

Watchet, Williton & Quantock Vale Area Panel

17th September 2019

7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton

NOTES AND ACTION POINTS

PRESENT:

Councillor David Westcott	Watchet Town Council
Councillor Loretta Whetlor	SWT and Watchet Town Council
Councillor Marcus Kravis	SWT Portfolio Holder
Dave Talling	Holford Parish Council
Peter Gill	Kilve Parish Council
Sue Goss	Stogursey Parish Council
Gordon Tizzard	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Tony Perrett	Williton Parish Council
Izzy Silvester	CCS Village Agent
John Richards	WACET
Samantha Murrell	SWT Engagement Lead
Rebecca Miller	SWT Principal Planning Officer
David Peake	SCC Highways Officer
Helga Staddon	Resident
Bob Crowther	Resident
Richard Cuttell	Resident
Jenny Berry	Resident

1. Introduction

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Huw Davies - SCC & SWT

Chris Hall SWT

Emma Cavendish – Holford Parish Council

PCSO Sue Marks (Who was called away to attend RTC).

3. Notes of the Meeting of 19th June 2019 and Matters Arising.

It was agreed that most of the matters arising would be covered under subsequent Agenda Items.

4. Have Your Say - Community Issues/Concerns

- a) Jennifer Berry (chair of the Good Neighbours scheme hosted in Danesborough View Common Room) spoke of her annoyance at use of the name "Good Neighbours" by Somerset Community Council for their national scheme. She had spoken to Izzy Silvester at length about this, and was angry that an advertisement had been displayed in the Williton Window, advertising the services of the Village Agents "Good Neighbours" which conflicted with her own. Izzy was doing her best to come to a resolution and was attending a meeting the following morning with her CEO to discuss the situation.

ACTION POINT 1 – Izzy Silvester to work with Miss Berry to establish a mutually beneficial way forward.

5. SWT Principal Planning Specialist – Rebecca Miller

- a) Rebecca introduced herself and said she had been appointed to post following the transformation to one Council. She was very aware of recent frustrations and she was putting together a cohesive planning team that was fit for purpose. She had finally finished interviewing and the last person would come into the SWT on the 1st January 2020. She had appointed 9 new planning posts, which would be assigned geographical areas and would familiarise themselves with their localities. This would result in consistency with names, faces and decision making. In addition three of these had specialisms in Conservation (Heritage Buildings), Conservation and Landscaping (AONB Areas) and Tree Preservation. The Planning Officer responsible for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) including HPC is John Burton.
- b) These officers would not be based at a specific location but would be flexible and work where it suited the purpose of the business. Although they had individual caseload, if capacity allowed they would be available to help customers with general planning related queries if called upon.
- c) Referring to action points that had been raised in the previous Area Panel Meeting by Holford Parish Council:-

C.1. Ongoing Maintenance of Amenity/Play Areas. Do new owners take on the restrictions and responsibilities that were imposed as part of the original planning application, and how long do these responsibilities last?
Rebecca advised that the original agreement still stands and the landowner is responsible. The landowner had provided a play area and that was fulfilling the planning obligation despite the fact it was closed as deemed “unsafe”. There were no grounds to enforce a S106 order because the landowner had not breached the order. It was pointed out that as this play area is owned by a RSL housing provider (Falcon Housing formerly West Somerset Rural Housing), it was in their interest as a responsible landlord to serve their tenants, and ensure that the play area was well maintained.

ACTION POINT 2 – Seek advice from Housing Enabler (Jo Humble) about who to liaise with at Falcon Rural Housing Association to resolve this matter. *Jo Humble and Sue Southwell prior to this Area Panel have expressed a wish to attend the December 2019 meeting to discuss S106 agreements and Housing Enablement roles.*

C.2. Is it now official planning policy to recommend prospective applicants consult with the Parish Council for opinions and suggestions regarding potential planning applications?
The answer given was that this is not official planning policy, but it is considered good practice for applicants to consult prior to submission, especially on large scale developments.

- d) Concern was expressed about the move away from providing paper plans with applications. Rebecca stated that SWT receives all applications in an electronic format now, and it was too costly to reproduce these as paper copies. It reduces carbon footprint, storage requirement and postage. David Peake emphasised this point and said that SCC also no longer provide hard copy plans. In the

event a Parish Council wanted a paper copy, it was suggested that they firstly approach the applicant to see if they could provide one as part of their consultation.

- e) Sue Goss expressed disappointment at the new rules regarding delegated decisions as she felt it reduced the importance of parish councils and asked that these were fed back to SWT. Marcus Kravis said this was a political decision, not officer led but her comments were noted.
- f) There were also several comments made regarding satellite dishes in Conservation Areas, unauthorised HMOs and other enforcement issues relating to the HPC site. Rebecca said that John Burton was the specialist officer in that area and should be point of contact. If matters needed to be escalated then they would come to her as Principal Planning Officer.

6. Police Report – Report is attached.

- a) Report was read out at the meeting in the absence of Sue Thomson who was called away to attend a RTC.
- b) A reminder that the PCC and Chief Constable would be hosting a question and answer session at the Beach Hotel, Minehead on 24th September at 7pm. The event is free but tickets need to be booked via Eventbrite.
- c) Sue also left some information booklets which highlighted scams and how to combat them.

7. Highways Report – David Peake

1. Referring to action points that had been raised in the previous Area Panel meeting:-
 - 1.1. Regarding overnight closures of the A39 during the winter months – SCC did their very best to issue advance notice but the surface dressing work was very weather dependent. High/low temperatures and rain affected the ability to carry out these works. It was always the intention for works to go ahead as advertised but they had to undertake a risk assessment on weather conditions prior to starting. If it was considered that conditions were unsuitable then the work was postponed until a more favourable time. Notifications were always posted on Twitter @TravelSomerset, BBC Traffic and Somerset Travel. <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk>. This was real time monitoring and updated incidents and road closures as they happened.
 - 1.2. Wide loads – this is not a matter handled by SCC Highways but wide load operating companies do have to check road conditions before setting out. Due to lack of resource there is no requirement on A&SPolice to assist with the private transportation of wide loads, but there are strict operating times about when they can travel.
2. Various questions were raised about Highways issues concerning the HPC Infrastructure. (Mainly concerning congestion, traffic census information, rat-runs and maintenance of roads in the Shurton area). David Peake said these needed to be referred to the relevant on-site case worker at Hinkley Point as the site had its own Highways Project Officers.
3. Hedgerow cutting and verge maintenance. The cyclical program on this had been reduced to one cut a year. The hedges and verges will be trimmed back by 1metre at the roadside to increase visibility. Due to bird nesting season SCC trim hedges only in

September and October, but if the hedge causes a health and safety hazard they will attend to it also outside of this time frame. Concerns can be reported via the SCC website.

4. A concern was raised by Jenny Berry about the state of pavements in Williton alongside the Wyndham Arms and Long Street. Due to the fact there was only one safe walkway alongside these busy main roads, she asked if essential repair works could be undertaken.

ACTION POINT 3 - David Peake to pass these comments along so that an assessment on the state of the pavements can be carried out.

5. Essential resurfacing work is due to take place on the A39 at Dragon Cross in October. This will result in overnight road closures Mon – Friday from 18:30 to 23:30 during off peak hours to minimise disruption. Work will begin on Monday 7th October with the final shift programmed for Wednesday 16th October. For further information on this please refer to www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks .

8. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – Not present

9. Somerset West and Taunton Council

- a) A report on the Somerset West Lottery had been circulated prior to the meeting. Funds raised this year are £35,349,60.

ACTION POINT 4 – The Chairman asked how much of the ticket price was specifically allocated to the former West Somerset Council Area, if that was where it was purchased?

ACTION POINT 5 – What arrangements were in place to celebrate the Lottery hitting the £100K target? Could this be investigated and reported back please.

- b) The lease to the Onion Collective Development will be signed on the 23rd September which will move the project to the construction stage. As a reminder the project is being managed by the Onion Collective and any agents they may appoint.
- c) Gordon Tizzard asked what the maximum capacity was for Fire Regulations on the John Meikle Room (JMR) in Taunton?

ACTION POINT 6 – To determine what the capacity arrangements are for the John Meikle room.

Councillors Kravis and Whetlor advised that meetings relating to local issues such as Licensing and Planning would be held at West Somerset House whenever possible. Due to the size of the Committee and to assist with accessibility, this was a sensible choice. With regards to Full Council however, it was somewhat more difficult to accommodate all 59 Councillors, press and public within the West Somerset Council Chamber, especially if the Agenda was focussed on a Taunton related issue.

- d) A new Prosperity and Economic Development strategy is being commissioned and will be completed during the winter of 2019. This will help the Council make informed decisions about how to direct its own resources and contribute to growth and investment.
- e) Councillor Whetlor advised that SALC would be convening a meeting at West Somerset House and member organisations would receive an invitation in due course.

10. Meeting closed at 9:00pm

Dates of Future Meetings

Tuesday 3rd December 2019

Tuesday 17th March 2020

The West Somerset House Council Chamber has been reserved for this purpose.