

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCILS' FORUM

TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH 2009

AT 6.30 P.M.

	Representative(s)	Parish
PRESENT:	Mr. J. Cypher	Alvechurch
	Mr. P. McHugh	
	Mrs. J. Jagger	Barnt Green
	Mr. R. Westbury	
	Mrs. C. Limm	Belbroughton
	Mr. C. R. Scurrall	
	Miss P. Harrison	Beoley
	Mr. B. Somner	
	Mrs. G. Lungley	Catshill and North Marlbrook
	Mr. G. F. Witcomb	
	Mr. B. Bridgewater	Cofton Hackett
	Mr. B. Hodgson	
	Mrs. C. Limm	Dodford with Grafton
	Mr. A. Rea	
	Mrs. R. Mullett	Hunnington
	Mrs. J. A. Casey	Lickey and Blackwell
	Mrs. J. King	
	Mr. K. Woolford	
	Mr. C. W. Bateman	Lickey End
	Mr. I. A. Hodgetts	Romsley
Mrs. R. Mullett		
Mr. P. Callaway	Stoke	
Mrs. H. Davies	Tutnall and Cobley	
Miss P. Harrison	Wythall	

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett (Chairman), Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. R. Savory and Mr. A. C. Stephens

17/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Hollingworth, and Mr. J. M. Bradley (Belbroughton Parish Council), Mr. K. Duncan (Cofton Hackett Parish Council), Mr. R. Harper (Dodford with Grafton Parish Council), Mr. M. Keary and Mr. K. Strawbridge (Stoke Parish Council) and Mr. L. J. Turner (Wythall Parish Council).

18/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Councils' Forum held on 6th January 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

19/08 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING**

(a) Planning Consultations

Members commented on the procedures for the completion of a bid for funding under the National Lottery 'Award For All' scheme towards the provision, and stated that the process was rather complicated and long-winded. However, it was felt that the Forum was a useful means by which to share information about how individual bids were progressing.

Mr. Bennett added that the Council would also be able to give assistance and undertook to identify which officers would be best able to help formulate a potentially successful bid application.

(b) Public Speaking at Planning Committee

Members of the Forum welcomed the introduction of public speaking Specifically for the parish councils within the District at Planning Committee meetings.

In respect of the guidance leaflet entitled 'Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings', clarification was suggested to make clear that each party (objector, applicant, parish council and relevant Ward Member) had a period of three minutes each in which to speak. This was noted.

20/08 **TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION - PRESENTATION**

Mr. H. Bennett welcomed Mr. R. Savory, Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager, to the meeting and invited him to address the Forum on the proposals for the redevelopment of the town centre.

Mr. Savory explained that his job was, essentially, to regenerate and revitalise Bromsgrove Town Centre in order to achieve a vibrant and active shopping area, as part of Bromsgrove's role as a thriving market town. He outlined the partner agencies involved in the proposals, which included Worcestershire County Council, the Primary Care Trust, West Mercia Constabulary and the Fire and Rescue Authorities, as well as the District Council.

Mr. Savory stated that the four main strategic aims of the project were to provide a revitalised and attractive town centre; a thriving and diverse economy; new multi-agency public service facilities; and an improved transport infrastructure. He informed the Forum of the regeneration work undertaken so far, together with how the plans were being developed as a

consequence of the listing of the former Parkside Middle School Building, and also gave an update on the current position in respect of future proposals and possibilities.

Mr. Savory then responded to a number of questions from members of the Forum, and expanded on a number of the issues in connection with the proposals for a combined police, fire and ambulance ("blue light") centre; the refurbishment of the Market Street Toilet block; the former Parkside Middle School buildings; transportation within and around the town centre; and the enhancement of tourism opportunities within Bromsgrove.

In closing, Mr. Savory promised the Forum that he would ensure copies of the presentation slides would be circulated to members after the meeting, together with details relating to the Town Centre Consultation Survey and proposals for the refurbishment of the Market Street Toilet Facilities.

Mr. Bennett then thanked Mr. Savory for his informative and interesting presentation.

21/08 **DRAFT CONCORDAT**

Mr. Bennett explained that, following the previous meeting of the Forum where it had been intended for the draft Parish Charter to be circulated to the parish councils, together with the Parish Concordat, this had unfortunately been delayed. However, he assured the Forum that a consultation document would be circulated immediately following the meeting, responses to which would be considered and discussed at the next meeting on 23rd June 2009.

