

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RURAL FORUM

Meeting held: 21st July 2016

Present: **Borough Councillors**

Councillor Jim Hakewill (*Chair*)
Councillor David Howes
Councillor Mark Rowley

County Councillors

Councillor Christopher Groome

Parish Councillors

Councillor Hilary Bull (Broughton)
Councillor Robin Shrive (Broughton)
Councillor Richard Barnwell (Great Cransley & Mawsley)
Councillor David Watson (Geddington, Newton & Lt. Oakley)
Councillor Robyn Whalley (Great Cransley)
Councillor David Whalley (Great Cransley)
Councillor Katherine Cadbury (Harrington)
Councillor Carl Ward (Loddington)
Councillor Andrew Macredie (Pytchley)
Councillor Peter Hooton (Rushton)
Councillor Frances Pope (Thorpe Malsor)
Councillor Ian Bushby (Warkton)
Councillor James Woolsey (Warkton)
Councillor Brian Peel (Weekley)
Councillor Nick Richards (Wilbarston)
Councillor Rosalind Willatts (Wilbarston)

Bernard Rengger (Sutton Bassett Parish Meeting)

Also Present:

Lisa Hyde (Kettering Borough Council)
Sue Lyons (Kettering Borough Council)
Carry Murphy (Kettering Borough Council)
David Pope (Forum Administrator-KBC)

PC Gareth Broxton (Northants Police)

16.RF.01 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor David Howes nominated and Councillor David Watson seconded Councillor Mark Rowley as Chair.

Councillor Richard Barnwell nominated and Councillor Carl Ward seconded Councillor Jim Hakewill as Chair.

A vote was taken, with Councillor Rowley securing 4 votes and Councillor Hakewill 11 votes and accordingly it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Jim Hakewill be duly re-elected as Chair of the Rural Forum for the municipal year 2016/17.

16.RF.02 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

Councillor Hilary Bull nominated and Councillor Robin Shrive seconded Councillor Mark Rowley as Deputy Chair.

Councillor Peter Hooton nominated and Councillor Nick Richards seconded Councillor David Watson as Deputy Chair.

A vote was taken, with Councillor Rowley securing 10 votes and Councillor Watson 5 votes and accordingly it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Mark Rowley be duly elected as Deputy Chair of the Rural Forum for the municipal year 2016/17.

16.RF.03 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sally McKeown (Ashley PC), Paul Wharin (Warkton PC) and Toni Wilkin (Weekley PC). Apologies were also received from Brendan Coleman.

16.RF.04 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

16.RF.05

MINUTES

DJP

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Rural Forum held on 4th February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a amendment to minute 15.RF.52 in relation to equality of service levels for villages compared to Kettering town.

16.RF.06

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Kettering Town Centre Highways Improvements

Following the works to the Sheep St/London Road/Bowling Green Road junction, it was requested that a report be brought to a future forum regarding further planned highways work to the road network North of the town centre.

LH/DJP

It was noted that Police Statistics was a standing item. Items relating to Rural Diversification Business Growth and Truck Stops would also be brought to a future meeting.

16.RF.07

FUTURE RURAL FORUM MEETING START TIMES

A report was submitted which sought the views of the forum on the start time for future meetings.

Members noted that at its meeting on 20th April 2016, Council had resolved to allow committees and forums of the council to review their start times.

The forum considered that the existing start time was suitable for all parties. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that future meetings of the Rural Forum continue to start at 7.00pm

16.RF.08

FEEDBACK FROM THE RURAL FORUM COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The forum heard that a small group of members had volunteered

to assist the Assistant Chief Executive in discussing the issue of improved communications between KBC and the Rural Forum.

The initial meeting of the group had been held at the end of April with Councillors Bull, Woolsey and Richards in attendance. It was noted that Cllr Barnwell had also volunteered to be part of the group but had been unable to attend the first meeting, however he still wished to participate going forward.

The group had considered and produced a list of key actions as detailed below to be taken back to parish colleagues for feedback.

- News or email alerts to be sent to parishes between quarterly forum meetings;
- Agenda items required a clear purpose as well as meaningful reference to the rural areas;
- The agenda work plan, helped to plan ahead and allowed for regular or annual items to be built in to agenda planning
- Planning workshops could be usefully reintroduced, assisting in building town and parish knowledge and potentially having a positive impact on reducing the level of enquiries and confusion in relation to planning issues
- Alerting parishes to relevant future consultations in good time, possibly using the email alert outlined above. Alerts would contain consultation subject objectives and timetables.

Councillor Bull provided positive feedback from Broughton Parish Council. It was heard that the parish council valued the Rural Forum as an entity and the value of working in partnership with other parishes and KBC. The key actions outlined above would ensure positive ways of future working to ensure the Rural Forum performed and was a constructive and valuable body.

Councillor Richards reported that two of the five Wilbarston Parish councillors that had previously attended the Rural Forum did not wish to return to future meetings and this was feedback in itself. The feedback from the parish council was that the existing Rural Forum appeared to be bit formulaic and should take hold of problems affecting rural areas and do something about them. He concluded by stating a different emphasis was needed going forward.

Councillor Woolsey reported that the key actions identified by the group had been relayed to Warkton Parish Council at its AGM with a consensus that the group should not just be a “talking-

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shop”, but rather an action group to provide workable agendas to get things done. There had been interest in the concept of planning workshops being re-established as delays to village hall renovation work could have been avoided if proper planning procedures had been better understood. It was considered that such procedural knowledge would benefit not only the parish council but also the community.

Councillor Richards noted that a recent review of rural transport services had been particularly hard on the Welland Valley, which was struggling to keep a meaningful bus service. He requested that any other parishes experiencing similar issues contact him to establish whether the topic was worth requesting as an agenda item at the next forum meeting.

It was considered that this would form an excellent issue for an email news alert and could provide a collection of information that would feed into the agenda creation process. It was suggested that the issue of public transport in rural areas may not follow borough boundaries and rural colleagues in neighbouring districts could be interested in providing their views. Involvement of NCC transport officers or bus service providers could also be examined for a future meeting.

The Chair commented that some thought be given to re-engaging with parishes that did not regularly send representatives to the Rural Forum such as Cranford, Stoke Albany and Weston-by-Welland.

Chair

It was

AGREED

that an email drafted by Councillor Nick Richards be sent to parishes prior to the next forum meeting by the Parish Liaison Officer seeking comments or concerns in relation to rural public transport.

**Cllr
Richards**

DJP

16.RF.09

CAR-PARKING PASSES

The forum was advised that a scheme was now in place for parish councillors and clerks to park at the main KBC offices without charge when visiting on council business. Time-limited scratch cards requiring vehicle registration details would be made available from reception and would need to be placed on display inside the car. The time limit was currently set at two-hours and the scheme would be monitored to assess whether it was working

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appropriately.

The meeting was informed that as soon as scratch cards had arrived, notification would be sent to parishes requesting registration details for those likely to require use of the scheme.

LH/DJP

16.RF.10 CORE SPATIAL STRATEGY

Development Team Leader, Carry Murphy attended the meeting and provided an overview of the work that had taken place regarding the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), formerly known as the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS).

The meeting noted that the previous CSS had been adopted in 2008 and sat at the hierarchical apex of KBC's statutory development plan documents, setting out policies and proposals for the use of land in the area and guiding day-to-day planning permissions. Decisions on planning applications were made in accordance with the development plans unless material considerations indicated otherwise. It was noted that the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) was responsible for preparing such a document.

The forum heard that each authority prepared its own detailed policies, the Local Plan covering Kettering borough. This plan was in the process of being updated, but had to wait for JCS completion as this document shaped overall policy, housing growth, new employment and environmental policies and set the scene for more detailed policies.

The JCS had been submitted to the Secretary of State in its final form in September 2015 with a planning inspector examining the plan. A series of hearings had been held in November, with the inspector examining the overall soundness of the plan. The inspector's report was delivered in June 2016 with a number of recommendations and modifications required. The modifications requested by the inspector were not considered to undermine the vision and outcomes of the plan and made for a stronger document.

The inspector supported the urban focus of the document and sustainable urban extensions for towns, although he stressed the need for continuous monitoring of growth in urban extensions, and if not being built at the expected rate, a review of the document may be required as early as 2019. Such urban extensions should deliver at least 75% of planned growth each

year over a three year period.

Although certain developers had argued for a dispersed pattern of growth, the inspector considered that this would not produce sustainable development. Housing growth figures for rural areas had not altered from figures previously published and the council could demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites which helped prevent speculative development.

The Joint Planning Committee formally agreed to adopt the JCS and accepted all modifications suggested by the planning inspector at its meeting on 14th July and these would now be subject to a further public consultation. Any representations received would be submitted to the inspector for consideration before his final report was published. There was now a six-week window ending on 25th August for applications to the High Court should there be any aggrieved parties wishing to apply for a judicial review.

Adoption of the JCS would allow for the production of site specific plans and would also be beneficial for any neighbourhood plans that were in place or in the process of being written.

