ACTION NOTES

| MEETING: | Buckingham Local Area Forum | |
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| DATE: | 29 September 2011 7.02 pm to 9.15 pm | |
| LOCATION | Radclive-cum-Chackmore Village Hall, Main Street, Chackmore MK18 5JE | |

| Present: | Mrs J Beckett (Radclive-cum-Chackmore Parish Council), Chris Benton (Water Stratford Parish Council), Hedley Cadd (Buckinghamshire County Council), Ivy Cakebread (Stowe Parish Council), Terry Cavender (Akeley Parish Council), Geoff Culverhouse (Nash Parish Council), Derrick Isham (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Roger Landells (Twyford Parish Council), Pearl Lewis (Aylesbury Vale District Council), Alex Matthews (Thornton Parish Council), Edwin Maxwell (Tingewick Parish Council), Mr P McHenry (Padbury Parish Council), Tom Morrison (Hogshaw Parish Meeting), Jackie Phipps (Aylesbury Vale District Council), David Polhill (Buckinghamshire County Council), Susan Renshell (Aylesbury Vale District Council), John Riches (Middle Claydon Parish Council), David Rowlands (Buckinghamshire County Council), Kim Shepherd (Calvert Green), Mike Smith (Buckingham Town Council), Mrs J Swadling (Turweston Parish Council), Vicky Webb (Westbury Parish Council) and Alan White (Gawcott & Lenborough Parish Council) |
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| In Attendance: | Stephen Archibald, Sue Barrett, Carl Blakeley, Pam Curtis, Ann-Marie Davies, Simon Dudley, Inspector Emma Garside, Mark Grindall, Ann Kiceluk, Margo Parfitt, Carol Sefton, Dr Tariq Siddique, Stephen Townsend, Liz Wheaton and Susie Yapp |
| Apologies: | Amanda Brooke-Webb, Ann Cobban, Lady Scott and Sir Beville Stanier |

| Item | ISSUES RAISED | |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP | |
| | Apologies as stated above. | |
| 2 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | |
| | There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 3 | ACTION NOTES | |
| | The action notes of the meeting held on 30 June 2011 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following minor amendments/updates. | |
| | The Chairman explained to Members that he wrote to Mark Jones at the Bucks Fire Authority following the request from the LAF and he has had considerable correspondence with him but they have reached an impasse. Terry Cavender has also been in contact with Mark who explained the fragmented way that scrutiny is undertaken across the Country. Terry has since written to John Bercow MP and he has been told that his concerns have been passed onto Eric Pickles, who will be looking into how scrutiny of Fire Authorities is carried out across the Country. Mike Smith pointed out that the car parking changes referred to under the AVDC update related to the long-stay car park and not the short stay. Inspector Garside updated Members on speed enforcement activity on the A422. She said that on one occasion, 11 speeding tickets were handed out and the top speed was 55mph. On the other occasion, the speed enforcement team handed out 3 tickets and the top | |

- speed was 61mph. She said that this area is being closely monitored by the team.
- Mark Grindall has spoken to Roger Landells regarding being the champion for the "promotion of local shopping facilities" priority and Roger has agreed to do this.
- The Chairman, on behalf of Westbury Parish Council, clarified the position relating to the speed restrictions. He explained that the parish council wanted to see the current 40mph limit reduced to 30mph but when the parish council viewed the website, it stated that the speed limit was due to be increased to 50mph. Ann-Marie Davies agreed to look into this and report back to Westbury Parish Council after the meeting.

Action: Ann-Marie Davies

4 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman started by saying that there is a lot of work going on at the moment but much of it is still in its embryonic stages. He mentioned the Boundary Commission's review which the County Council responded to the proposed changes outlined in the review and has now received a response back from the Boundary Commission. Some of the suggested changes put forward by the County Council have been considered by the Boundary Commission. The main change is that all divisions will be one ward divisions so Members will be responsible for a larger number of residents (8-9,000 rather than 7-8,000). This will result in a reduction of County Councillors from 57 to 49.

