

Bath and North East Somerset Council

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 22nd October, 2014, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Martin Veal (Bath & North East Somerset Council) (Chairman), Paul Crossley, Tim Warren (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and David Veale (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

Representatives of: Batheaston, Clutton, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Dunkerton, Englishcombe, Farmborough, High Littleton, Keynsham, Marksbury, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Peasedown St John, Priston, Publow with Pensford, Saltford, Shoscombe, South Stoke, Stanton Drew, Timsbury, Whitchurch,

Also in attendance: Tony Crouch (President ALCA)

Officers attending: Dr Jo Farrar (Chief Executive), Lisa Bartlett (Divisional Director, Development, Planning and Transport), Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager), Andy Thomas (Group Manager, Partnership Delivery), Richard Stott (Principal Planning & Enforcement Officer).

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman of Council, Councillor Martin Veal, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Clerk read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

B&NES councillors: David Bellotti, Sally Davis, Charles Gerrish, Eleanor Jackson, Dine Romero

Parish Representatives: Camerton, Corston, East Harptree, Kelston, Hinton Blewett, West Harptree, Ubley

Officers: Louise Fradd

17 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were none.

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting on 18th June 2014 were proposed for approval by Peter Duppa-Miller, seconded by Councillor Tony Crouch and signed by the Chairman.

19 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Andy Thomas, Group Manager, Partnership Delivery, introduced this item which highlighted progress with the Connecting Communities Project. He informed the meeting that 3 Connecting Communities forums were now running and a cycle of meetings had been established. At present, the 3 forums do not cover all of the parished areas yet, but that will follow in the future. He wished to register his thanks to all the parishes who had already taken part for their co-operation. After the national and local elections in May 2015, a series of conference-style events will be held. The Bath City Conference was already successfully established.

Peter Duppa-Miller added that the 3 wards (21 parishes) not yet covered by the forums were those in Bathavon and that he hoped that they would create their own forum.

A representative of Keynsham Town Council commented that there had been difficulties in getting the Clinical Commissioning Group and Curo involved in the forums.

Action: The Chief Executive offered to take this issue to the next meeting of the Public Services Board.

20 WORKING GROUP TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AND CIVIC GOVERNANCE WITHIN BATH

Andy Thomas, Group Manager, Partnership Delivery, introduced this item. He informed the meeting that the Elected Members Working Group had identified a wide range of options and wished to encourage parishes to engage with this issue and comment. For the future, the parishes will be kept informed of progress with the consultation process which will include presentations from other areas of the country.

The Chairman thanked Andy Thomas for his reports.

21 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Simon de Beer, Planning Policy and Environment Manager, introduced these items relating to the Local Development Framework.

Core Strategy

The Strategy has now been adopted and there had been no legal challenge, so therefore the adoption has been confirmed. This means that the Council is on a much more robust position to defend challenges from developers.

With regard to the urban extension sites, the Core Strategy requires that the developers prepare a Masterplan in consultation with the community and the Council. Developers have indicated their willingness to do this and work with the local communities.

The clerk to Combe Hay Parish Council informed the meeting that the first exhibition of proposed development of land at Odd Down would be on 3rd November.

Placemaking Plan

Simon de Beer informed the meeting that there had been a positive response from parishes to developing placemaking plans and that the quality of the plans was very high. The options document will be presented to the Cabinet in late November and the consultation period will continue till January 2015.

Councillor Paul Crossley wished to record his thanks to Stanton Drew Parish Council for inviting him to their placemaking planning day. He informed the meeting that he was happy to attend other parish planning days, as was Councillor Tim Ball.

Housing Development Boundaries Review

Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the department had had a good response to the review, with responses from 15 councils to date. These will be included in the Placemaking Plans.

The Chairman asked whether the ward councillors were involved in these reviews and was informed that they were, along with the LDF steering group.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the consultation on this issue had been completed and it would be submitted for examination in December. A corporate decision would be made as to how the levy would be spent.

The secretary to the Local Councils Association asked whether it was likely that developers will challenge the levy and delay the process. Simon de Beer replied that it was unlikely. The rates are at the high end, but a significant buffer has been included. Section 106 issues have also been taken into account. The Inspector has the option to lower the rate, having assessed our levy. A representative from Batheaston Parish Council asked whether the Section 106 agreement was defunct and was informed that it would work in tandem with the CIL.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People Site Allocations Plan

Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the Local Development Scheme had just been reviewed. Work has been delayed to ensure that all adjoining local authorities have a good evidence base as the Strategy requires neighbouring councils to work together on this issue. Once that has been achieved, sites in the West of England can be identified. The Chairman asked when the West of England consultation would be going public and was informed that it would not be publicised as its purpose would be as a background technical document for informing the local authorities. It would eventually be published in Autumn 2015.

A representative from Compton Dando Parish Council asked how the parishes join in the consultation and was informed that a link to the consultation would be sent to all parishes. A representative of Monkton Combe Parish Council asked whether the Council could afford to identify any more sites, given the cost of the Lower Bristol Road site. Councillor Crossley replied that there had been misinformation about the cost of that site.

22 UPDATE CONCERNING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING 'FRACKING' IN B&NES

The meeting noted the briefing note prepared by Phil Mansfield (Group Manager, Building Control).

Peter Duppa-Miller added that the only PEDL area currently licenced in this region is PEDL 227 which covers the southern part of B&NES and into Somerset. Details can be found on this website:

<http://www.ukogil.org.uk/webmap/index.html>;

The holder of the PEDL 227 licence has very recently indicated that they will be submitting a planning application for an exploration borehole within the PEDL 227 area and most likely within the B&NES district. The exact location is not yet known as they are in discussions with land owners. UK Methane have said that they will consult with ward councillors first. The 14th round licence offer closed on 28th October 2014, so additional areas could be licenced.

Councillor Crossley informed the meeting that he had written to the government about the two returned licences and had asked for them not to be included in the re-tendering process, but to no avail. He and Phil Mansfield would be addressing the upcoming shale gas conference about the potential difficulties caused to Bath and the Mendip Hills by the fracking process.

23 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Richard Stott, Principal Planning Enforcement Officer, informed the meeting that his department had undergone major changes in the past 6 months. 3 full-time planning and development control professionals had been recruited who would be implementing the Enforcement Plan (see attached documents). This had enabled the team to take actions against contraventions. Also, where possible, they had turned complaints

into retrospective planning applications and achieved compromises through negotiation. Actions needed to be appropriate and proportionate. Richard thanked the parishes for their patience as the department dealt with the backlog of complaints.

The Chairman said that he was pleased to hear that the backlog was clearing and asked whether there was a definition of expediency in these matters. Richard Stott replied that many issues were about disputes between neighbours where the public thought that the department could act as mediator, but where the government has granted permitted development rights, the Council has no remit to step in. They might use expediency where there were minor contraventions of the planning rules. Some are more like a nuisance rather than a breach – they would be judged on a case-by-case basis.

A representative from Saltford Parish Council asked whether the parishes will be kept informed as in the past, due to the constraints on the computer system, only the person logging the complaint was notified. Richard Stott replied that, unless the case officer was aware of the parish interest, they might not realise that they should be informed. In North Somerset, the planners publish a quarterly report on the progress of planning applications – the B&NEsteam were looking at this option and others as ways to improve communications. The representative from Saltford was not satisfied with this response and stated that parishes wanted clear action. Lisa Bartlett, Divisional Director, Development, Planning and Transport, replied that they accepted there was a problem but that the department were determined to improve communication with the parishes and release as much information as they could.

A representative from Compton Dando asked how long the process of retrospective planning application lasted. Richard Stott replied that, under the Localism Act, additional provisions were brought in around enforcement, giving local authorities the power to reject the application if there are repeated attempts to circumvent the enforcement notice. Representatives of Monkton Combe and South Stoke Parish Councils asked when the planners would serve a 'stop' notice. Richard Stott replied that it was difficult to give a definite answer as there are lots of legal issues around these notices. They have to consider whether there would be public harm or loss of residential amenity and weigh up the compensation risk. However, they could use temporary 'stop' notices while options are considered.

24 PROGRESS WITH THE IMPROVEMENT IN RURAL BROADBAND

The meeting noted the report prepared by John Cox and John Wilkinson.

Various issues were raised by parish representatives and so the Chairman suggested that, in the absence of the officer, they address their queries direct to John Wilkinson.

25 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman announced that the next Parishes Liaison meeting would be on Wednesday February 25th 2014 in the new Civic Centre in Keynsham. The Chief Executive informed the meeting that the Civic Centre and library were now open and encouraged everyone to visit.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their reports and the parishes for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services