

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area South Committee** held at the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil. on Wednesday 6 March 2019.**

(2.00 - 3.45 pm)

### **Present:**

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

John Clark  
John Field  
Nigel Gage  
Kaysar Hussain  
Andy Kendall  
Sarah Lindsay

Mike Lock  
Tony Lock  
Wes Read  
David Recardo  
Gina Seaton



### **Officers:**

Jo Boucher  
Natalie Fortt  
Peter Paddon  
Paul Rayson  
Peter Biggenden  
Linda Hayden  
Andy Coupe

Case Services Officer (Support Services)  
Regeneration Programme Manager  
Lead Specialist (Economy)  
General Manager, Yeovil Crematorium  
Specialist – Architecture & Projects  
Specialist – Development Management  
Somerset County Council

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

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### **62. Minutes of previous meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the Area South Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 copies of which had been circulated, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Cathy Bakewell, Rob Stickland, Graham Oakes, Peter Seib and Alan Smith.

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

The Chairman advised that he had a personal interest in agenda item 8 as he was a board member on the Yeovil Refresh Programme.

Cllr Tony Lock, Cllr John Clark and Cllr Sarah Lindsay advised that they also had a personal interest in agenda item 8 as they were also members of the Yeovil Refresh Programme.

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#### **65. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)**

A member of the public addressed the committee to highlight concerns that he had with two planning applications which were currently being considered by the planning department. One application was for a HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) on Mitchelmore Road. He highlighted that this would have a significant impact on the local residents as there were already issues with parking on the road, pointing out that there were already other HMO's on this same stretch of road.

He also pointed out a second application which was for Park School. He felt that the application was out of keeping with the area and that application would provide high density housing.

Members noted his comments but added no comments of their own.

Steve Elliott addressed the committee informing members of the forthcoming Yeovil Half Marathon. He informed them that it was to take place on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. He said that the course was to follow the same route as last year, with the start line on South Street and the finish line in the Quedam Centre. He informed members that he anticipated that over 2000 runners would take part and that there would also be an organised fun-run.

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#### **66. Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

Councillor David Recardo advised members that he had the privilege to present the Countryside Rangers and volunteers with the 'Best Park 2018 Five-Star Award' from South West in Bloom. He explained that the judges were extremely impressed when they visited the park and he offered his praise to the Countryside Team.

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#### **67. Reports from representatives on outside organisations (Agenda Item 6)**

Councillor John Clark, representing the Westfield Community Association, advised that building work for the Community Centre has commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> January and that the foundations for the building were now in place.

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#### **68. Yeovil Western Corridor Update (Agenda Item 7)**

Andy Coupe, Somerset County Council's Strategic Manager Infrastructure Programmes with the aid of slides presented members with an update of the Programme of Works.

He updated members on the works in progress and gave an overview of the future programme including:

- The Lysander Road junction had now been commissioned, however some works to the footways were still required. He added that some further signage was also due to be installed. He indicated that initial feedback about the operation had generally been positive, explaining that the performance of the junction would be monitored.
- All the junctions were working independently of each other and upon completion of all the schemes, they would all be working as one.
- The Westlands through-about had been commissioned in early February. He felt that the junction was generally performing well, stating that journey times had noticeably improved, during peak times, especially from the Cartgate link.
- He explained that he was aware of concerns regarding vehicles exiting Bunford Lane and confirmed that this was being reviewed. He also commented that final works to permanent signage and footways was still required.
- Concerns had been noted over the strobing effect of the low level lighting used along the airfield between the Westlands and Bluebell junctions. This was being reviewed.
- There were no further updates to the works on the Bluebell Roundabout, however the schemes designer's response to the interim audit was being finalised and any required work would be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.
- He had been in discussion with Asda to agree when the new Asda access would be opened.
- The works at Copse Road had now been commissioned, however these were currently operating on temporary configurations during the daytime with a one-way system in place. He noted that the permanent configuration will need to operate when the night time closures affecting Preston Road Roundabout were in place because the one way system on Western Avenue would need to be removed each evening and reinstated in the morning in order to give access to the Houndstone Retail Park during the evenings.
- The Stourton Way cycle route was continuing to progress. He hoped that the remaining works could be expedited.
- He advised that work was taking place on the north-eastern corner of the Preston Road roundabout and that some sections of the retaining wall had been completed. The next phase of works, which would commence on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March, was to remove the existing roundabout and carry out the necessary drainage and ducting works ready for the new road layout. This would require night-time road closures, details of which had been published. These works had been timed to coincide with the Asda Petrol Filling Station works to minimise overall disruption for both the public and the business. During the evenings, the only access to the Roundabout will be from Bunford Lane and into Lufton Way. Western Avenue would be open during the evenings to maintain access to the Houndstone Business Park. Access to Asda would remain from Preston Road. The only access through the roundabout between 8pm and 5.30am would be between Bunford Lane and Lufton Way. Traffic movements between these two arms of the roundabout would be controlled by temporary traffic lights. Access to Asda would be maintained from Preston Road. However, once the store closed at midnight, the closure would be extended to St James Park until 5.30am. While night works are underway the one-way closure on Western Avenue will be removed but will return during the day. The overnight closures were expected to take around six weeks and will be followed by a shorter period of further overnight works involving the use of temporary multi-way traffic lights.

He explained that the primary works at Lysander, Westlands, Copse Road and Bluebell had been completed and the junctions were now signalised. The programme was still on

track and the remaining works to the Preston Road junction were due for completion in June.

He advised that the overall benefits of the scheme would only be achieved once all works had been completed and that all junctions and signals were working together. He added that feedback on the schemes had generally been positive, particularly on the junctions which had been opened more recently.

During the discussion, the Strategic Manager (Infrastructure Programmes) clarified the scoot system. He advised that the signalling on junctions can work alone, or in combination. He explained that the system would allow traffic across the further area to be controlled. One member commented that it would be useful to provide further information to the public to explain how the system will work in conjunction with other junctions.

The Chairman thanked the SCC Strategic Manager Infrastructure Programmes for his presentation.

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## **69. Yeovil Refresh and Economic Development Update Report (Agenda Item 8)**

The Chairman advised that there were members of the public that wanted to speak on this agenda item.

Comments made by the first member of the public included;

- A quote which related to proposed access and layout works to Middle Street proposed in 2003 was referred to. The quote included comments made by Councillor Tony Lock and the Chairman of Area South Committee at that time, stating that the works in Middle Street were a great improvement and provided greater access to disabled people. She questioned why these improvements would now be changed.
- She also referred to public consultation which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018. She had not been aware of the consultation and questioned whether it would have been accessible to disabled members of the public.
- The findings from the public consultation had not been published. She had not seen any evidence that the proposal was supported by the community.
- It was pointed out that a public petition had been submitted in objection to the proposal. It was also pointed out that objections had been included in the local newspaper and on social media, however these objections and concerns had not been addressed within the report.
- Disabled visitors to the town centre would be disadvantaged.
- 20 or more disabled parking spaces would be lost.
- The proposal is unacceptable. Too few disabled spaces will be available and they will be too far from the town centre.
- The report states that there are no equality and diversity issues, however this is incorrect.

The Chairman clarified that the consultation took place in the Quedam, details of which were published online and in the local newspaper. He advised that 'Access for All' were consulted and that there would be opportunity for further consultation. He also added that

disabled parking spaces were not being eliminated, they were being moved to an alternative site.

The Regeneration Programme Manager addressed the Committee. She advised that this was an update report and that no decisions were being made, so there were no equality and diversity implications which would be directly affected by this report. She also advised that the official consultation had not begun. This consultation would be carried out by Somerset County Council and she was expecting an announcement on this shortly.

Another member of the public addressed the Committee. Her comments included;

- She advised that she started the petition. She noted that the spaces would be relocated, rather than removed and advised that the petition was to retain the disabled parking on Middle Street.
- She was pleased that access to the town centre was a priority, however the proposal would make the situation so much worse for disabled visitors to the town centre. The plans will make Yeovil less accessible for people with mobility impairments and inaccessible for others.
- She hoped that she would be able to discuss these concerns with the ward members in further detail and invited councillors to visit the town centre with her to share her issues.
- She raised concerns about the equality and diversity impact assessment which had been carried out.
- Her life would be negatively impacted in terms of independence, mental health and quality of life. So many people will be excluded from the town centre.

The Regeneration Programme Manager reiterated that the official consultation process had not yet started.

Referring to her report, she explained that the Yeovil Access Strategy work had begun and once completed would be jointly adopted with Somerset County Council. This would ensure that any proposals would require agreement from the Somerset County Council Highways Team.

She advised that since writing the report and following receipt of tenders, interviews for the Public Realm Design Project had been undertaken and a successful bidder had been selected. She was however unable to announce who the successful bidder was due to procurement regulations.

She explained that the Economic Development Team were working closely with the Refresh Team to deliver the programme.

During the discussion, member raised some concerns and suggestions which included;

- Members were aware of the concerns from blue badge holders and explained that they were looking to find suitable places to relocate the disabled spaces to.
- The Chairman advised that progress on the co-worker hub was continuing.
- It was suggested that it could be an option to restrict the hours when the road will be pedestrianised, to provide disabled access outside of these times.
- A member commented that the consultation process has not yet begun and commented that some comments in the press did not contain all of the facts and

had not been helpful. He also pointed out that things had changed since the comments made in 2003.

- The Chairman explained that he would be happy to discuss the proposals with any members of the public that wish to contact him.
- One member commented that members of the public were concerned that houses were being built on public car parks. He clarified that a review had been carried out, which was important to the Yeovil Refresh Project. He pointed out the importance of the consultation which would take place and welcomed involvement from the community.
- One member advised the committee of a near miss accident which he had witnessed on Middle Street.

On the subject of the car parks in Yeovil, the Regeneration Programme Manager advised that SSDC Local Plan provided many options on which consultation was still to take place. She confirmed that building on the Petters Way car park was not part of the current Yeovil Refresh Programme.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration Programme Manager for her report.

The Lead Specialist – Economy addressed the Committee. He explained that the Economic Development Team and the Regeneration Team were working closely together to ensure that the project is successful.

He explained that the new Economic Development Strategy had been recently approved and the team would be working to deliver the new strategy. He explained that the strategy was developed with a lot of input from members and that area workshops had been held. They had also directly contacted 40 businesses for feedback.

He pointed out to members that the strategy had been split into themes. He felt that all the themes within the strategy were important, especially around the time of Brexit. Issues such as business support, regeneration of market towns and training for business will still be important. He hoped that by having a strategy in place, it would aid successful bids for project support funds.

He advised members that the team were looking at projects across the district and noted that Yeovil had rural areas closely adjoining the town.

He explained to members that Yeovil Innovation Phase 2 was underway and that the team had been working with Yeovil College to support additional level 4 training.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Specialist – Economy for his report and for attending the meeting.

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## **70. Yeovil Crematorium Redevelopment Proposals (Agenda Item 9)**

The General Manger, Yeovil Crematorium addressed the Committee. He advised that following the opening of the Crematorium in 1971, they are currently averaging 1,800 cremations a year. He pointed out where other crematoriums were located, highlighting that the Yeovil Crematorium covers vast catchment area. He used a PowerPoint presentation to provide images of the site and plans to show the proposals.

Some of his comments included;

- The building needs updating and that the chapel only seats 96 people, adding that the waiting area is small.
- The chapel is dark and has no natural light.
- The vestry is poorly located and is away from the area where families congregate.
- The cloister area is looking tired and needs improving, however it is a covered area and a fish pond is located here.
- The book of remembrance chapel is oversized and not situated in an ideal location.
- The floral tribute area requires some updating.
- The garden of remembrance is becoming full and requires a lot of maintenance.
- The chapel needs to be updated.

He explained that a design had been developed which would reduce the size of the existing chapel and would create a larger waiting area. Some of the features of the design included;

- The existing waiting room would be converted into a new vestry.
- A family waiting room would be created next to the vestry.
- The proposals would include a small chapel as well as a main chapel which would seat 160 people. A viewing room would also be provided with one way glass to allow viewings separate from the main chapel.
- A shower room and upgraded offices would be provided for members of staff.
- A new car park has been provided. A rear access has been provided for construction traffic.

During the discussion, members noted that this was is an important part of Yeovil's future.

The General Manager confirmed that the work would commence in the summer.

The Chairman thank the General Manager and the Specialist – Architecture and Projects for their hard work on the project and for attending the meeting.

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## 71. Area South Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

The Case Officer, Support Services presented the report and advised that there were no updates to the Forward Plan.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that the Area South Forward Plan and the comments of Members be noted.
  - (2) that the reports identified by Members be added to the Area South Forward Plan.

*(Voting: Without dissent)*

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**72. Appeals (For information only) (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted the Planning Appeals.

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

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Applications.

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**74. Planning Application 18/03973/R3D - Yeovil Country Park Centre Brunswick Street Yeovil (Agenda Item 13)**

***Application Proposal: Extension to rear of existing building and provision of PV panels to front elevation***

The Specialist Officer – Planning presented her report to members. She explained that the application was for a single storey extension to an existing building at the Country Park in Yeovil.

Using a PowerPoint presentation she provided photographs of the site and images to show the proposed plans. She also pointed out the position of the proposed solar PV panels. She also advised members that the proposal included some hard surfacing and an outside seating area close to the existing building.

She explained to members that some objections to the application had been received and the history of the site has been raised as a concern. She pointed out that these concerns had been addressed within the report.

She considered that the size of the extension was modest and felt that this would have a limited impact on the surrounding area. She added that the building was some distance from neighbouring properties and felt that the extension would not have a demonstrable impact on residential amenity.

She also felt that the solar panels would not be duly obtrusive. She also pointed out that there had been no objections from the highways authority or from the SSDC Highways Consultant with respect of highway safety or parking concerns.

Members of the public spoke in support to the proposal. Their comments included;

- Since the café opening in 2014, it has been a great success and is enjoyed by many visitors.
- There are many events planned at the country park and the café will be busy. An extension will allow rangers to use the additional space during busy times.
- Items sold in the café provide a profit to be spent within the country park. An increase in size will provide additional retail space.
- The café is important to the Countryside Team, schools, the community and is a great social place. It draws people to the park from the wider area.



- Currently a screen is used to provide a separate area for training and ranger use, however this reduces the size of the café area considerably and restricts access to the side doors.
- An extension would allow the seating area to be increased.
- The park has received many awards.
- A decade ago the park was a dark and intimidating place to visit, however the rangers and the volunteers have transformed the site into a pleasant and welcoming place.
- The buildings hosts many learning events for children and will attract tourists to the area.
- The Parish Council supports the application.

Councillor Andy Kendall, Ward Member, spoke in support of the application. He was pleased that PV solar panels had been included within the proposal. He also requested clarification over whether the application would be permitted development if it wasn't owned by SSDC. He also felt that CCTV should be installed.

The Specialist Officer – Planning advised that the application would not be within permitted development rights due to the size of the extension. She advised that it would be unlikely that planning permission would be required for CCTV.

Councillor Kaysar Hussain, also Ward Member, offered his support to the application.

Councillor Peter Gubbins, also Ward Member, offered his support to the application.

Following the discussion, it was proposed and seconded that the planning application be approved, as per the agenda report.

On being put to the vote, this was carried by 11 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED:** that planning application 18/3973/R3D be **approved** as per the agenda report for the following reason;

01. The scheme would cause no demonstrable harm to (i) visual amenity; (ii) residential amenity; and (iii) highway safety. In addition, there would be no material exacerbation of flood risk as a consequence of this development and there is no evidence that any harm would be caused to interests of biodiversity. As such, the proposal accords with Policies SD1, SS1, EP8, EP15, EQ1, EQ2, EQ4, TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF and its associated Planning Practice Guidance.

**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 drawings:

Site Location Plan - scale 1:1250;  
Drawing no. 1381-03A "Proposed floor plan and elevations; and  
Drawing no. 1381-11B "proposed site layout plan"

and the external surfaces of the new extension shall be of materials to match the existing building, as indicated on the submitted application form and the Design and Access Statement. No other external finishing materials shall be used without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

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

03. Prior to any use of the development for the purposes hereby permitted, provision for access for bats shall have been made in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the number, location, design, appearance and size of bat boxes to be installed either on the new extension hereby permitted and/or the existing building. The approved bat boxes shall be maintained and retained thereafter in perpetuity, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of protecting biodiversity throughout construction and thereafter, having regard to Policy EQ4 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

(voting: 11 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

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Chairman

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Date