

**Social & Community Development Sub-Group
18 January 2006
2pm – 4pm
Assembly Room, Worksop Town Hall**

MINUTES

Attending:

Jo Wilson (Acting Chair)	Bassetlaw District Council
Jonathan Dawson	NRCC
Richard Edwards	Manton Neighbourhood Manager
Janice Hunt	Bassetlaw PCT
Graham Jackson	Bassetlaw District Council
Frank Raspin	NCC Community Development
Malcolm Robson	Bassetlaw District Council
Bob Wallace	NCC Regeneration

1. Introductions and Welcome

JW welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained that she would be Chairing on behalf of Pauline Elliott as she had been unable to attend due to urgent Council business.

She also noted that Inspector Jill Davies would now be replacing PC Bill Brown as the Police representative.

2. Apologies

PC Bill Brown, 'B' Division Notts Police; Steve Brown, BDC; Peter Clark, BDC; Bernard Coleman, A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd.; Inspt. Jill Davies, Notts Police; Pauline Elliott, BDC; Annie Fletcher, Centre Place; Alison Gimingham; National Trust; Len Hull, Bassetlaw District Council; Cllr Liz Jeffries, NALC; Gail Maxfield, Age Concern; Rob Packer, NCC Youth Services; Roger Ranson, BDC; Vicky Rawson, FOYPIB; Stephen Saddington, Bassetlaw CAB; Nicola Simpson, NCC; Kay Sutton, NN CLSP; Bob Whatley, BDC; Elizabeth Whittles, BDC; Tony Wright, BDC.

3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Consultation on Core Strategy Preferred Options for the Local Development Framework (LDF) – BDC Planning

BDC Planning Officers, Tom Bannister and Nina Hillyer gave a brief summary of the next stage in the development of the LDF for Bassetlaw. From the 9th January to 20th February BDC are consulting on the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy, and the Sustainability Report for the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

The main pages of interest are:

Pg12-13 – the Preferred Options for Spatial Objectives (these should reflect the objectives of the Community Strategy)

pg 19 – the Preferred Option

There are three different types of development centre considered in the preferred option:

- Worksop and Retford as Major Centres
- Harworth as a Secondary Centre
- Carlton, Tuxford, Misterton as Local Centres

There is an online response form, a response form within the document, or a response section on the Future Plans website.

The Sustainability Appraisal – also out for consultation - is online on the website, and is the supporting document to justify the Core Strategy.

It was agreed that the key concerns for this Sub-Group were rural housing and infill developments.

Q&A/ Comments Session

FR queried SO12 and asked if a supplementary policy document could be produced to protect existing facilities from conversion.

TB noted that the process would be similar to that for employment land. For the land/ premise to be used for something else the person/company wishing to change to use would need to prove it was no longer viable as a community facility.

FR also commented on SO11, and the fact that recent large developments don't have facilities, and asked how planning proposed to get around this.

TB noted that they would negotiate around the spatial objectives, which are in the broadest sense aspirational, but that they can't force compliance only work to those aspirations. They would look more favourable on applications that were in keeping with the spatial objectives.

RE asked how the spatial objectives fit with the 'green agenda', energy use etc.

NH noted that the documents at their current stage were not be that specific yet, however sustainable development would be a key feature.

RE asked about 'effective use of fuel'.

NH noted that there will be 2 more documents with more specific to these topics.

TB commented that Building Control deal with efficient buildings and the Sustainability Appraisal attempts to show what sustainable objectives will be met through the LDF.

JD asked about Affordable Housing, noting that in lots of Parish Plans the cost of housing is a big issue – will it be a % of each development?

NH noted again that this particular document for the LDF doesn't cover that level of detail however they will be aiming for a set % within the more detailed document (currently it is 25% of the development).

TB noted that a market price was not set.

NH also reminded members that the Housing Needs Survey shows where the need is and the will lead any future development.

GJ explained that where a developer makes an application a working group looks to see where housing need is in that location and other requirements of the site i.e. open space, leisure facilities – for example via a s.106 agreement. This is done in partnership with the developer. The affordable housing built could be rented accommodation or part-owned and passed to a housing association at a price they can afford to run.

