



BASSETLAW

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

AGENDA

Meeting to be held in
The Council Chamber,
Retford Town Hall,
on
Wednesday, 17th April 2013
at
7.00 p.m.

(Please note time and venue)

**(Please turn off mobile telephones during meetings.
In case of emergency, Members/officers can be contacted on the Council's mobile
telephone: 07702 670209)**

Bassetlaw—Serving North Nottinghamshire

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

Membership 2012/13

Councillors H. M. Brand, D. Challinor, S. Fielding, G. Freeman, M. T. Gray,
F. Hart, T. Rafferty, D. Pidwell and Mrs. K. Sutton

Substitute Members: Any Member

Quorum: 3 Members

Lead Officer for this Meeting

Mr. S. B. Brown - Ext. 3767

Administrator for this Meeting

Mrs. J. A. Hamilton - Ext. 3146

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

Wednesday, 17th April 2013

AGENDA

1. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES FOR 15 MINUTES TO ALLOW QUESTIONS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS (pages 5-6)
(Members' and Officers' attention is drawn to the attached notes and form)
 - (a) Members
 - (b) Officers
4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30TH JANUARY 2013 * (pages 7-12)
5. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION * (page 13)
6. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST * (page 15)

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

7. ITEMS SUBMITTED BY BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL
 - (a) Planning Protocol * (pages 17-22)
 - (b) Mapping Services Agreement +
 - (c) Developing the Relationship between District and Town/Parish Councils in Bassetlaw – joint presentation by BDC/NALC * (23-39)
 - (d) Lobbying on Rural Matters * (pages 41-46)
 - (e) First World War Commemorations +
8. ITEMS FROM PARISH COUNCILS

None

Exempt Information Items

The press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

SECTION B - ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None

Other Decisions

None

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

* Report attached

+ Verbal report

NOTES:

1. The papers enclosed with this Agenda are available in large print if required.
 2. Copies can be requested by contacting us on 01909-533146 or by e-mail julie.hamilton@bassetlaw.gov.uk
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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

HOW TO USE THIS FORM

There are now only two types of Declaration of Interest:

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)	Details can be found in the Councillors Code of Conduct which is contained in the Council's Constitution (a summary is printed below)
)	
)	
Non Pecuniary Interests)	

Upon receipt of the attached form you will need to enter the name and date of the Committee and your own name. By looking at the Agenda you will no doubt know immediately which Agenda Items will require you to make a Declaration of Interest.

Fill in the Agenda Item number in the first column of the form.

Enter the subject matter and any explanations you may wish to add in the second column.

In the third column you will need to enter **either** if you are declaring a disclosable pecuniary interest, **or** a non pecuniary interest.

The form must then be signed and dated. Please remember that if during the actual meeting you realise that you need to declare an interest on an additional Agenda Item number please simply amend the form during the meeting.

The form must be handed into the Committee Administrator at the end of the meeting.

NB. The following is a summary prepared to assist Members in deciding at the actual meetings their position on INTERESTS it is not a substitute for studying the full explanation regarding INTERESTS, which is contained in the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for Councillors, which is legally binding.

Members and Officers are welcome to seek, PREFERABLY WELL IN ADVANCE of a meeting advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer on INTERESTS.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

May relate to employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
May relate to sponsorship
May relate to contracts
May relate to interests in land
May relate to licences to occupy land
May relate to corporate tenancies
May relate to securities

Action to be Taken

Must disclose to the meeting
- existence of the interest
- the nature of the interest
- withdraw from the room
- not seek improperly to influence a decision on the matter

Non Pecuniary Interests

May relate to any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council
May relate to any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25
A Member may also have a non pecuniary interest where a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting wellbeing or the wellbeing of other council tax payers, or ratepayers or inhabitants in the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision.

Action to be Taken

Must disclose to the meeting
- existence of the interest
- the nature of the interest
- not seek improperly to influence a decision on the matter.

(Note – there are special provisions relating to “Sensitive Interests” which may exclude the above provisions in certain circumstances.)

