**BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

**RURAL FORUM**

**Meeting held: 28th June 2018**

**Present:** Borough Councillors

Councillor Jim Hakewill (*Chair*)

Councillor David Howes

Councillor Mark Rowley

Councillor Anne Lee (Kettering Town Forum Representative)

Parish Councillors

Councillor Brent Woodford (Ashley)

Councillor John Lillie (Brampton Ash)

Councillor Vicky Cleland (Braybrooke)

Councillor George Normand (Braybrooke)

Councillor Hilary Bull (Broughton)

Councillor Robin Shrive (Broughton)

Councillor David Watson (Geddington, Newton & Lt. Oakley)

Councillor Paul Gooding (Harrington)

Councillor Alan Durn (Loddington)

Councillor Stephen Chester (Orton Parish Meeting)

Councillor Fay Foster (Pytchley)

Councillor Patricia Hobson (Pytchley)

Councillor Peter Hooton (Rushton)

Councillor Bruce Squires (Stoke Albany)

Councillor Paul Wharin (Warkton)

Councillor James Woolsey (Warkton)

Councillor Hazel Woolsey (Warkton)

Councillor Mark Hales (Warkton)

Councillor Brian Peel (Weekley)

Councillor Nick Richards (Wilbarston)

**Also Present:** Lisa Hyde (Kettering Borough Council)

Helen Edwards (Kettering Borough Council)

Simon Richardson (Kettering Borough Council)

Danny Moody (Northants CALC)

Anne Ireson (Forum Administrator-KBC)