The key question is what is affordable, and this varies mainly going along the lines of shared ownership or rented.

BW commented on SO21 and asked how this was linked to NCC Transport Plans or other plans.

TB felt this area of planning was not always easy to work through as the District is not responsible for transport however NCC and BDC consult each other on all relevant plans and engage where necessary.

RE commented that planning was not easy to understand and asked how the planning team were engaging different groups.

NH noted that they were doing 'Planning over a Pint' across 15 pubs within the District to consult with the public. They were also in supermarkets, had advertised the consultation, were carrying out radio interviews, written out to Parish Councils (among others), and have had a stall on Retford Market.

RE asked how planning department would rate the success of this.

NH felt the pubs were working well, but the shop stands didn't create as much interest however people did read the info on the stands.

RE felt that much could be learnt from the engagement processes used and felt Manton Board should have a presentation from planning on the approaches.

BW said he had noted the advert in the Evening Post and asked how wide planning was consulting.

TB and NH explained that they were advertising outside the District as service users are not necessarily exclusively within Bassetlaw boundaries. It gave as many as possible, the opportunity to comment on development in the geographic areas that affect them.

5. Consultation on Area Housing Strategy – BDC Housing

Graham Jackson, BDC Acting Principal Housing Officer gave a presentation on the revised Area Housing Strategy.

Background

The original Strategy when produced had been too 'broad-brush' and GOEM required a more focused strategy clearly identifying the headline priorities for the District. In addition, as a District we are required to take account of Regional policies from EMRA and East Midlands Housing Board. Many of the subsidies we received as a Region are now channelled to the South East of the East Midlands due to Policy 7 for Milton Keynes i.e. Affordable Housing for London.

The Housing Needs Survey 2003, plus a recent desk top update show a 200 short fall in 'lets' per year. The stock conditions database is also updated annually.

Copies of the presentation were handed out at the meeting and will be circulated with the minutes.

Discussion Session

RE commented that the presentation was very informative, and had 2 questions:

- (1) Govt. seems to be saying that we need high level strategies to cover the main issues but we also need neighbourhood level input. How will you get this?

From his experience agencies are working together to find a holistic approach. Manton Pathfinder is a classic example of what should be seen across the District although most need less resources than Manton. The Pathfinder Strategy does acknowledge that we need to work with communities on estates on how improvements will happen.

GJ - This is happening and Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) have lots of input to the ASB team; and regarding repairs; allocations; and homelessness. The ASB team needs to be flexible to change according to the needs/ issues at the time.

RE - Commented that he felt the housing need of an area will be affected by how people perceive their area.

- (2) What is the difference between A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd. and BDC?

GJ - A1 Housing is a company owned by BDC, and they are contracted to manage the council stock and improve it, essentially a contractor. A1 have to work within the council's policies. A1 can input in to the revision of policies as needed, and this will happen via the improvement plan we are currently implementing to get a 2 star ALMO rating.

BW had 3 main queries:

- (1) Slide 4 mentions a shortfall in affordable housing – how 'short' is this?

GJ - We were short by 800 lets last year, and in reality needed 1000+ if the stock was sufficient. The original Housing Needs Survey shows lack of family and small households i.e. flats.

- (2) Are private landlords engaging with repairs/ standards required?

GJ - The Landlords Forum was re-launched on the 9th December with 50 attending. There were 3 key issues identified at the meeting that the Forum felt needed to be addressed. A further 3 meetings have been arranged.

1	Housing Benefits	There is an obligation on landlords to recover over-payments where tenants have left the property and this is a disincentive, to taking on benefit tenants. A specific meeting will be held on this to go through the rules and regulations, and the various processes and appeals procedures.
2	Licensing of properties/landlords and Health & Safety in properties	Health & Safety regulations for private landlords will come in to force during this year. Once the final legislation is in force a seminar will be held for local landlords to support and advise on how to operate within the legislation.
3	Grants for Private Sector	The policy is currently being re-written and a seminar will be held on this. Landlords will also receive information through the benefits cheques that BDC send out to Landlords. This area of work has been successful and the national forum is interested in what we are doing, as well as there being political support for the work.

(3) ALMOs are struggling so why will developers come to Bassetlaw?

GJ - A unique selling point of the District is the Improvement Plan which if achieved will get us £62m to carry out improvement work. A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd. as an ALMO is no better or worse than any other. They have a good management team in place and good staff at middle and higher management, and they are working pro-actively with tenants.

JD queried without the 2 star rating what will happen. Can the LSP support the achievement of the 2 stars in any way?

GJ – we need to show that we are working together to achieve the priorities of the new Housing Strategy.

RE stressed the need for consultation to be circulated to Hard to Reach groups. We need to make sure we try to find more innovative ways of engaging the public, like the planners in pubs.

6. **Progress on Key Projects in 2005-2006 Work Plan**

A.6

MR noted that he had researched other Local Authorities to see what was produced and noted that some produce leaflets but others are more web-based resources. He was waiting for info on potential costs of each approach.

FR noted that NCC had produced a leaflet on its community resources for Notts, and he would forward this to Malcolm.

A draft leaflet would be circulated with the minutes, with comments required before the next meeting.

There were 2 main issues to researched

- (1) What venues to include
- (2) What was offered at those venues

D.1

Members involved in this project were not at the meeting. It was noted that an update report was required from them on progress.

E.4

JH noted that a mapping of services in Manton and Harworth by Retford Action Centre commissioned by the PCT on behalf of the Health Sub-Group. They were also looking at the services local groups wanted to access in relation to Health

Action: (1) Members working on each project to liaise with each other regarding meetings and how to move the project forward. Progress Reports required to the next meeting.

7. LAA Update

JW reminded members that the most current draft of the LAA (3rd draft) had been circulated before Christmas.

RE noted that the group focussing on the involvement of the Neighbourhood Renewal areas had met a number of times. He felt that it was paramount to support and influence what was happening to ensure that the final version was deliverable and included all elements that Bassetlaw felt were essential.

In relation to the monitoring of the LAA RE also felt there needed to be more accountability vertically and horizontally between partners.

JD asked two questions:

- (1) Will the LSP receive any money? – No the LAA is about being more efficient with existing resources.
- (2) Do we have enough capacity as a District LSP to monitor relevant data required? – Through general discussion it was felt that more support might be needed and potentially training for partners on any software used. JW noted the potential to use the Council's performance management system.

JD felt that if we were not being allocated more finances to allow us to monitor effectively then we needed to source more resources.

8. BLSP Social & Community Development Action Plan

Members were reminded that updates to the Action Plan were required quarterly in January, April, July and October.

9. **Community Strategy Annual Report**

The draft of the Social & Community Development section circulated was agreed as accurate by the group. The only comment was to check details regarding a bid for outreach workers for Rural Debt Advice, which could potentially be included in the Case Study on Debt Advice Training.

Action: JW to check with Steve Brown regarding the bid.

10. **Update for the next Board Meeting – 26th January**

JD asked that the Debt Advice Training Session be included.

11. **A.O.B.**

Appointment of Vice-Chair

JW noted that Steve Brown had noted he would be willing to take on the role. The members present were asked if there were any other nominations, and none came forward. It was agreed that Steve be acknowledge as the Vice-Chair.

In terms of the position of Chair and Vice-Chair, members felt that a rotational system should be used.

Action: Chair and Vice-Chair to suggest a suitable period for each position to be held.

Rural Excellence Mentoring

JW asked members present to note the report from Steve Brown about the Mentoring Scheme that the Council was now involved in. This is an excellent opportunity for the District Council and the LSP to receive additional support to target the priority areas identified. Please contact Steve with your comments.

12. **Dates for 2006 meetings**

22nd March, 2pm-4pm, venue TBC

17th May, 2pm-4pm, venue TBC

19th July, 2pm-4pm, venue TBC

20th September, 2pm-4pm, venue TBC

22nd November 2pm-4pm, venue TBC