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 30th January 2013 at Worksop Town Hall

Present:

Councillor H M Brand (Vice in Chair)

Councillors: P Douglas, S Fielding, G Freeman, T Rafferty and K Sutton.

Parish Council Representatives: T Adams, G Brown, H Burton, B Carter, S Chandler, A Cooke, A Haddon, L Jefferies, D Langmead and B Marchant.

Officers in attendance: G Blenkinsop, S Brown, N Cockrell, J Hamilton and K Tarburton (RCAN).

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and read out the Fire Alarm/Evacuation Procedure.)

21. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES FOR 15 MINUTES TO ALLOW QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillors D Challinor and F Hart; and Parish Councillors H Holdaway, A Stevenson and M Stokes.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) **Members**

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

(b) **Officers**

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER 2012

The Group was advised that feedback from the recently held Rural Conference is now available, either by email or as a hard copy. Contact: Stephen Brown, Senior Manager Support Services, 01909 533767, steve.brown@bassetlaw.gov.uk

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2012 be approved.

25. MINUTES FOR ACTION.

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action be received.

26. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

There were no Outstanding Minutes.

(Councillor T Rafferty joined the meeting at this point.)

SECTION A - ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

27. JOINT DISTRICT/PARISH ITEMS

(a) **Review of District and Town/Parish Relationship**

The Senior Manager Support Services updated the Group on this review, which is one of the Council's key priorities, and the work of the cross-party working group, which includes NALC representatives.

The working group considered ways in which a positive relationship can be progressed and how parish councils can be supported in their role in the community. These included: the role of the parish council and its clerk; communications between the two organisations; capacity issues; the usefulness of a parish charter; and the outcomes of the Rural Conference to help draft a Rural Action Plan.

Mr G Brown, one of the NALC representatives, added that the working group had held a number of meetings which were open and honest, and allowed a frank exchange of views. The key issues for the parishes are: engagement between the District and parishes, both strategic and tactical; how the outcomes from the Rural Conference can be taken forward; a possible merger of NALC and the Parish Councils Liaison Group (PCLG) to enable debate and dialogue; two-way communications and the use of new technology; the development of a parish council forum for all parish councillors within Bassetlaw and rural District councillors; a formal agenda item for BDC and NCC officers to provide updates; enhancing the role and remit of parish councillors; improving the skills and qualifications of parish clerks and councillors, and possible incentives; and training so that parish councils can take on more responsibilities, e.g. planning issues.

The Chair added that there is one more meeting of this Group (PCLG) and a report will be presented to the March Cabinet Meeting which will propose new processes to come into effect with the new municipal year.

AGREED that the verbal update on the District and Town/Parish relationship be noted.

28. ITEMS SUBMITTED BY BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

(a) **Localism Act 2011: Code of Conduct New Arrangements**

(Apologies were given for the absence of the Director of Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer due to ill health.)

The Senior Manager Support Services advised the Group that concerns had already been received by the Council's Legal Department on the draft new complaints process which had been circulated to all parish council clerks.

Mr G Brown reported that the process was originally biased towards District councillors and not parish councillors, and so the Monitoring Officer had agreed to draft a separate process for parishes, to which amendments had been suggested to make the process clearer. The main issue now is that there is to be a sub-committee of the Council's Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee which would hear any complaint if deemed necessary. This should be a joint District/parish panel and not comprise solely District councillors hearing complaints about parish councillors. The Localism Act requires a complaints process to be adopted but it does not state that District councillors should be a part of that process in respect of parish councillors. Therefore, unless the new arrangements provide a fair process for parish councillors, why should they be adopted by the parish councils? Indeed, one parish council is looking to write its own process.

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on the new arrangements for the Code of Conduct be noted.
2. Parish councils send any further comments on the proposed new arrangements to the Council via their Ward Member.

(b) Neighbourhood Planning and Funding for the Plans

N Cockrell, Planner, tabled information on Neighbourhood Plans and updated the Group on the concept of Neighbourhood Plans, which is a tool provided by the Localism Act for parish councils and community forums to enhance planning powers. They cannot be used to stop development but can be used to enhance existing development.

