

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISTRICT AND PARISH LIAISON GROUP BUSINESS MEETING

**NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2019 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER
AT MILL LANE**

Present:

Members from District Council/Parish/Town Councils

Councillor Martin Thacker – NEDDC and Holymoorside and Walton Parish Council (Chair)
Councillor William Armitage – NEDDC and Ashover Parish Council
Councillor Charlotte Cupit – NEDDC and Shirland and Higham Parish Council
Councillor Alex Dale – NEDDC and Unstone Parish Council
Councillor Lilian Deighton – NEDDC and Dronfield Town Council
Councillor Richard Fidler – Ashover Parish Council
Councillor Cecilia Harper – Wingerworth Parish Council
Councillor Lee Hartshorne – NEDDC and Grassmoor Parish Council
Councillor Craig Hodgson – Wingerworth Parish Council
Councillor Clive Hunt – NEDDC and Eckington Parish Council
Councillor Maggie Jones – NEDDC and Clay Cross Parish Council
Councillor Heather Liggett – NEDDC and Shirland Parish Council
Councillor Guy Liggett – Shirland and Higham Parish Council
Councillor Pat Maskrey – Holymoorside and Walton Parish Council
Councillor Alan Powell – NEDDC and Dronfield Town Council
Councillor Diana Ruff – NEDDC and Wingerworth Parish Council
Councillor Mike Smart – Sutton-cum-Duckmanton Parish Council
Councillor P Stevenson – Pilsley Parish Council
Councillor Philip Wright – NEDDC and Dronfield Town Council
Councillor Jackie Wood – Grassmoor Parish Council

Parish Clerks

Sara Atkinson – Ashover Parish Council
Kate Brailsford – Holymoorside and Walton Parish Council
Helen Dowson – Shirland and Higham Parish Council
Charlotte Taylor – Wingerworth Parish Council
Philip Woodward – Pilsley Parish Council

Also Present

Dan Swaine – Chief Executive
Sarah Sternberg – Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer
Karen Hanson – Strategic Director - Place
Lee Hickin – Strategic Director - People
Steve Brunt – Head of Streetscene
Richard Purcell – Head of Planning
Tom Scott – Temporary Governance Officer

DPLG/11/19-20 Chair's Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Martin Thacker MBE, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Liaison Group, welcomed everyone to the District/Parish Business Meeting and asked them to introduce themselves. He thanked those present for attending.

DPLG/12/19-20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Ann Brown (Shirland and Higham Parish Council), Councillor Ann Clarke (Sutton-cum-Duckmanton Parish Council), Councillor Bette Hill (NEDDC and Grassmoor Parish Council), Councillor Carol Huckerby (NEDDC and Holmesfield Parish Council), Councillor Jeremy Kenyon (NEDDC and Eckington Parish Council), Councillor Martin Kirkland (Pilsley Parish Council), Councillor Denise Phelps (Holymoorside and Walton Parish Council), Councillor Mike Roe (NEDDC and Shirland and Higham Parish Council) and Councillor Richard Smith (Unstone Parish Council).

Apologies were also received from Wendy Amis (Chief Officer – Derbyshire Association of Local Councils) and Parish Clerks Ros Bullimore (Eckington Parish Council) and Jacqueline Clayton (Unstone Parish Council).

DPLG/13/19-20 Notes of Last Meeting

The Group gave consideration to the Action Notes of the District/Parish Liaison Group held on 24 September 2019 and noted their content.

Parish councillors asked when the bills from the Council for the 2019 Parish Election would be sent to parish councils, because each parish council needed to have its revenue in order. The Monitoring Officer assured them that this would be sent as soon as possible. The Leader added that although it was frustrating for parish councils to not have these bills, everybody had to acknowledge the amount of work being done by officers because of the General Election on 12 December 2019.

Parish councillors asked the Head of Streetscene if he would be visiting all parish councils as he'd mentioned in the past. He explained that every parish council should have received a letter that invited them to request his attendance.

It was AGREED that the Action Notes of the District and Parish Liaison Group held on 24 September 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

DPLG/14/19-20 Planning Applications – Advice on Submitting Comments

The Head of the Planning service (Richard Purcell) gave a presentation to the Group with advice on submitting comments for Council planning applications. He explained that comments on planning applications from parish councils were vitally important because they were a great source of

local knowledge. He also reminded the parish councillors that comments submitted had to be relevant, and explained that parish councils could shape planning proposals with their comments, and this included development plans and neighbourhood plans. He said six neighbourhood plans (Ashover, Brackenfield, Dronfield, Holymoorside and Walton, Wessington and Wingerworth) had been completed for this district, and each parish council that produced a neighbourhood plan had undertaken a referendum to be able to do it.

Parish councillors were informed that when they submitted comments on planning applications, they also had to consider the objectives of their neighbourhood plans, as well as the harm that the applications could do. Any concerns raised needed this depth of understanding to support them. The Head of Planning referred to the labour plans and explained how parish councillors needed to quote the relevant policies when expressing concerns, and title their concerns 'other comments'. He added that planning officers needed to determine planning applications in collaboration with the development plans.

Parish councillors were informed that the Council would provide assistance to parish councils to help them set up planning training. The Head of Planning advised that parish councils should organise themselves when submitting comments, and he explained that comments from smaller groups would mean a more agile response from the Council.

The Head of Planning explained that if a parish council did not have a neighbourhood plan but wanted one, they should contact planning officers to help them make the arrangements.

Parish councillors referred to the recent major floods in the District and although they acknowledged that planning applications considered flood risks, they asked if the recent floods had caused a reassessment of flood risks in the District. They were informed that Planning Officers constantly monitored the Environmental Agency's flood risk maps and the Environmental Agency kept these maps regularly up to date.

Parish councillors were concerned that Planning Officers were not consulting in enough detail with the public/parish councils in relation to applications to set up solar windfarms. Parish councillors reported examples to support this, like how for windfarms in the Sutton-cum-Duckmanton parish area, all of the farms ran into the same watercourse and it had flooded. The Head of Planning assured parish councillors that this would be considered next time there was a planning application in the area.

Parish councillors referred to some planning training they had been given by the Planning Manager – Development Management and felt they should do this training again. The Leader agreed to pass this request on.

Some parish councillors that were also on the North East Derbyshire District Council Planning Committee supported the presentation and how it

guided parish council comments for planning applications. They felt that some of the comments they saw at planning committee from parish councils (if they were objecting) were often supported with many case studies and examples, but parish councils should look to make their comments more concise with well-argued points.

Parish councillors enquired how the Council's Local Plan was progressing. The Leader explained that it could not be discussed because of the Council being in the Purdah period for the upcoming General Election. The Head of Planning left the meeting and the Leader thanked him for his presentation.

It was AGREED that the presentation be noted.

DPLG/15/19-20 Update on the Election Process

The Chief Executive Officer informed parish councils of voting deadlines for the 12 December 2019 General Election. He explained that:

- (1) Midnight on Tuesday 26 November 2019 was the registration deadline for people to make an application to be registered in time to vote in the Parliamentary Election.
- (2) The deadline for receipt of postal voting applications was 5.00 pm on Tuesday 26 November 2019.
- (3) Requests for cancellations or changes to an existing postal vote had to be received by 5.00 pm on Tuesday 26 November 2019.
- (4) Last date for receipt of new proxy voting applications was 5.00 pm on Wednesday 4 December 2019. A proxy had to be a registered parliamentary elector themselves, so no-one who was an EU citizen and could only vote in local elections, for example.
- (5) The first issue of postal votes would be mailed out from out printers around 26 November first class. This mailing would include people whose postal voting applications were received up to approximately mid-day on 7 November.
- (6) The second issue of postal votes, people whose applications were received between the afternoon of 7 November and the deadline of 5.00 pm on 26 November would be posted out around 3 December.
- (7) Emergency proxies were for when an elector could not present themselves at a polling station for unexpected medical or work reasons. It had to be for a reason they were not aware of before the deadline. There were two forms: one for work related issues and one for medical issues. In relation to medical issues, this needed certification by a medical professional or social worker depending of the circumstances.

