

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a virtual meeting of the **Area South (Informal)** held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software **on Wednesday 2 March 2022.**

(2.00 - 3.45 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Peter Gubbins (Chairman)

John Clark	Wes Read
Nicola Clark	David Recardo
Karl Gill	Gina Seaton
Andy Kendall	Peter Seib
Mike Lock	Jeny Snell
Pauline Lock	Andy Soughton
Tony Lock	Rob Stickland



Also Present:

**Officers:**

Jo Boucher	Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)
John Hammond	Lead Specialist (Built Environment)
Ian Timms	Yeovil Refresh Project Manager
Peter Paddon	Acting Director Place & Recovery

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

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### 35. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

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### 36. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

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### 37. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

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### 38. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

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### **39. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

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### **40. Market Review Working Group - Verbal Update (Agenda Item 6)**

Councillor Karl Gill gave a verbal update on the work of the Market Review Working Group. He explained that they were looking to re brand the Yeovil market and launch something new rather than build around the old existing market. He said a meeting was to take place next week with 'Eat Yeovil' with an aim to encourage and raise awareness and renew interest with other markets within the area.

Members thanked him for his update and the work being done.

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### **41. Progress Update Yeovil Refresh (Agenda Item 7)**

The Yeovil Refresh Project Manager presented the report and updated members on the following:

- Access strategy adopted with work ongoing regarding the creation of walking and cycling packages. Three sections as listed in the report are currently out for invitation with statutory consultation currently being undertaken. This feedback will then be used to aid the design and address any specific issues or concerns raised. He hoped to tender out in the early part of the summer.
- Work ongoing regarding bus stops with further meetings planned to discuss options going forward.
- Public realm works:
  - Experiencing difficulties around the Westminster Street section due to the administration of Midas, however they were working through the legal process with an announcement over next few weeks with the aim to start works again very quickly.
  - Aware of the traffic management and safety issues of the site at Westminster Street and that this issue would be dealt with in the coming days to rectify this issue.
  - Wine Street works had been delayed slightly due to recent storms but hoped drainage works in the area would commence shortly.
  - Hoped that the Middle Street, High Street and Borough would be in contract by end of May with view to start works late summer.
- Development Schemes are not making significant progress at the moment but work continues to seek to enable these.
- Complementary initiatives theme now underway on a number of activities including:
  - Re-start on the night time economy group.
  - Market review and re brand works ongoing.
  - Setting up management and licensing arrangements for public realm.

In response to members questions' the Project Manager advised that:

- Acknowledged the concerns raised regarding the difficulties at the entrances of the two shops at the top of Westminster Street. This was currently being addressed to make access to these shops more accessible.
- Standard safe on street storage facilities for bicycles was included within the proposal of the walking and cycling packages, however larger scaled proposals have not been considered at this stage.
- Works at the Triangle was ongoing with trees already removed ahead of work. Construction is reasonably complicated due to diversion of utilities, but it is hoped a start date will be confirmed soon and he would inform members as soon as possible of this date.
- Acknowledged the concerns of safety and security at the Westminster Street site. He explained the issues of the site and expected these issues to be addressed very soon.

The Chairman thanked the Project Manager for his detailed report and requested that he bring a visual powerpoint presentation to the next meeting showcasing the works currently being carried out within the town.

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## **42. Phosphates Update (Agenda Item 8)**

The Lead Specialist, Built Environment explained that he was attending Area South Committee on members request to give a brief summary of where the five Somerset Councils are in terms of managing phosphates. He also explained what work was being done at a national level with the increasing problem of the phosphate impacts on development across Somerset and beyond.

Some of the key points he raised included:

- The history and background of the phosphate situation and the impact within the areas of South Somerset.
- The creation of the phosphate calculator, a tool that allowed applicants and agents to understand the likely phosphates emissions before and after development to create a differential which was the level of phosphate mitigation they would need to deliver.
- This process has allowed some developers to use existing land, upgrade existing cesspits and other small scale solutions to allow smaller housing developments but not currently strategic scale development.
- One significant project delivered houses in Crewkerne where the applicants were able to follow a large amount of land to provide an offsetting through not spreading phosphate fertilizer on that land.
- Working with Royal Haskoning to produce a follow up document that gives a 'best practice' guide. This sets out where the most effective land management solutions would come from for best value for money in terms of visibility and costings and provide an opportunity for land owners whether promoting projects would suit them.
- The aspiration was to produce a supplementary planning document that sets out national and local policy to each individual planning applications and the benefits of this document.
- Explained the work currently being done by Somerset West and Taunton council and their commitment to delivering phosphate mitigation projects. However they currently have retained council housing stock, which SSDC do not have, although we are working with local housing associations to encourage these mitigation projects.

- The five Somerset councils wrote to Defra and what was the ministry for housing, communities and local government last year requesting they consider funding infrastructure improvements.
- Additionally, the council's requested that central government should apply pressure to Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority), who sign off on the improvement plans of Wessex Water and others to improve their programmes for phosphate stripping where this is not currently programmed.
- Solutions required are not at a district or county level and that national standards and national best practice needs to be rolled out to help Natural England with more evidence rather than 'reinvent the wheel' as progress is made.
- There was currently a lack of coordination and focus in terms of the national bodies involved in the process. The solutions need a coordinated approach at government, non-governmental organisation level, and those associations that represent the various interests involved.
- Working with EnTrade (a Wessex Water derivative) to help part fund and future monitoring work going forward to deliver land management solutions.
- Land management solutions are unlikely to be the long term primary solution given the likely land take involved. There needs to be a recognition that engineered solutions need to come forward more quickly with a common priority.

In response to question from members, the Lead Specialist, Built Environment gave the following responses:

- Wessex Water are the company that services South Somerset but the frustration being we need to look to represent a larger geographical area and work together across the various councils involved.
- Believed that nearly 300 planning applications are currently being held up in South Somerset.
- Wessex Water have provided a programme of water treatment works to be upgraded across Somerset but have not provided any costing figures per plant. He believed the entire works were phosphate related.

Members wished to thank the Lead Specialist for his comprehensive presentation. They appreciated the detailed information involved and therefore requested a short briefing note be circulated to members for their information. The Lead Specialist was happy to provide this and would circulate to members separately.

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#### **43. Area South Forward Plan (Agenda Item 9)**

***This item was taken before Item 7 on the agenda.***

A request was made by Cllr John Clark to start to undertake work to identify and agree area priorities within Area South going forward into the new Local Community Networks (LCN's).

During a full discussion, members voiced their support of this request although some members believed this may be a little premature, due to the unknown clarity of prospective boundaries or responsibilities of the LCN's at this stage. However at the conclusion of the debate it was agreed that a workshop be arranged for Area South committee members only to start work on this issue. This request was noted and that Cllr John Clark would liaise with officers accordingly. Members would be kept updated.

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**44. Planning Appeals (For Information) (Agenda Item 10)**

Members noted the Planning appeals.

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Chairman