

Parish Liaison Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 12th July, 2017

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

The Chairperson and Clerk of each Parish and Town Council in Bath & North East Somerset and the Chairpersons of Parish Meetings

Chair of the Meeting: Councillor Karen Walker

Group Leaders: Councillor Robin Moss and Councillor Dine Romero

Group Spokespersons: Councillor Sarah Bevan and Councillor Lin Patterson

Cabinet Members: Councillor Tim Warren (Leader of the Council and Conservative Group Leader), Councillor Charles Gerrish (Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Conservative Deputy Group Leader North East Somerset), Councillor Bob Goodman (Cabinet Member for Development), Councillor Paul May (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Councillor Paul Myers (Cabinet Member for Economic and Community Regeneration), Councillor Vic Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health), Councillor Mark Shelford (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways), Councillor Martin Veal (Cabinet Member for Community Services) and Councillor Karen Warrington (Cabinet Member for Policy and Transformation)

ALCA Representatives: Rosemary Naish (Chair of Clutton PC and Chair of B&NES ALCA) and Clive Fricker (Chair of Keynsham Town Council and Vice-Chair of B&NES ALCA)

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers

Press and Public



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NOTES

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Paper copies are available for inspection at the **Public Access points:-** Reception: Civic Centre - Keynsham, Guildhall - Bath, The Hollies - Midsomer Norton. Bath Central and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. **Recording at Meetings:-**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Some of our meetings are webcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. If you would prefer not to be filmed for the webcast, please make yourself known to the camera operators.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we require the consent of parents or guardians before filming children or young people. For more information, please speak to the camera operator.

The Council will broadcast the images and sound live via the internet www.bathnes.gov.uk/webcast An archived recording of the proceedings will also be available for viewing after the meeting. The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. They may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. **Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.** Further details of the scheme:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are signposted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

6. **Supplementary information for meetings**

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

Parish Liaison Meeting - Wednesday, 12th July, 2017

at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as follows:

If the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people. The assembly point is: in front of Kingston Buildings, which is situated at the east end of Bath Abbey near to the taxi rank on Orange Grove.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair will announce any items of urgent business accepted since the agenda was prepared

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 22ND FEBRUARY 2017 (Pages 7 - 18)

6. UPDATE FROM LEADER OF BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Cllr Tim Warren will give an update.

7. PARISH CHARTER UPDATE

An update on progress with the Parish Charter will be given by Cllr Paul Myers (Cabinet Member for Policy, Localism and Partnerships) and Cllr Rosemary Naish (Clutton PC).

8. HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (HELAA)

Issue raised by Cllr Rosemary Naish (Clutton Parish Council)

9. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - UPDATE ON NON-PARISHED ALLOCATION AND LAST YEAR'S DISTRIBUTION

Raised by Chris Gittins, Clerk of Timsbury Parish Council

10. PAPERLESS PLANNING UPDATE

Raised by Cllr Martin Robinson, Dunkerton Parish Council

11. PARISH RECEPTION/CONFERENCE IDEAS

Cllr Paul Myers

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting will be:

26 October 2017, at 6.30pm in the Community Space, Keynsham

The following dates are proposed for 2018-19:

21st February 2018

24 October 2018

20 February 2019

In addition a half-day conference for parishes is proposed for June 2018 on a date to be agreed.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Sean O'Neill who can be contacted on 01225 395090.

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 15th February, 2017, 6.30 pm

Councillors: Councillor Alan Hale (Chairman), Councillor Tim Warren (Cabinet Member), Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones (Cabinet Member), Councillor Anthony Clarke (Cabinet Member), Councillor Michael Evans (Cabinet Member), Councillor Charles Gerrish (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Myers (Cabinet Member), Councillor Vic Pritchard (Cabinet Member) and Councillor Liz Richardson (Cabinet Member)

Parish Representatives: Rosemary Naish (Chair, B&NES ALCA) and Judith Chubb-Whittle (Vice-Chair, B&NES ALCA) and representatives of Bathampton PC, Cameley PC, Camerton PC, Chew Magna PC, Clutton PC, Combe Hay PC, Compton Dando PC, Corston PC, Dunkerton & Tunley PC, Englishcombe PC, Farrington Gurney PC, Freshford PC, Hinton Charterhouse PC, Keynsham TC, Monkton Combe PC, Peasedown St John PC, Priston PC, Publow PC, Saltford PC, South Stoke PC, Stanton Drew PC, Timsbury PC, Ubley PC, Wellow PC, Whitchurch PC

Also in attendance: Ashley Ayre (Chief Executive) and Maria Lucas (Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

59 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

60 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair advised the meeting of the procedure.

