

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the Area West Committee held as a Virtual Meeting - using Zoom meeting software on Wednesday 17 June 2020.**

(4.30 - 4.59 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Jason Baker (Chairman)

|                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Mike Best      | Tricia O'Brien (from 4.55pm) |
| Dave Bulmer    | Sue Osborne                  |
| Brian Hamilton | Robin Pailthorpe             |
| Val Keitch     | Oliver Patrick               |
| Jenny Kenton   | Linda Vijeh                  |
| Paul Maxwell   | Martin Wale                  |



**Officers:**

|                 |                                           |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Jo Morris       | Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)   |
| Becky Sanders   | Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)   |
| Debbie Haines   | Locality Team Leader                      |
| Dan Bennett     | Property and Development Project Manager  |
| Kirsty Larkins  | Director (Strategy and Commissioning)     |
| Nathan Turnbull | Locality Officer                          |
| Cara Cheshire   | Case Officer (Strategy and 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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**295. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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**296. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Martin Carnell and Garry Shortland.

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**297. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

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**298. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda Item 4)**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Area West Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 using Zoom virtual meeting software.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

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### **300. Chairman's 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.

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### **301. Chard Regeneration Scheme Update (Agenda Item 7)**

The Property and Development Project Manager introduced the report and advised that due to the uncertainty surrounding Covid-19 and the safety of workers and the public, the Chard Regeneration Scheme site had closed for a period of two weeks. The site was now safely open and work was progressing with all the necessary Covid-19 implications in place. He explained that although work was being undertaken, there were a number of issues such as supply chain delays, social distancing and sub-contractor delays which would impact on the delivery timescale of the Leisure Centre and the opening was likely to be put back to the Autumn 2021. The timescale would be kept under review and members would be kept up to date on any delays and the opening date. He referred to some of the more noisy operations currently taking place and explained that monitoring stations were located around the perimeter of the site including one attached to a residential property in the vicinity to closely monitor vibrations from the site.

With regard to the Boden Street Public Convenience, the Property and Development Project Manager advised that the facility had been closed to the public. The Contractor was currently undertaking survey work prior to demolition and arranging for disconnection of the facilities. The demolition was planned to take place in late July although delays were possible due to the implications of Covid-19.

Members were informed that the Chard High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Project would deliver improvements to the High Street through the awarding of grants. The Property and Development Project Manager advised that he was currently in the process of recruiting a Project Manager and would keep members updated on progress.

He concluded that the next steps would involve looking at phase 2 of the project which would include residential conversions of some of the Mill buildings and the Boden Centre and the submission of a planning application.

The Property and Development Project Manager responded to members' questions on points of detail.

At the conclusion of the item, members were content to note the report and commented that the project was going well considering the current circumstances and the end result would be an excellent facility for Chard.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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### **302. Area West - Covid 19 Community response (Agenda Item 8)**

The Locality Team Leader presented the report and updated that Officers had been assisting businesses with the opening up of the High Street including the erection of signs and information in relation to social distancing. Some follow up work would also be undertaken with shops, businesses and residents to monitor any issues. The next stage would include support for the opening up of public houses and restaurants. The Locality Team Leader invited members to comment and raise any issues or concerns relating to the current Covid - 19 pandemic within their wards.

During a short discussion, members raised the following comments:

- The majority of businesses were very positive about the changes around social distancing in Chard.
- It was important to note that Council staff had been responsible for erection of signage and undertaking all the work involved with the opening up of the High Streets. Congratulations were expressed to all staff involved.
- There had been no adverse comments received over the pedestrianisation of Holyrood Street in Chard.
- It was good to see local businesses open as they were the future of the High Street.
- There had also been a positive response in Ilminster. It was noted that quite a few of the businesses had remained open including hardware shops and cafes operating a takeaway service.
- During the lockdown, many people were out cycling and walking and taking an interest in the natural environment and it was felt that this should be encouraged further.
- It was positive to see communities working well together and businesses adapting under the restricted measures.
- There was a need to harness the energy of those community groups that were set up to keep them together as potentially there was a real source of community support activity going forward.

In response to questions, members were informed that:

- All SSDC managed public toilets had remained open throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, however there were a number of public toilets within the district that were managed by town and parish councils on behalf of the Council and some of those were closed.
- There was an initiative from Government that Somerset County Council were leading on and the District Councils feeding into on improving cycle-ways and cycle-paths.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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**303. Area West Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 9)**

Members noted that a report on the progress of Stop Line Way would be presented to the July Area West Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Area West Committee Forward Plan be noted subject to the following update:

A report on Stop Line Way to be presented to the July Area West Committee meeting.

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**304. Planning Appeals (Agenda Item 10)**

Members noted the report which gave details of appeal received.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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Chairman