Final Minutes of the

Somer Valley Forum Tuesday 19th September 2017, 6.00pm SWALLOW Community Café, Church Road, Radstock BA3 3QG

Present:

Name	Organisation Represented
Lynda Robertson	Chair of Somer Valley Forum
Richard Baldwin	Divisional Director - Safeguarding & Social Care, B&NES
	(Divisional Director Sponsor of the Somer Valley Forum)
Cllr Rupert Bevan	Radstock Town Council
Adrian Brinson	Midsomer Norton Dial-a-Ride
Cllr John Bull	B&NES Ward Councillor, Paulton
Bev Craney	Chief Executive, SWALLOW
John Cox	Business Support & Development Manager, B&NES
Cllr Doug Deacon	B&NES Ward Councillor, Timsbury
Maralyn Deacon	Observer
Sara Dixon	Locality Manager, B&NES
Brian Earley	Trinity Radstock Methodist Church
Cllr Michael Evans	B&NES Ward Councillor, Midsomer Norton North
Cllr Geoff Fuller	Chair, Westfield Parish Council
Cllr Eleanor Jackson	B&NES Ward Councillor, Westfield
Jon Lovatt	Senior Transportation Planner, B&NES
Jo Lewitt	Public Healthy Development & Commissioning Manager, B&NES
Cllr Barry Macrae	B&NES Ward Councillor, Midsomer Norton North
Simon Martin	Programme Director - Bath Enterprise Area/Zone, B&NES
Cllr Paul Myers	B&NES Councillor, Midsomer Norton Redfield
Cllr Veronica Packham	Chair, Timsbury Parish Council
Gary Peacock	Deputy Group Manager, B&NES
Brian Perrett	Radstock Residents Association
Cllr Jonathan Rich	Peasedown St John Parish Council
Richard Robertson	Welton Village Group
Cllr Alastair Slade	Midsomer Norton Town Council
Shirley Steel	Somerset and Dorset Railway Heritage Trust
Cllr Kathy Thomas	Chair, Peasedown St John Parish Council
Allayne Treadway	Radstock Residents' Association
Jamie Tutton	Assertive Outreach Worker, Julian House
Cllr Mary Upton	Shoscombe Parish Council
Cllr David Walker	Peasedown St John Parish Council
Cllr Karen Walker	B&NES Ward Councillor, Peasedown St John and Vice Chair of
	the Somer Valley Forum
Gary Ward	Senior Enabling and Development Development Officer, B&NES
Cllr Hugh Warren	Paulton Parish Council
Alison Wells	Community Engagement Officer, B&NES
Paul Woodward	Somer Valley Foodbank
Claire Wynne-Hughes	Philanthropy Executive, Quartet Community Foundation

Apologies

Name	Organisation Represented
	Avon and Somerset Police
Cllr Sarah Bevan	B&NES Ward Councillor, Peasedown St John
Cllr Chris Dando	B&NES Ward Councillor, Radstock
Jason Edwards	Avon Fire and Rescue Service

Lorraine Frapwell	Somer Valley Locality Manager, The Carers' Centre
Nick Hall	Radstock Museum
Cllr Liz Hardman	B&NES Ward Councillor, Paulton
Cllr Les Kew	B&NES Ward Councillor, High Littleton
Cllr Deirdre Horstmann	B&NES Ward Councillor, Radstock
Roger Tollervey	Welton Village Group
Tina Veater	Somer Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sarah Westell	Radstock and Westfield Big Local

		Action
1.	Welcome from the Chair of the Forum	
1.1	LR welcomed those present, introduced herself as Chair of the Forum and Cllr Karen Walker as Vice Chair of the Forum. It was noted that the traffic was particularly bad in Radstock this evening so there may be some latecomers. A safety notice was given along with a reminder to sign into the meeting.	
1.2	1.2 LR said she was delighted that SWALLOW had agreed to host his evening's meeting and thanked them for the refreshments. She explained that working in the café provides valuable skills and experience for local young people with learning disabilities. SWALLOW was given a round of applause as thanks for the arrangements they had made.	
2.	Notes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
2.1	These were agreed as a true record.	
2.2	It was noted that the request for Emergency Planning to be considered as a future Agenda item had been added to the Forward Plan for the Forum.	
3.	Community Updates	
	Quartet Community Foundation	
3.1	LR introduced Clare Wynne-Hughes, Philanthropy Executive at Quartet. CWJ explained that the Foundation is a grant making trust. Their work covers the West of England, including B&NES. They work with local organisations who want to support local communities.	
3.2	CWJ said knowing the needs of local communities is important so Quartet produces a document called 'Vital Signs'. They believe that there is a role for private philanthropy in crisis prevention. They have a number of programmes for groups rather than individuals. Some of these run all the time, such as the Express programme. Some are time limited, such as the Wessex Water Money Matters Fund, which is designed to prevent people getting into debt. Other funds launch then close when all the funds have been allocated.	
3.3	CWJ said that, this evening, she wanted to speak with the Forum about a Somer Valley Grants programme, which will provide grants up to £1,000 for groups in this area. SD said that further information on the fund will be circulated. It can also be found on the Quartet website here: http://quartetcf.org.uk/grant-programmes/somer-valley-small-grants-programme/	SD/AW

	Engaging Young People	
3.4	SD said that the Forum has requested this and we are working on facilitating it. We did try to encourage young people to attend this evening's meeting via Off the Record. However, their view is that engagement with young people needs to be meaningful and appropriate and may not involve regular attendance at meetings. Work will continue on the best way of engaging and perhaps, young people might agree to lead part of a future Forum meeting. SD noted that there are young people from SWALLOW present this evening.	
4.	Priority Theme: Local Housing Needs	
	See Appendix 1	
5.	Any Other Community Issues or Concerns	
	There was none.	

Break

		Action
6.	Somer Valley Transport Strategy	
6.1	See Appendix 2	
7.	Somer Valley Enterprise Zone	
7.1	See Appendix 3	
8.	Any Other Business	
8.1	LR said she would like to thank SWALLOW for the cakes – there is also chutney and fruit/veg for sale, so please support them.	
8.2	KW said she is holding a fund-raising Tea Party for Macmillan at her house on 29th September. Please see her after the meeting if you would like to attend.	
8.3	EJ said Radstock Museum will host an exhibition on the history of Westfield which will be opened by Michael Eavis at 11.30am on Saturday.	
9.	Dates of Future Meetings	
9.1	The next meeting will be on Wednesday 29th November , Midsomer Norton Town Hall, 6pm. It will be a special meeting on the budget.	
9.2	SS asked what happened to the request for an agenda item on Emergency Planning. SD said this will be scheduled for early 2018 – the November Forum meetings always feature the budget.	
9.3	2018 Meeting Dates (Some venues TBC):-	
	21st February (AGM – to include a discussion on meeting venues) to be held at the Centurion Hotel, Charlton Lane, Midsomer Norton BA3 4BD	
	20th March	

24th July 19th September 29th November	

Actions

	Responsible
Information on the Somer Valley Funding will be circulated to the Forum	SD/AW
Discussion on venues to be added to AGM agenda	SD/AW
Figures on unmet housing need in Somer Valley GW	
Response to bus pass question	SD/AW
Future Agenda Item on Broadband	SD/AW

Presentation: Local Housing Needs

Presenters:

Gary Ward - Senior Enabling and Development Officer, B&NES Bev Craney – Chief Executive, SWALLOW Jamie Tutton – Assertive Outreach Worker, Julian House

The presentation can be found here:

Slide	Comment
1 – Title Slide	GW said he is part of a small team of three who work within Housing Services. Grants, advice, supported lodging, disabled facilities etc. His team look at affordable housing – the Council has a statutory obligation to do this.
2 - The B&NES Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016	This provides our 'Objectively Assessed Need' for 2016-2036: Total Housing need = 13,500 including affordable housing need = 3,100 (155 dwellings per annum).
3 – Affordable Housing Policy	CP9 enables the Council to capture between 30% and 40% of the total number of dwellings on new planning applications as affordable housing (on developments of 10 dwellings or above). This is normally captured as social rented housing and shared ownership, depending upon the financial viability of the application, other tenures, such as affordable rent or discounted market, may be used.
4 - Affordable Housing Policy in the Somer Valley	For Somer Valley, the affordable housing figure is 30% and we negotiate this with developers. The approach is generic across the whole district and we have delivered new build affordable housing on development sites from Whitchurch across to Freshford. Within the Somer Valley we have delivered on the Radstock regeneration site, Paulton Printworks, Temple Cloud, Midsomer Norton and Westfield.
	Although the approach is generic, we do take account of local housing issues, for instance we examine the Council's housing register and negotiate new affordable housing to best fit the housing demand expressed upon the register.
	We also listen to local needs and aspirations and where possible facilitate new solutions or partnerships to help provide housing solutions to those client groups that struggle to access appropriate housing through the Council's housing register.
5 – SWALLOW Title Slide	Gary Ward handed over to Bev Craney – Chief Executive of SWALLOW
6 - Introductions	Bev introduced Dan, Sarah and Lizzie who are users from SWALLOW. Also, Café Manager Maggie Blake.
7 – Where SWALLOW Comes	Sarah said that SWALLOW stands for South West Action for Learning and Living Our Way

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From 8 - How SWALLOW started	Bev explained that SWALLOW began when a group of people, some with a learning disability decided they wanted more choice for Supported Housing and activities. They were looking for an alternative to existing daycentres and hostels
9 – Founded in 1993	Dan said that SWALLOW was founded in 1993 and is a Registered Charity (Charity Number 1045893)
10 - User led	Sarah said that SWALLOW has a Management Committee of 11 members. Members have a choice of what they do and what they participate in - we shape the direction we take.
11 and 12 Regulated by Care Quality Commission CQC	Bev said SWALLOW is regulated by the CQC and has been rated good in all areas.
13 – Mission Statement	Dan said that SWALLOW is working to make sure that teenagers and adults with learning disabilities live the lives they choose through user led support.
14 - What is our organisational culture?	 Sarah said this is To ensure that our members are at the heart of everything that we do Trust, respect and openness Excellence in the quality of our services Commitment to staff Protection of the vulnerable
15 – Our Members	Bev said our members have their own hopes and dreams and we work together to try to make them to become a reality.
16 – We provide	Dan said we provide support to our members from all over Somerset and surrounding areas. We offer activities in: Radstock, Chilcompton, Midsomer Norton and Bath
17 – The team	 Sarah said we employ 54 staff (7 who have a learning disability) 11 volunteers (3 with a learning disability) We have an extremely low turnover of staff and have received awards for how well we support the staff team We do not use bank staff
18 – 21 Services	Bev said we offer a wide choice of services and activities. Dan and Sarah went through these on the slides.
22 – Base House	Bev spoke about base house which gives users an opportunity to spend a night away from home in supported accommodation. It was established in 1993.
23, 24 – Redfield Road	Redfield Road supported housing was opened in 1997.
25 - The Hawthorns	Sarah said that she lives at Hawthorns in Redfield Road which was opened in 2010.

26 – Sarah	Sarah spoke about her life at Hawthorns, hobbies and interests.
27 – 28 – The Need for more	Bev said that there is a need for further accommodation but parents do not want their children to live just anywhere.
29 and 31 – Meeting with the Council and new partnership with Aster	Bev said she met with Gary and colleagues and with Aster homes. There was three years of planning before the flats were ready. There was also a need to check that social services would support the venture.
32 and 33 – Dan	Dan now has a new flat and said how much he likes it.
34 – Plans for 2019	Aster will be providing SWALLOW with two more new flats in 2019.
35 and 36 – Thank you and Questions.	

GW thanked SWALLOW. He said that the project had involved some excellent local organisations. Aster's staff were pleased to deliver for a particular client group. There is still a shortage of affordable housing – it is difficult to deliver and even more so for supported housing. It is important for politicians to support this as it can be difficult for officers otherwise.

Slide	Comment
37 and 38 -	GW said the Council's Housing Development team has been notified
Approaches to Sofa	about the Somer Valley Forum's concerns around sofa surfing. There
Surfing and Statistics.	are some figures on known cases which has been around 20 people per year for the last 3 years. However, there is no idea of the real numbers as not everyone will contact the Council for assistance.

GW handed over to Jamie Tutton – Assertive Outreach Worker, Julian House

Slide	Comment
39 – Julian House Title Slide	JT said Julian House is growing and changing. His role involves some responsibility for sofa surfing.
	Julian House is 30 years old this year and began when there was the death of a rough sleeper on the streets. It prides itself on working with the homeless across B&NES and into Wiltshire. However, it also covers women's refuge and runs a house for people with autism. It also deals with social justice and runs a social enterprise – a bike workshop – to help people gain skills and qualifications.
	Jamie said he has worked for them for ten years, five as an outreach worker, funded by central government and B&NES.
	Getting people into accommodation is the main aim and putting them in touch with support networks. Julian House works closely with DHI (Developing Health and Independence) on drug and alcohol issues. Julian House also has a female outreach worker to support young vulnerable females, which is funded by St John's.
	The main focus of Julian House's work is on the city centre in Bath where there are visible issues. However, they do cover the whole of B&NES and put resource into Peasedown St John, Radstock and Midsomer

Norton. DHI hold a drop-in three times a month in Midsomer Norton and saw sixteen people over eleven months. However, this is just a small number and there are likely to be more – they are working closely with the Council to help identify those in need. Many people do not see themselves as homeless if they are sofa-surfing but they are and could be putting the tenancies of their friends and families at risk.

The homeless man seen in Midsomer Norton is now in Julian House following a report from a member of the public. Reporting rough sleepers is important and can be done 24 hours a day via Street Link http://www.streetlink.org.uk/

It involves filling in a form and identifying where they are. Julian House can then assess them and ensure they are receiving the welfare and benefits they are entitled to.

The public can request feedback too and part of Jamie's role is to give this. There is someone at Julian House 24 hours too, so it's possible to contact them directly as well. Tel: 01225 354650.

Jamie said Julian House has some great contacts at the Council in the Welfare Support Team which provides an excellent service. There is an annual street count for B&NES as well – this will take place in November to provide an accurate number of rough sleepers. Last year there were twenty-five. However, it is a problem which is on the rise and Universal Credit is not helping. We are anticipating 50 rough sleepers this time. It is an issue nationally and Bristol has a significant problem.

JT handed back to GW. GW thanked JT and said if you do come across rough sleepers or sofasurfers, report it – it's best to try and help them as early as possible.

40 and 41 – Platform for Life

GW said that young single people do not fare well on the housing register. To address this, the Council has provided supplementary funding to support 'Platform for Life' with the YMCA.

We would like to have 8 bed spaces in the Somer Valley area as part of this but location is key. The YMCA is currently looking for suitable housing. If successful, the scheme will continue and could be an option for sofa surfers to help prevent them slipping into a homeless lifestyle.

GW said he is aware that some of the work is Bath-centric but the team does listen and tries to work in partnership across the district. Without help from Central Government, the Council will never be able to deliver affordable housing to meet the demand. We do negotiate with developers early but building works are often slow. If you think we are not listening, do get in touch and we will try to help.

Importance of developing and strengthening relationships – the Council can't do it all – need to work together.

Questions following the presentation

Q1: Affordable Housing is delivered by developers but does it then go to a Housing Association?

A1: Yes – there are seven or eight with the expertise and finance to deliver in B&NES. They are offered at lower cost than commercially.

Q2: Do we have figures for the unmet housing need in the Somer Valley?

A2: I can get them – there is a shortage of Affordable Housing everywhere. We have been quite successful in this area but there is the issue of lack of employment in the Somer Valley – the housing provision needs to link to economic development and transport. There will always be an affordable housing need and it is hard for young people to get a mortgage.

Q3: Is there a danger of people coming to Bath to take advantage of Julian House and its facilities?

A3: Yes – at Christmas and in the Summer, we see an increase in begging. B&NES has introduced a local connection policy in order to access services. We will still help anyone but this will be limited and we do our best to send people back to their best local connection.

Comment 1: It seems a vicious circle – we need new houses but don't have school places or health services to match the increase in population.

Response 1: When invited to consult on Placemaking Plan, you need to feed in.

Q4: When do you negotiate with a developer – when they purchase the land?

A4: Developers can have options on sites for 20 years. We start when they submit a planning application. We have good relationships with most of them but do have to fight for affordable housing.

Comment 2: A notable exception to the local connection policy is military families. The last two families I have supported have been military.

Response 2: There is a housing officer in B&NES that specialises in this.

Q5: Does the Homesearch Register accurately reflect the level of need?

A5: Yes it is robust but not holistic. We work with smaller Housing Associations and developers too – the demand may be low in a particular area but once housing is built, demand goes up. People do not register if they think they are not going to have a chance of living somewhere they want to be.

Q6: How many houses have to be built to get affordable housing included in the development?

A6: 10

Q7: So they could build 200, 9 at a time?

A7: Planning are savvy and do try to catch this. Internal square meterage counts as well. The problem is with small sites with just one or two units. Housing Associations don't like this, so we may take money to reinvest elsewhere instead.

Q8: Is 30% a B&NES target or a Government target?

A8: B&NES

Q9: When will this be reviewed?
A9: Soon, via the Placemaking Plan

Q10: Is this comparable to other Authorities in this area?

A10: Yes – we can't stall development – have market targets too.

LR thanked the speakers for their very interesting talks this evening.

Presentation: Somer Valley Transport Strategy

Presenter: Jon Lovatt - Senior Transportation Planner, B&NES

The presentation can be found here:

Slide	Comment
Title Slide	Jon Lovatt introduced himself as Senior Transportation Planner for B&NES
Slide 2 – Scope of	JL said the presentation would cover:
Presentation	Vision and Objectives
	Context and Issues
	Process and Engagement
	Key Actions
Slide 3 – Scope of Strategy	A map of the area of scope. This dates to 2029 – the same as the Core Strategy
Slide 4 – Vision and Objectives	The objectives have been derived from the Joint Transport Plan
Slide 5 – Context and Issues	The JSP and TS date to 2026. There is focus on employment in Somer Valley, not housing. The 41k population figure comes from the 2011 Census. The workforce in Somer Valley is mainly out-commuting to Bath and Bristol. There is currently 7,000 fewer jobs than employed people.
Slide 6 – Process and Engagement	2016 consultation findings. There will be a further report by the end of the year and one more public meeting.
Slides 7, 8 and 9 – Key Actions	The cycling routes relate to the old railway line. Park & Ride is key for those commuting to Bath and Bristol. A new site is proposed for Whitchurch on A37. The Greater Bristol Bus Network is designed for areas like this. There could be a Radstock Park and Ride or interchange/car share facility.
	Also a new link to the Odd Down Park and Ride from the South.
	The approach taken on the A37 will be rolled out to A367/A362.
Slide 10 – Thank	
you and questions	

Questions and Answers

Q1: Will B&NES consider supporting the railway link to Frome? We have support from

Somerset CC but not B&NES.

A1: It was looked at in detail under the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and

Transport Strategy and was included on the long list but taken out as the majority of

travel is to Bath and Bristol, so it's going in the wrong direction.

Comment 1: The idea is that it then links to Westbury and beyond.

Response 1: It was considered but is not a priority to serve regional needs.

Comment 2: A lot of people work in London a couple of days a week. It is better to go there from Radstock than Bath.

Response 2: We need to prioritise for existing issues – a Park and Ride and the Greater Bristol Bus Network would help more people in the timeframe available.

Q2: We have aimed to protect the track bed between Midsomer Norton and Radstock.

For the cost of a bridge, we could have that East-West link – could that go in?

A2: Yes – this is just a strategy, not a policy. There will be more consultation.

Comment 3: There has been no mention of Westfield. There is a good deal of work going on here on the Neighbourhood Plan. We are hampered by the A367 and this is significant for the Industrial Estate.

Response 3: It is not specifically mentioned but many of the schemes cover it.

Comment 4: This is too vague – people need more information. Response 4: This could be sent to the Forum after the meeting.

Q3: Would it be possible for bus passes for people of working/studying age but who are

unable to drive for medical reasons to be used from 9am?

A3: I am unable to answer this but will take it away and get a response.

Presentation: Somer Valley Enteprise Zone

Presenters:

John Cox - Business Support & Development Manager, B&NES Simon Martin - Programme Director - Bath Enterprise Area/Zone, B&NES

The presentation can be found here:

Slide	Comment
Title Slide	Simon Martin introduced himself and said this will be a scene setting exercise. The Somer Valley is a great place to live but not so good for getting to work. We need to translate strategy into action. The Government has given us an opportunity to include Somer Valley as part of the Enterprise Zone for the West of England.
	John Cox introduced himself. He said the Council and Enterprise Partnership put a bid to Government for Bath and to extend this to the Somer Valley. This came into being on 1st April this year.
Slide 2 – Our Policy Framework	This has to be within existing policy framework
Slide 3 – Economic Policy Context	The economic ambitions for the area relate to bringing forward employment land as the supply is running out.
Slide 4 – Somer Valley Policy Context	Reference in the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan
Slide 5 – Somer Valley Issues	A summary of the challenges – manufacturing seems to be increasing so there are positive signs. Vacancy rates are as low as 1%. The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone can make a major contribution to the 2,000 job creation target. In terms of Broadband, the Government policy is to prioritise Enterprise Zones.
Slide 6 - Old Mills	This has been known as Old Mills for some time but we want to start rebranding. It offers a potential 54k sq m of employment space.
Slide 7 – Site Constraints	We need to bring land owners together and create access. The viability is challenging but Enterprise Zone status gives us levers to address the constraints and access to external funding. We are bidding for local growth funding for highways improvements – a £2.8m bid for early wins funding. We can also bid for site infrastructure.
Slide 8 – EZ Transport Improvement Study	These will require discussions with landowners, agents etc but we need to improve A362 access.

Slide 9 – EZ Deliverables	 Landowner engagement Key stakeholder consultation Development of Delivery Framework for site Finalisation of Transport Improvement scheme Including walking & cycling routes Preparation of funding bids for enabling infrastructure
Slide 10 – EZ Governance	There is a Cross Service Project Team and a Steering Group chaired by Paul Myers. They give feedback to West of England level. An Enterprise Zone is an opportunity to retain Business Rates which we can invest up front rather than them going to Central Government as previously. We can pool future business rates to invest in roads up front. It also gives us incentives for businesses to relocate.

Questions and Answers

Q1: We have been hearing this for years. A lot of time has been spent planning

infrastructure. What are you doing to market the site?

A1: The first steps will be in November when we sign the agreement. The landowners

needed to be incentivised to bring it forward. We do need to work hard and quickly

on people investing in bringing business.

Q2: Is the funding from the Business Rates ring-fenced for infrastructure?

A2: Yes – it has to be expended in particular ways – highways, broadband, utilities

typically. We have been successful in securing one of the six pilots for next level of

broadband, which has just been announced. There is a real opportunity for

businesses to get together to facilitate it.

Q3 You say there is a lack of employment land but Purnells was allocated for units that

have never been built as the developer claims there is no demand. Could you

comment on this?

A3: It is an issue we face frequently, especially on mixed use schemes. We are trying

to get better at enforcing the employment element. We know there are viability issues associated with Old Mills but if you build it, they will come – it has happened

at Westfield.

Comment 1: In hindsight, the units should have been built and filled before the housing.

Comment 2: You say you can improve the A362-A367 links but going the other way, it is harder.

It means traffic via North Road or Welton, which will all end up in Radstock.

Response 2: 44k residents are currently commuting through Midsomer Norton, Radstock and

Westfield, all within 2 miles of the site. Access to a good local employment base is

key to reducing this along with the provision of cycling and walking routes.

Q4: I am pleased to hear road access will be improved. I run a business in Westfield

and the broadband is atrocious. Will the incentives just be for new businesses, or

all?

A4: All businesses and residents. The trial will begin in October and we will send out

information packs. There will be grants to put in restructure for a community to pool

– if they put all the grants into one pot, there will be real opportunity to draw things

together without BT involvement.

Q5: Could we add this to a later Agenda for the Somer Valley Forum, so we can

encourage communities to club together?

A5: This suggestion was welcomed by the Forum.

Comment 3: We tried this before and got BT and Truspeed. Could we have someone from

B&NES to explain it simply please?

Comment 4: This is important for businesses, so could we do a special meeting with the

Chamber?