Members of the forum asked questions in relation to:-

- The title of the document, with a suggestion that it be renamed Local Plan 1 (Joint Core Strategy)
- Monitoring of growth in urban extensions on an annual basis
- Site Specific Plan timetables and consultation processes
- A request be made to the JPU for Parish Councils to have hard copies of the JCS document made available to them
- The rolling five year supply of deliverable housing sites

LH/DJP

16.RF.11

STREETLIGHTING

The forum received copies of a fact sheet that contained previously supplied information in relation to street lighting as detailed below:-

- Street Lighting Legislation Summaries
- Responsibilities for Street Lighting
- KBC Street Lighting contact details
- Current repair procedures; and
- Forthcoming works/meetings relating to Street Lighting

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The forum considered that a definite resolution to this issue was required, although the fact sheet did contain useful information.

In regard to a meeting scheduled for August with NCC to begin discussions on existing street lighting responsibilities potentially being shared between the two authorities, the Chair and Cllr Chris Groome requested to attend on behalf of the rural areas.

A request was made for a response from the Head of Environmental Care Services to a street lighting issue raised at the previous meeting that affected Warkton Parish Council.

BC

It was

AGREED

that a letter be drafted by the Chair on behalf of the Rural Forum to both the Leader and Chief Executive to state that given the imminence of the annual budgeting cycle, the forum did not expect to see any changes in 2017/18 to the current system of funding for rural street light maintenance.

Chair/DJP

It was further

AGREED

that a letter be drafted by the Chair on behalf of the Rural Forum to the Head of Environmental Care Services thanking him for the fact sheet, but the view of the Rural Forum was that the borough owned and maintained street lighting in the villages.

Chair/DJP

16.RF.12

SOLAR PV FARMS

The Development Team Leader provided some feedback on the item of roof mounted solar panels that had been raised by the Rural Forum and carried forward for further work.

As a result of concerns raised by Rural Forum, the issue had been referred to the Executive Committee in October 2015, who had in turn referred the matter to the Planning Policy Committee to undertake a piece of work.

Following research, the Planning Policy Committee had concluded that there was enormous available roof-space that

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could be used to install solar panels. Companies could save money from generating energy rather than purchasing it and such roof space was where the Department of Energy and Climate Change had wished to see much of the solar energy installation in future. It was noted that there was a big contrast between usage of roof-mounted solar panels in the UK and Europe.

The forum heard that there were no practical constraints for such installations and there was support from the renewables industry, with limited maintenance costs. However, there were ownership complications of such units with fewer owner-occupiers than on the continents that could cause contractual issues.

It was noted that primary and secondary legislation would be required to incentivise solar panels on commercial buildings. Additionally the Department of Energy and Climate Change no longer existed and there was no government guidance to introduce a policy to impose roof mounted panels. As a result such installations could only be encouraged and KBC would explore wording in the Site Specific Plan to encourage its use. The forum could also assist in lobbying to overcome barriers to installation.

It was

AGREED

that a letter be drafted by the Chair on behalf of the Rural Forum to Phillip Hollobone MP commending his present stance on roof-mounted solar panels and reinforcing the desire of the forum for such installations to happen, with caveat that they not be installed in fields.

16.RF.13 POLICE STATISTICS

PC Gareth Broxton attended the forum and noted concerns regarding the new format of police statistics that had been supplied following the introduction of new reporting systems by the force.

It was noted that PC Broxton would feedback concerns regarding both the format of statistics and the lack of provision to both parish council meetings and neighbourhood watch schemes.

Concerns were raised regarding speeding of vehicles in Weekley and discussion was held regarding the possibility of speed camera installation or the use of mobile speed cameras.

Councillor Peel was advised to speak to County Councillor Jim Harker and Councillor Mark Rowley to establish whether there were any funding opportunities to assist with camera purchase and installation.

At this point it being 9.00pm, it was

RESOLVED that the meeting continue in order to conclude the remaining business on the agenda

The Chair noted that the current statistics in their existing form were of little value and presented no guide as to crime and disorder in specific parishes.

It was therefore

AGREED that a letter be drafted on behalf of the Rural Forum and sent to both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable seeking a response to the concerns of the forum in relation to the current format of police statistics being supplied.

Chair/DJP

16.RF.14 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items were noted for future meetings of the Forum:-

- Kettering Town Centre Highways Improvements
- Truck Stops
- Rural Diversification Business Growth
- Planning Enforcement
- Appointment of Representative to the A6 Towns Forum
- Business Rates update
- Police Statistics

16.RF.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a query from Cllr Barnwell, it was noted that a composition statement would be sent out setting out KBC's position on Community Infrastructure Levies.

16.RF.16

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND SUGGESTED VENUES

It was noted that the next meeting of the forum would take place on 15th September 2016. An offer was made on behalf of Mawsley Parish Council to host the meeting.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9:22pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP