

Bridgnorth & Shifnal Area Committee

7pm on 16 September 2019 at Quatt Village Hall

Attendance: Attendance list was signed by 17 representatives of Local Councils

Also in attendance: Cllrs Peter Nutting and Gwilym Butler, Shropshire Council, Dianne Dorrell, County Secretary SALC and H Carver, Save Bridgnorth Greenbelt.

1. Guest Speakers

The Chairman, Cllr Abbiss, welcomed to the meeting Cllr Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services.

Gwilym introduced himself and reported that since taking over his portfolio a few months ago there had been a strong focus on undertaking the refresh of Place Plans across the county and establishing the approach to a new Communities/Rural Strategy, which will balance the focus across Shropshire's rural geography. His aspiration was to include public health and wellbeing in the place plans not yet formally agreed. He spoke of his attendance at the recent meeting of the Rural Services Network where Key Note speaker was Lord Foster of Bath, Chair of the Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy. Whilst Government recognised the disparity of funding for rural areas, there was no national rural strategy. His view was that the best route to lobby Government would be through the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to gain their support for the self-employed and SME's and revitalised market towns instead of focussing on the larger employers and industry. He gave some comparisons between shire counties and urban areas indicating that Shropshire on average had around £54M less funding than metropolitan boroughs. Local Councils would be consulted via SALC on the draft Rural Strategy once completed, which he anticipated would be October/November.

Gwilym answered a number of questions on boundary reviews, Shropshire Council's performance compared to others, differentials in precepts where some town were government growth hubs and received additional government funding. He answered questions relating to the Stanmore site. If SC did not meet their 10 year land supply, then developers would be able to build where they so wished. Whilst growth in some areas was to be welcomed, it was about how much.

The Chairman invited the Leader of Shropshire Council, Cllr Peter Nutting to speak.

Peter explained why Stanmore was considered an appropriate site to develop and how this would work. No decision had yet been taken over Bridgnorth. Development had taken place in Shifnal, where there had been a shortage of land supply, to prevent developers building where they chose. There were further questions about employment land where SC were talking to employers in the area which the Chairman said was a topic for a future meeting.

Peter then explained how he was ensuring SC's budget was being kept in balance, noting the pressures on particular services. Shropshire covered a large area but was receiving a third less than London Boroughs. He reported that SC would be undertaking a boundary review following the next elections, noting that some areas were already in discussion. He raised the issue of asking Government to undertake a joint review with local councils.

A discussion then followed on the housing company SC were setting up where schemes in Oswestry and Shrewsbury had been identified and where there was land available. The aim was to include a mix of social housing, commercial properties and homes for sale on the open market.

After further questions/discussions on Bridgnorth's Westgate and Stanley Lane, Cosford, schools, development land in Telford, roads in the South and the definition of sustainability, Peter thanked everyone for what they did for their local communities.

The Chairman thanked both Peter and Gwilym who then left the meeting followed by several others who had been present.

2. Election of Chairman

Proposed by Cllr Abbiss, seconded by Cooper,

RESOLVED: That Cllr Beechey be elected Chairman for the current year.

Cllr Beechey thanked the meeting and Cllr Abbiss whom he said had done a super job.

3. Apologies

Cllrs Mary Hill and Yvonne Holyoak, Much Wenlock TC, Cllr Anne Hill, Sutton Maddock PC, Sylvia Pledger, Albrighton PC, Simon Harris, Kinlet PC and Stockton PC Chairman Lord Hamilton of Dalzell and Vice Chairman Cllr David Plant.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair.

Proposed by Cllr Marshall, seconded by Cllr Abbiss.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Cooper be appointed Vice Chair.

5. Election of representatives and substitute representatives to the SALC Executive.

Proposed and seconded.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Abbiss and Beechey be reappointed to SALC Executive with Cllrs Cooper and Court substitute representatives.

6. Secretariat

Cllr Abbiss read from a letter of resignation sent to her by Mrs Freda Morris former Secretary. She asked those present to sign a card and it was agreed to send flowers to thank Freda for all she had done for the Area Committee over the years.

Cllr Abbiss reported that the Clerk to Rushbury, Mr Chris Maclean had expressed interest in becoming Secretary and would attend the next meeting for formal appointment. Draft appointment terms were circulated for approval.

RESOLVED: To thank Mrs Morris for her service to the Committee and to welcome Mr Chris Maclean to the next meeting.

7. Accounts to be paid

None were presented. Cllr Abbiss said that the bank mandate would need to be changed, Cllrs Beechey and Abbiss to remain signatories. Cllr Court agreed to be a third signatory.

8. Secretary's Expenses

Cllr Abbiss proposed that Mrs Dorrell be paid for the meeting. Mrs Dorrell said this was all part of the job and only travelling expenses would be claimed.

9. Correspondence received

None.

10. Matters from Parishes to raise with SALC Executive

None.

11. SALC Update

The need for contingency plans was emphasised, also the need to consider delegated powers for consultations taking place in the summer recess. A brief overview of SALCs work during the first part of the year was noted.

12. Suggestions for future speakers/topics

Professor John Whitelegg, Transport, Cllr Robert Macey, Planning, Boundary Reviews, Highways, Emergency Planning.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Signed (Chairman)..... Dated: