

Parish Council Liaison Forum

A meeting of Parish Council Liaison Forum was held on Monday, 22nd March, 2010.

Present: Cllr David Coleman (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Jennie Beaumont, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Miss Barbara Inman, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Barry Woodhouse; H. Atkinson (Billingham T.C.), G. Colling, J. Walker (Egglescliffe & Eaglescliffe P.C.), G. Rees (Grindon P.C.), Cllr Bowman (Ingleby Barwick P.C.), G. Smith (Long Newton P.C.), T. Hampton (Kirklevington P.C.), J. Lithgo, J.H. Willis (Stillington & Whitton P.C.).

Officers: T. Beckwith (CESC); M. Clifford, Ms J. Edmends, Ms J. Higgins, W. Trewick (DNS); N. Hart (LD).

Also in attendance: M. Bullock (ARC4)

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Councillor Laing and Councillor Feldon (Ingleby Barwick P.C.).

PCL 24/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Bowman (Ingleby Barwick P.C.) and Councillor Coleman each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 6 'Misconduct Allegations-Update' as a result of their membership of the Assessment Sub Committee.

PCL 25/09 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st December 2009**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st December 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

PCL 26/09 **Housing Futures Project-Update (Presentation)**

The Housing Strategy Manager presented the Forum with an update on progress with regard to the Council's proposal to stock 'transfer' its entire housing stock of some 10,400 properties, having determined that this was the only viable option open to it to secure future stock and investment needs.

Since this time, Tristar Homes had been chosen as the 'preferred new landlord' (a new not for profit social housing landlord) to form a new Housing Group with Housing Hartlepool and a transfer application had been submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency. An 'Offer' Document had also now been developed and a 28 day period of consultation had commenced with tenants which would end on the 6th April 2010.

Key features of the 'Offer' Document were a series of 'promises' made to tenants in relation to both property and service improvements. These included timescales for the provision of double glazed doors and windows to all properties, new kitchens and bathrooms, and the commitment that tenants would not be expected to pay any more in rent than they would have done if the properties had remained in local authority control.

If after the current 28 day period of consultation with tenants it had been proven that there was support for the proposed transfer, officers would then be expected to move to Stage 2 of the consultation and arrange a 28 day ballot of all tenants, some time commencing around the middle of May 2010.

The Housing Strategy Manager advised the Forum of the likely timescale for

stock transfer should it be confirmed by a ballot, and offered to attend a future meeting of the Forum to update members on the decision and the next steps.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

**PCL
27/09** **ARC4-Rural Housing Needs-Presentation**

Further to the meeting of the Forum held in June 2009, Michael Bullock (ARC4) provided the Forum with the results of the study undertaken to ascertain the level of affordable housing need in rural areas for local people.

This was in accordance with Planning Policy CS8 which sought to provide affordable housing in rural areas and followed the issuing of a questionnaire to all households within the Borough, all Parish/Town Councils, and the holding of 4 community events. A 21% response rate to the household survey resulted, which was considered to be appropriate for the purpose of reaching a conclusion for this sort of study, and the results revealed that there was a shortfall of 24 affordable dwellings in rural areas within the Borough over the next 5 years. This was largely in keeping with the forecasted numbers. The results also revealed that the tenure of such provision should be two thirds social rented properties; one third intermediate (shared ownership/equity). The areas identified of most need were Stillington & Whitton, Carlton, Grindon and Redmarshall. It was essential that whatever future provision was made, the locations benefited from connectivity with other areas and were sustainable.

The results of the study would now be handed to the Council with the recommendation that it seek to make provision for affordable housing development in partnership with suitable Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). An explanation was provided of the regulations regarding development outside of village envelopes, and it was noted that the Council would not seek to impose any development of affordable housing, and rather would work in partnership on any development.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

**PCL
28/09** **Misconduct Allegations-Update (to Follow)**

Consideration was given to statistical information regarding the number of complaints (4) received by the Borough Council relating to members conduct/behaviour for the period 1st April-12th March 2010.