For each approved Neighbourhood Plan, the District Council can access Government funding of £30,000 which is available to the District Council to pay for the examination and referendum of Neighbourhood Plans. Sturton and Elkesley Parishes have each received £10,000 from the Awards for All funding to assist with their Plans; and Shireoaks is currently awaiting its decision from the National Lottery. From March 2013, further Government funding of up to £7,000 will be available to help parish councils with things like printing costs.

Information on potential Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue was also tabled. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities in England and Wales can require of most types of new development in their area (based on £x per sq m), in order to pay for the infrastructure needed to support development. CIL charges will be based on the size, type and location of the development proposed. 25% of the CIL charge will be given to the parish/community if a Neighbourhood Plan is in place and only 15% if no neighbourhood plan is in place. The money can be spent on community facilities within the village. CIL is non-negotiable and does not apply to developments which have already commenced. For unparished areas, i.e. Retford and Worksop, any CIL will be kept separately for projects which will arise through consultation with the communities. The Council's CIL will come into force in Spring 2013.

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on Neighbourhood Plans be noted.
2. Any parish council who has questions or who would like a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning should contact Natalie Cockrell, Planner, 01909 535151, natalie.cockrell@basetlaw.gov.uk

(c) Community Right to Bid: Assets of Community Value

Further to her presentation at the last meeting on the process for the Community Right to Bid, the Corporate Development and Policy Manager tabled information on Assets of Community Value.

Under the Localism Act, voluntary and community organisations can nominate any land or building to be included on a List of Assets of Community Value which will be managed by the District Council. A building or land in any ownership may be considered an asset of community value if its current principal use or recent use has been to further the social well-being or social interest of the local community and is likely to do so in the future. If a land/property owner wants to sell a registered property, they must tell the District Council. If a group wants to buy the asset, this will trigger a six-month moratorium period which gives the community group some time to develop a proposal and raise the required capital to bid for the property when it comes onto the open market at the end of the moratorium period.

There are some assets that are excluded from listing, an appeals process at both the listing and compensation stages of the process, enforcement measures in place, and compensation available to owners of assets if the process results in a loss of income or sale of an asset. Any compensation will have to be met through the New Burdens funding to local authorities or through an agreed “top up” payment that the Government have committed to pay for claims received in excess of £20k in any calendar year up to March 2015.

Information on both the Community Right to Bid and the Community Right to Challenge can be found on the Council’s website: www.bassetlaw.gov.uk . Simply type the words “Community Right to Bid” or “Community Right to Challenge” in the search facility. There is also information on some external funds that can be accessed to help communities use these new powers.

A nomination form for land or a buildings to be considered as an Asset of Community Value is also available on the Council’s website under the Planning pages and the contact for parishes will be Natalie Cockrell, 01909 535151, natalie.cockrell@bassetlaw.gov.uk

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on Assets of Community Value be noted.
2. The information pack be circulated to all parish council clerks with the Minutes.

(d) Dog Control Orders: Information about Consultation Proposals

(Apologies were given for the absence of the Principal Environmental Health Manager.)

The Senior Manager Support Services advised the Group that the consultation for the proposed Dog Control Orders, which will control dog fouling, dogs on leads, the number of dogs being walked by one person, etc., will commence on 4th March until 26th April 2013. Details are on the Council’s website and details will be sent to all parish councils clerks. Contact Julian Proudman, 01909 533171, julian.proudman@bassetlaw.gov.uk

AGREED that the verbal update on consultation regarding Dog Control Orders be noted.

(e) Civic Pride Scrutiny Review

The Senior Manager Support Services advised the Group that the Scrutiny Panel which was held last year cited evidence that “sustainable communities” which have high levels of community pride and involvement tend to have less problems and therefore require less public spending. Overall, it identified that there is a low level of identity with the District of Bassetlaw

but residents have a strong identity with their parish/community. All the parish councils were invited to submit information to the Scrutiny Panel, and some representatives gave evidence. Some of the issues will be incorporated into the Rural Action Plan. The report is available on the Council's website.

AGREED that the verbal update on 'Civic Pride' be noted.