The Chairman explained that the Government has made a U-turn in relation to HS2. There will now be a Parliamentary debate on the issue. He went on to say that Martin Tett, the Leader of the County Council, is chairing the 51M Group.

5 QUESTION TIME

The Chairman explained that Water Stratford Parish Council had emailed in advance of the meeting a number of questions (listed below). David Hedley, Local Area Technician is aware of the concerns and is preparing a written response to be sent to Water Stratford after the meeting.

Action: David Hedley

Question 1 - Dip in Water Stratford Road

The dip in the road close to the Water Stratford road bridge over the River Ouse is becoming increasingly dangerous especially to cyclist and motor cyclist. It is also dangerous to motor vehicles and causes grounding of many vehicles.

When will the promised temporary repairs be carried out?

Question 2 - Can we have assurance that the dip will be permanently repaired at the same time as the proposed resurfacing of Water Stratford Road?

Question 3 - Resurfacing of Water Stratford Road

Can we have assurance that the proposed resurfacing will in fact be carried out during 2012/2013?

Question 4 - Missing Road Sign at Water Stratford / Stowe cross roads

This sign was first reported missing in December 2009.

It is an important sign in that in addition to giving directions it also warns motorists that they are approaching a (very dangerous) crossroads.

When will this sign be replaced?

Question 5 - Water Stratford / Stowe Cross Roads

We would strongly dispute the statistic quoted at the previous meeting regarding the number of accidents (9 collisions in the last 10 years - 8 minor ones). There have been many more accidents. This is a very dangerous junction. We should not be required to wait until there is a fatality before improvements are made.

When is the speed limit review for this junction to be carried out? What action can be taken to improve the vision splay?

Question 6 - HGV traffic through Water Stratford

We have instances of very large HGVs routing through the village some of which have difficulty negotiating the road and the Church corner. We accept that some of this traffic is caused by use of sat navs.

Can any steps be taken to deter this traffic e.g. a weight limit?

6 PETITIONS

Members were asked to note the response prepared by Transport for Buckinghamshire in relation to the closure of Twyford Bridge. The lead petitioner, Roger Landells, was present at the meeting.

Simon Dudley updated Members that the bridge is due to be opened on Friday 30 September. He acknowledged that there has been a great deal of concern over the closure of the bridge. Transport for Buckinghamshire were asked to look at both temporary and permanent solutions to the problem. It was imperative to make the bridge safe and this has now been done. TfB are now looking at strengthening the embankment on both sides.

Mr Landells thanked Simon Dudley and other TfB officers but he went onto criticise TfB on two counts during the whole process. Firstly, he felt that the repair could have been carried out much earlier than it has been. He said that around £6-8,000 per month has been spent on additional fuel costs for motorists in the area who have been unable to use the bridge and have been diverted. Mr Landells criticised the senior managers at TfB for putting Simon Dudley in a very difficult position. He said it was a matter of principle as he was told that HS2 would not affect the decision on whether to repair the bridge or not but then Simon told him that it was thrown out because of HS2.

Mr Landells concluded by saying that he, and the local residents, were all delighted that the bridge has finally re-opened and thanked Simon and his team again.

7 TRANSPORT FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE UPDATE

The Chairman introduced County Councillor David Rowlands in his role as spokesperson for Transport at the County Council. David referred to the TfB report included in the agenda pack which lists the current list of streets which will be treated over the next 2 years. He stressed that footpaths are not included within this particular allocation of funding parishes and town councils can apply for funding footpaths through the delegated budget. He asked Members to speak to their County Councillor if they felt there were roads missing from the list.

Category 1 and 2 potholes are to be dealt with at the same time.

A decision is expected from the Department of Transport in October regarding the proposed 20 mph. David agreed to update Members at the next meeting.

Simon Dudley then took Members through the Winter Maintenance review results. He said that recent media coverage has suggested that we will have a harsh Winter, starting in November/early

December time. There is an 85% probability of a significant amount of snow during this period which will raise issues in relation to the Winter Maintenance programme. He said that, unfortunately areas in Thornton have still not made it onto the winter gritting programme. There have been a few additions to the programme and a few routes taken off.