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Martin Veal (Cabinet Member), Bathford PC, Batheaston PC, Donald MacIntyre (Chair of St Catherine's Parish Meeting) and Richard Ireland (Chair of West Harptree PC).

62 MINUTES OF 12 OCTOBER 2016

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

63 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

64 LEADER'S REPORT - COUNCILLOR TIM WARREN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

[This item was taken immediately after item 9.]

Councillor Warren gave his report.

East of Bath Park and Ride

The Cabinet had chosen its preferred site at its meeting on 25th January this year. The decision had been called in and would be considered by the Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on Thursday 23rd February. The call-in could either be rejected or upheld. If the call-in was upheld, the decision would be referred back to the Cabinet or Council. If it was referred to Council, it would then have to be referred by Council to the Cabinet with a recommendation. If the call-in was rejected, the next stage would be the preparation of a full business case and a planning application.

Libraries

There are proposals to change the way the libraries operate. There had been a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding about what was proposed. It was not true that Bath library was going to be closed. The Council is facing tough times and £49m has to be saved over the next 4 years.

Joint Spatial Plan

Replying to the statement made by Duncan Hounsell (Minute 67) he said that the sequencing of projects would be a matter for the West of England Mayor to decide. The JSP would only get approval if it was clear that the infrastructure to support it was going to be delivered.

The extension of rural broadband would be included in the JSP. He had pushed hard for this; he had low internet speeds at home and understood the frustration this caused.

Mayoral Combined Authority

This now existed in shadow form until the Mayor was elected on 4th May. The Mayor would have massive input into the Joint Spatial Plan.

Council Budget

This had been approved by Council the previous evening. Most front-line services had been preserved, which was an achievement, given the size of the savings that had had to be made. He thanked the Council's officers and fellow Cabinet Members for the hard work that had made this possible.

Refugees

Cllr Warren described how he had met by chance a woman who had come to this country as a refugee some years ago and now had children of her own. B&NES had recently agreed to take 23 unaccompanied refugee children, 13 of whom had arrived. They had all been placed, and seem to be faring well.

65 BUDGET UPDATE - CHARLES GERRISH, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

Cllr Gerrish made the following statement:

This has been most challenging budget that this authority has ever faced. The situation will continue to be difficult in future years, as there is a move towards a new funding model for local government. Bath and North East Somerset has to find £49m of savings by 2020, of which £12m was identified in this year's budget and is on course to be delivered. In next year's budget a further £15m of savings has to be identified, the largest amount of savings that has ever had to be found in a single year. A comprehensive review of all Council spending was undertaken over the past year or so, with the aim of maximising efficiency and income generation and finding innovative ways to deliver services. I wish to thank my Cabinet Assistant, Cllr Paul May, for his invaluable help with this review. Those of you who know Paul will realise that his background enabled him to dig and explore what we might call "the drains", to identify every possible area we look for further savings.

As a result of the review a budget has been drawn up that protects front-line services to a greater degree than any other council, and keeps Council Tax well below that of neighbouring councils and comparators. Despite the challenges the Council faces, the budget continues to invest in the future, supporting job creation and economic growth, delivering new homes for young people, improving transport infrastructure and generating additional income in the years ahead.

The vast majority of the savings we need to make are to be achieved either through increased efficiency or new income. In total the figures breakdown as follows. Firstly, £6.6m from increased efficiency and refinancing. This includes improving ways of improving the delivery of services, taking advantage of lower interest rates, and rationalising back-office services such as Harptree depot. Secondly, £1.3m from avoiding growth in the Adult Care sector. This means working with our partners to reduce long-term dependency. My colleague, Vic Pritchard, will speak more about the impact of the budget on Adult Care. Thirdly, £5.3m of new income. This includes our new housing company, which is not only providing more homes for residents, but is also generating greater income than budgeted. There is £2.5m from the business rate retention pilot, which was part of the devolution deal. This has given us £2.5m towards our revenue budget in the current year. Expanding our commercial portfolio budget has given us an additional £1.5m. On a smaller scale, we are generating additional income from the Film Office, weddings and the sale of spring water. This means that of the £15m required, only £1.3m will need to be delivered by changes to the way we provide local services.

I don't pretend these changes are easy, but I would rather we sought to reform services, rather than make arbitrary cuts or to cease providing some services

altogether. For instance, I am aware of the concern expressed by some residents about changes to Bath libraries, but I believe that the proposals for the library service as a whole are a good example of how we continue to deliver valued and vital services, but in a more integrated ways, as well as delivering the savings the Council needs to make. Similarly, with Children's Services' buildings, we are looking to work with partners to use these assets in a way that not only delivers savings for the Council but also benefits the wider community, and we are well-advanced in our discussions with those partners on that principle. In response to feedback from Scrutiny Panels, I can confirm that we have reinstated funding for Dog Wardens and Park Services this year, recognising the importance of these services to our residents and allowing more time for the services to produce future models of delivery. This change is funded by the small amount of headroom within the final calculations of Council Tax income.

I would like to comment about children and Adult Care. As you aware it is in these areas that the inflationary costs of demographic changes are putting the greatest pressure on our resources, and it is something that we recognise and try to address in the budget. Both Adult Care and Children's Services' budgets are rising this year, by £1.6m and £700,000 respectively. These increases are in part funded by the proposed 2% increase in the Social Care Precept. Consideration was given to taking advantage of the new 3% limit set by Government, however it was felt more prudent not to front load the increase, but to retain greater flexibility for future years, so that we can address any future pressures that may arise in that time.

We must of course also be mindful that any additional tax rise will have an impact on our residents at a time when inflation is showing signs of creeping upwards. In addition to the precept, the Government has also awarded the Council a one-off grant to help meet immediate pressures on social care. This amounts to an extra £730,000, which will be held as a social care reserve and used both to smooth the integration of health and care services as well as to meet any in-year pressures that may arise.

As far as the capital programme and investment priorities are concerned, the budget has a major focus on improving transport, growing the economy, generating income and building capacity in the communities to help produce savings in the years to come. We are proposing to invest a total of £7m in transport and highways, a sum that has been bolstered by an additional Government grant through the devolution deal and an additional amount through the National Productivity Fund. This will help us repair potholes, deal with social routes to schools, new bus shelters, cycle schemes and road improvements. There will be road improvements in Freshford, a drainage scheme in Bishops Sutton, more work on the Wells Road in Corston, a feasibility study for Salisbury Road in Paulton, pedestrian schemes in Keynsham South, Midford and Writhlington. We are also committed to investing in the future, with improved school buildings, affordable homes and good jobs. A list of schools has been provided where funding is being delivered to accommodate growing numbers of children and to upgrade facilities. £3.5m is being made available for an affordable homes project and further funding set aside for when appropriate schemes may come forward. To support job creation we are investing £30m in the Bath Enterprise Zone and working with partners to support the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone as well as earmarking a further £10m for the pioneer buildings in central Bath (part of the North Quay Project), which will provide much-needed office space for small and medium-sized enterprises in Bath while at the same time

