



NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2014

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors R L Butler (Chairman), S J Boote, N K Boughton-Smith, L B Cooper, J E Greenwood, Mrs M M Males, G R Mallender, B Tansley (substitute for Councillor Combellack)

OFFICERS PRESENT:

D Banks	Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
D Mitchell	Executive Manager - Communities
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer
A Pegram	Service Manager - Communities

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE:

Councillor T Combellack

18. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

19. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 January 2014 were accepted as a true record subject to the word principals being amended to principles in paragraph 12 of Note 14 YouNG Network Group.

20. Relationship with Town and Parish Council

The Executive Manager - Communities gave a presentation outlining the work undertaken by the Borough Council to increase engagement with the parish/town councils. He stated that there were 58 parishes in Rushcliffe and if all the council positions were filled there would be 339 town/parish councillors.

He reminded Members that this issue had been scrutinised in April 2013 and six recommendations had been approved. As part of the process a questionnaire had been sent to the parishes and it had been identified that the top three subjects parishes contacted the Borough Council about were planning, finance and environmental matters. Planning had previously been a topic for the parish forums and was also programmed for the forum in April.

With regard to the six recommendations the Executive Manager - Communities informed the Group of their progress.

Recommendation 1 Produce a short summary document – a two page document had been distributed to all parish and town councils and uploaded on the Council's website.

Recommendation 2 Member Services to act as a key point of contact to Executive Managers – this had been implemented and was working well. Executive Managers were working closely with the larger parish/town councils, including attending meetings.

Recommendation 3 Where possible executive summaries of large council documents to be supplied – there had not been many large documents produced in the last twelve months. Parishes received a briefing note regarding flooding in 2013.

Recommendation 4 Engagement of Town and Parish Councils in forward planning the forums/conference and involvement of other parties in programme delivery – 98% satisfaction levels for the forums and conference in 2013/14. There was an average attendance of 49 for the forums and the 2013 conference had 96 delegates. At each event there was a consultation exercise undertaken to ascertain what topics could be included in a forward plan. Members were informed that this year's conference was on 25 June 2014 and the theme was "doing more for less". The Group were informed of the many organisations who attended as speakers, including Incredible Edibles, Cropwell Bishop Community Led Planning Group, Nottinghamshire County Council, National Association of Local Councils.

Members noted that a fair proportion of the attendees at the forums were Borough Councillors and queried if priority was given to parish councillors. Officers stated that many Councillors represented both tiers of government and that, so far, no one had not been able to attend. Members supported the fact that West Bridgford local associations should also be invited.

Following a question the Group was informed that some parishes did not attend the forums, however, they did receive a copy of any presentations.

In respect of non-attendance Councillors queried if working people were disadvantaged as the forums were held during working hours.

Recommendation 5 Include key County Link officers in communications and explore collaboration – Nottinghamshire County Council's Liaison Officer receive all agendas and programmes for the forums and attend whenever possible. They have attended the 2013 conference and will attend the 2014 conference.

Recommendation 6 Arrange meeting with interested parishes to review recommendations - the Executive Manager - Communities stated that there had not been a formal meeting but the parish forums and conference were used as a consultation tool. After reviewing the responses of the initial consultation it was noted that it was primarily Borough Councillors who had indicated that they would attend the meeting.

The Group felt that a lot of work had been undertaken and that there was a very good relationship between the Borough and the parishes. Following a

question regarding the engagement with the larger parishes the Executive Manager - Communities and Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods explained that they regularly contacted the clerks to see if there were any issues, attended different meetings of the Council and gave support when needed. He stated that this was not a regimented approach.

Councillor Boote stated that as a member of Keyworth Parish Council he knew that parishes valued their independence from the Borough and County Councils. He said that parishes often felt that they had to pick up tasks that should be actioned by other authorities.

Following a question the Service Manager Communities explained that the parishes were consulted on planning applications and, if possible, extra time was allowed. However, there were strict timescales for a decision to be made on an application.

The Group felt that recommendation 6 had been completed, but not using the originally envisaged method.

The Group AGREED the actions that had been undertaken in respect of work with Town and Parish Councils.

21. Request for Scrutiny of New Energy Initiatives

The Executive Manager - Communities reminded Members that the Group had requested to consider adding new energy initiatives to its work programme. In accordance with the scrutiny matrix the Group would not be discussing the actual topic of new energy initiatives but considering if it should become a substantive item for scrutiny. To assist Members the Executive Manager - Communities gave a presentation giving an overview of the alternative energy options.

In respect of wind turbines, the Group was informed that work was being undertaken with Melton Borough Council on a renewable wind turbine policy, as the Vale of Belvoir had been identified as a possible location. The Borough Council was considering five applications, four applications had been refused and the results of the appeals in relation to two of these refusals were awaited. Three applications for small wind turbines had been approved. It was recognised that other local authorities had received, and approved significantly more applications.

With regards to solar power the Executive Manager - Communities informed the Group that this was achieved either through domestic photovoltaic panels or commercial photovoltaics. The Borough had approved one commercial solar farm application at Orston. This type of application received fewer objections than one for a wind turbine.

Members were informed that an application for an anaerobic digester at Barnstone had been approved and that another one was being considered. It was considered that a digester looked like another farm building and therefore there was only limited impact on the aesthetics of the site. The Executive Manager - Communities explained that comments often were concerned about smells and there was also a perception, although small, that these could be

dangerous and could explode due to the gases. This was not considered to be a risk

In consideration of hydro-generation Members were informed that two applications had been approved and that there were a further five potential sites. The only potential issue that had emerged was the environmental impact on the river as a leisure facility.

Finally, the Executive Manager - Communities gave a brief outline of hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking. He explained that the County Council would be the planning authority and the Borough Council would be a consultee. There had not been any applications so far but the Council would need to consider what its response would be should one be received. It was acknowledged that not enough was known about this issue and it could be beneficial to invite representatives from the British Geological Survey to provide further information to Members and officers. Councillor Boote agreed to provide details of another speaker. Following a question Members were informed that 1% of revenue from fracking was allocated to the community, however it was not stated which authority would receive the money.

The Group discussed the Council's role and whether it should be reactive or proactive. The Executive Manager - Communities stated that planning was reactive in response to an application, however the Council could be proactive with its strategy and identify its approach to such applications. Members agreed that further information was necessary and raised the possibility of arranging a meeting at the British Geological Survey.

Members discussed the different levels of each type of alternative energy and agreed that the Council's approach to wind turbines was already being considered. Anaerobic digestion, solar and hydro power appeared to have a smaller number of objections when compared to a potential application for fracking, therefore, the understanding of the impact of fracking on a community and what the Council's response should be to any future applications should be a priority. Following a question regarding including this item on a future parish forum agenda officers stated that the parishes set the agendas and that this was probably not an appropriate time to send out any information yet.

The Group agreed that new energy initiatives should be included in their work programme with fracking as a priority.

22. Work Programme

The Group considered its work programme and agreed that the issue of new energy initiatives should be included in the programme for the meeting 15 July 2014.

Councillor Boote raised the issue of public conveniences for consideration as an item. He felt that this was an issue of public concern and that there needed to be a holistic approach to see if there was enough provision provided by the County, Borough or parish councils. He was informed that this could be considered against the scrutiny matrix to see if the Group wished to include it within its work programme.

Councillor Boughton-Smith reminded Members that he had asked a question about scrutinising homelessness. He was informed that this topic was considered annually by the Partnership Delivery Group and for 2013/14 had been considered at its meetings on 3 October 2013 and 7 January 2014.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Action Sheet COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2014

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
21. Request for Scrutiny of New Energy Initiatives	Officers to arrange a visit to the British Geological Survey for all Members to investigate further the impacts of fracking	Executive Manager - Communities
22. Work Programme	a) The work programme to include the topic of new energy initiatives on 15 July 2014. b) The topic of public convenience provision to be considered against the scrutiny matrix	Member Service Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods

Responses

Minute Number	Action	Officer Responsible	Response
21. Request for Scrutiny of New Energy Initiatives	Officers to arrange a visit to the British Geological Survey for all Members to investigate further the impacts of fracking	Executive Manager - Communities	Officers are investigating opportunities with British Geological Survey
22. Work Programme	a) The work programme to include the topic of new energy initiatives on 15 July 2014. b) The topic of public convenience provision to be considered against the scrutiny matrix	Member Service Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods	This item has been added to the work programme A report is included on the agenda for 6 May 2014