

JOINT CHAIRS AND PARISH CLERKS MEETING - MINUTES

Council Chamber, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Tuesday 7th June 2016, 6.30pm

1. Welcome

Mel Barrett, Chief Executive, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC), welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the importance of parish and rural councils in the borough.

2. Devolution

Councillor Clive Sanders, Leader of the Council, gave a presentation on the current devolution proposals in Hampshire. The presentation is attached. Key points were:

- Structure of local government and allocation of responsibilities is largely the same today as it was 42 years ago when local government was first set up. In that time, the population has expanded dramatically and the challenges faced by local government have changed.
- In March 2015 Hampshire County Council (HCC) published a report on how a combined authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight might look. As well as the 15 councils in the area, other interested parties involved in the proposal included the National Parks, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Health Authorities/NHS. In September 2015, the group set out what powers they would like devolved from central Government and what the combined authority would do in return. These powers included control over business rates and devolution of a sum of money for local infrastructure, such as roads and schools. This led to a series of meetings with central Government.
- Three concerns were raised. The first was how the organisation should govern. Central Government made it clear that they wanted a Directly Elected Mayor if there was to be any deal. Such a proposal involves a number of costs and effectively creates a fourth tier of government, thus it was agreed in Hampshire that there was no support for this. The second problem was how to redistribute pooled business rates. BDBC could not be sure whether they would be better or worse off under this proposal. The third concern was that the focus of the new authority would be around the south coast, where two thirds of the population live and where most of the problems lie.
- The proposal for the combined authority of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was therefore abandoned, and a number of authorities around the Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight area made a separate bid (the Solent bid). HCC

decided not to be part of this bid as it saw it as the first stage of the fragmentation of Hampshire.

- The six District Councils that were not part of the Solent bid – BDBC, Hart, Rushmoor, Test Valley and the New Forest – then put forward their own combined authority bid, in the hope that they could take control of the £30m a year infrastructure funding that was potentially available to the Solent bid. HCC again decided not to be part of this bid, but the group put the proposal forward to central Government anyway, even though it would legally be difficult to go ahead without HCC's participation. A response is still awaited.
- Two weeks ago HCC announced proposals for an alternative unitary reorganisation for Hampshire. This followed research carried out by Deloitte on behalf of HCC looking at how local government restructuring could save money. The proposals suggest a potential net saving of £40m a year. BDBC are commissioning some work to look at what people in the area want so that the local voice and local choice can be balanced against cost effectiveness. This should be completed by October 2016. It is not yet clear what a "Mega Council" would mean for parishes.

3. Update from around the Borough

Mel Barrett, Chief Executive at BDBC, gave a presentation on major policy and development proposals in the borough. His presentation covered the new Local Plan which was approved and adopted on 26th May 2016, the Manydown development, BDBC's Housing and Homelessness Strategy, proposed regeneration plans for Basingstoke leisure park, the commercial regeneration of Basing View and the new Enterprise Zone, effective from 1st April 2017. Key points from the presentation are in the slides attached.

Questions

Q: Do we need another retail park?

A: Mel Barrett explained that the proposed new Designer Outlet Centre will be a different experience to that already available in Basingstoke, akin to the Bicester Outlet Village. There will be a full retail impact analysis as part of the planning process.

Q: Julian Jones (Dummer) raised the point that many of the proposed development sites in the Local Plan were a long way from the centre of Basingstoke and placing people in affordable housing so far from the centre of Basingstoke could raise problems of access. Secondly, with regards to the new leisure park and retail development, bringing visitors into an already congested area of Basingstoke could cause problems.

A: Mel Barrett acknowledged that there are real challenges around how planning is done under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Local Plan provides the borough with a five year housing supply and it will be important for BDBC to ensure that planning applications are dealt with in a timely manner to avoid planning by appeal. The Government has just finished consulting on amending the NPPF to move towards the discounted market sale Starter Homes

approach, whereby developers sell some houses at 20% less than market value and it is proposed that this can count towards their affordable housing allocation. Mel Barrett also acknowledged that it was important to consider the infrastructure developments required to support housing and leisure developments.

Q: Chris Tomblin (Bramley) asked (i) If builders don't come forward with sufficient delivery to meet the five year housing supply, will that make the Local Plan invalid, thus leading to applications for additional sites that aren't set out in the Plan? (ii) Shouldn't we be following the masterplan route proposed for Manydown for all Local Plan sites? (iii) Do we have the money to provide the infrastructure required to support development?

A: Mel Barrett said that, with regards (i), officers at the Council have been asked to be proactive in monitoring what is coming forward for sites and engaging with developers to help remove barriers. With regards (ii), the Local Plan states that any major greenfield allocation coming forward should have a masterplan developed by the Local Planning Authority. With regards (iii), this is why the devolution debate is so important. BDBC is identifying the infrastructure needs to help development come forward and this is forming part of the dialogue with Government. The Manydown development gives BDBC a special dialogue with Government; how this development is taken forward is of national importance with the precedents it sets for future developments.

4. Partnership Policing in Rural Parishes including Community Speedwatch

Inspector Paul Pressley gave a presentation on Community Speedwatch. Presentation attached.

Questions

Q: Derek Cain informed the meeting that Rooksdown had a successful Community Speedwatch (CSW) scheme until negative publicity in the national press put volunteers off. The parish council is having difficulty getting the scheme up and running again. How can they encourage a spread of the community to volunteer?

A: Inspector Pressley suggested that beat officers could accompany schoolchildren roadside in safe locations to kickstart the CSW.

Q: Joyce Bowyer (Sherfield Park) expressed frustration at the length of time it was taking to get volunteers registered.

A: Inspector Pressley agreed to put Joyce in touch with a sergeant to push things forward.

Q: David Leeks (Tadley) asked Inspector Pressley if he could speak at a Tadley town council meeting to encourage volunteers for CSW to come forward.

A: Inspector Pressley agreed.

Q: Simon Mahaffey said that Silchester have run a successful CSW for the last 3-4 years. They were obtaining good data and were seeing a plateau in speeding. He suggested that the scheme might be made even more effective if they could coordinate with neighbouring parishes to catch people who break the speed limit on a journey through multiple parishes.

A: Inspector Pressley said it should be possible to look at coordination across parishes.

Q: Paul Mahoney (Rooksdown) asked whether a driver who gets caught speeding in three parishes on one journey would trigger a third offence visit from a local beat officer.

A: Yes.

Q: Paul Mahoney (Rooksdown) said that Rooksdown have identified times and roads where there are particular speeding problems. CSW is not effective enough in these areas. Can the Police help?

A: Inspector Pressley said that if the evidence is available then yes, such sites would be eligible for the next tier of activity (Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Roads Policing Unit). Agreed to speak outside of the meeting.

Q: Peter Bloyce (Old Basing and Lychpit) asked whether the Police could follow up non-speeding offences relating to CSW such as verbal abuse towards volunteers. He also asked whether there could be more feedback on the outcomes of CSW work.

A: Inspector Pressley said that if evidence of abuse was given to the local beat officer the Police could take action regarding abuse. He agreed that improved feedback was needed and informed the meeting that feedback was put on the website and in the CSW newsletter, and available through Hampshire Alerts.

Q: John Sawyer (Kingsclere) emphasised the importance of feedback. He also stated that volunteers had experienced problems logging information on the system and that this, combined with lack of feedback, had left them feeling disillusioned and that maybe CSW was a waste of time.

A: Inspector Pressley suggested that either himself or one of his beat officers be invited to the next parish council meeting to discuss these issues and take them forward. He also stressed that the logging of data had now improved.

Q: Julian Jones (Dummer) referred to an article that appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle saying that 20mph speed limits were not enforceable. He asked whether we could dispel this idea and say they are, in fact, potentially enforceable.

A: 20mph speed limits can be enforced if they have formally been instigated as a 20mph area. CSW could also be used to educate people in these areas.

Martin Slatford (Baughurst) said that it was important to understand that there had been a big change in the way that CSW is being adopted. Basingstoke Police had found a way around the problems experienced by Hampshire Constabulary regarding the inputting of CSW data and had sent out around 600 speeding letters during this period. There is a great CSW support team in Basingstoke Police , suggestions this evening that CSW teams in this area could work together , perhaps sharing volunteers during shortages , was a good idea. Inspector Pressley and BDAPTC would arrange a local meeting. (He recently used the) The Hampshire Police Volunteer approval system could provide online approval (system and had received approval) within 24 hours but the delays of many weeks had stressed several prospective CSW teams . There were so many good ideas around CSW in the parishes involved that if they worked together they had a great future ahead.

5. Open Forum

- 5.1 Martin Biermann asked (i) how the Manydown Partnership would work given the reincarnation that HCC might undergo? And (ii) whether the question of how Manydown would be parished was being considered. Mel Barrett said that it was important that any potential investors and partners in the Manydown project had confidence in the partnership. Therefore in addition to the formal ownership documents there was also a Memorandum of Understanding between HCC and BDBC on how partners/investors in Manydown would be managed. Cllr Simon Bound said that, with regards (ii), there was a big conversation taking place at present around the best way to govern Manydown from the beginning of the process that would be sustainable going forward.
- 5.2 Martin Slatford (Baughurst) asked whether anything was being done to help the 5% of the population that wouldn't receive superfast broadband through HCC. The meeting was informed that BDBC had taken back their portion of funding towards HCC's match funding scheme after realising that there was a serious lack of support and central and county level for this 5% and were looking at how they could better spend it to help this portion of the population access superfast broadband. They are restricted by EU rules and are scoping out what the options are.
- 5.3 Joyce Bowyer (Sherfield Park) welcomed the approach to the Manydown development but expressed concerns that the various developments coming through in the north of the borough were not being dealt with in a joined up manner, and the road infrastructure, in particular the A33, would need addressing. Mel Barrett informed the meeting that Rebecca Emmett, Executive Director of Borough Services at BDBC, was preparing a paper for Councillors on masterplanning for these other developments. Mel Barrett said he would feedback these comments to Rebecca. Cllr Sanders said that the Local Enterprise Partnership was looking at cost benefit analyses for road schemes that were neither local nor national and the A33 fell into this category. He also stressed that there were significant allocations of money being used to improve the roundabouts on the A33 over the next few years.
- 5.4 Brian Langer (Overton) asked for an assurance that BDBC would fight appeals that came forward as a result of applications being turned down that were not aligned with the Local Plan. Mel Barrett said that he could not bind the Development Control Committee with regard to future decisions that will be before them, however planning officers' reports would reference the adopted Local Plan and five year housing supply and there could now reasonably be a greater degree of confidence in general terms that applications that went against the Local Plan would be rejected at the application and appeal stage, remembering of course that each application would need to be judged on its individual merits.
- 5.5 Brian Langer also reported that, whilst the box junction by Churchill Way and the bus station had been reinstated, the one at Norn Hill/Churchill Way East/Eastrop roundabout hadn't and

this was causing congestion. Could BDBC ask HCC to reinstate please? Also vegetation growth over road signs was bad in the town and needed to be cut back. Mel Barrett offered to speak to Brian after the meeting to get further details and write to the Chief Executive at HCC as the Highways Authority. Vegetation around road signs is cut back by BDBC for HCC on a paid for basis. The frequency of cuttings has been reduced but if safety is becoming an issue, this can be raised with HCC.

5.6 Sandy Johnston (Sherfield on Loddon) asked whether the Community Safety Partnership was still meeting and whether police officers were still allocated specific responsibilities such as domestic violence. Cllr Simon Bound said that the CSP was still going and was due a review to ensure that it was working well and producing results. A meeting was due shortly. Inspector Pressley said that the police work closely with the Safer North Hampshire Partnership and that some police officers were still sometimes allocated to lead on specific issues.

5.7 A representative from Bramley noted that the parish had received around 300 new houses and 40% of this had been social housing, to meet affordable housing targets. However, some people who had been housed in this were not happy at being so far from the town centre and places of work. He stated that there needs to be a debate around how to engage parishes over the new Discount Market Sale proposal and how this can help address this problem. Cllr Sanders said that there is precedent, in an area where there is no affordable housing demand, for providing affordable housing elsewhere as part of the developer contribution. However evidence to support such activity was required and caution was needed over developing "ghetto" areas. Integrated communities were what was needed.

5.8 Julian Jones (Dummer) spoke about anaerobic digester plants. Dummer has such a plant and had been told that it would take slurry from the local area. This has not been the case in practice, with slurry coming from Essex and the Isle of Wight. This results in very large lorries driving through Hatchwarren and down the A30, where further housing development is proposed. Careful and sensible thought needs to be given to where such plants are situated in future.

5.9 David Thornton (Chineham) said that the dualling of the A33 had been off the agenda when the development site to the east of Chineham had been discussed. Cllr Sanders said that it was the case then, but things change. The order in which housing and infrastructure developments happen will depend on when money comes on stream.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.