

Bath and North East Somerset Council

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 17th October, 2012, 6.30 pm

Bath & North East Somerset Councillors: Rob Appleyard (Bath & North East Somerset Council) (Chair), Neil Butters, Paul Crossley, Dine Romero (Bath & North East Somerset Council), David Bellotti (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Eleanor Jackson (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Mathew Blankley (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Vic Pritchard (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Tim Warren (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and David Veale (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

Representatives of: Bathampton, Cameley, Camerton, Clutton, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Dunkerton, Englishcombe, Farmborough, Freshford, Keynsham, Marksbury, Midsomer Norton, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Peasedown St John, Paulton, Priston, Publow with Pensford, Radstock, Saltford, South Stoke, Stanton Drew, Timsbury, Ubley, Wellow, Whitchurch,

Eric Potter (Chair, B&NES Local Councils Association), Tony Crouch (President, Avon Local Councils Association)

Officers: Jo Farrar (Chief Executive), Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager), Paula Bromley (Principal Youth Officer) , Gordon Currie (Implementation/ Enforcement Manager), Vernon Hitchman (Solicitor to the Council), Liz Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer) , Gill Millar (South West Regional Youth Work Advisor), Meghan Rossiter (Senior Planning Officer), Ian Savigar (Divisional Director, Customer Services) David Trigwell, (Divisional Director, Planning and Transport), Ann Swabey (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Chris Head (West of England Rural Network)

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Rob Appleyard, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a special welcome to Jo Farrar, the new Chief Executive.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the Emergency Evacuation Procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Gabriel Batt, Tim Ball, Cherry Beath, David Dixon, John Bull, Sally Davis, Francine Haerberling, Roger Symonds, Martin Veal, Geoff Ward and Charlcombe, Corston, Batheaston and Chew Magna Parish Councils.

17 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 20TH JUNE 2012

A representative from Publow and Pensford asked for his request (at Item 12 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people site allocations DPD) about whether questions from correspondents on this issue would be answered (to which Glen Chipp had replied in the affirmative) to be recorded. With this amendment, the minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19 THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME

The Council's Monitoring Officer, Vernon Hitchman informed the meeting that the Standards Committee had decided on a new, simpler mechanism for the handling of complaints against councillors. All but the most serious complaints would now be considered at a single session of the Committee, thus speeding up the whole process. This change should mean that instead of it taking 3-4 months for a complaint to be processed, it should now take 3-4 weeks.

20 THE PROVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

The Principal Youth Officer, Paula Bromley, introduced this item together with her colleague Gill Millar (South West Regional Youth Work Advisor from Learning South West). Gill gave a presentation on the outcomes of the survey which had been carried out in July and August 2012 by the Somerset/B&NES Youth Innovation Zone Project. The Project aimed to work closely with Parish and Town councils to encourage and support their youth work. The next step for the Project would be to organise focus groups in B&NES on November 8th. Details of this event had already been sent to Parish and Town Councils.

The Chair asked how this initiative differentiated between the two authorities, given that Somerset was much larger than B&NES. Paula Bromley replied that information that applied specifically to B&NES would be identified in the response along with local issues. It was also planned to share good practice.

21 THE COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUY

The meeting **RESOLVED** to note the report from Andy Thomas, (Group Manager, Partnership Delivery).

22 THE B&NES CORE STRATEGY

Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager) introduced this report and drew the meeting's attention to the revised timetable for the examination of the Core Strategy.

A representative from Priston Parish Council commented that the placemaking plans seemed to concentrate on housing and asked whether other issues will be included in the Core Strategy consultation with the parishes. Simon de Beer replied that the whole range of planning issues would be addressed. A representative from Englishcombe Parish Council asked when the options would be assessed and was informed that the department would be talking with parishes in January and then the conclusions would be presented to the February full Council. The outcome of the Council meeting, together with community views would then be sent to the Inspectorate. The Chair asked whether the parish views would carry less weight with the Inspector and was informed that he would consider all views. Simon de Beer also offered to send guidance to parishes on the weighting that the Inspector gives to the various planning documents.

A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council (referring to Paragraph 10 of the report) asked what the 4 other Core Strategy policies were that the Inspector was concerned about was informed that they were 1) the district heating policy, 2) the Recreation Ground policy, 3) the flood compensation scheme and 4) the gypsies and travellers' policy.

A representative from Priston Parish Council asked, with regard to placemaking, when the discussions with parishes would take place and was informed that it would probably be in Spring 2013. A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council informed the meeting that the launch workshops would take place on 12th, 21st, 22nd or 26th November.

