and delegate decisions to the Chief Executive (or the relevant Director in the Chief Executive's absence) in consultation with those meetings.

This was extended at Full Council on 8 July 2021 for a further 6 months.

The Chairman informed members of the Future Chard Strategy Consultation Event taking place on Saturday 23rd October, 8.30am-2.00pm, Monday 25th October, 9.00am-4.00pm and Tuesday 26th October, 12 noon – 8.30pm at The Guildhall, Chard.

47. Area West Chapter Update 2021/22 (Agenda Item 7)

The Locality Team Leader presented the report, which provided members with an update on the 2021/22 Area Chapter for Area West. She gave an update from the Lead Specialist – Communities on the project 'Develop new initiatives to tackle longstanding issues of health and inequality and social inclusion' listed under Healthy, Self-reliant Communities on page 12 of the agenda report which was unavailable at the time the agenda was published. Members noted the following:

- £12,000 had been awarded to Chard Connect to resource their work
- A grant would be awarded to the Food Bank to help with increased demand
- Discussions were taking place with the Chard Leisure provider with regard to providing free seasonal leisure vouchers to disadvantaged groups
- Work was being undertaken on the promotion and roll out of the Household Support Grant in Chard to help adults without children cope with cost pressures this winter

With regard to Community Grants, the Locality Team Leader informed members that there was £8,000 remaining in the revenue budget to be spent by the end of the financial year. If members were aware of any groups within their wards who would benefit from a community grant further information was available on the Council's website.

In response to a question, members were advised that the two pending grant requests were from Combe St Nicholas Running Track and Ark Indoor Activity Space and both would be coming forward to the Area West Committee for a decision in the next couple of months.

There were no further questions and members were content to note the report.

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

The following amendments were made to the Area West Committee Forward Plan:

- Combe St Nicholas Running Track grant application to be added to the Forward Plan for November.
- Ark Indoor Activity Space grant application to be added to the Forward Plan with a date to be confirmed.
- Members noted that Cllr Martin Wale was no longer the representative on the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel.
- An update on Historic Buildings at Risk had been omitted from the Forward Plan in error.

RESOLVED: That the Area West Committee Forward Plan be noted.

49. Planning Appeals (for information) (Agenda Item 9)

Members noted the details of planning appeals that had been received, dismissed and allowed.

50. Schedule of Planning Applications to be Considered (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications.

51. Planning Application 20/03733/FUL - Willeys Farm, Forton, Chard (Agenda Item 11)

Application Proposal: The conversion and extension of an existing agricultural shed into 2 semi-detached dwellings

The Specialist - Principal Planner presented the application as detailed in the agenda, and with the aid of a powerpoint presentation, continued to show the site and proposed plans. He advised that there was an existing stone agricultural building on site currently used for agricultural storage and that the application proposed to construct two dwellings over that footprint and to use part of the paddock to create two garden areas. He outlined the key considerations which were class q and fall-back position, scale of development, local associations and accessibility to services and facilities. The Planning Officer recommended that the application be refused.

In response to various questions, the Specialist – Principal Planner informed members of the following:

- There would be new upper floors across the entire structure.
- Some of the walls could be retained although it was likely to be more of a new build rather than a conversion.
- The rule of thumb for walkability to facilities was 400 metres.
- Some of the materials could be retained but there would also be a lot of new material because of the scale of the structures being created.
- It was confirmed that a condition could be attached to retain some of the materials.

- The Manor Farm site was currently under construction and delivered a heritage benefit with a mix of units including holiday units and new builds.
- The bus service (bus stop outside the Manor Farm scheme) provided an opportunity to use an alternative mode of transport.
- There would be a need to rely on the use of a car to access facilities.
- There were no issues with the application in terms of landscape.
- Class Q could be a fall back but there would need to be evidence that it would be implemented and some reason why the alternative was a better outcome.
- The application was not considered to be an exceptional dwelling in the countryside. It was a pair of dwellings proposed to sit in a rural location and was a familiar design.

The Committee was addressed by one of the joint applicants. He referred to his family ties to Forton and explained some of his family history. The application was to build two four bedroom homes for their families and the proposal was the only viable option as prices for new houses in the village and beyond were out of price range. The size and scale of the buildings were no larger than the houses granted at Manor Farm 200 yards away which it was felt had already set a precedent and there were many other houses of a similar size in the village. The design made use of the existing features of the barn and the dwellings would be fit for purpose and futureproof. The dwellings would be made as sustainable as possible with the use of photovoltaics and air source pumps using local tradesmen. The Parish Council were in support of the proposal and there were no letters of objection. In building two larger homes, two smaller affordable properties would be available helping sustainability within the village. The applicant concluded by confirming that the building would be kept in its entirety with the end walls being knocked out slightly and the raising of the roof.