22/08 **LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS**

Mr. Bennett addressed the Forum and informed members that it was the intention of the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships initiative to avoid adhering to, what could be, restrictive and burdensome codes of practice in order to maintain an informality to the meetings and to ensure any strict guidelines and regulations would not hinder the decision making process. He stated that the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships have specific Terms of Reference, following consultations at related stakeholder meetings (made up of representatives from the County Council, parish councils, Local Strategic Partnership, etc., as well as District Council representatives) in order to guide the issues considered by the Partnerships.

Members asked a number of questions relating to the operation of, and support given to, the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships [LNP's]. Mr. Bennett explained that, when appointed, officers within his Policy team would support the LNP's. Mrs. C. Felton re-iterated Mr. Bennett's previous comments about ensuring a straightforward and proportionately balanced decision making process, unhindered by strict rules and regulations and added that, although some broad principles needed to be established for the LNP's, it was the Council's intention for the Partnerships to be able to have scope for a certain level of autonomy.

In conclusion, Mr. Bennett stated that the draft Terms of Reference can be circulated if required as they were not expected to change too much when considered by the Council's Cabinet in July 2009.

23/08 **DRAFT CORE STRATEGY: PLANNING FOR HOUSING BETWEEN ALVECHURCH AND REDDITCH**

Mr. Bennett informed the Forum that a written response had been prepared by an officer within the Planning Policy team. Having read out the response, he stated that a copy would be forwarded by email to the parish councils.

The written response clarified that the consultation relating to the Draft Core Strategy was separate from the West Midland Regional Spatial Strategy [WMRSS] phase 2 Revision consultation which expired in December 2008. It detailed the number of responses received in respect of the consultation, together with the sources of those responses. The document explained the next stages in the process, including the analysis of the representations received, which would then be referred to the Council's Local Government Framework Working Party in due course. It was anticipated that the final version of the Core Strategy would not be submitted to the Secretary of State until the outcome of the WMRSS Examination In Public is known, which may not be until next year.

Mr. Bennett responded to members questions which largely related to procedures in respect of the WMRSS Examination In Public and the allocation of housing for the Bromsgrove and Redditch districts, where the provision for Redditch may ultimately be focussed on land within the Bromsgrove district. He added that the Council's preference for its own allocation would be to incorporate it within the proposals for the town centre and concentrate that allocation around the centre of Bromsgrove.

Mr. Bennett concluded by stating that additional information about the WMRSS Examination In Public would be obtained and forwarded with the minutes of the meeting.

(NOTE:

Further information about the WMRSS Examination In Public can be obtained from:

- http://www.wmra.gov.uk/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy/Planning_and_Regional_Spatial_Strategy.aspx; and
- http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/rss/west_midlands_phase_two/index.htm

24/08 **BROMSGROVE RAILWAY STATION REDEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Bennett gave a brief update in respect of the proposals for the redevelopment of Bromsgrove railway station and explained that any reported shortfalls in funding had, hopefully, been negotiated around by the County Council, with a view to 'signing-off' the necessary agreements within the next few months.

He provided additional details about the proposals in terms of access arrangements, car parking, design of the station building and improvements to the transportation service infrastructure (that is, electrification of the main cross-city line, additional hourly train services and provision of a "hopper" bus service to and from the proposed 'gold standard' bus station in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

However, Mr. Bennett stated that the development of the railway station was still subject to obtaining planning permission although, under the Railway Act 1836, proposals for a new station may be considered as permitted development. In the meantime, this matter was being investigated, especially in view of the old legislation and the fact that the view of local residents may also need to be taken into account.

This was noted.

25/08 **PARISH COUNCIL CASUAL VACANCIES / ELECTIONS 2009**

Mrs. Felton explained that Mrs. S. Mould, Electoral Services Manager, had included the Parish Council Casual Vacancies details for information as the Electoral Services team were looking to strengthen the support and advice relationships between the District Council and the parish councils. She also referred to the timetable relating to the combined County and European Elections taking place on 4th June 2009 which was, again, included with the agenda for information.

Mrs Felton concluded by stating that any questions relating to parish council elections, casual vacancies or other electoral services matters can be directed to the Electoral Services team on 01527 881421, or email to elections@bromsgrove.gov.uk.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Chairman