



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## *COUNTY AND PARISHES LIAISON COMMITTEE*

---

### AGENDA ITEM: 4

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY AND PARISHES LIAISON COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.00 PM.**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

#### Representative

#### Organisation

Mrs C M Aston	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr Benifer	Chairman BALC
Mr W J Y Chapple	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr J Currell	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mrs A Derrick	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr D Goodenough	BALC
Ms J Hall	Buckinghamshire County Council
Miss L K Hazell	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr T Holland	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mrs A Hooton	BALC
Mr S Orchard	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr R S Royston	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr G Spenceley	Buckinghamshire County Council
Mr K Walker	Chairman, Society of Local Council Clerks
Mrs M Yates	Buckinghamshire County Council

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mrs A Jones, Mr C Jones and Mr M W Taylor.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

## **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

### **RESOLVED**

That Mrs C M Aston be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

## **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

### **RESOLVED**

That Mr B Benifer be appointed Vice-Chairman.

It was agreed that Mr B Benifer took the chair for this meeting.

## **1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2001, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

## **2 PAST AND FUTURE WORK PLANS FOR BALC**

The Committee received a progress report which outlined the work of the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) over the past year.

It was noted that following a successful pilot period, formal arrangements to provide administrative support had been established with Berkshire Association of Local Councils. The additional monies had provided funding for new staffing appointments.

### **Partnership**

The Committee noted that the association had continued to work successfully in partnership with the County Council. Notably, work on the 'Bucksonline' portal project which aimed to provide electronic communication and IT facilities to all Parish and Town Councils.

Other partnership work BALC was involved in included, representation on Leader and Rural Transport Partnership and the first multi-agency seminar of Affordable Housing. BALC continued to work with the Rural Community Councils, County Federation of Women's Institutes and the Oxford Diocese.

BALCs work with the Society of Local Council Clerks in providing support to clerks, had led to NALC requesting the association to support clerks on a national basis.

## **3 Development**

It was noted that five new members from newly created local councils in Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes had joined BALC.

Information on BALC was now available on their website, an e-group with 36 members had been established.

#### **4 Consultation**

It was reported that the Association, through its links with SERCAF had appointed 3 local council representatives from Beds, Northants and Bucks to join the Stakeholder Group that responded to the Governments Rural White Paper.

#### **5 Training**

It was noted that a second conference had been arranged at Green Park on 16 March 2002 to continue the training and development of Local Councils as highlighted in the Rural White Paper.

A member commented on the need for adequate training of Clerks. In reply it was noted that the society had facilitated a two-day course in the Ireland Room at County Hall.

#### **6 BEST KEPT VILLAGE**

It was noted that Princes Risborough had been entered for the Best Kept Village competition.

#### **POLICE RESOURCES IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC ORDER ACT 1994 – SECTION 61 – TRAVELLERS.**

The Committee received and discussed a paper tabled at the meeting, which is appended to the minutes, it looked at the powers the Police and local authorities had under the 1994 Act, to act against gypsies and travellers who occupy land without permission.

It was noted that the implementation of Section 61 varies between police divisions. Buckinghamshire has three divisions, Aylesbury and Chiltern Vale plus part of Slough, making a consistent approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments difficult.

The following was noted by Members:-

- Police only have powers under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 although these do not generally apply where the encampment is on highway land.
- In 1998 a government document strongly suggested a joint policy between local authorities and the Police. The Authority has, since 1996, been trying to establish, in conjunction with the Police, a joint policy to agree an approach to illegal encampments.
- The introduction of the Human Rights Act has further complicated issues. An Authority applying for a court order must now satisfy the court that all issues have been addressed.

- Following the repeal of the local authority duty to provide sites, authorities are required to estimate the amount of accommodation needed and facilitate its provision through local plans.

A Member informed the Committee that Haddenham Parish Council had experienced problems which had been resolved through working with a Travel family and were currently in the final stages of a contract with the family to run a site allowing other families to live and integrate within the community, taking advantage of schools and health.