Ward Member, Councillor Jenny Kenton stated that Forton was a hamlet that formed part of the Blackdown, Tatworth and Forton ward but was closer to Chard than it was to Tatworth. A lot of the Chard Eastern Development Area would cut through the hamlet from the B1362 to the A30 along the Crewkerne Road and the first house in Forton was next to the last house in Jocelyn ward in Chard. She said that the applicants had links to the village of Forton which span over 200 years and took an active part in the local community. The village of Forton fell within the parish of Tatworth and Forton which had a pub, shop, post office and school. It was not a remote location and a precedent had already been set by building at Manor Farm and Whatley. There were no objections from the parish council and letters of support had been received. The Council was currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply and the family had a history of building beautiful houses that blended into the landscape.

The other Ward Member, Councillor Martin Wale said that from standing in the paddock you would see various housing developments that had been constructed over many centuries. There was a listed building further up the road, a converted farmhouse which was part of the family plot and a 1950's bungalow. The development was considered to be part of the village and within a quarter of a mile of the Chard Eastern Development site. It was also felt that the development was not overbearing and would not impinge on any other properties.

During the discussion, some members expressed their support for the application and the comments made by the ward members and did not agree with the reasons for refusal. It was felt that the proposed dwellings were surrounded by other properties within the village and were not considered to be located in open countryside. One member supported the use of existing materials as confirmed by the applicant.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed and seconded to approve the application contrary to the Planning Officer's recommendations for the following reason as suggested by the Specialist – Principal Planner:

The location is considered to be accessible to community infrastructure and public transport to comply with the provisions of Local Plan Policy SS2. The development itself is well related to the settlement and would not adversely impact upon the landscape character.

A vote was taken and members unanimously approved the application.

Members indicated that they were in agreement with the following conditions as suggested by the Specialist – Principal Planner:

1. Standard time
2. Approved plans
3. Materials approval together with use of existing materials in the finished development
4. Landscape plan and boundary treatments
5. Provision of Electric Vehicle charging point
6. Provision of badger mitigation
7. Provision of bat / bird boxes
8. Lighting scheme
9. Removal of Permitted Development for extensions / alterations to the dwellings

RESOLVED: That members of the Area West (Informal) Committee recommend to the Chief Executive that Planning Application 20/03733/FUL be APPROVED contrary to the Planning Officer's recommendation for the following reason:

The location is considered to be accessible to community infrastructure and public transport to comply with the provisions of Local Plan Policy SS2. The development itself is well related to the settlement and would not adversely impact upon the landscape character.

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 be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans referenced:

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

03. The external surfaces of the development shall include existing materials and those materials indicated in the application form and no other materials shall be used without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the proposed development is completed in accordance with Policy EQ2 of South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

04. A scheme of landscaping with full details of boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained. All planting, seeding, turfing or earth moulding comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following completion of the development hereby permitted or after the development hereby permitted is first brought into use, whichever is sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

05. Prior to first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, electric charging points (of a minimum 16amps) for electric vehicles shall be provided adjacent to the parking spaces or within the garages shown on the approved plan. Sufficient electric charging points for at least one per dwelling shall be provided in this way. Once installed such charging points shall be retained and maintained in working order, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development is resilient and sustainable in accordance with Policy TA1 (Low Carbon Travel) of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

06. In accordance with the mitigation measures outlined in the Quantock Ecology Report dated 16.03.2021 any trenches dug should either be covered at night or have a rough sawn plank placed in them to act as a ramp for badgers or any other wildlife which may fall in. In addition any security lighting must be directed away from the hedgerow with details of any lighting being submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of surrounding occupiers in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028.

07. Details of Schwegler bat and bird boxes (e.g. Bat: 1F and 2FF,

Bird: 1B and open fronted robin boxes). Shall be installed on the developed building or within trees T1 and T2 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted.

Reason: In order to safeguard and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policy EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

08. Full details of external lighting in accordance with the guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professional shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

09. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to the dwellings hereby approved under Class A or B of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the said order without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

Informatives:

01. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner 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, the applicant/agent did not take the opportunity to enter into pre-application discussions.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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Chairman