

Draft Notes of the
Somer Valley Forum
 27th April 2016, 6.00pm
 The Assembly Room, Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton BA3 2HQ

Present

Name	Organisation Represented
Lynda Robertson	Chair of Somer Valley Forum
Denice Burton	Assistant Director Health Improvement, B&NES Public Health
Dave Dixon	Stronger Communities Manager, B&NES
Cllr Michael Evans	B&NES Ward Councillors, Midsomer Norton North
Cllr Liz Hardman	B&NES Ward Councillor, Paulton
Cllr Deirdre Horstmann	B&NES Ward Councillor, Radstock
Cllr Eleanor Jackson	B&NES Ward Councillor, Westfield
Cllr Les Kew	B&NES Ward Councillor, High Littleton
Cllr Barry Macrae (from 6.15pm)	B&NES Councillor, Midsomer Norton North
Cllr Paul Myers	B&NES Councillor, Midsomer Norton Redfield
Andrew Pate (from 6.20pm)	Strategic Director Resources (Strategic Director Sponsor of Forum)
Brian Perrett	Radstock Residents' Association
Richard Robertson	Welton Village Group
Terry Taylor	Norton Radstock Regeneration
Roger Tollervey	Welton Village Group
Cllr Mary Upton	Shoscombe Parish Council
Cllr Karen Walker	B&NES Ward Councillor, Peasedown St John; Vice Chair of the Forum (Acting Chair for this meeting)
Alison Wells	Community Projects Officer, B&NES (support)

Apologies

Name	Organisation Represented
Caroline Lightfoot	Senior Development Officer, Skills & Regeneration, B&NES (presenting)
Cllr Lesley Mansell	Peasedown St John Parish Council

Informal Open Public Session

		Action
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	LR welcomed those present. All introduced themselves. Apologies as above.	
2.	Updates including Q&As	
	<u>Local Police Matters</u>	
2.1	The Police were not present at the meeting. DD said that they are on operational duties so may have been called to an incident. LR said it is possible to access the latest information for your community on-line. AW to circulate the links following the meeting (see actions below for information).	AW
2.2	ME said it is disappointing that the Police did not turn up. There appears to	

	<p>be a lack of engagement from them since the PACT meetings ceased. We also need to be aware of trends in crime, not just what has happened recently. There does not seem to be any PCSOs visible in Midsomer Norton now, despite assurances they would remain. He hopes the Police will engage in future Forum meetings.</p>	
2.3	<p>EJ said the Police attended the Westfield Annual Parish Meeting and spoke about vandalism at Westhill Road and their strategy for dealing with it. They also assured those present that there is 24 hour, 7 days a week cover at Radstock Police Station.</p>	
2.4	<p>PM said there needs to be a Somer Valley wide approach to communication and he hopes the Police do attend the next meeting, otherwise it undermines the value of the Forums. We should write as a Forum to express our disappointment.</p> <p><u>Action Plans</u></p>	
2.5	<p>LR said the Somer Valley Action Plan was circulated with the papers for the meeting. She said this is for information and will be reviewed and updated at the AGM in Autumn.</p> <p><u>Highway Maintenance Programme 2016/17</u></p>	
2.6	<p>A table detailing the planned highways works across the district was sent out with the papers for the meeting. DD said that if planned works are missing, they may be from last year's budget – we have requested information on this as well and will provide it as soon as it is available. LR said, in praise of Highways, that she recently reported a noisy manhole cover which was disturbing a neighbour and three days later it was fixed.</p>	
2.7	<p>EJ said with reference to the Highways information, Elm Tree Avenue and Glebelands are listed as Radstock but are in Westfield. KW said there is no Crown Road in Peasedown St John either. AW to let Highways know.</p>	AW
3.	<p>Welcome and Update from Midsomer Norton as Host Community</p>	
3.1	<p>PM welcomed those present. He said he felt some items highlighted at the Midsomer Norton Annual Town Meeting were relevant to the Somer Valley as a whole and worth sharing.</p>	
3.2	<p>PM said when the Town Council was formed in 2011, there was a deficit of green space. Since then, they have acquired</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St Chad's Well - the Garden of Friendship to the rear of the Catholic Church - land for a Town Park 	
3.3	<p>The Town Park will have some housing at one end and an amphitheatre for events. There will also be wooded areas and wild meadows. A consultation will be taking place soon and the Town Council is working with B&NES on access and parking. Alongside this, they have acquired the Wellow Brook walk from Thicket Mead to Welton Bag, which is a lovely space.</p>	
3.3	<p>The West Clewes sports ground was in Trust when the Town Council began but they have now been able to add some outdoor gym equipment.</p>	

3.4	In terms of events, there will be an Arts Festival in June and the Midsomer Fayre in July. Midsomer Norton is keen to work with all the communities in the Somer Valley on activities like this, which are not solely for residents of the town.	
3.5	PM reported that Midsomer Norton is through to the Britain in Bloom finals this year.	
3.6	The River Somer project has had a mixed reaction but a new contractor will be managing it on a fortnightly basis which should address some of the concerns raised.	
3.7	The Carnival is another event that is also for the Somer Valley to enjoy. The Carnival Royalty competition is open to local young people across the area and the winners are chosen for their personality and contributions to the community.	
3.8	In terms of regeneration, the Town Council is working closely with B&NES who will be appointing a town centre regeneration officer soon. Much of the land in Midsomer Norton is under private ownership, so there is a challenge ahead. However, in order to revitalise the high street and retain vital services such as banks; bus services etc, it is important that it is well used by Somer Valley residents.	
3.9	TT said he would like to congratulate Midsomer Norton Town Council for putting the heart back into the community.	
3.10	BMc said it is important that communities in the Somer Valley see Midsomer Norton as a resource for all to enjoy just as the town's residents enjoy facilities in other parts of the area.	
3.11	KW asked for the dates of the forthcoming events. PM said the Arts Festival is 17 th – 25 th June and everyone will be invited to the launch event. There will also be a Pride event around discrimination on 18 th June. The Midsomer Norton Fayre takes place on 9 th July and this will see increased music in the form of 'MFest' to respond to concerns around lack of live music.	
3.12	PM said he would like to set up an anti-clash diary for Somer Valley events and would welcome ideas on this. KW said a Facebook page for events in the Somer Valley might be easy to set up	
4.	Any Other Issues	
4.1	There was none.	

Ordinary Meeting

		Action
5.	Notes of the Previous Meeting (25th February 2016)	
5.1	These were agreed as a true record. TT proposed and RR seconded. All in agreement.	

6.	Matters Arising	
6.1	There was none.	
7.	<p>Update on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study – Simon de Beer and Peter Dawson, B&NES</p> <p>7.1 SdeB went through the presentation on the JSP (to be circulated following the meeting). This included an update on the recent consultation. At present, the preference is for the environmental option.</p> <p>7.2 SdeB said it will not be possible to meet the projected housing need without some greenfield development. They are currently looking at where this might be accommodated.</p> <p>7.3 He reported that workshops were held in Midsomer Norton and Keynsham in April and there will be feedback on these in May.</p> <p>7.4 There are some employment sites coming forward that could help to reduce out-commuting in the Somer Valley area.</p> <p><u>Q&A</u></p> <p>7.5 EJ said there has been no mention of the possible conversion and re-use of historic buildings. SdeB said the JSP is a high level plan to identify large scale housing and infrastructure development. Following this there will be opportunity to look at ways in which to contribute to new housing or employment. EJ asked whether it could be included as a principle. SdeB said it is one of our key policies and won't be changed by the JSP.</p> <p>7.6 BMC said in terms of infrastructure, the focus seems to be on roads rather than other types such as schools, health, jobs etc. This area does not wish to see 12,000 new homes on greenfield sites. He hopes that any submissions made on the Forum's behalf reflect this view. SdeB said all types of infrastructure are being considered. He appreciates that new housing can be a difficult issue but the Government decrees what must be provided. The Inspector will test, so any argument against development needs to be sound.</p> <p>7.7 LR asked whether the JSP over-rides Neighbourhood Plans. SdeB said the strategic plan does take precedence but we would like the Neighbourhood Plans to feed it – lots of useful work has been undertaken on these.</p> <p>7.8 LR said she is hearing anecdotal evidence that the wrong type of houses are being built ie lots of family homes but nothing for single people and older down-sizers. SdeB said developers tend to build family homes by default. However, through the JSP, they are trying to take need into consideration.</p> <p>7.9 Peter Dawson then spoke about the Transport Strategy. He said they are working with Planning to make sure the JSP is supported by the right infrastructure.</p> <p>7.10 PD said the Greater Bristol Bus Network saw three schemes draw down Government money through a ten year study looking at where issues are occurring and how they might change. A similar process is being undertaken for this ie trying to build a model to understand the implications for the different spatial options. The model is in development and, as part of</p>	<p>AW</p> <p>SdeB</p>

