

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 16th January, 2020

Present:- **Councillors** Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Sarah Bevan, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Chris Dando, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Winston Duguid, Michael Evans, Andrew Furse, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Liz Hardman, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Dr Kumar, Matt McCabe, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Paul Myers, Lisa O'Brien, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Vic Pritchard, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Mark Roper, Richard Samuel, Bruce Shearn, Brian Simmons, Alastair Singleton, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Sarah Warren, Karen Warrington, Andy Wait, Chris Watt, Ryan Wills, David Wood and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Colin Blackburn, Jess David, Douglas Deacon, Mark Elliott, Steve Hedges, Lucy Hodge and Karen Walker

87 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Manager to announce the emergency evacuation procedure.

88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests made.

89 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair reminded Councillors of the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony on the 27th January at 5.30pm in the Guildhall and encouraged Members to attend.

90 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

91 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Sue Grimes, a resident and Parish Councillor on Publow with Pensford Parish Council, made a statement about the potential detrimental effect of further housing and transport infrastructure on the village of Pensford and the already busy A37. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. In response to a question from Councillor Sarah Bevan about particular issues in her area, Ms Grimes responded that Pensford was a gateway into Bristol and a new Park and Ride would destroy the green belt in that area. Councillor Tim Ball explained that further work

would be done on these issues over the coming months and asked if Ms Grimes would be prepared to meet the relevant Cabinet members to discuss this. Ms Grimes responded that she would.

Kim Hicks, a resident of Whitchurch and member of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group, also spoke about her concerns of more housing in and around Whitchurch village. She queried the future of the Joint Local Transport Plan 4 and called for better cooperation for any future planning. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. In response to the offer to meet with Cabinet Members already extended by Councillor Tim Ball, Ms Hicks responded that she would be happy to do so.

A statement from Jill Britten, a member of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan and Whitchurch Village Action Group, was read by Ms Walsh as Ms Britten was unwell. In it, Ms Britten called for protection of the green belt and listed the reasons this area was not suitable for further large housing projects. She called for any future such plans to be discussed with the communities concerned. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. Councillor Tim Ball extended the same invitation to meet to be passed to Ms Britten.

Mary Walsh, one of the founder members of the Whitchurch Village Action Group, made a statement calling for measures to make their village a safer place to live without fear of added pollution and more destruction of the precious Green Belt. She proposed smaller housing developments shared out more equally amongst villages. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. Councillor Tim Ball extended the same invitation to meet, which was accepted by Ms Walsh.

Faye Dicker, founder of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group, addressed the Council about the housing proposals and the South Bristol Ring road. She expressed concern that those plans remained on the table. She highlighted positive cooperative work that had taken place with Bristol City Council and called on B&NES to engage in the same positive dialogue. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. Councillor Tim Ball extended the same invitation to meet, which was accepted by Ms Dicker.

Alyson Lampard, a member of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Planning team, welcomed the intervention of the inspectors but asked for reassurance that large-scale development will not take place without the appropriate infrastructure in place. She also called for better communication with residents for any future plans. The statement can be read in full in the attachment to the minutes. Councillor Tim Ball extended the same invitation to meet, which was accepted by Ms Lampard.

John Pierce, a Whitchurch Village Councillor, made a statement against the unrealistic plans of the JSP. He described their historic and stable community, surrounded by green belt but dissected by the busy and congested A37. He commented that plans for a ring road to add to the congestion and pollution were viewed with dismay. With regards to housing, Mr Pierce explained that new housing had already been accommodated and acknowledged that there was a national housing shortage, but any growth needed to be sustainable, realistic and based around existing transport networks so as not to further add to the global climate

emergency or local pollution from existing traffic levels. Councillor Tim Ball extended the same invitation to meet, which was accepted by Mr Pierce.

The Chair thanked all the speakers for their contributions which were referred to the relevant Cabinet members.

92 WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT SPATIAL PLAN

The Council considered a report seeking authorisation to withdraw the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) from examination.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Sally Davis, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to agree that;

1. The West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), as submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in April 2018, should be withdrawn under regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and in accordance with section 22(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

93 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no items.

