

Bath and North East Somerset Council

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 18th June, 2014, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Neil Butters (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Martin Veal (Bath & North East Somerset Council) (Chairman) and Paul Crossley, Vic Pritchard, David Veale.

Representatives of: Cameley, Camerton, Combe Hay, Clutton, Compton Dando, Compton Martin, Corston, Dunkerton, East Harptree, Englishcombe, Farmborough, Freshford, Keynsham, Marksbury, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Publow with Pensford, Radstock, Salford, Shoscombe, South Stoke, Stanton Drew, Ubley, Whitchurch,

Also in attendance: Tony Crouch (President ALCA).

Officers attending: Jo Farrar (Chief Executive), Louise Fradd (Strategic Director of Place), Simon de Beer (Planning Policy & Environment Manager), Phil Mansfield (group Manager, Building Control).

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Clerk read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

B&NES Councillors: Mathew Blankley, Sally Davis, David Bellotti, Katie Hall, Eleanor Jackson, Dine Romero, Tim Warren.

Parish Representatives: Farrington Gurney, Timsbury, Eric Potter.

4 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chairman agreed to take 2 urgent items:

1. Broadband update: Peter Duppa-Miller (secretary of B&NES Local Councils Association) read out a briefing note from John Wilkinson (Divisional Director, Community Regeneration). This note will be appended to the minutes.
2. British Legion: The Chairman drew the meeting's attention to the services for armed service families provided by the British Legion at the One Stop Shop. He requested that members be aware of the support available which could help service families in their parish.

RURAL BROADBAND - UPDATE

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2014

The minutes of the last meeting on 19th February 2014 were proposed for approval by Peter Duppa-Miller, seconded by Councillor Tony Crouch and signed by the Chairman.

6 THE B&NES CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

Dr Ian Orpen (Chair of the Bath Clinical Commissioning Group) gave a presentation on the work of the group and the plans they have for developing the local health service in the future.

A representative from Cameley PC asked what performance measures were used and was informed that the group worked to a national benchmarking standard. A representative from Freshford asked what services would be trimmed from the budget in order to balance the books. Dr Orpen replied that they were looking at a range of areas, particularly those where more money was spent than necessary e.g. on hip and knee operations. Additionally, the walk-in centre in Bath had been closed and an urgent care centre opened instead at the RUH.

A representative from Radstock Town Council expressed concern that some areas had been missed from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment e.g. mental health, LGBT and other equalities issues. She asked whether providers commissioned by the group were assessed for their handling of equality issues. Dr Orpen replied that equalities (including Equality Impact Assessments) were an integral part of the group's processes. The Secretary of the B&NES Local Councils Association asked about the contribution of the voluntary sector and the CCG's participation in the Connecting Communities forum. Dr Orpen replied that there were a huge variety and number of voluntary groups involved in the health service – it was the CCG's responsibility to check that they met service standards. The group were keen to engage with the Connecting Communities initiative, but they had an issue with capacity. Jo Farrar added that the two organisations were already engaged in talks.

A representative from Corston PC asked about the impact of private health providers in the B&NES area. Dr Orpen replied that there were many private clinics which are used by NHS patients, but the cost to the service was no different. Elective care was not a large part of the overall budget. A representative from Saltford asked about the issue of unnecessary interventions when prescribing for the elderly. Dr Orpen agreed that it was important to learn when not to treat people. Junior doctors were often

concerned about being sued if they did not offer treatment, which was why it was important to have senior decision makers available for consultation.

The Chairman thanked Dr Orpen for his presentation.

7 HYDRAULIC FRACTURING IN B&NES

Phil Mansfield (Group Manager, Building Control), gave a brief presentation on the current state of the hydraulic fracturing projects in the B&NES area. He informed the meeting that none of the licences in the area have asked to be extended beyond the 6 year period. A (separate) current licence covering the Radstock coalfield, Midsomer Norton and Mendip area (Area No 227) has been extended by a year. UK Methane hold the licence to extract coal-bed methane rather than shale gas.

A representative from Stanton Drew PC asked whether the officer was aware of a previous licence holder called Geonet who compiled a geological report in 1999. Mr Mansfield said he was not aware of that report. A representative from Farmborough and Marksbury asked what effect the fracking might have on the hot springs. Mr Mansfield replied that the Council had sought advice from the British Geological Survey who had confirmed that there was a potential threat to the hot springs – the department were having ongoing discussions with the Department of Energy about their special concerns in this area.

A representative from Camerton PC asked whether the 227 area included the villages surrounding Radstock and was informed that it did and that the department would be keeping parishes informed throughout the planning process. A representative of Stanton Drew PC asked how large a borehole site would be and was informed that it would initially be vehicle-based equipment similar to a large crane. Following a question about the status of the green belt during these excavations, Simon de Beer confirmed that the land would revert to green belt afterwards unless it had been taken out of the green belt. Councillor Paul Crossley (Cabinet Leader) informed the meeting that the Council had been attending conferences with the fracking industry and were lobbying for the 3 expired licences not to be renewed. They were also lobbying UNESCO to support Bath's case because of its World Heritage Status. All 4 political groups were unanimous in their support of the Council's position on 'fracking'.

Peter Duppa-Miller asked about the current government consultation on downward and sideways drilling and how it affects land ownership. Phil Mansfield replied that the government were looking to change the rules about land ownership. If the drilling goes deeper than 300 meters, companies would not need permission to go under house-owners' land. Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning) informed the meeting that the Council had an understanding with Mendip and Somerset Councils about mineral workings – their joint policy was to oppose development which could disrupt the water supply.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his presentation.

8 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager) introduced the items.

Core Strategy – the final report on the Core Strategy would be published at the end of June, before being adopted by the full Council at its meeting on 10th July. The inspector's recommendations will have to be accepted before it can be formally adopted – it can then be used in decision-making and will be used to defend against applications for green-field sites. A representative from Saltford PC asked whether developers who were looking to find fault with the Strategy could take the Council to judicial review and was informed that they could, but that the Inspector had been meticulous in his approach, making a legal challenge difficult. A representative from Cameley PC asked when the Core Strategy would be operational and was informed that the exact date was not yet known, but that Lisa Bartlett (Divisional Director, Development, Planning and Transport) would inform Parish and Town Councils as soon as a date was fixed.

The Placemaking Plan – Simon de Beer commented that the level of collaborative working with the Parish and Town Councils during this project had been much appreciated. A note setting out the next steps in the process would be sent out to councils soon. The outcome would be included in the proposals for the November 2014 Cabinet meeting. A representative from South Stoke PC asked whether there might be speculative applications in advance of the completion of the Placemaking Plan. Simon de Beer replied that once the Core Strategy was accepted, then it was possible to resist inappropriate housing proposals. A representative of Radstock TC expressed similar concerns and was informed that the housing needs for the Radstock area had been met as confirmed by the Inspector.

A representative from Corston PC asked when the conservation areas were going to be updated. Simon de Beer replied that a new heritage planning officer had just been appointed who will look into those issues. A representative from Combe Hay PC asked whether it was mandatory for developers to create a master plan and was informed that it was made a requirement for the South Stoke development.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People DPD – Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the Council was working with neighbouring authorities on a joint approach to this issue. A new permitted site was to be built on the Lower Bristol Road, Bath. Councillor Tim Ball added that permission for the site development (which included 15 pitches – 8 permanent and 5 transit) had been passed in June and that it would be in use later in 2014.

Neighbourhood Planning – The meeting noted the update contained in the briefing paper.

Community Infrastructure Levy – Simon de Beer informed the meeting that the Levy mechanism need to be in place by 2015 or the Council would miss out on potential income for its planning structure.. It would need to be submitted for adoption later in 2014. 15% of CIL money would go to local communities. A representative of Cameley PC asked whether the CIL would only apply to applications determined after 2015 and was informed that the trigger would be the adoption of the CIL by the Council. A representative from Combe Hay asked whether different authorities would have different charging rates and was informed that there was unlikely to be much difference between the rates.

9 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

The meeting noted the report prepared by Andy Thomas.

A representative from Freshford PC asked for an update on the Parish Charter and was informed that the Charter would be considered at the November Cabinet meeting alongside Connecting Communities. The Chief Executive, Jo Farrar, informed the meeting that Peter Duppa-Miller had been working with the Cabinet and Connecting Communities Officers on updating the Charter. Peter Duppa-Miller added that the commitments made by the Council in the current Charter will remain, but that sometimes the nature of the consultation will be different. A representative from Radstock TC asked what B&NES will be doing to ensure that officers and councillors know who to consult about local matters and was informed by the Chief Executive that this would be clarified in November.

10 PAPERLESS CONSULTATION CONCERNING MINOR AND OTHER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The meeting noted the report prepared by Sarah Jefferies.

11 THE ENERGY@HOME INITIATIVE

The meeting noted the report prepared by Kathy Tate.

12 PARISH RANGERS SCHEME

Peter Duppa-Miller introduced this item and referred the members to a handout on this issue which was circulated at the meeting. He informed the meeting that, following the pilot, the Rangers scheme would not be rolled out to other areas. Councillor David Dixon (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods) explained that the scheme had not proved affordable for the whole authority. Councillor Vic Pritchard commented that he had not been in favour of the ranger scheme. A representative from Newton St Loe said they would have welcomed a Parish ranger, but that in any case it would be useful to have just one point of contact about a range of issues. David Dixon agreed that Council Connect needs improving in that area, but that the Connecting Communities scheme should help in future to bring a more streamlined response. The pilot had highlighted the gaps in the provision, so for that reason, among others, it had been useful. The Chief Executive added that the Ranger Scheme had been part of the 10 in 100 scheme suggested by staff. In future there would be 1 ranger and an enhanced street cleaning service and the timetabling of tasks would be clearer.

Peter Duppa-Miller informed the meeting that Environmental services would be reviewing the Parish Sweeper Scheme in 2015. A representative from South Stoke expressed concern and commented that the scheme had been working well so they

hoped it would not be changed unnecessarily. Councillor Dixon replied that it would be the first review of the sweeper scheme in 12 years and that if there was not a problem, it would not be changed.

A representative from Compton Dando commented that the Council Connect service was satisfactory but asked that the mapping on the site be updated and that it would be helpful if the log number be sent back to the originator of the call. Peter Duppa-Miller asked whether the Ranger's area would cover the whole authority including Bath or just North East Somerset and was informed that it could not be guaranteed that the Ranger would only work in the rural area.

PARISH RANGERS SCHEME - UPDATE

13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman announced that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 22nd October 2014. The venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING – 18TH JUNE 2014

BRIEFING NOTE FROM JOHN WILKINSON ON RURAL BROADBAND (taken under Item 4 – urgent business)

1. BT have begun survey work through the BDUK programme in the B&NES area as expected and have been in conversation with the highways department about delivering the first cabinets.
2. The Connecting Devon and Somerset board is conserving the offer from BDUK for the extension programme and how best to deploy funding in the area.
3. B&NES Council has facilitated a meeting between Wansdyke Telecom CiC and Connecting Devon and Somerset as early engagement in the extension programme, which was positive.
4. Wansdyke Telecom CiC have also been in to speak to the B&NES planning department about the deployment of their own programme
5. B&NES council have held a number of positive meetings with parishes to explore their options where they are within the current commercial rollout, but speeds remain low.
6. B&NES Council continues to explore opportunities to find other means outside these programmes to support access to faster broadband schemes, including at the Local Enterprise Partnership.

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Parishes Liaison Meeting – 18th June 2014 – item 12

Parish Ranger Pilot

As you are aware the Parish Ranger pilot was extended until the end of July. During this period we have learned much although the scheme has unfortunately not proved to be cost neutral. We will therefore be ending it in its present form at the end of the pilot, and will use what we have learned to make our existing services more responsive and customer focussed.

As a result, we now plan to:

- Introduce a new “Ranger” role into the wider Neighbourhoods operational team to carry out various jobs like mending benches, lopping branches and cleaning signs more quickly on the highway and in green spaces, working closely with our colleagues to assist where our highways contractor cannot prioritise work.
- Increase training for Cleansing/Neighbourhoods staff to be more vigilant to issues and to act on the spot where they can, where it is safe and practical to do so.
- Use our CRM system for “Report It” and to give streamlined administration through Council Connect
- Give clear response times for jobs so that Council Connect can feed this back to residents
- Work with the Highways Service to ensure outstanding lower priority jobs are tackled by our contractor in the summer quieter period.
- Publish clear timescales when low priority work will be completed by Highways gangs so that we can tell Parish Councils when work will be completed
- Increase liaison between the Highways gangs and Neighbourhoods Supervisors so that we use a bigger pool of resources to respond to issues.

We propose to carry out, with Parish Council representatives, a thorough review of the Parish Sweeping scheme in 2015 with a view to increasing community ownership and involvement in service provision. This could effectively result in the better use of the funding currently allocated to this scheme. As part of this review we will explore the potential for Parish Councils to be able to buy top up services from us to enhance standards in their areas if they wish.

What did we learn from the pilot?

Positives

- A responsive service - the majority of Parish Councils have given positive feedback and like the scheme, but not all feedback is positive.
- A backlog of outstanding work was completed initially, giving immediate impact in some parishes
- Good examples of how quicker response times have reduced issues such as removing fly tipping promptly, clearing debris from drain covers/channels

during the flooding, suspicious activity reported to police, litter droppers tackled on the spot when observed.

- Useful learning about how we could improve our existing services to be more responsive
- The trial has demonstrated that existing resources could be used more productively, and that management & administration can be streamlined using mobile technology and one point of contact through Council Connect.

Concerns

- No significant long term demand for ad-hoc requests once the first tranche of jobs was complete and the backlog cleared.
- Over 50% of time now spent on routine cleansing activity (emptying bins, clearing litter, dead animal removal, low level cleansing enforcement) which could be covered by existing cleansing staff.
- HR issues - lone working, management/supervision/monitoring, and lack of resilience due to low number of staff involved
- Some overlap with Parish Sweeping scheme
- No further funding has been identified within existing Environmental Services budgets to expand the scheme as there is still a need for highway gangs, highway inspector, cleansing/waste and grounds operatives to visit each parish.

Carol Maclellan

Group Manager – Neighbourhood Environmental Services

Kelvin Packer

Group Manager – Highways and Traffic