Parish councillors enquired what they were able to do under the election Purdah period (the period of time immediately before an Election where restrictions on communications activity are in place). The Monitoring Officer explained that because it was a General Election, parish and district councillors would not have to modify any of their Council related behaviour. She added that parish councillors could view the LGA's Guide to Purdah on their website. The Chief Executive Officer also explained that the term often used to describe Purdah was 'heightened sensitivity', which meant that a Council cannot use its resources to indicate support to any group or party. An example was used where a Council could go about its business as normal through a General Election, but the same Council could not promote a candidate to be an MP.

It was AGREED that the update be noted.

DPLG/16/19-20 The Council's Climate Change Strategy

Councillor Charlotte Cupit (Shirland and Higham Parish Council and NEDDC's Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change) gave an update to the Group detailing the Council's recent progress with climate change. Councillor Cupit explained how economic grants to primary schools had now been sent, and projects had been happening in primary schools like Deerpark Primary School in Wingerworth which had been holding Fume Free Friday Events. Councillor Cupit explained how the Council was committed to reducing its carbon footprint. She was pulling together Parish Packs to distribute to parish councillors which would include guidance on how each parish council could integrate climate change measures into their parishes. The Parish Packs would be completed in a few weeks and circulated to every parish council. She welcomed input from parish councillors about the packs at this meeting.

The Leader explained that grants to schools were part of the first cycle of projects and for the second cycle, parish councillors should encourage all schools in the District to apply for the grant. He added that all district councils in Derbyshire had agreed to work with Derbyshire County Council to reduce carbon emissions by 2030. Parish councillors enquired what the Council's policy of plastic was in terms of litter. The Head of Streetscene explained that the Council had trialled litter bins for just plastic, but it was difficult to separate the types of waste when it was in a public bin. However, the people working at the recycling centre would sort waste at the end of the process. Parish councillors felt that the most important aspects of increasing recycling figures was education and the Leader agreed with this, explaining that the Council had visited schools to educate children on recycling and publicised recycling guides to everybody in the District. He added that the Council's Climate Change Strategy was very in-depth. The Head of Streetscene also added that there was a Government Waste Strategy and one of the key aspects of it was a bottle deposit scheme, which would charge for disposal of bottles and aim to reduce the amount of plastic in the waste stream.

Parish councillors enquired how the Council would involve local businesses with climate change issues. Councillor Cupit explained how in the Parish Packs there would be guidance for parish councillors to get local businesses on board with climate change. The Leader added that he had sat on the D2N2 LEP Board and discussed this issue, but it was also up to parish councils and local businesses to get involved themselves.

Some Parish councillors passed on reports of front doors in shops being left open in Chesterfield which was wasting energy. The Leader advised that this was an issue for each individual shop and they were responsible for how much energy they wasted.

It was AGREED that the Climate Change Update be noted.

DPLG/17/19-20 Health and Safety Services

Sarah Sternberg (the Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer) informed parish councillors that the Council was working with parish councils on a number of health and safety issues. She added that the Council's Health and Safety Manager would be attending the next District/Parish Liaison Group meeting, so parish councils should consider any health and safety questions or requests before the next scheduled meeting.

Parish councillors enquired if cemetery management came within the remit of Health and Safety. The Monitoring Officer said she would pass this question on to the Health and Safety Manager.

It was AGREED that the Health and Safety update be noted.

DPLG/18/19-20 Any Other Business

Parish councillors referred to a development in Winsick and asked why no Section 106 money had been given to parish councils for the development. The Strategic Director – Place advised that she would investigate this.

Parish councillors wished to place on record their thanks to Mick Cave in Community Services who had rescued a baby during the recent floods. The Leader agreed with this and wished to thank everyone who had helped out during the floods.

The Chief Executive Officer explained that there was a co-ordinated response across the County to the floods, incorporating a number of authorities and organisations. The Leader added that Derbyshire County Council had set up a flood relief fund.

Some Parish councillors reported stories about trees planted in car parks being dug up. The Leader explained that the Council was committed to planting as many trees as possible, so it was unlikely this had been carried out by the Council.

Meeting closed at 6.00 pm.

DPLG 1125 Notes