The meeting ended at 6.15 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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COUNCIL 16TH JANUARY 2020

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

- Sue Grimes
- Kim Hicks
- Jill Britten (to be read by Mary Walsh)
- Mary Walsh
- Faye Dicker
- Alyson Lampard
- John Pierce

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I am Sue Grimes, a resident and Parish Councillor on Publow with Pensford Parish Council. The proposals indirectly affect Pensford. Many Pensford residents including myself support Whitchurch Village in opposing them. We have attended the Wrong Road meetings and lodged formal objections. Although I am speaking on behalf of myself, my own Parish Council has registered formal objections.

Pensford is a “conservation village”. Our residents care about the environment and do not want to be absorbed into a “Greater Bristol” metropolis.

I am concerned about the effect these proposals will have on our local environment. Road safety was by far the area of greatest concern highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan. High volumes of commercial and private vehicles already pass through Pensford village on the A37. The village suffers from noise, pollution and bottlenecks on the narrow section of the main A37 on Pensford Hill and a large volume of commuter traffic uses the rural back lanes as rat runs.

Pensford Hill is not wide enough for lorries to pass side by side and sees major bottlenecks when HGVs come face to face with each other and get stuck. It is also a potential health and safety hazard as pedestrians may be hit by HGV wing mirrors, which extend beyond the narrow footpath boundary. The village centre and school also suffer from traffic hazards. B&NES has recently put in traffic calming measures on Pensford Hill. While these are helpful, they could not cope with a huge increase in traffic.

The new ring road will act as a magnet to attract ever more through traffic to pass through Pensford village. The A37 would become the shortest satnav route from the South coast ports of Poole and Weymouth to the northbound motorways and the shortest satnav route to Bristol airport (which already has expansion plans) from the South. Extra vehicles would clearly increase the existing noise, congestion and air pollution levels.

The proposed Park and Ride at Whitchurch will not only destroy existing green belt land but will attract further large volumes of commuter traffic to pass through Pensford to get to it.

We have seen the disruption in Whitchurch Village that just 200 new houses can cause. The numbers now proposed would generate a vast increase in commuter and through traffic, which will inevitably flow on to local rural roads. Such an increase would create an unsustainable situation, which could only be alleviated by building a by-pass for Pensford.

I ask if B&NES could carry out a transportation study to evaluate the likely impact of the proposed ring road on all the villages on A37 corridor to the south of Whitchurch; namely Pensford, Clutton, Temple Cloud and Farrington Gurney. Farrington Gurney and Temple Cloud villages are already Air Quality Management Areas as their air pollution (NO₂) levels already exceed the government’s legal maximum.

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Statement for meeting 16th January 2020 by Kim Hicks

I live in Whitchurch, just meters away from the boundary between BANES and BCC. I am also a member of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group (SBWR).

I went to the 1st round of JSP hearings. As the 2nd round was cancelled so we did not get to talk about concerns of building any more houses in Whitchurch Village.

I am happy to speak with you if you think that it is a 'good idea' to build even MORE NEW houses in the village.

The JSP and the JLTP4 were issued for consultation at the same time. The JLTP4 closed in March 2019. The latest update from WECA is that the consultation report will be issued in the coming weeks? *whatever that timescale means!*

The JLTP4 plan, unfortunately, hasn't been subjected to the same scrutiny as the JSP.

BANES will be involved in making the final decisions on the JLTP4.

The JLTP should have provided the transport infrastructure to support the SDL, in the JSP, at Whitchurch Village.

The plans included a new ring road running from A4 at Hicks Gate, across green belt to the A37, across more fields and onto Whitchurch Lane.

We have always been told the following:

- No road = no houses
- No houses = no road

Some of the funding for this new road would have come from the HIF Bid, generated by the SDL's. I also understand that there is still a massive gap in funding for the road plans.

I urge BANES and BCC to co-operate work with each other. The JSP and the JLTP4 are prime examples of where this has NOT happened.

Thankfully, we have had inspectors look at the JSP. Where does that leave the new road plans in the JLTP4?

The research and feasibility studies stop right on the boundary between the two councils? ALL the extra volumes of heavy traffic will then be forced onto a residential road that has:

- a weight limit,
- 20mph zone,
- speed humps etc
- traffic calming measures
- and is right next to a primary school with over 600 pupils.

BCC has not even done a feasibility study to see if the road is even suitable! Putting a brand-new ring road onto an unsuitable residential road. WILL NOT WORK

PLEASE PLEASE look into this further BEFORE you sign off the JLTP

I urge you to start to work together just like so many local people have done.

PLEASE WITHDRAWN YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE JSP **AND** THE JLTP4

BANES Bath and North East Somerset

BCC Bristol City Council

HIF Bid: Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid

JLTP4 Joint Local Transport Plan

JSP Joint Spatial Plan

SBWR: South Bristol Wrong Road Group

SDL: Strategic Development Location

Whitchurch: in the Bristol City Council area

Whitchurch Village: in the BANES area

For the attention of Council Members, BANES Council Meeting 16th January 2020.

I am Jill Britten and a member of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood Plan and Whitchurch Village Action Group.

I am a Farmer, licenced with the Soil Association for Organic trading, and have lived and worked in the area for 50 years. My farm is within the Green Belt.

The work on the Neighbourhood Plan took 3 years of meticulous investigation and background papers with especial attention to the National Planning Policy Framework. Multiple surveys were delivered to every household, which village residents responded to, with the results feeding into the final version of the NP. These surveys showed a resounding 97% response wishing for the Green Belt to be retained and the Village to remain a Village. This plan was then adopted by BANES in 2018 and became an integral part of BANES Core Strategy/Local Plan which runs to 2029.

It was with relief that Government appointed Inspectors decided to call a halt to the JSP due to the lack of clarity regarding the SDL's selection process and for the JSP to be revisited.

Residents overwhelming stated why the chosen site for 2,500 houses here was the wrong site for such a huge development. Thousands of letters were sent to BANES and WECA explaining this; - lack of employment, lack of infrastructure, lack of access to Motorways, no rail link or metro link, an historic A road into Bristol (A37) which cannot be widened etc etc.

As already stated the Core Strategy/Local Plan is valid up to 2029 but should the Council persist in trying to revive housing in this area before this then communication with the Village is essential. Please bear in mind the Village has had a 50% expansion over the last few years, taking some 250 houses, so the area has already “done its bit” for BANES.

Thank you for your attention.

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Statement from Mary Walsh one of the founder members of Whitchurch Village Action Group

This visit to the Guild Hall is the first time in the many years that I feel progress can be made to keep our village a safer place to live without fear of added pollution and more destruction of the precious Green Belt which future generations will thank us for.

When I heard there was to be another meeting for us to attend I felt like Brenda from Bristol when she was told there was to be another election "Not another one!"

But having read the Inspector's response my comment was this is the first time we are being fairly treated. The inspectors were not locals and seemingly could see what we were saying but no one else seemed to understand.

We always felt Whitchurch was a dumping ground for B&NES to fulfil housing numbers for central government. I drive to Keynsham regularly and expect it to join to Whitchurch any day soon.

The definition of Village is assemblage of dwellings in a country district but smaller than a town but it seems someone must have suggested a Garden Town for Whitchurch looked on a Google map saw a patch of green as far away from Bath as possible but within the B&NES boundary.

You can see why Fairness is all we ask. I was always told you must give an alternative if you are not happy So again this is my suggestion No precious villages all treated the same as they were in the 1950s with small developments built in most to enable locals to live in the areas where they were brought up.

I realise that the profits would not satisfy developers but perhaps small builders could be approached.

I would ask has a survey been prepared to establish if a road could be built from Chelwood to the motorway system. I have been told it would be too costly but cannot find a survey report.

The village of Pensford which also has a pollution problem would benefit in the future if a road was constructed. The heavy goods vehicles that pass daily must be frightening to the residents you can see the number of small accidents by counting the car and lorry wing mirrors under the wall leaving the village.

The A37 is not able to cope now. Rarely can I join the road without a wait So please help us make Whitchurch a cleaner place to live. Bristol City Council permitted hundreds of houses to be built on farmland in Whitchurch Bristol in the 1960s and 70s When a housing survey was carried out Whitchurch Bristol and Whitchurch Village were lumped together and the outcome was more houses for Whitchurch Village these statistics were flawed and the plans that stemmed from them were untenable.