generating income for the Council. As part of our strategy to build capacity in the communities we are working with Midsomer Norton Town Council on a Community Asset Transfer that will see the transformation of their historic Town Hall to make it more accessible to the community and enhance on its offer to organisations across the Somer Valley. Part of the capital programme also seeks to invest, so that we earn and save money in the future. In this regard you will note that there is a provisional item for new commercial acquisitions. Just to clarify, I believe that it is absolutely right to diversify our investment portfolio to generate income that can be re-invested back into local services. Bath City Council left a great legacy to the community by passing on its commercial estate portfolio, which currently generates around £15m towards providing Council services, and that is why we are seeking to acquire further properties giving us further income to help close the funding gap in providing services. We do recognize, though, that there are some concerns being aired about the Council using its advantageous borrowing position to crowd out the private sector, especially in Bath. This is not the intention. So, going forward, the Council will spread its investment portfolio beyond the Bath and North East Somerset boundary, in particular across the West of England more widely. While we do not rule out further investment in B&NES, we also need to diversify the portfolio so that we become less reliant on retail as a proportion of our portfolio. As one-off expenditure, arising from a surplus in the Council Tax collection fund, we have allocated money in the City to manage the gull problems, provide £50,000 to develop shovel-ready transport schemes – that will be new schemes – to enable us to bid for Government funding as and when it is announced. A further £15,000 for a detailed study of how home-to-school transport currently operates, what the needs for it are and what solutions are possible in the future. We are also creating the new Community Empowerment Fund, about which my colleague Cllr Paul Myers will provide more detail.

As far as Council Tax is concerned, we aim to deliver a balanced budget, to continue to protect the majority of front-line services, and in so doing we propose a general rise in Council Tax of 1.5%, i.e. in total (including the 2% Social Precept) 3.5%. We believe it is right not to put undue pressure on the finances of residents, and it should be noted that this rise is one of the lowest in the region and amongst the lowest in the country. You will have read that places like South Gloucestershire and Bristol are increasing Council Tax by 4.99%. That sets the scene, and I know there are a number of questions and I'll address them up front.

I know there are concerns from parishes about the small amount we have included within the budget for parish council by-elections. I have to tell you that this idea was put forward by a parish. It does happen elsewhere in the country. It recognises that in a certain number of parishes there are too many by-elections taking place, because people have been talked into being candidates for parish councils when they did not really know what they were taking on. What I would say is that I think that it is justified in an attempt to get people who really want to serve their parishes taking on the role of parish councillor rather than just being talked into it to serve as a party hack. So that is the rationale for that proposed reduction. It will not apply in special circumstances, for example where there is a death of a sitting member, that is not the intention, but it is to encourage parish councils to get people who truly want to do the job.

Dog Wardens, I mentioned earlier.

Adult Services, Cllr Pritchard will cover in more detail, and Cllr Myers will cover the Community Empowerment Fund.

I am happy to take questions.

Parish Elections

Cllr Dawn Drury (Chair, Compton Dando PC) made the following statement about the cost of parish elections.

B&NES 2016/17 budget proposals include the following:

Resources - Income generating opportunities: "One such opportunity is for Parish Councils to contribute to by-elections - Parish Councils will be asked to contribute to the cost of running their by-elections - 50% for the first and 100% for future ones..."

Parish and Town Councils would feel obliged to raise their precepts to ensure that there was enough money in reserves to meet these potential costs. There is no saving whatsoever to the Council Tax payer as the Parish (and Town) precept is collected with the Council tax.

There would be a pressure on a Parish or Town Council NOT to widely publicise any vacancy and hope that an election would not be called by 10 local electors. The vacancy would then be filled by co-option at no cost to the Parish Council. Equally, it might deter voters from calling for an election or indeed standing as a candidate if they knew that the costs would fall on their local Parish council. In a small community, the pressures not to call for or stand in a by-election could be considerable.

The proposal seems detrimental to local democracy".

She added that that some Parish and Town Councils had set their budgets without accounting for the possibility of these additional costs, and wondered what would happen if they could not afford the fee.

Cllr Gerrish replied that B&NES was not the first Council to introduce restrictions on the funding of parish elections. He said that the aim was to improve local democracy by getting people who really wanted to the job to stand for election. He thought that if this there were fewer political nominees and more genuinely interested independent people standing for election, it would result in parishes being better served. However, every by-election would be considered as an individual case.

In reply to a question from a delegate, Maria Lucas said that the typical cost of a parish by-election was £2,000-3,000. Costs could vary depending on whether there was a charge for the parish hall or not.

