

# Bath and North East Somerset Council

## PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

### Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 19th February, 2014, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Neil Butters (Bath & North East Somerset Council) (Chair), Tim Ball (Bath & North East Somerset Council), David Dixon (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Tim Warren (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and Katie Hall (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Sally Davis (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Vic Pritchard (Bath & North East Somerset Council) .

Representatives of: Bathford, Bathampton, Cameley, Camerton, Chelwood, Clutton, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Corston, Dunkerton, East Harptree, Englishcombe, Farmborough, Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Keynsham, Marksbury, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Paulton, Priston, Publow with Pensford, Radstock, Saltford, South Stoke, Stanton Drew, Timsbury, Ubley, Wellow, Whitchurch,

Officers attending: Louise Fradd (Strategic Director of Place), David Trethewey (Divisional Director of Policy and Partnerships), Simon de Beer ( Planning Policy and Environment Manager), Lisa Bartlett ( Development Manager, Planning and Transport Development), David Wales ( Principal EEB Development Officer), Ann Cullis (Senior Arts Development Officer), Claire Gresswell (Programme Manager, Connecting Communities, Marion Britton (Interim Project Manager, Sustainability).

Also in attendance: Deborah White (Secretary ALCA), Tony Crouch (President ALCA), Eric Potter (Chair of B&NES Local Councils Association), Peter Duppa-Miller (Secretary to the B&NES Local Councils Association).

### **32 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair of Council, Councillor Neil Butters welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **33 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Clerk read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

### **34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

B&NES Councillors: Paul Crossley, David Bellotti, Ben Stevens, Simon Allen, Dine Romero, Caroline Roberts, Eleanor Jackson.

Parish Representatives: Farrington Gurney, Newton St Loe.

**35 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was none.

**36 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER**

The minutes of the last meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 were proposed for approval by Councillor Tony Crouch, seconded by Peter Duppa-Miller and signed by the chair.

**37 BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2014-2015**

The Chair introduced this item and informed the meeting that the Cabinet Member and Finance Director were unable to attend. He explained that the budget had been passed with a reasonable measure of support and directed members to the budget press release issued on 18<sup>th</sup> February which gave more detail of the process.

**38 COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE START OF THE 1914-18 WAR**

Ann Cullis (Arts Development Manager) introduced this item and invited parishes to share their plans for the commemoration with the Council. She informed the meeting that the centenary events would start on August 4<sup>th</sup>, which was the day in 1914 that war was declared. The B&NES civic ceremony would take place at the War Memorial in Royal Victoria Park at 6.00pm, followed by a special late evening service in Bath Abbey at 10.00pm (reflecting the time of day that war was declared).

There would also be a commemoration of Victoria Cross recipients. B&NES has one VC – Oliver Brooks from Paulton who was awarded the medal in 1915. An exhibition of photos and memorabilia from local people would be staged in the central library during the summer.

Ann Cullis informed the meeting that the dedicated email address for parish clerks to contact her about their parish commemorative events is [centenary\\_worldwar1@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:centenary_worldwar1@bathnes.gov.uk)

The Chair thanked Ann Cullis for her report.

**39 THE ENERGY@HOME PROJECT**

Marion Britton (Interim Project Manager, Sustainability) gave a presentation about the 'Energy@home' project. The presentation will be distributed to all Towns and Parishes.

The Centre for Sustainable Energy's Advice Line is currently available on 0800 082 2234.

The Energy@Home Advice service will be available from July 2014

The Energy@Home Provider will be in place in August 2014.

Councillor Katie Hall (Cabinet member for Community Integration) informed the meeting that the Council had been working with the Warmer Homes project for two years. She recommended the advice package and said that grants were available in all parts of the authority. It had been found that residents were more willing to work with the Council on these issues than with the energy companies. Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet member for Homes and Planning) added that the Southdown and Twerton starter project under this scheme was going well and that he was happy to talk with parishes on this issue. Marion Britton added that she would welcome invitations to speak at Parish Council meetings about the project.

The Chair thanked Marion Britton for her presentation.

#### **40 UPDATE ON "PAPERLESS CONSULTATION" REGARDING PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Lisa Bartlett (Development Manager, Planning and Transport Development) introduced this item and commented on the generally positive feedback that had been received about the transition to a paperless planning process.

Representatives from Freshford and Marksbury both expressed concern that some smaller councils do not have adequate technology (or funds to purchase it) in order to view the larger planning applications on screen. In reply, Lisa Bartlett confirmed that the planning office would be happy to supply paper copies of large applications for the foreseeable future. The project was moving forward in small steps and it was understood that some parishes would progress at a different rate. A representative from Compton Dando commented that the broadband speed made it very time-consuming to download applications – Lisa Bartlett asked that this issue be brought to one of the planning workshops. Several parishes also pointed out that applicants should be asked to ensure that their diagrams and plans are properly designed to be viewed on a screen. A representative from Dunkerton, which has made a complete transition to paperless planning applications, said that other parishes were welcome to attend their meetings and see how the process works. It was noted that there were 6 parishes in B&NES who had gone paperless.

Councillor David Dixon (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods) agreed that it would be useful to ask applicants to tailor their applications for on-screen viewing and also to use the zip folder tool. A representative from South Stoke added that naming files instead of just numbering them would help with identification – Lisa Bartlett agreed to look into this idea. A representative from Stanton Drew asked whether the weekly planning lists would still be available in hard copy and was informed that they would.

The Chair thanked Lisa Bartlett for her report.

#### **41 UPDATE ON THE "CONNECTING COMMUNITIES" PROJECT**

Claire Gresswell (Programme Manager, Connecting Communities) introduced this briefing which detailed progress made with the Connecting Communities project

since last reported in October 2013. A three-phase framework, consisting of an annual conference, local cluster forums and support areas has emerged as the preferred model. A Council Director-level sponsor will be appointed for each cluster together with a dedicated locality team of officers. It is anticipated that the current Parish Cluster Group meetings will be absorbed into the Connecting Communities Forums. The Parish Charter will need changing to reflect these developments. David Trethewey (Divisional Director of Strategy and Performance) added that they were learning from the pilots before rolling out the full programme and were working hard to develop relationships with the various partners.

Councillor Vic Pritchard expressed concern that, in this proposed model, the Parishes Liaison meeting would cease to exist, but David Trethewey replied that there were no proposals to discontinue this meeting, rather it was hoped to improve it. The new Forums would replace the Parish Cluster Groups and the PACT meetings. Discussions were also under way about how to engage with the City of Bath.

Councillor David Dixon added that the project was all about developing a toolbox of different ways of engaging with communities according to their individual needs. A representative from Monkton Combe informed the meeting that a local forum called the Valley Parish Alliance had been set up in partnership with neighbouring parishes from West Wiltshire and he extended an invitation for Cllr Dixon to attend.

The Chair thanked Claire Gresswell for her report.

## **42 UPDATE ON THE PARISH CHARTER**

Peter Duppa-Miller (Secretary to the B&NES Local Councils Association) introduced this item and informed the meeting about the changing scenario of public engagement which now included other public services including the police, health service and fire and rescue. The Parish Charter consequently needs to evolve to reflect these changes and so a radical update was planned towards the end of 2014. A representative from Freshford commented that the Parish Charter was a practical document which laid out a code of practice between parishes and officers – he asked that that aspect of it be kept in the future version. Peter Duppa-Miller assured him that the future Charter would retain the mutual commitments as before.

The Chair thanked Peter Duppa-Miller for his update.

## **43 UPDATE ON THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager) introduced this item which updated the meeting on progress with the Local Development Framework. He said that the Inspector's recommendation that B&NES new housing provision would not need to be more than 13,000 had been welcomed. However, this figure cannot yet be used to inform planning decisions as the Core Strategy has not been finalised.

A representative of Combe Hay asked whether there would be any further statements of Common Ground regarding the green belt and was informed that most of the proposed statements were now complete and published. Simon de Beer was also asked whether he thought that developers would challenge the requirements for numbers of affordable housing. He replied that they already had done so through the November 2013 consultation and there was considerable disagreement on that score.

A representative from Ubley stated that their village currently only had infill developments within the existing housing boundary and asked whether they would have to provide more houses. Simon de Beer replied that, as Ubley is within an AONB, then the character of the village would be taken into account together with the rationale behind the Parish Council's conclusions about extra houses. The AONB status does allow for some developments.

Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning) commented that it was hard getting the Core Strategy together but there was now hope that it would get through the inspection process, enabling the authority to defend applications contrary to its provisions. Simon de Beer added that work was progressing on the Community Infrastructure Levy (which is a tax on development profits) and a more detailed report will come to June Parishes Liaison.

With regard to the Placemaking Plan, Simon de Beer informed the meeting that, of necessity, it had taken second place to the Core Strategy in recent months. He thanked the parishes for their assessments and said that the department has planned to respond to these by early April 2014.

With regard to the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People Site Allocations DPD, Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the options consultation would be sent out towards the end of 2014 with a draft plan to be published in 2015. A representative from Compton Dando asked for re-assurance that this would not mean that B&NEs would go soft on enforcement and was not changing its attitude. Simon de Beer replied that now the authority has authorised sites, the government advice was not to approve planning permission in the green belt. Lisa Bartlett added that each case would be taken on merit and that the general policy was to take a wider view of the need across the district – it may be that land will need to be taken out of the green belt to achieve that end. Officers were reviewing the case regarding enforcement.

Councillor Tim Ball said that the authority currently has 2 pitches, but no transit pitches. If the Lower Bristol Road application is successful, it would have 5 transit pitches which would ease the situation. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked whether green belt designation is removed when land is being considered for a travellers' site and was informed that national policy states that if a site is to be used for the travelling community, then it should be removed from the Green Belt through the Plan-making process. Planning permission should not be granted on sites within the Green Belt unless there are very special circumstances. The authority preferred to allocate them through the Plan-making process. The Lower Bristol Road site emerged via the Plan-making process, but the planning application has come forward in advance of the finalisation of the plan. It will need very special circumstances for planning permission to be granted. If permission is granted, the land may subsequently be removed from the green belt.

#### **44 UPDATE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL BROADBAND IN N.E. SOMERSET**

David Wales (Principal EEB Development Officer) introduced this item. Also in attendance were Laurent Boon from British Telecom and David Bland from Wansdyke Telecom. David Wales informed the meeting that surveying for the roll-out of high speed broadband in B&NES was planned for spring 2014 with first services live at the end of 2014. With regard to funding, an announcement would be made shortly about the share of the £250m allocated by the government for rural programmes and also the £10m which has been designated for far-flung communities.

Councillor Tim Warren asked for details of areas which would not be covered and was informed that until more areas had been surveyed, it was difficult to state where there would not be a service. When asked about speeds, Laurent Boon said that 90% would get 24Mb or above – it depended on the residents' distance from the cabinets.

A representative from Dunkerton asked when their village would get broadband in their own right – at present they were included with Peasedown St John linked to a commercial supplier. Laurent Boon offered to investigate. A representative from Combe Hay asked whether, as the surveying phase progressed, the parishes could help in any way. Laurent Boon thanked him but replied that the company's main interaction was with the highways department and the power companies.

A representative from Stanton Drew asked what the survey included, to which Laurent Boon replied that they check the capacity, the fibres and the ducting network. They also ensure they can get power to the cabinets and are trying to get fibre much nearer to homes.

David Bland of Wansdyke Telecom gave a presentation about the Broadband service that he had set up based in Newton St Loe which has an upload and download speed of 800Mbps. A representative from Freshford asked about the costs compared to BT and was informed that it could be installed at a cheaper price.

The Chair thanked David Wales, Laurent Boon and David Bland for their contributions.

#### **45 UPDATE ON THE PARISH HIGHWAY RANGERS PROJECT**

The meeting was asked to note the briefing paper on progress with the Parish Ranger pilot in the Chew valley as prepared by Stefan Chiffers (Area Traffic Engineer West, Transport Planning).

**46 PRESENTATION TO THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Peter Duppa-Miller, on behalf of the Parishes Liaison meeting, thanked Councillor Neil Butters for chairing the meetings during 2013 – 2014 and presented him with a gift of a bottle of local wine.

**47 FUTURE DATES OF MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in the Council Chamber, Riverside North, at 6.30pm.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**