

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RURAL FORUM

Meeting held: 21st September 2017

Present:

Borough Councillors

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

County Councillors

Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes

Parish Councillors

Councillor Brent Woodford (Ashley)
Councillor Angela Beardsmore (Braybrooke)
Councillor Hilary Bull (Broughton)
Councillor David Watson (Geddington, Newton & Lt. Oakley)
Councillor David Whalley (Great Cransley)
Councillor Robyn Whalley (Great Cransley)
Councillor Fay Foster (Pytchley)
Councillor Peter Hooton (Rushton)
Councillor Bruce Squires (Stoke Albany)
Councillor Frances Pope (Thorpe Malsor)
Councillor Nick Richards (Wilbarston)
Councillor Rosalind Willatts (Wilbarston)

Also Present:

Lisa Hyde (Kettering Borough Council)
Guy Holloway (Kettering Borough Council)
Brendan Coleman (Kettering Borough Council)
David Pope (Forum Administrator-KBC)

Insp Julie Mead (Police)

Actions

17.RF.15

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Anne Lee (KBC), Victoria Perry (NCC) and Parish Councillors Brian Peel (Weekley), James Woolsey and Paul Wharin (Warkton), Cllr Andrew Macredie (Pytchley), Cllr Richard Barnwell (Great Cransley) and Robin Shrive (Broughton)

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17.RF.16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

17.RF.17 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Rural Forum held on 29th June 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17.RF.18 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

16.RF.50 - Town & Parish Notifications of Planning Related Applications

The forum heard that an email had been sent as requested to town and parish councils that had not responded by the consultation end date. It was noted that only a small number of additional responses had been received since the deadline was extended. Further contact would be made when a decision had been reached regarding planning notifications going forward.

17.RF.19 **POLICE STATISTICS**

Insp Julie Mead attended the meeting and answered questions in regard to rural crime from members of the forum.

It was noted that a presentation regarding the new policing model would be provided at the meeting with the Police Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner on 23rd October.

Members of the forum asked questions in relation to the following issues:-

- Increased in the rural crime rate
- Vehicle crime in Broughton and Burton Latimer
- A lack of feedback from police as a victim of crime
- Which crime types constituted the statistical category “Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society”
- Rural crimes that residents were aware of not appearing in crime statistics

- Thefts from rural properties
- Clear up rates for rural crime and thefts in particular

Insp Mead responded to the questions and stated that the police proactive team was operational in rural areas to tackle crime and the work of the team could be followed on Twitter. The face of crime had changed, with cross-border offenders committing a number of crimes and police were working alongside partner agencies to increase visibility and undertake preventative work. It was reported that crime statistics were ordinarily a couple of months in arrears which could explain the absence of crimes that rural residents were aware of.

Insp Mead advised the forum that a document detailing changes to the policing model was available and would be distributed to parishes by email. In addition, details of the Community Connect scheme would be circulated to parishes providing village specific alerts for rural crime.

**Insp
Mead/DJP**

The meeting heard that police had to allocate resources on the basis of threat, harm and risk as well as tackling locally identified priorities such as speeding, parking and ASB. Perception and fear of crime were considered to be problematic especially amongst elderly resident.

17.RF.20

DETAILS OF MEETING WITH POLICE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The meeting heard that its request for the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police to attend a meeting with representatives of the Rural Forum had been granted and a meeting would be held on 23rd October at the KBC Municipal Offices. Also in attendance would be the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Stephen Mold and Insp Julie Mead.

The forum were asked to consider what questions they would like to put to the Chief Constable and PCC and decide who would be attending from each parish.

The following list of questions was submitted from forum members:-

1. Parish Councils and rural residents would like greater feedback generally as communities regarding crimes committed in rural areas.
2. It is important that victims of specific crimes know what has

- happened regarding investigation and outcome of the crime
3. There is concern around clear up rates for crimes committed in rural areas; this is clearly a resourcing issue.
 4. Should there be more powers delegated away from police (parking, dog fouling etc.) to focus on more serious crime?
 5. Is there a different approach to rural and urban theft?
 6. When calling 101 and there is no answer, there is a message advising that police will get back to you, but they never do. What is the point of 101 if there is no feedback from it?
 7. Are people answering 101 trained in inter-personal skills?
 8. Are there any speed cameras currently operational in the county?
 9. How important in local policing is the public's fear of crime and the need for visible policing?
 10. Can the Chief Constable encourage a policy of police officers acknowledging residents as and when they see them, and where possible to stop?

The forum was requested to send any additional questions and details of attendees for the meeting to the Committee Administrator. **DJP**

17.RF.21 THIS IS KETTERING

The Head of Corporate Development attended the meeting and provided a presentation in relation to the recently introduced This is Kettering website.

The forum heard that the Kettering Borough Council has had a website for over 20 years but it was not the most suitable site to host details of local visitor attractions, restaurants and the local shopping offer as it was focussed on council services. As a result, a specific website had been built to promote tourism, retail and food across the Borough. The website had been live for approximately six months and had seen 56,000 visitors to date.

The meeting noted that the website featured three main channels relating to food and drink, shopping and a blog. In addition the website had a page that sought to promote local events and activities, with parishes encouraged to submit details of any scheduled events in the rural areas. In addition, facilities such as

village halls and rural businesses could also utilise the site to promote bookings.

A request was made for an interactive Borough map to be provided on the site that included rural areas. It was also suggested that venues and restaurants be linked to TripAdvisor.

It was agreed that a short report could be sent to all parishes publicising the site and requesting feedback on existing information. **DJP**

17.RF.22 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

A report was submitted which sought to update the Rural Forum on the current position and responsibilities for verge maintenance and cutting across the Borough.

It was heard that the responsibility for verge maintenance lay with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) as the Highways Authority, with KBC cutting the grass on behalf of NCC.

Following budgetary review in 2012; NCC had cut their budget for verge maintenance down to two cuts a year from five cuts previously. KBC continued to maintain the level of subsidy it provided in order to maintain higher standards than could be achieved from NCC's budget alone. Joint working with Corby Borough Council was being examined and it was hoped greater efficiencies and increased performance could be achieved in relation to verge maintenance.

Members stated that the report was a useful reference in identifying which local authority was responsible for cutting verges and grass in which areas. Questions were asked in relation to policies on Ragwort, street sweeping and play area maintenance.

17.RF.23 **TOWN CENTRE CONFERENCE**

The meeting was provided with feedback from the Town Centre Conference held at Cornmarket Hall on 13th September.

The forum heard that KBC was at the start of a process for developing a Town Centre Delivery Plan in response to the changing face of the High Street. The public consultation process

had commenced with the conference that had involved local businesses and stakeholders.

Three different workshops had been held at the event in relation to:-

- Transport and moving around Kettering;
- Business events to promote the town encourage joint working; and
- Public realm works; identifying areas of Kettering needing aesthetic improvement such as Wadcroft or the station quarter

It was reported that the event had seen good attendance and received positive feedback. One of the attendees from within the business network had offered to undertake some additional workshops that would allow business owners to promote their services and showcase their products via Twitter to potentially increase footfall. Statistics had shown this method of connecting with the public to be effective. It was heard that if the forum considered it to be beneficial, a Twitter-use workshop could be undertaken for members that would also link in with This is Kettering.

Other feedback received from the event included:-

- Potentially increase dwell time in the Town Centre by allowing shoppers to pay for their parking at the end of their stay rather than in advance
- Meadow Road green space was not fully utilised and could be better linked to the Town Centre
- Better WiFi connectivity was required
- Promotion of activities and leisure pursuits was more appropriate than shopping on certain occasions.

17.RF.24 REPORT OF THE A6 TOWNS FORUM REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair, as the Rural Forum representative on the A6 Towns Forum provided feedback on the previous meeting of the forum.

17.RF.25 APPOINTMENT OF A RURAL FORUM MEMBER TO THE KETTERING TOWN FORUM FOR 2017/18

Nominations were sought to be the Rural Forum representative
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on the Kettering Town Forum.

It was noted that Councillor Victoria Perry (NCC) sat on both forums, and an enquiry would be made to ascertain whether she would be interested in acting as the Rural Forum representative. **Chair**

17.RF.26 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

- Rural Broadband
- Solar Panels on Buildings update
- Highways - Kier WSP/NCC

A brief update was supplied in relation to Business Rates (BR) Retention with the forum noting that the government was seeking authorities to participate in a pilot scheme relating to BR. Discussions were currently underway with other authorities in the county to decide how to proceed.

17.RF.27 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND SUGGESTED VENUES**

It was noted that the date for the next meeting of the forum would be 30th November 2017 and an offer had been made by Warkton Parish Council to host the meeting.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9:07pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP