

PARISH LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Thursday, 26th October, 2017, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Councillor Cherry Beath (Chairman), Councillor Tim Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor Charles Gerrish (Cabinet Member), Councillor Bob Goodman (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul May (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Myers (Cabinet Member), Councillor Vic Pritchard (Cabinet Member) and Councillor Karen Warrington (Cabinet Member)

Parish Representatives: Rosemary Naish (Chair, B&NES ALCA) and Clive Fricker (Vice-Chair, B&NES ALCA) and representatives of Cameley, Camerton, Charlcombe, Chew Magna, Clutton, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Compton Martin, Corston, Dunkerton & Tunley, Englishcombe, Farrington Gurney, Freshford, High Littleton, Keynsham, Monkton Combe, North Stoke, Peasedown St John, Salford, Stanton Drew, Timsbury, Ubley, Wellow, West Harptree and Whitchurch

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Chief Executive), Martin Shields (Divisional Director - Environmental Services), David Dixon (Stronger Communities Manager) and Sara Dixon (Locality Manager)

87 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

88 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer advised the meeting of the procedure.

89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Shelford, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Shoscombe PC and Trudi Gilbank, Clerk of Farmborough PC.

90 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

91 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

These were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

92 UPDATE FROM THE LEADER OF BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Councillor Tim Warren, Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council, gave an update.

He said he was sure that everyone was aware of the budget challenges facing the Council as Government grant had been reduced. At present 75% of the Council's budget was spent on Adult and Children's Social Care. The costs of these services were rising quickly, and would soon account for 80% of the budget. These services were statutory, so any reductions had to come from the other 20% of the budget. It appeared that the budget would now have to be reduced by a further £16m on top of the cuts already planned. This would mean a total budget reduction of £90m by 2020. Tough choices would have to be made. The Council would need an even stronger vision and to invest in things that mattered most to residents. There were three objectives for the Council:

- to be efficient and well run
- to invest in the future of the area
- to put the interests of residents first

The Council aimed to be financially self-sufficient by 2020, when the Council would retain all business rates and Rate Support Grant would cease. To achieve this, the Council would have to be more innovative, efficient and entrepreneurial. There would be commercial investment to generate more business rate income and create jobs. The Council had established a commercial housing company, generating income and providing more affordable homes. There were Enterprise Zones in Bath and the Somer Valley with the aim of improving broadband speeds and creating new jobs. The Council recently launched consultations on transport strategies for the Chew Valley and Somer Valley. There would be West of England/B&NES funding to improve the road link between Midsomer Norton and the A37. The West of England will also be funding highways improvements to reduce congestion.

New technology would be used to reduce costs and change the way that people interfaced with the Council. There would be an increasing role for parish and town councils as the Council would no longer be able to provide certain services. It was important that the Council worked in partnership with town and parish councils and appreciated their skills and local knowledge.

Councillor Warren concluded by thanking the parish and town councils for what they did for their local communities.

93 UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION, COUNCILLOR PAUL MYERS

Parish Charter

Cllr Myers thanked everyone who had participated in the Parish Charter consultation. 43 out of the 51 towns and parishes (84%) had given feedback. The majority of parishes supported the new Charter. There had been many helpful proposed amendments and improvements. An amended draft would be circulated to towns and parishes before the new Charter went to Council for approval in March 2018. The main concerns raised during the consultation were:

- communications and the lack of feedback from the Council: Cllr Myers said this had been taken on board. Concerns about failure to give feedback to

parish comments on planning applications would be addressed under tonight's Planning update.

- Council staff's awareness of the role and nature of the parishes: Cllr Myers said this was a very strong message, and evidently there was work to be done in educating Council staff about the parishes.
- whether parishes have the capacity to take on more responsibilities

He referred to issues raised at the latest ALCA meeting which had been fed through as suggestions for tonight's agenda. He said that he had telephoned a number of those who had raised issues to discuss them. The clarification they had provided had been very useful. However, it was not possible to run the Parish Liaison Meeting on an individual case review basis. Therefore, he would attend an hour before the start of each meeting, so that parish representatives could raise specific issues with him. In addition, the Council had locality managers:

Dave Dixon The Hollies 01225 396532
Sara Dixon The Hollies 01225 396594

In the first instance parishes should contact Council Connect, and if Council Connect were not able to provide the required information, the locality managers could be contacted. He had gathered from feedback that parishes would rather receive 'no' for an answer than receive no answer at all. If parishes felt they were getting nowhere, he would be happy for them to email him. He would follow issues through and, if necessary, take them to Cabinet or talk to officers. He recognised that two-way communication was the essential foundation for effective partnership working between parishes and the Council.

Parish Sweeper Scheme

Cllr Myers reminded delegates that this scheme had commenced in April 2003 and was now due for a review. There were 18 participating parishes. Street cleaning functions had been delegated to these parishes and funding based on an initial length of highway. Additional funding had not been given to cover increases in cost, such as uprating of the Living Wage, or for additional parishes to participate. Parishes in the scheme decided how to spend the money. Most employ staff, 5 have contracted out street cleaning, and one has contracted out a twice-yearly mechanical sweep. The review would look at what has been achieved by the scheme and at employment and health and safety issues. Additionally, the fact that the most parishes were not in the scheme raised the issue of fairness. There would be a short dedicated meeting about the sweeper scheme after tonight's PLM, to which all delegates were invited.

Community Empowerment Fund

Cllr Myers said that 13 applications had been received from towns and parishes. The total cost of these was £113,000 with an input of 286 volunteer hours, which is £2,850 of value. Only £13,000 had so far been allocated of the total of £89,000 available. This £13,000 had leveraged in £96,000 of additional funding. Applications could be accepted up to 31st January 2018 and he urged parishes to apply for

funding. Parishes who were not sure whether a project would qualify could speak to one of the locality managers.

In reply to questions from delegates Cllr Myers said

- The Fund was a match-funding scheme based on a multiple of head of population in 2011. Match-funding could be in the form of voluntary hours valued notionally at £10 each. Funding could be applied to any range of projects that relate to the public realm. There were a couple of pages of guidance about the Fund and a two-page application form. Projects could be such things as footpath restoration, BMX track refurbishment, provision of a hearing loop in a village hall or an emergency telephone for a village.
- The review of the Parish Sweeper Scheme would not have any impacts before 2019/20. The aim was to have a thorough discussion in good time before any changes were made.
- Provision of legal advice and other support to parishes who would like to set up shared parish sweeper services, to allow efficiencies from the pooling of resources, was something that could be looked at.

94 UPDATE FROM THE DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Martin Shields, Director – Environmental Services, gave a presentation. A copy of his PowerPoint slides is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

After his presentation he responded to questions from delegates:

Leonard Sheen, Chair of High Littleton and Hallatrow PC asked the following question: the flow of traffic through High Littleton comes via the traffic lights at Marksbury and at White Cross. If the traffic from Marksbury is speeded up it arrives at High Littleton, the next bottleneck, much faster. What further work to improve traffic flow is planned after the work at Marksbury has been completed? Martin Shields replied that whenever there is a major road scheme extensive traffic modelling has to be done. This is a statutory requirement. We have to assess the impact of the scheme on the surrounding area. The issue about High Littleton will be picked up. Highways will be pleased to come to talk to the parish when the formal engagement process begins, so that your concerns are fed into the process.

In reply to a question about flashing speed signs, Martin said that they were not all being removed. The common type of flashing sign often only lasted for a short time. They were old technology. Where they served a purpose they were being repaired, though there was a backlog of repair work. If parishes thought that a light in a specific location was vital, they should let Highways know about it.

Martin invited parishes who had specific Highways queries to email him.

95 PLANNING UPDATE

Cllr Myers sent that Lisa Bartlett, Divisional Director – Development, had had to present her apologies for tonight because it was half term and he had booked holiday. She had provided answers to questions raised by Englishcombe PC, which were given under this item in the agenda. He had recently discussed them with her.

He said that having served on Midsomer Norton TC Planning Committee he could empathise with the concern about lack of feedback from the Planning Service on decisions contrary to parish recommendations. He had suggested to Lisa that a sentence could be added to parish planning submissions requesting an officer to contact the parish if Planning were minded to go against the parish's recommendation. He envisaged that such a request should be made by a parish no more than two or three times a year. He asked delegates what their view of this was.

Alistair MacKichan, Chair of Charlcombe PC, said that parishes often did speak to officers, who often did not know how they would decide an application. Parishes only found out when they saw the delegated report. It was not possible to guess what the officer would do, even though the parish had discussed the application with them. There were not many case where the officer and the parish disagree, far less than 10%, but those were the sensitive cases. He suggested it would be simple for the officer to notify the parish when there was going to be a decision against the parish, to ensure that all issues had been taken into account. He did not think there should be a need for the parish to request feedback.

Cllr Myers then referred to the answer about the Community Infrastructure Levy. He said that in his experience parishes were less interested in erudite descriptions of the CIL rules than in how they could secure more funds from the scheme. He suggested that Lisa should attend the next meeting to lead an interactive workshop with a view to explaining to parishes whether they could or could not get CIL funds and how the CIL was benefitting towns and parishes. Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, pointed out that a paper on the CIL would be going to the next Cabinet meeting. Cllr Myers suggested that the paper should be considered at the next PLM. Rosemary Naish said that parishes were concerned when they were aware that CIL was charged on development in their area without there being any resulting investment in local infrastructure.

The meeting agreed that Lisa Bartlett should be invited to the next meeting to provide more information about the CIL.

Delegates agreed

96 BROADBAND UPDATE

Rob Dawson, Business Engagement Officer, gave an update.

He said that on 4 September this year the Government had announced that B&NES and Bristol would be one of six areas selected for a £2m national pilot scheme to deliver 1 Gigabit broadband. The scheme provides broadband suppliers with a financial incentive to introduce broadband infrastructure to enable customers to upload and download at a speed of 1 Gigabit per second. Customers can be both residents and local businesses with less than 250 staff. Businesses can receive a discount of £500-£3,000 while the discount for residents is £500. Less detail is available about the residents' scheme at the moment. The broadband suppliers are

being registered on a Government web portal. For our area they are Truespeed, Gigaclear and BT at the moment. Businesses and residents need to contact these suppliers directly to see if the broadband package is achievable and affordable for them. Neighbouring businesses are encouraged to apply as a consortium. . There is no guarantee that any business or resident will be offered a 1Gb package by a supplier. The pilot will either finish when the full £2m has been allocated or the end of March 2018, whichever is the sooner. If the pilot scheme is judged a success the Government may provide further funding, as they will be launching a new round of funding in the New Year. The project is due to launch early November. The scheme relates entirely to broadband and does not include mobile phones. The Council's main role in the project is demand stimulation. Information about the scheme is available on the Council's website at:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/latestnews/bath-north-east-somerset-pilot-uk%E2%80%99s-fastest-broadband>

The Council will also be promoting the scheme on social media and undertaking a business visit programme, predominantly in the industrial estates in rural areas. Westfield Industrial Estate would be the first. There would also be meetings with Chambers of Commerce and local businesses.

Rob requested parishes requested to pass information about the scheme to local businesses.

97 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 28th February 2018.

Subsequent meetings are scheduled for:

24 October 2018
20 February 2019

98 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A delegate requested that an item on the General Data Protection Regulation be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The Head of Audit West, Jeff Wring, has subsequently provided the following information:

We ran a session on GDPR for ALCA in September and will do another one early next year. Anyone who is interested may wish to go the next session at ALCA. All B&NES Parish Councils were directly contacted about GDPR this year. We also ran six local sessions this year for Academies, Parish Councils etc this year and Timsbury, Peasedown, Chew Stoke and Keynsham all attended.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC UPDATE

26 October 2017

Martin Shields
Divisional Director - Environmental Services

Service dimensions

- » Maintain over 1100kms of road
- » Over 16,000 street lights (over 9,000 converted to LED) 60% energy saving
- » 27,000 road gullies
- » 2,500 structures
- » Footways – Over 1200km
- » Over 100 sets of traffic signals
- » Non-illuminated Signs -7,800
- » Bollards -1,875
- » Reflector Posts – 2,700

Our highway network – Estimated gross replacement cost £1.3billion.