Details were provided of the Assessment Sub Committee's consideration of the complaints received. It was noted that all complaints received were considered by the Assessment Sub Committee within the Standards for England's 20 working days timescale; the average being 17.25 days.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**PCL
29/09** **Issues Raised by Parish/Town Councils**

The Forum received five questions, one from Egglecliffe and Egglecliffe Parish Council, three from Ingleby Barwick Town Council, and one from

Stillington and Whitton Parish Council.

The first question related to whether any Parish/Town Council had had any experience of adopting a BT red telephone kiosk under the terms of the BT scheme. It was noted that no authority had as yet considered such a route, and it was noted that the Borough Council had indicated that they would not be seeking to adopt any and that any Parish/Town Council wishing to do so would be responsible for any on-going maintenance. Contractual advice regarding adoption was available on the Council's website.

The first of three questions from Ingleby Barwick Parish Council (IBPC) requested an update following Cabinet's recent decision to carry out investigations to test the deliverability of four approved options as part of proposals for South of the Borough under Building Schools for the Future. It was noted that a report was expected to be considered by Cabinet some time later this year.

IBPC also expressed concerns regarding unauthorised vehicular parking outside of school premises and it was noted that the schools in Ingleby Barwick, supported by the Council where necessary, had in place a number of initiatives to reduce the scale of parking and access problems around the school environs. Each were constantly seeking out new ways of reducing the numbers of cars involved and ensuring the safety of the children and local residents.

First and foremost all schools encouraged parents and children to walk or cycle to school. This had the added value of improving health and well being. Each school has some facilities for the parking of cars whilst children were dropped off and improvements to access were envisaged within the scheme to replace the mobile accommodation at Whinstone. Each school also had arrangements in place to try and control the excesses of parking and obstruction and they regularly remind parents of their responsibilities to their own children and others. There are opportunities in Ingleby Barwick for parents to park a short distance from schools and walk the rest of the journey.

The main issue for both Whinstone Primary and Ingleby Mill Primary was the large number of pupils, 539 and 679 respectively. The results from the mode of travel census undertaken in January 2010 revealed that 69% of pupils walked/cycled to school at Whinstone Primary and 39% at Ingleby Mill Primary. Even though nearly 70% of the pupils from Whinstone Primary travelled using a sustainable mode, there was still over 150 pupils travelling by car and over 400 pupils travelling by car to Ingleby Mill Primary. Both schools are involved in pedestrian and cycle training and sustainable travel promotion and both were constructed with safer routes links and a controlled crossing was introduced on Ingleby Way to encourage walking to Whinstone Primary. Each had also been proactive with congestion issues and the support of sustainable travel initiatives. To support each school, the Council's enforcement staff also visit the sites from time to time to remind people who park illegally and/or unsafely of their responsibility and issue parking tickets where necessary. Enforcement deployments to 3 of the schools in Ingleby Barwick take place on a regular basis and details of the visits carried out and notices issued were submitted.

Finally, the Parish Council requested an update on the current situation regarding Leven Bank Bridge, which had now been closed for 4 weeks. The Council's Traffic & Road Safety Manager advised that a decision on the extent of necessary works to be carried out to repair the bridge was expected to be taken by the end of the week however, the problem had resulted due to gradual erosion of the embankment upstream causing the river to scour material from under the arch supports on the east side of the bridge. The cost of any necessary repairs was unknown at this stage, although a contractor who had had experience of similar works during the Cumbria floods in 2009, had already been appointed. Arrangements for the re-routing of bus services, including the provision of free buses, were noted.

Members expressed concern that the full cost of repairs were to be borne by the Council, and it was requested that discussions should take place on contributions from other agencies responsible for maintenance of the riverbank.

Clarification was sought by Stillington & Whitton Parish Council of this Council's policy on the development of wind farms in the Borough and it was noted that whilst there was no specific wind farm policy within the current Local Plan, it was anticipated that the Council's Core Strategy would be adopted by the Council on the 24th March 2010, which contained provisions within, the details of which were submitted, which would then be used to determine future applications for renewable energy generation.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.