

Minutes of an INFORMAL meeting of the BRIDPORT AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN JOINT COUNCILS COMMITTEE (NPJCC) held in the Committee Room at Mountfield on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 10.00am.

PRESENT: Councillors: Jim Basker (Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council, Chairman), Paul Everall (Bradpole Parish Council, via Zoom), Ian Bark (Bridport Town Council), and Paul Hartmann (Symondsburry Parish Council, via Zoom).

Also present: David Dixon (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer), and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence. However, the Town Clerk explained that, as virtual attendance by Cllrs Paul Everall and Paul Hartmann could not be regarded as actual attendance, this meeting would be conducted as an informal meeting, with recommendations to be taken forward for decision at the next quorate meeting of the NPJCC.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes of the meeting of the NPJCC held on 22 June 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. **IMPLEMENTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – PROJECTS REVIEW AND UPDATE**

Consideration was given to an update on project delivery ENCL: 3768. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officers reported that:

- The Streetscape & Heritage Study (Project 3) had been completed in the summer, with support from FERIA Urbanism. Engagement had included town walks of relevant areas, and meetings of the Town Centre Working Group. The findings had been made a core aspect of the Bridport Investment Plan.
- The installation of solar car ports (Project 5) was almost complete. There had been issues with supply chains, cost increases, and the engagement of an energy supplier.
- Work to develop an outdoor skate park (Project 8) was now being fed into a planning application.
- Vistry Partnerships and Wessex Community Assets were working to add a timber fabrication facility (Project 10) into the proposed Skills Academy at the Foundry Lea development. This would focus on natural materials and funding applications were being worked on.

- As part of Project 11, Land Use, Dorset Council was working on a cycling/walking route and bridges.
- Bridport Town Council continued to operate the community bus (Project 12).
- Participating councils had been asked to look at possible sites for inclusion in a brownfield register (Project 16). This initiative was on hold pending a review of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr Paul Overall noted that this would also need consideration as part of the Community Governance Review. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer agreed to incorporate a note into the update reflecting these issues.
- Cllr Paul Overall noted that Cllr Colin Baker had provided a summary note in respect of Second and Holiday Homes (Project 17), and requested that the project update be amended to reflect this. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer undertook to make this change.
- As part of Zero Carbon Homes (Project 20), the Energy Champions were considering further how to engage with the community, using a thermal imaging camera and referrals for home visits. These were noted as being heavily oversubscribed. Also related to this project, Warm Hubs were being used to disseminate energy efficiency information provided by the Town Council. This approach would be extended to include sessions with the Energy Champions, when attendance was high enough. Queries on energy efficiency were being responded to, and a social media campaign had been launched.

Members discussed:

- Project 3:
 - The use of the Study as a framework for an approach and ideas, rather than as a template for the detailed style of signage/interpretation.
 - The coherence provided by this valuable piece of work.
 - Ensuring localised input beyond the Community Governance Review.
- Project 5:
 - A preference for exporting green energy to support Energy Local Bridport, if possible.
- Project 10:
 - Ensuring sufficient capacity for the number of potential trainees.
 - The aspiration to be on site with the facility in late 2023.
 - The scope of training to include traditional and new building methods, natural materials, retrofitting, self-build, and modular builds.
- Project 16:
 - Cllr Jim Basker noted a planning application for flats at Asker Mill.
- Project 17:
 - Whether the National Planning Policy Framework might change in a way that could affect the approach to second and/or holiday homes.
 - A government consultation on 'Airbnb'.

RECOMMENDED: that the update be noted.

5. **BRIDPORT INVESTMENT PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Bridport Investment Plan, ENCL 3769. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer advised that the Town Council had approved the Bridport Investment Plan, subject to minor amendments to the detail, and professional design. It would be used as a funding proposal for government and other larger funding sources. The context was one of frustration at a lack of external funding for the Bridport area, which had led to discussions with local businesses, Dorset Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and local businesses. The outcome was a request for a coherent investment plan, including a desire to address the transition to net zero, economic resilience, and opportunities for young people. Engagement activity had included a business survey and themed workshop sessions to elicit ideas. Bridport Local Area Partnership had been engaged for rural input. The plan included a set of high-level projects focused on collaboration, skills development, marketing 'Dorset's Eventful Town', and community control/delivery. The plan also incorporated key elements of the Streetscape & Heritage Study and Access & Movement Study.

Members discussed:

- The use of Bridport's 25% industrial economy as back up for the seasonal and low wage economy. Bridmet was being used as a case study.
- The geographical area covered by the statistical appendix.
- The 180° nature of Bridport's geography.
- Whether the funding estimate for the Foundry Lea walking/cycling link was sufficient.
- Bradpole Parish Council's welcome for the plan, and the need to continue to engage parishes, including via the NPJCC and Bridport Local Area Partnership.
- The importance of the rural economy.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

6. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Town Clerk reported that the Community Governance Review would inevitably impact on the detailed arrangements for governance of the Neighbourhood Plan. He invited members to begin consideration of the implications, and possible future approaches.

Members discussed:

- The possibility of NPJCC membership comprising one member from each of the five proposed Bridport Town Council wards, and one from Symondsbury Parish Council.
- Another approach being an equal representation from Bridport and Symondsbury.
- Ward/parish representation based on electorate share.

RECOMMENDED: that a further report be considered at the next meeting.

7. OTHER INFORMATION UPDATE ITEMS

The Chairman highlighted the damage to trees and hedgerow on West Road, caused by erroneous works by the Foundry Lea development consortium.

Cllr Ian Bark noted that the issue had been covered on the front page of the Bridport News.

Cllr Paul Hartmann advised that the issues arising were both legal and planning-related. Dorset Council's enforcement team had been engaged, and alleged criminal damage was also being looked at. A working group meeting on 5 December would consider the matter further. Cllr Hartmann said he did not understand why the contractors had not been properly briefed.

A discussion followed regarding potential compensatory actions, the planning process, a possible contribution to the Mayor's charitable fundraising, the damage to community confidence in, and the reputation of, the consortium.

RECOMMENDED: that the updates be noted.

8. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman reported that the next meeting of the NPJCC was scheduled for 2 March 2023 at 10.00am.

RECOMMENDED: that the scheduled meeting date be noted.

RECOMMENDED: that proposed dates for future meetings be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.58am.