

Parishes Liaison Meeting – 22nd October 2014

Connecting Communities

1. Aim of this briefing

This briefing note updates on the progress of Connecting Communities, Parishes Liaison having received updates on 19th June and 16th October 2013 and 19th February and 18th June 2014

2. Update

The aim of the Connecting Communities programme is to gain better, more consistent engagement between public services and local communities across Bath and North East Somerset. This is being achieved through a mix of:

- a) New local Connecting Communities Forums which involve Parish Councils and elected members
- b) Wider “conference”- style events. The Bath City conference is now well-established as a means of engagement in the City.

Since the last report in June, progress has been as follows:

- The new Somer Valley Forum held its first meeting on 31st July and next meets on 15th October.
- The Keynsham and Chew Valley areas finalised their Forum arrangements at a meeting on 24th July. This was accompanied by an “Ask the Leader” session with the Leader of the Council. All “Ask the Leader” questions and responses- including those made online- can be found [here](#). The Chew Valley Area Forum met on 9th October and the Keynsham Area Forum meets on 15th October.

A key aim of Connecting Communities has also been to reduce duplication and streamline meetings. Parish Cluster Group meetings covering the Keynsham, Chew Valley and Somer Valley areas (ie, Parish Cluster Groups 1, 4 and 5) no longer take place. Police engagement processes are being incorporated into the Somer Valley Forum and discussions are taking place on how this can also be effective in Keynsham and Chew Valley.

For Bath, the Council has established a cross-party working group to consider options to strengthen community representation and civic governance within the City. Parish Councils have been kept informed of progress and this is set out in a separate report.

Efforts are being made to use community buildings around the area for Forum meetings. The first Somer Valley Forum took place at Farrington Gurney Memorial Hall as guests of Farrington Gurney Parish Council and the next will be at Camerton Village Hall. In addition, the 27th November meeting of the Keynsham area forum will be held at the new Keynsham Community Building at the One Stop shop. The arrangements for the Forums currently operating are summarised in the Appendix: please contact the relevant lead officer for any further information required.

3. Next Steps

The three new Forums will focus initially on identifying local priorities and new Area Profiling tools have been developed to help the Forums gain a better understanding of local needs. Forums will further strengthen our work with local partners such as the Police and CCG. The meetings in October and November have also been programmed specifically to discuss the Core Strategy and the Placemaking Plan.

Parish Cluster groups 2 and 3 are not currently included in the the Connecting Communities “Forum” approach. However, there are currently no Parish Cluster group meetings timetabled beyond the end of this calendar year. There is therefore an opportunity for future engagement in these areas to take place through the Connecting Communities approach, including establishing a Forum or Fora. Further discussions are taking place and a report will be taken to the December Cabinet with recommendations for next steps. Consideration is also being given to establishing “Conference” arrangements for the parished area, comparable to the Bath City Conference.

APPENDIX: INFORMATION ON CONNECTING COMMUNITIES FORUMS

FORUM NAME	UPCOMING MEETING DATES	CHAIR/ VICE CHAIR	B&NES COUNCIL SPONSOR/ VICE SPONSOR	LEAD OFFICER CONTACT
Somer Valley Forum	(16 October) 25 November	Chair- Terry Taylor Vice-Chairs- Lesley Mansell; Lynda Robertson	Andrew Pate/ Richard Baldwin	Dave Dixon dave_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk
Chew Valley Area Forum	(9 October) 20 November	Chair- Richard Curry Vice Chair - Tony Heaford	Louise Fradd/Derek Quilter	Sara Dixon sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk
Keynsham Area Forum	(15 October) 27 November	Chair - Tony Crouch Vice Chair- Adrian Inker	Louse Fradd/ Derek Quilter	Sara Dixon, sara_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk

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