Cllr Kathy Thomas (Peasedown St John PC) asked for clarification on whether the restoration of the Dog Warden Scheme was for one year only. Cllr Gerrish replied that the £50,000 for the Scheme had been put back into the budget, and so would remain for next year as well. Kathy said that all parishes appreciated this service. She noted the various responsibilities that Dog Wardens have, such as collecting

stray dogs, making dog owners aware of their responsibilities and educating the public about the law relating to dogs. If the Council reduced provision, what level of service would it provide to comply with its statutory duties? Cllr Gerrish replied that the Dog Warden Service was covered by two lines in the draft budget. A saving of £50,000 was proposed for 2017/2018 and a further saving proposed for 2018/2019. The £50,000 for 2017/18 has been put back in the budget. This enables the Council to have a thoroughgoing review of the service and to consider how it might be provided in a different way. If there is another way of providing the service for less, the saving may be reinstated, but we will not know until the review has been completed. Kathy said that the parishes hoped that the Council would consult with the parishes about any change to the service. Cllr Gerrish said that he and his Cabinet colleagues would give a commitment that there would be consultation before any decisions were made. He would liaise with Martin Shields, Divisional Director of Environmental Services, about this.

Cllr Judith Chubb-Whittle (Co-Chair Stanton Drew PC and Vice-Chairman of B&NES ALCA) asked whether it was elderly or young adults who were going to feel the most impact from pressure on the Adult Social budget. Cllr Vic Pritchard replied that the contraction in Adult Social Care would impact equally on all clients. There was tremendous demographic pressure. There were growth pressures of £4m this year. The Council could not just continue to do what it had been doing hitherto. It had to change the way in which it operated. The focus was going to move significantly towards prevention, so that residential care could be avoided wherever possible. £2.4m savings had been identified by changing the way things were done and there was going to be a 2% increase in the Social Care precept. Together these cover the £4m. The Council also now has £730,000 in a Social Care reserve fund to cope with in-year pressures. Judith asked what percentage of the budget would be targeted on younger adults. Cllr Pritchard said that he was unable to provide this information. Children needing social care tend to become adults needing social care, so it was possible to have an idea of the numbers transitioning from one category to the other, and an estimate of this had informed the budget. Ashley Ayre said that there was an older persons' budget, but there were no specific budgets for other age groups. All other budgets related to some form of disability or condition. As Councillor Pritchard had said children needing social care became adults needing social care, which meant that on average the Adult Social Care budget of about £58m had on average to rise by about £600k per year. Cllr Gerish said that the £58m for Adult Social Care should be seen in the context of just over £30m for Children and Families.

Cllr Paul Myers said that a major part of the Council's plans for the coming year was to look for ways of working more closely with towns, parishes and community groups. There is considerable scope for more co-operative working to get the solutions right for each area. He had progressed to being a B&NES councillor from work with a community group and being a town councillor. He had participated in the setting up of a new town council, and he had at first found it strange looking from a council out towards the community after having done it the other way round. He thought there could be better communication between the Council and towns and parishes. The Parish Charter review was looking hard at how relationships could be improved. His Cabinet post was a new one, and he felt he should actually be offering something to towns and parishes. The Council had approved a Community Empowerment Fund as a one-year scheme to start with. It is an allocation across towns, parishes and the city of Bath of 50p per head of population based on the 2011 census. There is a minimum grant of £250 and the idea is that based on the

population in a town or parish area there is an amount of money on the table about which there can be talks. Match funding will be required. Volunteer time can be offered as a match. The funding could be provided for anything, but broadly focussed on public realm. The whole idea was to come up with a simple process, which will be based on talks. It was possible for parishes to pool the match funding they were offering. There will be an application form. He and the Partnership Team would visit parishes who had expressed an interest either individually or as a group. He hoped that, as the scheme progressed, projects could be showcased in various fora to share ideas and approaches. If parishes had any ideas now, he would be delighted to hear from them over the coming weeks. In reply to a delegate, Cllr Myers said that it was not necessary for parishes to submit a business plan; they should just come and talk about their idea. This discussion could inform the formal proposal and business plan they subsequently prepared. The key thing was for a dialogue to be opened.