Thank you for listening to my rant

Mary Walsh

Faye Dicker statement

Thank you for calling this special meeting.

My name is Faye Dicker. I'm the founder of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group, which represents thousands of frustrated residents, affected by the housing proposals in Whitchurch Village and the accompanying South Bristol Ring Road.

I was born and brought up in Whitchurch, Bristol. I now live in Whitchurch Village, BANES, where I am now bringing up my own young family. I know the area well.

The JSP proposals for the housing for Whitchurch Village and the accompanying ring road, came to my attention in November 2018, following a public meeting called by my local Cllr Paul May.

As a result of the meeting, I formed the South Bristol Wrong Road group and engaged with the community, local councilors and MPs, on these shortsighted plans. We are well supported.

We had a seat at the JSP hearings and were delighted with the inspectors report. However, we are very concerned that Whitchurch still remains an SDL site and that the proposed ring road, remains on the table.

Whitchurch Village can not take more housing. Just a short distance away on the Whitchurch/Hengrove boarder, there are already another 2000 houses being built. South Bristol – regardless of being in Bristol or BANES can not take any more.

My children attend Bridge Farm junior school, in Whitchurch, Bristol. I cycle them to school every day in our family cargo bike. This is a route I will be unable to use, if the plans for the South Bristol Ring Road go ahead. This is a backwards step at the time of a climate emergency.

The City of Bristol have fully accepted modern cycling and walking plans from South Bristol into the centre of the city. They are currently spending £1.9 m on the final link, which reduces the demand for a road from South Bristol to Keynsham. The South Bristol Wrong Road group has had several public and closed meetings with the Mayor Marvin Rees and his transport team.

Before Christmas we issued a joint statement. I would like to quote from the statement issued by ourselves and the Mayor's office:

It was appreciated that BANES are the lead authority for much of this work and the conversation highlighted that the Mayor of Bristol and Bristol City Council has only limited decision-making power over this regional, strategic infrastructure project. As a result, the Mayor and residents agreed to request further engagement from WECA and BANES.

The South Bristol Wrong Road Group are continuing to work together with the Mayor of Bristol to talk about the future of sustainable transport in the area.

We would like to have the same positive dialogue with BANES as well.

The majority of the proposed ring road route, passes through BANES and yet you haven't afforded us the same time and conversations as we have had with Bristol City Council.

Please talk to us. Please work with us. Please listen to us. Please make the right decisions for us and the next generation.

Thank you for listening.

Statement to BANES cabinet 16th January, 2020

My name is Alyson Lampard and I am a member of the Whitchurch Village Neighbourhood planning team .

We started work in 2014 and succeeded in having a democratically adopted Neighbourhood plan “made “ by Banes in 2018 .

As you know, a great deal of work goes into this at a local level including significant gathering of evidence and close attention to the National Planning Policy framework as we shape the development of our village .

It was great relief when we heard the news in the summer that the Inspectors of the JSP called a halt to the hearings. They were unconvinced that the most appropriate sites had been identified as Strategic development locations. They have asked for more work to be done on this .

I have lived and worked in Whitchurch village for 22 years and I know the area well . While I appreciate that there is a housing shortage ,we all know that it is of paramount importance that new sites are sustainable and that we design homes in locations where we build communities that foster good health and wellbeing

The residents of Whitchurch would appreciate your communication on this matter . We , above all , would like reassurance that large scale development will not take place without the appropriate infrastructure in place . We had an exceptionally high turn out of voters for our NP , 97% of whom stated that they wanted the Village to remain as a village and that they valued the Green belt .

I would be very happy to work with you in the future to demonstrate why the Greenbelt ,green fields and farm land around Whitchurch Village are not sustainable sites for large scale development . I would ask you to look at the evidence related to commutability, air quality , strategic routes , access to doctors , schools , the local economy and employment , flood risk and the affordability of a very expensive road .

Our neighbourhood plan and policy development was underway when the JSP came into the being . The BANES planning department had full opportunity to adversely comment which they didn't. We were informed that it would be beneficial to our community to get our NP to referendum and passed. We promised our community a say in its future , we worked hard on the principle of accepting sustainable development that would be welcomed into the village and gaining benefit for all .

This enormous development plan is not what our community voted for and is not sustainable .