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|  | |  | | **Actions** |
| **18.RF.01**  **18.RF.02** | | **ELECTION OF CHAIR**  **RESOLVED** that Councillor James Hakewill be elected Chair of the Rural Forum for the ensuing municipal year.  **APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR**  **RESOLVED** that Councillor David Watson be appointed Deputy Chair of the Rural Forum for the ensuing municipal year. |  |
| **18.RF.03** | | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Andrew Macredie (Pytchley), Nick Richards (Wilbarston) and Brendan Coleman (KBC). |  |
| **18.RF.04** | | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  Councillor Jim Hakewill declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9 on the agenda (Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan) as a landowner in Braybrooke and stated he would leave the meeting room during any discussion thereon if necessary. |  |
| **18.RF.05** | | **MINUTES**  **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Rural Forum held on 2nd February 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the addition of the following councillors to the list of those present at the meeting:-  Councillor Hilary Bull (Broughton)  Councillor Peter Hooton (Rushton) |  |
| **18.RF.06** | | **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**  None. |  |
| **18.RF.07** | | **PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM**  Helen Edwards (Head of Democratic and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer at KBC) and Danny Moody (Northants CALC) were welcomed to the meeting.  The Head of Democratic and Legal Services introduced the document entitled “Future Northants”, which was currently being consulted upon following an invitation by the Government for the eight local authorities across Northamptonshire to submit proposals to restructure local government in Northamptonshire. The invitation had followed the publication of the Northamptonshire Best Value Inspection Report in March 2018.  Danny Moody then addressed the Forum from the viewpoint of town and parish councils, outlining his interpretation of two clear stages to the consultation process, namely:-  18th June to 30th August Following the end of the consultation period on 22nd July, there could then be a submission to the Secretary of State on 30th August. All Council meetings held during the last week of August would be focused on the proposed joint submission. During this period the Chief Executives/Managing Directors of the eight Borough and District Councils were meeting weekly with fortnightly meetings including Council Leaders. The Secretary of State would only be interested in the structure of new authorities and little detail regarding delivery of services would be included.  30th August onwards Should the proposal be submitted consideration would be given to where and how services would be delivered, with new unitary councils coming into being on 1st April 2020. However, it was likely that much of this detail would be deferred for the new councils to make their own decisions upon.  It would be important to stress the importance of town and parish councils without overselling aspirations, capacity and roles, given that the total Northamptonshire precept of town and parish councils was currently less than £15m. The Forum noted that it was anticipated that the role of town and parish councillors would be broadly similar to that currently. Roles may be enhanced but this would be optional dependent upon aspirations and resources.  Members of the Forum noted that as the Rural Forum did not form part of the consultation process, all its members were urged to respond individually to the consultation, which would end on 22nd July. Further information was available online on the website [www.futurenorthants.co.uk](http://www.futurenorthants.co.uk) and two consultation events had been organised as follows.  North Northants – 2.00 pm on Thursday, 12th July at the Castle, Wellingborough  West Northants – 6.30 pm on Tuesday, 3rd July at The Forum, Towcester  Attendance at either event was required to be pre-registered on the above website.  The guidelines for the consultation were outlined and members of the Forum noted that, as these were very specific and clearly set out by the government, there was no room for alternative proposals. Responders were required to focus on the look and feel of the proposed new councils and the relationship between town and parish councils and other public sector organisations such as the Police and Health Services.  Each District or Borough Council would consider responses at full Council meetings to be held at the end of August and decide whether or not to be part of a joint proposal going forward to the Secretary of State.  During debate the following issues were raised:-  Consultation and Questionnaire  Some members of the Forum felt that the questionnaire was too broad and was pitched at too high a level, and on this basis the second stage of the process as outlined by Danny Moody would be the most important stage for town and parish councils. Some members felt that town and parish councillors were not qualified or knowledgeable enough to take such a high level view, as there was uncertainty about how services would be delivered. However, the alternative view was expressed that it would be dangerous not to emphasise the importance of town and parish councils through the consultation exercise, especially as rural areas could suffer from financial cutbacks as a result of the reorganisation.  The Forum was advised that part of the reason the consultation was pitched at a high level was that new councils would need to make their own decisions on how they would work. The two councils would operate as two distinct and separate entities responsible for their own areas and would deliver all services in that area unless there were arrangements for shared services in place.  Elections in 2019  It was possible that town and parish elections in 2019 could be postponed until 2020. The Forum was advised that the Secretary of State would make the final decision on whether to delay Borough and District Elections, but could decide that town and parish elections go ahead in 2019 but with a five year term of office, whilst postponing Borough and District elections until 2020, when elections to the new unitary authorities would take place.  During debate, members of the Forum expressed differing views. On the one hand it was felt to be vital that Parish and Town Councillors were clear about their role in the new local government structure before being nominated for election. Prior information on how and by whom services would be delivered before elections took place was also felt to be important. Some members felt that the practicalities of having two elections would be too complicated and costly. The general consensus was that it would be advantageous for towns and parishes to have the opportunity to have a say in shaping local services, whenever elections were held.  Finance  Members of the Forum sought clarification on the contents of the NCC Best Value Inspection report. It was noted that the Inspector did not have a remit to comment on District and Borough Councils and therefore any comments made about problems and failures that had been identified in the report were entirely about NCC. The invitation letter had signalled that the Oxford-Cambridge-Milton Keynes arc should be taken into account and infrastructure and housing requirements considered at greater levels.  Given the new authorities were likely to inherit a financial deficit, there would be a real challenge as to how this deficit could be tackled by new authorities whilst taking advantage of any additional funding opportunities to deliver growth in North Northamptonshire. Concern was expressed regarding the potential for a rise in Council Tax and also what additional services may be required to be paid for in the future by town and parish councils, such as had happened recently with street lighting.  Parishing of Currently Unparished Areas  Following a short debate it was agreed that currently unparished areas (Kettering town) should be parished. It was noted that the Borough Council of Wellingborough had recently agreed to conduct a Community Governance Review of its area, although this had not yet commenced.  **RESOLVED** that the Borough Council be asked to take into account the following views of the Rural Forum when making its submission to the consultation:-  (i) Town and Parish Council Elections should take place at the same time as Borough and District Elections  (Voting For: 9; Against 2; Not Voting 2)  (ii) The town of Kettering, currently unparished, should be one or a number of Parishes  (Voting For: 11; Against 1; Not Voting 1)  (iii) An email should be sent to all town and parish councillors reminding them that the consultation should be responded to individually in order to make views known. |  |
| **18.RF.08**  **18.RF.09**  **18.RF.10** | | **SITE SPECIFIC PART 2 LOCAL PLAN: DRAFT PLAN – CONSULTATION**  A report was submitted which made members of the Forum aware of the consultation on the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan.  Simon Richardson (Development Manager – KBC) addressed the Forum outlining the main points of the report and explained that Part 1 of the Local Plan was the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and contained policies in respect of developments of 500+ houses, whereas the Part 2 Local Plan provided policies to cover Kettering Borough and included identification of sites for housing (less than 500 houses), employment, recreation and other land uses.  It was noted that the Part 2 Local Plan was still at an informal offstage in the process, and fitted with the timeframe for the proposed local government reorganisation. The SSP2 timetable was outlined as follows:-  Consultation 22nd June to 3rd August 2018  Pre-submission Plan October-December 2018  Examination of Policies June 2019  Adoption December 2019  A broad explanation of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor growth proposal was given, it was noted that at the present time, it was unclear as to how this would affect the area and investment in infrastructure.  During debate, Members of the Forum welcomed the consultation, commenting that for many parishes it represented protection of their communities and areas, and provided opportunities to ensure the benefits of employment or enhancing areas of green space, whilst allowing a level of growth to enable communities to evolve at a pace people were comfortable with.  Discussion was held on the status of Neighbourhood Plans within the process. It was noted that the Plan did not look to discourage Neighbourhood Plans but rather adopt a document that reflected community views that would otherwise be contained in Neighbourhood Plans. The Forum was assured that Kettering Borough Council supported the development of Neighbourhood Plans and it was noted that some old Local Plan policies were still in existence.  **RESOLVED** that the consultation on the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan be noted.  **POLICE STATISTICS**  **RESOLVED** that in the absence of a police officer, the Police Statistics be taken as read.  **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**  The following items were noted for future meetings of the Forum:-   * Police Statistics (4th October) * An update on the various reports regarding the situation at NCC (4th October) * Solar Panels on Buildings Update (4th October) * The Concept of Parishing for Kettering town * Cransley Park Development update * Kettering Town Centre Highways Improvements * Business Rates Update * Oxford-Cambridge-Milton Keynes Arc – Update (4th October plus 1-2 sides A4 and invite Councillor Lloyd Bunday to the meeting) * Unitary Authorities Update (4th October) * Loss of Bus Services in Rural Areas (4th October) * Broadband Consultation Results and Update (4th October) * Travellers Update (4th October)   It was agreed that the item relating to truck stops be taken off the programme of future items following an update by the Chair of Orton Parish Meeting.  It was agreed that as Cransley Park was now moving forwards, this should also be taken off the programme of future agenda items. |  |
| **18.RF.11** | | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |

It was noted that the next meeting of the Rural Forum would take place on 4th October 2018.

**THANKS**

Warkton Parish Council was thanked for hosting the meeting at the newly refurbished Village Hall. It was noted that the work had been nominated for a Civic Society Rose Bowl award. All members of the Rural Forum were invited to the official opening by the Duke of Buccleuch and presentation of the Rose Bowl on 17th July at 6.00 pm.

Danny Moody was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 9:00pm)

Signed ……………………………………………..

Chair

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