- (f) Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/14 to 2015/16 and Value For Money Strategy – Cabinet Report 8.1.13

(Apologies were given from the Director of Resources and the Head of Finance and Property, who both had prior engagements.)

The Group was presented with the Cabinet Report from its 8th January 2013 meeting which made projections about the long-term financial sustainability of the Council in conjunction with current issues, and the financial support required for Bassetlaw's priorities in the Corporate Plan.

The report outlined: the Chancellor's Autumn Statement; the Formula Grant; the New Homes Bonus; Council Tax; Reserves and Balances; the Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit; staffing and downsizing costs; inflation; Service Improvements; Value For Money; and preparing for the future. Other influencing factors include: the new National Non-Domestic Rates; the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme; the "bedroom tax"; "second home taxation"; the introduction of Universal Credit; the New Homes Bonus; and insurance liability for which the Council's share is £340,000.

Local government has taken the biggest cut in public services and Bassetlaw's reduction in funding of 33% equates to £3.8m. A referendum is needed for Council Tax to be raised above 2% so many local authorities are imposing a 1.9% increase. Decreased income due to the economic downturn has also had an effect, e.g. planning fees, land charges and car parking. Bassetlaw District Council has made £7.3m savings since 2005/6 by reducing service budgets and achieving efficiencies. Staffing is now at 373 ftes, from 486, excluding the transfer of leisure staff to Barnsley Premier Leisure.

Most local authorities are making compulsory redundancies, some are only receiving funding for one year at a time, some are now considered "unviable", and others are in danger of being taken over. The report outlined three strategic choices for the future of Bassetlaw, i.e. either by going "up", "sideways" or "down"; such organisation change will take time to plan and deliver.

Mr D Langmead asked if "the Council provides value for money to all its taxpayers" particularly rural taxpayers who are "double-taxed" through the parish precept. The Senior Manager Support Services replied that the District Auditor applies specific criteria and that he would look into this and get back to Mr Langmead.

AGREED that the contents of the Cabinet Report be noted.

29. ITEMS FROM PARISH COUNCILS

None.

30. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other business to be discussed the Chairman closed the meeting, after reminding all parish councils to forward any items in readiness for the next meeting scheduled for 17th April 2013.

MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION SHEET

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

30/1/13

FROM: Senior Democratic Services Officer TO: Parish Councils
SDSO = Senior Democratic Services Officer

The following decisions are brought to your attention for action by the appropriate officers within your Service:

28. ITEMS SUBMITTED BY BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

(a) **Localism Act 2011: Code of Conduct New Arrangements**

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on the new arrangements for the Code of Conduct be noted.
2. Parish councils send any further comments on the proposed new arrangements to the Council via their Ward Member.

Parish Councils

(b) **Neighbourhood Planning and Funding for the Plans**

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on Neighbourhood Plans be noted.
2. Any parish council who has questions or who would like a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning should contact Natalie Cockrell, Planner, 01909 535151, natalie.cockrell@basetlaw.gov.uk

Parish Councils

(c) **Community Right to Bid: Assets of Community Value**

AGREED that:

1. The verbal update on Assets of Community Value be noted.
2. The information pack be circulated to all parish council clerks with the Minutes.

SDSO

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

Wednesday, 17th April 2013

OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

Members please note that the updated positions are shown in bold type following each item.

<u>Min. No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Officer Responsible</u>
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None

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON GROUP

17th April 2013

REPORT OF PLANNING SERVICES MANAGER

PLANNING PROTOCOL

Cabinet: Community Prosperity
Contact: Richard Schofield
Ext: 3493

1. Public Interest Test

The author of this report, Richard Schofield, has determined that the report is not confidential.

2. Purpose of the Report

To receive and consider the draft Planning Protocol

3. Background and Discussion

3.1 It is to the benefit of the District Council (in its role as local planning authority) and Parish Councils (in their role as statutory consultees on relevant planning matters and as elected bodies representing local communities) to ensure that, while agreement may not always be possible, constructive communication exists between them. To aid this communication and understanding, the Planning Services Manager has produced a draft Protocol (attached) this sets out the expectations upon both parties.

3.2 It is intended that the Protocol will be kept under review and can be adjusted to reflect any learning points developed.

4. Implications

a) For service users

The Protocol aims to provide a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the District and Parish Councils on planning matters.

b) Strategic & Policy

Rural issues have been identified as a priority area for the Council.

c) Financial - Ref:

None from this report.

d) Legal – Ref: 123/04/13

The Protocol is a guidance document. It has no formal status in the consideration and determination of planning matters.

e) Human Resources

None.

f) Community Safety, Equalities, Environmental

The District Council's Equality Scheme recognises rural inclusion as an area for specific consideration.

g) Whether this is a key decision, and if so the reference number.

No.

5. Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The Protocol can either be accepted or not. It is possible for amendments and additions to be proposed.

6. Recommendations

That the Protocol be supported by the Liaison Group and all Parish Councils be invited to comment upon it.

Background Papers

Location

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PARISH COUNCILS PLANNING PROTOCOL

The vast majority of planning applications relating to Bassetlaw District are determined by Bassetlaw District Council as the local planning authority (although Nottinghamshire County Council is the local planning authority for its own development proposals (e.g. schools) and also for minerals and waste applications). The District Council is also responsible for producing a local plan (comprising of 'Core Strategy' and 'Site Allocations' documents), supplementary planning documents, Conservation Area Appraisals and other relevant planning documents.

One of the most important aspects of the role of Bassetlaw's 45 Parish and Town Council's is considering, and commenting on, planning applications in their parishes. They also have input to the development of the local plan, through formal and informal consultation processes

The District Council is bound to determine planning applications in line with the adopted Core Strategy, although the weight and emphasis placed upon individual policies will vary in relation to other relevant material planning considerations, of which the Council will have to take account. Thus, while the Council will consider carefully any comments made by Parish Councils, which carry a degree of weight in relation to planning and other relevant applications (e.g. those concerning protected trees), it will not always agree with them.

It is to the benefit of the District Council (in its role as local planning authority) and Parish Councils (in their role as statutory consultees on relevant planning matters and as elected bodies representing local communities) to ensure that, while agreement may not always be possible, constructive communication exists between them. This Protocol sets out the expectations upon both parties.

Planning applications

The District Council will:

- Consult Parish Councils about all planning applications received in respect of their parish relating to:
 - Applications for planning permission, listed building and advertisement consent and demolition within a conservation area¹;
 - Telecommunications equipment, proposals relating to agricultural and forestry and demolition requiring prior consent under the notifications procedure;
 - Consultation applications for development by Government Departments and public utilities.

- Give Parish Councils:

¹ N.B. Government is currently consulting on a proposal to remove the need for Conservation Area Consent for demolition.

- 21 days to submit formal representations on applications;
 - 10 days to submit formal representations on submissions for agricultural and forestry buildings and demolition as there is a statutory requirement that these be determined by the District Council within 28 days from the date of receipt;
 - 21 days to submit formal representations on submissions for prior notification relating to telecommunications equipment;
 - 10 days for the submission of representations on proposals where there has been a significant amendment to an application (that is where, in the view of officers, the character of the development has materially changed).
- Provide direct assistance to Parish Councils in registering with and using the Public Access to view, respond to and track planning applications through to the issuing of a decision;
 - Notify Parish Councils, when time permits (i.e. if Parish Council comments have been received within the agreed time period), where their comments differ significantly from the likely decision being proposed by the Council in relation to a specific planning application. Parish Councils may wish to arrange a meeting with the relevant case officer to discuss their concerns and this will be accommodated whenever possible;
 - Report to the Planning Committee as necessary a summary of the representations provided by Parish Councils on specific applications (on the understanding that a full copy of the representations will be available for inspection on the planning file), highlighting these representations where they are clearly contrary to the officer recommendation;
 - Notify Parish Councils when applications on which they have submitted representations are to be considered by Planning Committee.