	<p>the analysis, the 2011 census was used to see how people travel to work. Slide 20 of the presentation shows in red the areas where most people drive to work.</p>	
7.11	<p>PD said that Bath has a very sustainable journey to work pattern with 70% walking, cycling or using public transport. Building on brownfield sites is likely to create non-car journeys. There is a question around creating housing settlements where public transport is weak. He said the Forums will be kept informed of development of schemes.</p>	PD
	<p><u>Q&A</u></p>	
7.12	<p>ME asked how representative of the local population the consultations have been. PD said there is a need to be cautious when considering consultation responses but a range of stakeholders were approached and the feedback provides a direction of travel.</p>	
7.13	<p>EJ asked if the consultation was only available electronically. PD said hard copies were available too and consultation events held. However, it has been mainly web-based as it is cheaper and more effective.</p>	
7.14	<p>BMc said that, in the findings, there is a preference for quality of life. He asked how we square this with a dual carriageway to Bath, Bristol or other local employment centres. Building roads is challenging and expensive. It is important to build houses where the jobs are and reduce the growth in travel.</p>	
7.15	<p>LR said the lack of importance placed on freight seems quixotic, given the number of shops closing on the High Street and rise in on-line purchases, all of which are delivered by freight. She agreed that we do need jobs in this area but also good roads to support them. PD said the study will look at selective road areas – for example, how does a business in the Somer Valley reach the M4? There is a freight consolidation project in Bath which sees smaller, electric vehicles going into the city centre – businesses are being encouraged to support this. The Council is also talking to Bath Spa University about deliveries from Amazon so there is one a day, rather than frequent journeys from individual orders being placed by students. There are solutions available, with technology to support them.</p>	
7.16	<p>PM said his concern is around the east-west link which means that a high level of traffic has to pass through Radstock. This creates bottlenecks now, with only 20% of the approved houses built. There are high levels of traffic on the lanes around Welton, trying to avoid the traffic at Radstock. There does not seem to be enough objection to development on highways grounds. He asked where the funds are to support road relief. PD said it is a good question and we are trying to think cleverly with the funding coming forward from developments.</p>	
7.17	<p>PD said there will be a consultation on the Somer Valley Transport Strategy at the Town Hall in Midsomer Norton on 5th May, 4pm – 8pm.</p>	
7.18	<p>BMc said Mendip is building houses on its boundary with the Somer Valley. This not part of this strategy but will have impact locally. PD said we do need to speak with Mendip more than we do.</p>	
7.19	<p>KW said Peasedown Parish Council were sent a copy of the Somer Valley Transport Strategy consultation questionnaire but it has questions for</p>	

7.20 7.21 7.22	<p>individuals – is there a version suitable for a Parish response? PD said no but not to be constrained by it and provide relevant information/viewpoints.</p> <p>SdeB returned to the JSP and the spatial scenarios. The consultation responses indicated that transport focussed development is key. There was also support for protection of the green belt but there is limited green belt in the Somer Valley.</p> <p>SdeB said there was limited support for a new settlement but it is not being ruled out and if anyone has ideas for a location that could take around 5,000 homes, now is the time to put it forward. BMc said a new development for retirees could be a possibility. They do not need schools and could have the facilities they do need concentrated in one place.</p> <p>LR thanked Simon de Beer and Peter Dawson for their presentations and said the issue of transport continues to be an important one for this area.</p>	
8. 8.1	<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>PM said perhaps a future Agenda item could be a discussion about the name 'Somer Valley 'and whether it means anything to the communities included. BMc said Somer Valley is the best marketing construct the area has. LH said Paulton is miles from the river Somer and she would like to discuss it.</p>	S&P
9. 9.1	<p>9. Dates of Next Meetings</p> <p>LR thanked PM for his update on Midsomer Norton's achievements and future aspirations. She said that if any other community would like to host a meeting in this way, to let her or DD/AW know. AP said he thinks this would be good way of sharing ideas and best practice. EJ said she is happy to volunteer Westfield but would need to consult colleagues.</p> <p>Wednesday 6th July, 6pm, Prattens, Westfield</p> <p>Wednesday 14th September, 6pm, Venue TBC (AGM)</p> <p>Monday 21st November, 6pm, Midsomer Norton Town Hall (Special Budget Meeting)</p>	ALL/EJ

Actions

	Responsible
<p>Links to on-line Police information to be circulated</p> <p><i>The following information was sent after the meeting:- For the latest information for your community visit: https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/</i></p> <p><i>It is also possible to look for numbers, types and locations of crimes in your area on the police.uk website https://www.police.uk/. There is monthly data on this site going back to December 2010.</i></p> <p><i>We have set up a map on this website of the Somer Valley Forum area which can be found here: https://www.police.uk/avon-and-</i></p>	AW

<u>somerset/CS219/crime/+BPScSc/</u>	
Contact Highways with amendments to planned works schedule	AW
Feedback on JSP workshops held in April to be made available to Forums in May.	SdeB
Updates on development of transport schemes linked to the JSP to be given to Forums	PD
Discussion on Somer Valley name to be added to Action Plan/Agenda Planning	S&P
Host communities for forthcoming Forum meetings	ALL