A delegate asked about the tourist tax that had been proposed. Cllr Gerrish said that this had been investigated and it was found that it was not lawful for the Council to charge a tourist tax at present. When he stayed France, the hotel charged tourists 1 Euro per night, which went to the local parish council. He thought this was a benchmark for an appropriate level of charge. If councils were empowered to levy such a charge, the Council would consult fully with the community before imposing it. He was attracted by the idea of a charge that contributed towards local services that was paid by people from outside. It had been calculated that a charge at the French level on the number of visitors staying in Bath could generate £700,000 a year equivalent to about 1p on Council Tax. Hoteliers had been opposed to the tax, but many residents had been in favour.

A delegate asked about the Ward Councillors Initiative Programme. Cllr Gerrish replied that this was not disappearing altogether. It had to be renewed with every change of administration; it was not a permanent fund. A number of Councillors had not used it. On the other hand there had been attempts to encourage Councillors to spend money whether they thought the project was right or not just because the money was there. Councillors had been emailed by organisations saying that they knew this money was available. Sometimes the schemes for which money was sought were not local. He felt that the Programme was in certain respects beginning to pass its sell-by date. Funding was still available for local schemes for Councillors to bid for.

66 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Maria Lucas, Council Solicitor, made a presentation. A copy of her PowerPoint slides is attached as Appendix 2.

She drew attention to the briefing session by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to be held at the Guildhall on 20th February, as advertised on the agenda.

She informed the meeting that there were two boundary reviews taking place, one of the parliamentary constituencies by the Boundary Commission for England and another of B&NES by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

Information about this can be found at <http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2018-review/>. An initial consultation ended before Christmas after which proposals were published. There will be a consultation on these proposals between 28 February and 27 March this year.

Local Government Boundary Commission Review

- B&NES last had a local government boundary review in 1997. They are usually done every 5 years, so this one is overdue. The first aim is to determine how many councillors B&NES should have. The second is have the same number of electors in each Ward within +/- 5%. The overall boundary of B&NES would not be changed and there would be no impact on parish council boundaries. However, if parish councils wished to revise their boundaries, they should let her know. The Council would decide in May 2017 the number of Councillors needed. The timetable for subsequent stages of the process is shown on slide 5. Further information is available from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

67 PLANNING UPDATE

[The Chair agreed that this should be taken as the first item of business.]

Simon de Beer, Group Manager - Policy & Environment, updated the meeting. A copy of his presentation is attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Simon said that the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) is a high-level plan produced by the four West of England authorities which will set out the requirements for housing, the economy and employment up to 2036. It was now at a crucial stage. Following two initial consultations a draft plan is being prepared, which will go out to consultation this summer. The JSP will set the context for the next local plan and neighbourhood plans, so the JSP will carry significant weight in the planning system. Standing alongside the JSP is the Joint Transport Plan, which focuses on the linkage between transport and new development, to ensure that development is properly aligned with transport infrastructure. In addition a new Local Plan for B&NES is being prepared.

B&NES had significantly improved housing delivery, but overall capacity is down, largely because brownfield sites in the city no longer have the necessary capacity. Brownfield sites are the most difficult, but most new housing is on brownfield sites. Unless some greenfield sites are released, there will be insufficient capacity. The delivery of affordable housing is erratic, but on average accounts for 27% of new housing. The target is for 105,000 new homes in the West of England by 2036. The orange circles on slide 11 show the target areas for new housing. In B&NES there would potentially 3,500 new homes in Whitchurch and 1,100 north of Keynsham. Significant new transport infrastructure is required to support these new homes as

shown on slide 12. A statistical summary for B&NES is shown in the table on slide 13.

There is continuing pressure from the Government to deliver housing targets, because of the housing crisis.

It was proposed to have a workshop on the Local Plan, to which parishes would be invited.

In reply to questions from delegates Simon said

- B&NES has no need of additional sites and so is in a strong position to resist inappropriate development
- funding sources include regional funding under the devolution deal, strong council tax receipts from some locations, and dedicated funding for the Joint Transport Strategy
- Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework lays down that decisions makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans unless other material considerations indicate otherwise; there is no immediate danger that new JSP will suddenly having greater weight than the existing Local Plan
- the Joint Transport Strategy was underpinned by a number of studies; further information could be found at <https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti>

Duncan Hounsell (Saltford PC) made the following statement on behalf of the parishes:

We all want there to be maximum public engagement in the WEP Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Vision in the consultation on the final draft due this summer.

Will B&NES Council and the West of England Partnership be learning from the experiences of the public consultation on the initial draft held before Christmas?

Please consider the need for:

- **A longer time** for the public to respond than the statutory minimum.
- An awareness that many **Parish councils do not meet in August**.
- **Better on-line questionnaires** which allow for nuanced responses. *The questions in the first consultation were often vague, hard to understand, and only really geared towards an all or nothing agreement by the responder*
- A consultation which allows the public to have a say on the **sequencing** and priority of proposed projects particularly transport.
- A consultation **email address** and a **postal address** to be published in all public material, on the website and in the printed brochures etc.
- **Materials to be made available for the public to use** to respond at any public exhibition static display site such as in Keynsham Library

- *Any on-line questionnaire should allow for people to save answers and add to them later. There needs to be **an appreciation of the problem of being timed-out** for those in rural areas with slow broadband.*
- **A dedicated IT help-line** for anyone experiencing technical issues

68 PARISH CHARTER REVIEW

Rosemary Naish (Clutton PC) said that the working group was making good progress without any 'them and us' attitude. It was a very representative group with ALCA and non-ALCA members, clerks, councillors, people from town councils and small, medium and large parishes and a good geographical spread of members. Senior officers and Cabinet Members had attended meetings.

Cllr Myers said that he had been pleased that Cabinet Members had attended with their officers. Discussions had been general at first, but then the group had focussed on specific areas like planning, transport and place. The process was fundamentally about achieving a different understanding between the Council and the parishes. The working group had considered what the obstacles were and how could things be done differently, and had understood that there were sometimes legal reasons for why things could not be done in a way that seemed easier. He thought that the new Charter should not just be published, but that it should be something that parishes could sign up to. He said that the focus had been on processes rather than documents. Rosemary said that when the document was ready it would be put out to parishes for their comment.

69 MODERN LIBRARIES REVIEW - IAN SAVIGAR, DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR (CUSTOMER SERVICES)

Ian Savigar, Divisional Director (Customer Services) updated the meeting.

He said that as part of the strategic review of services the library service had had to look at how it could contribute towards the Council's savings and efficiency targets. When what is happening in the rest of the country is considered, the library service in B&NES has got off fairly lightly. B&NES had also been quite forward thinking in the way it delivers customer services. Libraries had been brought into customer services last Easter. The way that customers used the one-stop shop and libraries was changing. What was happening in the community had to be looked at in the strategic review. B&NES is one of the first councils to operate under full Universal Credit, which had to be taken account into account in the operation of the one-stop shop. How could the strategic objectives be achieved without closing libraries? The answer was to bring library staff and front-line customer staff together in the three main population centres and to share facilities with other groups at the 5 satellite libraries. Discussions had taken place with parish councils; there were, for example, discussions in Radstock about establishing a healthy living centre in the library. He had attended 5 Community Forums to explain what was happening and he would give an update at future Forums. Suggestions from parishes about what they might wish to do were welcome. A capital bid would be made as part of the Modernising Libraries Programme, and within that he hoped he would have money

to assist parishes take ideas forward. In response to a question from a delegate he said that involvement of parishes in mobile libraries would be considered.

The Chair said that anyone who was concerned about what was being proposed for Bath Library should take a look at Keynsham Library. Some people had expressed concerns about this at first, but its facilities, including the children's corner and the IT suite were extremely well used.

Ashley Ayre said that he had attended the Bath City Forum and had been dismayed by the number of people who had formed an opinion based on what could only be described as misinformation and misrepresentation. There seemed to have been a lot of mischief making. The Council had formally written to one agency objecting to the misinformation that had gone out in their name.

70 REPORT FROM CABINET MEMBER

Cllr Myers said that he had provided all the information he had intended to under previous items.

71 FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS AGENDA ITEMS

The meeting noted the updates.

72 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The meeting noted the suggested items.

73 FUTURE MEETING DATES

The meeting noted that the remaining meetings for 2017 were scheduled to be held on:

22 June 2017

26 October 2017

74 FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The meeting noted the information provided on the agenda.

The meeting ended at 8.34 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services