## **7 UPDATE ON PROVISION OF METERED AND UN-METERED ELECTRICITY**

The Committee received an oral report which updated Members on the provision of metered and un-metered electricity.

It was noted that a meeting with British Energy had been arranged to discuss the supply of energy through the authorities purchasing capability and other related issues.

It was reported that 35 parish councils had shown an interest, a planning workshop in December, was arranged to discuss the options to achieve cheaper energy. In reply to a comment regarding wider consultation with parish councils through Local Committees it was felt that individual contact would allow each parish council's needs to be assessed.

The Committee discussed the safety of lighting stands noting the County Council was responsible for inspecting 23,000, 25% of which were approaching their 20 year lifespan. It was noted that a lot of Parish Councils had approached the Authority to take over the care of lamp standards, due to resource implications this would only be feasible if the lamp standards reached a prescribed standard. It was noted that those Parish Councils not wishing to take up the energy option could benefit from the contract held with the tester.

Discussion moved to funding for replacing and repairing lighting stands, through the Forbearance Fund

In reply it was reported that this would have to be investigated and reported back at a later date.

It was felt that additional information regarding life expectancy of lighting stands be added to the fact file. In reply, it was noted that lighting stands be reviewed as part of the Liaison Group.

## **8 UPDATE ON LOCAL COMMITTEES**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Transportation, which gave an update on Local Committees.

The report outlined the current arrangements and recent review of Local Committees conducted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the

Buckinghamshire Environment. The report outlined the review's findings through questionnaires, interviews and written comments which had been sent to County Councillors, District Council Members, participants in Local Committees and other stakeholders and partners. The Committee noted the responses which were appended to the report. The review was reported to Cabinet who recommended to Council that the existing Constitution/Terms of Reference be retained and reviewed in 12 months time.

More immediate issues highlighted during the review, for example, amplification equipment and the comments raised regarding more succinct reports had all been addressed.

A Member commented on the number of consultation documents coming from County Council, District Councils, Police and other parties, and suggested issue led items be included on the agenda to avoid the current 'overload' of consulting.

In reply to this, Steve Orchard, Area Manager for Aylesbury Vale reported that Aylesbury Vale Local Committee agreed with the comment and, had with Aylesbury Vale District Council conducted joint presentations resulting in good positive, joint, cross-party, Authority working which was reflected in the attendance and feed back from attendees.

In relation to a comment on the way Parish Council representatives reported to their respective Councils, it was felt that this responsibility was with the representatives themselves. Several Parish Councils felt that not enough information was fed back to grass roots level. The Head of Transportation commented that unless two-way communication was adopted it would be difficult to make the LCs work effectively.

David Goodenough commented that relationships between partners were beginning to change as barriers were removed for more joint working activities.

## **9 COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT – TRANSPORT**

The Committee received an oral report on the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report.

It was noted that in July 2000 all Parish Councils received a copy of the Local Transport Plan that was subsequently submitted to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). The Committee was reminded that each year an Annual Progress report was produced and submitted to GOSE.

The officer informed Members that Local Committees, Parish Councils and BALC were consulted at the implementation stage, at which stage any individual schemes were dealt with at local level.

It was also noted that BALC were represented on the LTP Consultative Group. The Plan was divided into three parts:

- 1 Widening travel choices;

- 2 Effects on traffic – road improvements;
- 3 Maintenance – road bridges, street lighting, paths.

A letter, from GOSE, was expected in December, outlined the funds secured for 2002-03.

Members commented and discussed the following points:-

- When producing the LTP does consultation include neighbouring authorities? In reply it was noted that the Authority regularly met with Milton Keynes and Slough. If issues were cross-boundary, an agreement was usually sought. Informal meetings were held regularly and more formal meetings quarterly.
- The Authority had begun publishing ‘The Buckinghamshire Times’, an active way of informing the public on the progress of the LTP. Ideas on other ways to consult were welcomed. It was noted that the press were not usually interested until plans reached a practical stage.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

18 March 2002.

## **CHAIRMAN**

Council Information Area - CIA\Miscellaneous\County and Parishes Liaison Committee\Minutes\20011015.doc