Simon said that 35 farmers and contractors have expressed an interest in snow clearing on behalf of the County Council and they have all been sent an agreement to sign. Everything should be finalised within the next 4-6 weeks.

Last year, the Government produced a snow code which clarified the position with regards to liability when clearing snow. Simon said that if you clear snow sensibly and do not make it more dangerous than before, then you are not liable. He stressed that you should not use hot water on the snow as this will just cause the snow to turn to ice. He advised people to use salt or ash on the snow.

During discussion, Members asked the following questions and raised the following issues.

- The representative from Thornton expressed disappointment at not being included in the winter gritting programme but he went on to ask whether the grit bins would be filled up well in advance of the bad weather. Would the bins then be maintained and refilled on a regular basis throughout the Winter. Simon responded by saying that the County Council cannot organise for heaps of grit to be put out yet because parishes are still cutting the grass. The heaps of grit will probably be delivered towards the end of October. The grit bins will be refilled every 3-4 weeks as it is not effective to go back and forth to different areas more frequently than that.
- The representative from Akeley asked what the method was for informing farmers of routes which needed to be cleared. Simon explained that all enquiries should come through to the County Council as the County Council is ultimately responsible for snow clearance and it is the responsibility of the County Council to arrange payment to the farmers who assist in this. He advised Members to either contact Simon or Tim Fowler or to call the emergency number 48660.
- The representative from Calvert Green asked what would happen if the parish council
 purchases a salt bin and then a resident slips. Simon re-iterated that, provided the snow
 clearance was done in a safe manner, then the parish would not be held responsible for
 any accidents.
- Councillor Pearl Lewis asked whether the routes to all schools had been included in the
 programme this year as last year, for example, Chandos Road was a major problem.
 Simon explained that he has been in contact with Passenger Transport and he is waiting
 for further information from them but he stressed that TfB cannot salt all the routes which
 buses take.
- Mark Grindall, Localities Manager, advised parishes who were providing salt to carry out a risk assessment to ensure people were using it in an appropriate way.
- A Member encouraged Simon to undertake a survey of the local area as he stressed that
 people cannot use a primary route if a secondary route has not been salted and cited
 Chandos Road again in this instant. Simon said that TfB cannot salt all roads in
 Buckinghamshire but he said that he would take this point back to his manager. He said
 that Bucks County Council covers a larger area in its winter gritting programme than its
 neighbouring counties.

Action: Simon Dudley

- The Chairman explained that he has suggested to Arriva that they try and make their vehicles safer during the Winter months by using winter tyres and snow chains, where appropriate.
- The representative for Akeley asked Simon to make sure that schools are told which routes are going to be salted so that they are aware of this as it costs a lot of money to close schools. He asked Simon to pass this onto his management team. Simon responded by saying that the County Council does not have a duty to salt all the roads in the area. He said that a link could be sent to all schools showing which roads will be salted and he said that he would make sure that it is available to the bus companies as well. The map should be available next week.

Action: Simon Dudley

The Chairman thanked David, Simon and Ann-Marie for their update.

THAMES VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Emma Garside. She started by explaining that later this year, the Police non-emergency number will be changing from [08458 505505] to [101] which will not be such an expensive number to call, be easier to remember and will be a national non-emergency number.

There is a consultation currently underway relating to the front counters at police stations which is available on the Thames Valley Police website. It is a review relating to the opening times and the public have been asked to feedback on the proposals. This is relevant to the Old Gaol at Buckingham. The front counter is currently open from Monday to Friday 09.30 -14.00. Inspector Garside asked Members to respond to the consultation with their views as soon as possible. The Winslow office is not included in the consultation process. The police station in Moreton Road will be relocating to the Buckingham Industrial Estate in October 2012. Inspector Garside said that it was disappointing that the move was not happening earlier than this.

Inspector Garside said that the recent riots in London had not caused any problems in the Aylesbury Vale area. The impact of losing officers to London was kept to a minimum as a result of those officers and neighbourhood staff who remained, working longer hours.

Review of police areas

8

Inspector Garside explained that the three existing Buckingham Neighbourhood Areas are not coterminus with the Local Areas. It has been agreed that the police neighbourhood boundaries in Aylesbury Vale will come into line with the Local Area Forum areas. This will assist TVP to be better aligned with its partnership organisations, reduce bureaucracy and provide teams with a greater pool of officers to draw from. It is hoped that the IT changes to support this process will be implemented from March 2012.

The Neighbourhood Action Group areas are also being reviewed. Inspector Garside stressed that if an area wished to continue to meet, then it could but in some areas, it was felt that the attendance was low and there was a lot of repetition with what was being said at parish meetings. Inspector Garside encouraged people to keep attending the NAG meetings and she said that her teams would be very happy to attend parish meetings as well.

Update on local police activity

Inspector Garside reported that across all three neighbourhood areas, there has been a decrease in crime.

- In Buckingham Town, serious acquisitive crime is down by 43% and crime, overall, is down by 18%;
- In Buckingham North, serious acquisitive crime is down by 22% and crime, overall, is down 34%.

The figures are at their lowest in 3 years, but Inspector Garside warned Members not to be complacent. There tends to be an increase in burglary dwellings during the Winter months with the longer, darker evenings and the Christmas period.

Specific areas in the Buckingham Town area are being targeted by officers so that patrols are being carried out at various times during the day.

Anti-social behaviour is still a priority and TVP are working closely with the town council to try and reduce it. Cameras were trialled in Chandos Park as part of an initiative by Buckingham Town Council as a deterrent for young people gathering. Inspector Garside said that she is looking at possible funding streams for a mobile CCTV which could be placed in crime/ASB hotspots.

There has been an increase in the number of reports of people using ketamine and the police are working with partner organisations to try and address this.

A member of the public has been arrested and admitted criminal damage, in relation to graffiti (writing the word "Joker"). The offender will be scrubbing the graffiti off next week.

Inspector Garside reported that John Bercow MP has recently spent 4 hours in patrol with TVP in the local area.

TVP officers are working closely with Adult Social Care in relation to the in-touch programme which provides vulnerable people with a means of getting in touch with relevant services. PCSOs are currently conducting home visits and will undertake home security checks, if required. PCSOs are also being trained as Community Responders.

A Member asked Inspector Garside if she could update him on two crimes which took place in Middle Claydon. Inspector Garside asked the Member to speak to her after the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Garside for her very useful update.

9 BUCKS AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AND RESCUE UPDATE

David Rowlands, Chairman of Bucks and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue, read out the following personal statement.

"Yesterday, following a recent strategic consultation, the Fire Authority considered proposals from officers for a set of service reviews. Many stakeholders had responded to that consultation and the vast majority were supportive of the need for reviews.

The Authority gave approval for the reviews to proceed and will consider their outcomes in due course. I was pleased to note that, although some small changes to the way services are delivered will be investigated, I am informed by the Chief Fire Officer that no station closures or compulsory job losses among fire crews will be proposed. Given the fact that many areas of England with significantly higher fire risk than this authority's area, are engaging in station closures, we are in a comparatively good position.

It was noted that Buckingham Town expressed views which were opposed to the consultation and it was disappointing to me that they did not seek further information from the service before doing so and instead seemingly relied upon local and quite prejudiced sources for advice. Yet other local stakeholders expressed views which extended to increasing the fire provision in this area and

certain stakeholders in this area are now apparently embarking on attempts to alter the fashion in which Combined Fire Authorities are held to account. The Chief Fire Officer has indicated that he is not, in principal, against providing extra fire provision to meet local demand but is not in a position to advocate that the Fire Authority would pay the extra costs. We therefore await details of how those local areas propose to fund any provision of fire services that is deemed as being higher than that required.

I am aware that many people in this area gave views and I thank all of them for their enthusiasm and participation in our consultation.

