

Minutes of a meeting of the NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN JOINT COUNCILS COMMITTEE (NPJCC) held in the Committee Room at Mountfield on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 10.00am.

PRESENT: Councillors: Ian Bark (Bridport Town Council, Chairman), Jim Basker (Bothenhampston & Walditch Parish Council), Paul Overall (Bradpole Parish Council), and Paul Hartmann (Symondsburv Parish Council).

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Phyllida Culpin, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the NPJCC held on 3 August 2023 be agreed, and that the Chairman should sign these as a correct record.

4. BANP GOVERNANCE FROM 1 APRIL 2024

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk, ENCL: 3852, setting out proposed governance arrangements for the NPJCC following community governance changes in April 2024.

Members discussed:

- Proposals for one member from each of the five Town Council wards, and one from Symondsburv Parish Council;
- The appropriate quorum for the revised membership; and
- Corresponding changes to the terms of reference for the NPJCC.

RESOLVED: that participating councils be requested to approve the governance arrangements as proposed in the report, with a quorum of three members being the only amendment.

5. JCC OPERATIONAL COSTS AND PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS

Consideration was given to the Clerk, ENCL: 3853, setting out the estimated costs of NPJCC administration for the year 2023-24, and proposed council contributions apportioned according to the parish tax base.

Members discussed:

- A reduction in the proposed contributions compared with 2022-23, largely due to a reduced number of NPJCC meetings; and

- Arrangements for future years given the changes to community governance. The Town Clerk advised that this would be for the NPJCC to consider after April 2024, but his expectation was that officers would propose a similar model for the two participating parishes of Bridport and Symondsburry.

RESOLVED: that the participating parishes be requested to pay contributions as set out in the report.

6. OTHER INFORMATION UPDATE ITEMS

The Town Clerk reported that developers and Dorset Council were working on street naming for the Foundry Lea development, following submission of suggestions from the Town Council, Symondsburry Parish Council, and other local stakeholders.

Cllr Paul Hartmann reported that a pedestrian crossing at the proposed Miles Cross junction was being pursued by Symondsburry Parish Council, although this would be subsequent to the construction of the roundabout.

Cllr Jim Basker reported that highway improvements were under consideration by National Highways. Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council would like to see the addition of cycle crossing signs.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer reported that there had been no meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group since the last NPJCC meeting. The next meeting was expected to be in February, to discuss a 'light touch' review of the Neighbourhood Plan, including resources and timescale. Members discussed the possible need for technical advice, the relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan review and the Local Plan review, Steering Group membership, and changes to planning legislation since the current plan was made.

RESOLVED: that a report on a review of the Neighbourhood Plan be tabled at the next NPJCC meeting.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer reported that the third biennial town centre health check had been completed. It showed an increase in the number of vacant retail premises, and an apparent trend towards relocation to industrial estates. A number of businesses had indicated an intention to end their operation. A shoppers' survey had shown a reduction in satisfaction. Public transport use was down, and car travel up, with consequent dissatisfaction with car parking. The health check had also identified issues for young people, including concerns about a lack of gathering places and an appropriate retail offer.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

7. DATE FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman reported that future meetings of the NPJCC were scheduled for 29 February 2024 at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 11.05am.