A representative from Freshford Parish Council expressed concern about the Community Infrastructure Levy and the wide variance amongst the proposed level of charges between local authorities. He thought that there should be a fair alignment between districts, especially where county borders cut through communities. Simon de Beer replied that there was no requirement for B&NES to align their charges with neighbouring authorities. The Chair proposed and the meeting agreed that this issue should be included as a future agenda item for Parishes Liaison.

23 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Gordon Currie (Enforcement and Implementation Manager) and Liz Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer) introduced the report and informed the meeting that their section aimed to improve the service to the parishes and to the public. They planned to tackle some of the long-term issues and make a difference to the historical perception of the service.

A representative from Englishcombe requested that parishes be sent an organisation and responsibilities chart of the new enforcement team to which Gordon Currie agreed.

David Trigwell (Divisional Director for Planning and Transport) informed the meeting that additional resources had been put into enforcement during this year - the only area in the department which had an increase in funding. It was hoped that this investment would effect significant changes.

A representative from Dunkerton Parish Council commented that they had been very impressed with the enforcement officers for their handling of a local issue. A representative from Priston asked whether parishes were being told when enforcement issues were being considered and was informed that, although it was not part of the statutory process, the officers were considering how to do that.

24 GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Meghan Rossiter (Senior Planning Officer) introduced this report.

A representative from Compton Dando commented that in the criteria, there was nothing about sites who had put in planning applications and been rejected, then had appealed through the courts. She asked why these sites were still being assessed. Meghan Rossiter replied that all applications are taken into account together with their full history, whatever that might be.

A representative of Publow with Pensford Parish Council asked about the absence of detailed responses from the planning department in answer to submissions earlier in the process. Meghan Rossiter replied that all the responses have been compiled and are on the planning website and that the department would be responding to as many as they could. However, they could only respond collectively to general concerns.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson informed the meeting that she had recently attended training on Gypsy and Travellers sites and the two main conclusions which had come out of that were that councils should listen to the requests of travelling people themselves who do not want large sites and also that there should be a liaison forum set up between the travellers and the Council which has councillor (as well as officer) involvement. Meghan Rossiter replied that the assessment of need (which included what the travellers want) was nearly finished and would be published in November. Councillor Paul Crossley added that he would make sure that there was councillor representation on the forum.

A representative from Stanton Drew Parish Council asked why distances to essential services from sites were not mentioned in the report and also why there was no

reference to sites being places nearer urban areas which was more suitable for young people. Meghan Rossiter replied that all the specific selection criteria would be taken into account, including distances to schools and services. In response to a question from a representative of Dunkerton Parish Council about the timing of the assessment, the officer referred members to information on the planning website and said that the report would go to the Planning, Transport and Environment PDS panel in January before the shortlist of sites goes out to public consultation in February 2013.

25 LOCALISING COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TAX-BASE AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Ian Savigar (Divisional Director, Customer Services, Revenue and Benefits) introduced this item and gave some background to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. He explained that the scheme was funded slightly differently from previously but that the Council had discretion about exemptions and discounts. Proposals for running the scheme had been agreed by Cabinet and were due to be put before full Council on November 8th. The tax base will fall, but the government have not yet given details about how the parish precepts will work and is still considering the methodology. Once the department has the information (hopefully by December) they will issue guidance, technical supports and workshops to parishes.

A representative from Priston Parish Council asked whether it would affect parishioners who pay Council Tax and was informed that it might do, depending on the outcome of government consultation. A representative from Cameley asked if the parish precept would be divided between those who pay Council Tax and was informed that once the Council had set the tax base, parishes are required to determine their precept for the area and divide one sum by the other to arrive at the charge for each property. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked whether the parishes would collect the precept and was informed that the billing authority (B&NES) would collect it.

A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council commented that it would be helpful if the billing authority requested the parishes information slightly later than at present so that they know more about what amount they will collect. Councillor David Bellotti (Cabinet Member for Community Resources) replied that they would try and make it as late as possible, but that parishes should be aware that they may need to call an extra meeting to set their precept if the government changes the timetable.

26 RURAL BROADBAND PROJECT

The Chair asked the meeting to note the report and invited questions which would be fed back to Anna Garner (Principal EEB Development Officer).

A representative from Englishcombe Parish Council stated that their area was very badly affected by slow broadband speeds and they were concerned that fast broadband could not be guaranteed to be available for their parishioners.

Jo Farrar (Chief Executive) replied that a request has not yet been made for information about supplying superfast broadband to hard-to-reach areas within the

authority as the project team had only recently received the bid and needed to consider this first. She added that she would arrange for Anna Garner to meet with Englishcombe Parish Council to discuss this further.

27 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting will be February 20th 2013; venue to be announced.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and added that he was happy to visit communities. He added that he has been very impressed so far with the work going on in the parishes.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services