It is with great regret to us that some local media carried articles which were ill-informed and somewhat alarmist but I am reassured that the service is making no proposals to the Fire Authority which will lower the very high standards enjoyed by the citizens of this area.

I would like to emphasise that there will be no station closures and no staff redundancies – any reduction in numbers will be as a result of natural wastage."

The Chairman thanked David for his update.

10 AVDC UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Ann Kiceluk, Lead Officer at Aylesbury Vale District Council. Ann started by updating Members on SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership). She said that AVDC has taken the view that the interests of the Vale would be best served by joining forces with the South East Midlands group of authorities rather than a Thames Valley proposal.

SEMLEP recently appointed Dr Ann Limb as chairman with effect from 30 September 2011. Councillor Michael Edmonds is the representative on the Board from AVDC.

SEMLEP is targeting jobs growth by focussing on generating/supporting start-up businesses. SEMLEP is engaging with central Government on urgent issues associated with transport and infrastructure which are affecting short-term job growth in the area.

A Member asked whether voluntary organisations have been included in partnership arrangements as there was no mention of them. The Member also said that LEPs are replacing the Regional Development agency and wondered where the financial support will come from under the new arrangements – will the funding be lost? Ann said that she would look into these points and let Members know at the next meeting. Mr Riches said that the voluntary sector does have a seat on the board, as an observer.

Action: Ann Kiceluck

A copy of the presentation on SEMLEP is attached.

Ann then took Members through the AVDC update which included the following:

- The Vale of Aylesbury Plan update
- The 2012/13 budget
- The new AVDC Corporate Plan
- Changes to the refuse and recycling collection service this will be discussed in more detail at the next LAF meeting.

Further information on the above items can be found on the attached document.

Mike Smith, Buckingham Town Council, said that he is still awaiting a response from AVDC regarding shredding materials. He asked Ann to chase the appropriate officer for a response.

Action: Ann Kiceluck

The Chairman thanked Ann for the update.

11 CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

Pam Curtis, Child Poverty Programme Manager at Bucks County Council took Members through her presentation. She made the following main points:

- The Child Poverty Act 2010 gave responsibility to partner organisations to conduct a needs analysis and produce a strategy.
- The Bucks Needs Assessment was completed in 2010 and in the late spring 2011 the Bucks Child Poverty Strategy was published. It was noted that much of the data is out of date when it is collected.
- The latest Department of Work and Pensions statistics (2008) state that 11,725 children aged 0-19 years are living in poverty in Buckinghamshire.
- In 2007, there were 8 Communities across 4 wards in the 30% most deprived wards in England. In 2010, this had risen to 12 Communities across 8 wards, all in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and parts of Chesham.
- Rural poverty is often hidden or the data is suppressed to avoid stigmatization.
- The National definition of poverty is a national indicator where income is less than 60% of the median income.

Youth Unemployment

There has been an increase in youth unemployment for those aged 18 - 24. In July, 215 were unemployed and there were a further 115 in August. In Aylesbury Vale, 28.7% of 18-24 year olds are claiming Job Seekers Allowance.

Impact of Living

Due to the high living costs in Buckinghamshire people could be well below 60% of median income. People living in poverty are often less healthy, have lower aspirations and are frequently the victims of bullying.

Priorities

The Child Poverty Group meets quarterly and each member acts as a sponsor to act within and across the Strategy Priorities.

- Aim to help people work together and maximise parental income by increasing employment. There is a representative from Bucks Business First on the Group.
- 2 Reduce health and housing inequalities
- 3 Improve career advice and opportunities for children and young people
- 4 Build community resilience

Loan shark information events will be taking place to warn people about the dangers of using loan sharks.

A family finance page will be added to the Bucks Family Information Service website.

Pam's contact details are as follows - email: pcurtis@buckscc.gov.uk; tel: 01296 382955.

The Chairman thanked Pam for her very informative presentation.

12 LOCAL PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET UPDATE

Mark Grindall, Localities Manager, referred Members to page 21 of the agenda pack which listed the results of the priorities workshop. The following were identified as foreground priorities:

- Evening bus services and access to leisure facilities to be improved (awaiting a champion)
- Improved support for carers (champion: Margo Parfitt/ Mike Smith)
- Flood Mitigation (champion: Terry Cavender/Pearl Lewis)
- Address Buckingham Hospital service reduction (John Riches)
- Promote Local Shopping facilities where they exist (Roger Landells)
- Insufficient Public Transport in Rural areas (Mike Smith/Stephen Townsend).

Mark explained that, as yet, none of the local priorities budget has been allocated and Members of the LAF need to decide how the budget will be spent. The champion can then put in a request and Mark will write the relevant report for the LAF to then approve the spend.

Flood Mitigation

Terry Cavender provided Members with a brief update on this priority. He said that work is currently being undertaken jointly with the Canal Society to look at where the rainfall goes and quantitative information will then be provided. He said that there will be a further meeting in late October time and he agreed to circulate the date after the meeting.

Action: Terry Cavender

Terry explained that he withdrew the funding request from the last financial year but he would like to re-instate the proposal for funding for design work from this years' budget. He estimates the cost to be around £5-6,000.

Mark Grindall agreed to provide a written report in the next few weeks' for Members to consider. He emphasised that the money was just being earmarked at this stage until the LAF had formally approved the spend.

Members agreed to this approach.

Action: Mark Grindall

A Member asked whether the Local Area Technician could attend the roads and pavement inspections in the area. Ann-Marie said that she would speak to David Hedley about this.

Action: Ann-Marie Davies

Address Buckingham Hospital service reduction

John Riches explained that he has received no response, as yet, from health officials at Buckingham Hospital. Terry Cavender said that he has been in contact with them and said that he would pass on his contacts to John after the meeting.

Action: John Riches/Terry Cavender

Mark suggested that a separate meeting to brainstorm ideas about how to tackle this issue might be useful.

Action: Mark Grindall

Insufficient public transport in rural areas

Mark asked Members whether anyone was willing to be a champion for the "insufficient public transport in rural areas" priority. Mike Smith and Stephen Townsend agreed to take this forward.

Action: Mike Smith/Stephen Townsend

13 OPEN FORUM

There were no questions raised under open forum.

14 SUPPORT FOR CARERS

The Chairman welcomed Stephen Townsend (Buckingham Way), Margo Parfitt (Buckingham & Winslow Young Carers), Carol Sefton (Buckingham & Winslow Young Carers), Stephen Archibald (Carers Bucks) and Tariq Siddique (GP, United Commissioning).

Mike Smith, joint champion of this priority with Margo Parfitt, referred Members to the notes of a meeting held on 9 August 2011. He said that the group is seeking funding for an additional post (two days a week) within Carers Bucks to more effectively manage north Bucks – approximate cost estimated at £10,000 per annum plus staff on-costs and travel expenses. There are around 8,000 carers across Bucks and the aim is to improve adult carer support.

Mark proposed to Members that this initiative is funded jointly by the Buckingham LAF and the Winslow & District LAF as it affects both areas, so each LAF would contribute £5,000.

Members agreed to this proposal and Mark agreed to write a report in the next 2 weeks for Members to consider before the next meeting.

Action: Mark Grindall

Mark concluded by saying that last year, Bucks County Council launched its Community Contingency Plans to assist vulnerable people during the snow period. He said that he will be sending the information to parishes again over the coming weeks' and he encouraged parishes to think about vulnerable people in their areas.

Action: Mark Grindall

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution.

15 INFORMATION ITEMS

The Chairman asked Members to note the information items:

- Community Asset Transfer Policy;
- Joint District and County Big Society Review.

16 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 15 December 2011.

The Chairman explained that there has been a proposal to reduce the number of LAF meetings from 4 to 3 a year due to the current overspend on the budget in managing the LAFs. Members discussed the idea but agreed to maintain 4 meetings a year.

Future meeting dates in 2012:

Thursday 29 March Thursday 28 June Thursday 27 September Thursday 13 December.