Key challenges facing the team

- £52m backlog of road resurfacing
- A 'risk based' approach to maintenance
- Avoiding growth pressures from new work
- Supporting the JSP/JTS and WECA
- Strategic schemes v local projects
- A sustainable service budget

Winter Maintenance 2017/18

Approx 280 miles of
road treated.

40- 70 runs per
winter.

Over 400 grit bins.

Snow warden
scheme.

24/7 cover.

1300 tonnes of salt.

Specialist weather
forecasting.



Common Questions from the Parishes

Potholes - What is being planned to ensure that potholes don't become a serious safety issue this winter.?

There is a programme of regular inspection of all roads and repairs are prioritised accordingly. The significant backlog in maintenance currently £52m for planned resurfacing of roads inevitably means that potholes will form during bad weather. Therefore, it is likely that the quality of our roads will continue to deteriorate, but the Council will ensure potholes that meet the repair criteria will be repaired.

Footpaths (real or virtual) are mostly narrow in the rural areas, hedges & verges aren't being cut back regularly enough

Verges are cut twice a year in rural areas. Landowners are responsible for cutting back hedges. There will not be an increase in the programme. Also, in order to reduce costs further a risk based approach may be introduced whereby we focus on road safety /visibility issues and reduce the cutting at other locations

Speed restrictions through village centres & outside schools, clarity on B&NES policy. Examples are Corston & Whitchurch.

This is part of the corridor route review and speed limit programme. Where possible the Council endeavours to introduce a 20MPH limit outside schools.

A formal policy on speed limits is being considered by officers, but only after the DfT publishes its reviews on the effectiveness of 20MPH zones.

We will continue to review speed limits on a road corridor basis.

Flashing speed signs being turned off- (Whitchurch & B3116), explanation as to why.

Many signs have been added to the Highway network over the years. In some cases broken signs are simply awaiting repair and sit within a busy programme. Where the original sign has been funded but no future maintenance provision is available the sign will be removed. The Council is not planning to introduce any new signs, lines and bollards etc. unless they are part of a scheme within the approved capital programme. Where speed limits have changed some signs are no longer relevant and will be removed.

Bath v Rural Areas.

Raised by Batheaston PC . There is a perception that services are better in Bath, specific items mentioned were bins collections (changing to fortnightly in rural areas, but weekly in Bath), grass cutting - parishes have to pay for their own grass(parks/football pitches etc.) to be cut, but B&NES pays for those in Bath. What is the policy on this?

Batheaston has seen significant investment from Highways compared to similar sized area in B&NES. The cycle/footbridge across the river cost over £1m. There has been a major improvement of the footway outside the shops and various other capital schemes such as Bannerdown Road. The waste service has been constructed based on operational and cost efficiencies and there is no 'one size fits all'. Only the centre of Bath remains on weekly residual waste collections. All parts of the district have weekly recycling and food waste collections. The parks are maintained in Bath because there are no Parish Councils to undertake this work.

How does the council decide which roads to resurface and which schemes make it on to the programme?

- » All proposed schemes are submitted to the full Council budget setting meeting in February for approval.
- » In the case of resurfacing our programme is based on feedback from the public, the inspection programme and independent technical surveys.
- » With regards to transport schemes all requests are scored against Joint Local Transport Plan objectives and the highest scoring schemes are recommended.
- » All proposals are subject to scrutiny by the Cabinet Member before officers prepare the draft programme.

Joint Transport Strategy

The West of England has set out an ambitious vision for transport aimed at transforming connectivity by public transport; promoting healthy, low carbon walking and cycling journeys; and managing traffic and a resilient road network. The vision reflects the feedback of residents and businesses that this level of ambition is needed to ensure that the area continues to contribute to the national economy and to thrive across all sectors.

The JTS includes a large number of schemes that are considered necessary to tackle both the existing issues on the network but also to accommodate growth and is intrinsically linked to the Joint Spatial Plan.

Worthy of a separate presentation and discussion!

Any Questions ?