Parish Councils will:

- Respond promptly in writing, in accordance with the timescales described above, to consultation opportunities on planning and other relevant applications received by the District Council;
- Set out clearly, in writing the planning reasons for an objection to, or support for, a particular planning or other relevant application. Where a Parish Council has no strong views in relation to such applications, it will indicate that it has no objection in order to avoid any ambiguity;

- Notify the District Council if they wish to address the Planning Committee in relation to an application in their Parish (where that application is to be considered by Planning Committee);
- Respond promptly and constructively to requests for information from the District Council to assist with improvements to the function of the Service.

Planning Enforcement

The District Council will:

- Investigate any alleged breaches of planning control, reported to it by Parish Councils, in line with its agreed targets;
- Where necessary, seek to regularise any breaches through negotiation or the submission of retrospective planning applications;
- Where necessary, take enforcement action against breaches of planning control, through to prosecution if required.

The Parish Council will:

- Bring to the District Council's attention any alleged breaches of planning control, including precise details and location of the alleged breach;
- Be aware that the nature of the planning enforcement process and legislation means that breaches of planning control, where it is deemed expedient to address them, can take a considerable time to resolve.

Strategic Planning and other matters

The District Council will:

- Consult with relevant Parish Councils on the development of strategic planning documents (notably the development of the local plan), Supplementary Planning Documents and Conservation Area Appraisals;
- Provide assistance with the production of Neighbourhood Plans (as resources permit) or guide Parish Councils towards sources of grant funding;
- Provide, on request or as felt necessary by the District Council, training courses for Parish Councils (either collectively or on an individual basis), to aid their

understanding of the planning process and matters that relate to the determination of planning applications.

Parish Councils will:

- Respond promptly in writing, in accordance with any timescales given, to consultation opportunities on strategic planning documents (notably the development of the local plan), Supplementary Planning Documents and Conservation Area Appraisals;
- Provide assistance to the District Council in publicising consultation events and providing consultation venues when required.

Further information

Useful guidance, by CPRE and NALC, on the planning system generally, Neighbourhood Planning specifically and on responding to planning applications may be found through the following links:

www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/1903-how-to-respond-to-planning-applications

www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/2689-how-to-shape-where-you-live-a-guide-to-neighbourhood-planning

www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/2654-planning-explained

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCILS LIAISON GROUP

17th April 2013

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGER SUPPORT SERVICES

**DEVELOPING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
DISTRICT AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS IN BASSETLAW**

Cabinet: Support Services
Contact: Stephen Brown
Ext: 3767

1. Public Interest Test

The author of this report, Stephen Brown, has determined that the report is not confidential.

2. Purpose of the Report

To receive a verbal report from District Councillor Hazel Brand and Parish Councillor Gordon Brown (Chairman of Bassetlaw Branch of NALC) on the recommendations arising from a joint working party of representatives from Bassetlaw District Council and the Notts Association of Local Councils (Bassetlaw Branch) to examine how the relationship between the District Councils can be strengthened and improved.

3. Background and Discussion

3.1 The District Council has indicated that rural issues will be one of the key priorities for the authority. Part of the development of this agenda is an examination of how the relationship between the District and Parish Councils can be improved and strengthened.

3.2 The District Council has always recognised that Parish Councils are the 'local' level and oldest form of local government. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, Parish Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their communities. They offer a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities. In turn, the Parishes recognise the strategic role of the District Council of balancing the needs of the wider community.

3.3 Over the recent time there have been a number of developments arising from both the national and local situation that are/will impact on the future agenda. It is felt these issues will need to form part of the dialogue with parish representatives:

Localism Act – there have been presentations to Parishes as the detail from the Act have started to emerge. Key focus has been:

- Community Right to Challenge
- Community Right to Bid
- Neighbourhood Planning

Standards in Public – a recent training session was held on:

- The new Code of Conduct
- The role of independent reviewers in relation to complaints
- The relationship with local councils in dealing with complaints under the new Scheme
- Disclosable pecuniary interests

Rural Ambassador – link to Cabinet

All councils are facing some major uncertainties in 2013/14:

- The change to the NNDR (National Non Domestic Rate Relief) system
- The change to the council tax benefit system
- A new two year Local Government Finance Settlement; and limits on income through the council tax referendum

3.4 There is a recognition from both the District Council and Parish representatives that there needs to be a more dynamic relationship between the various partners. The financial arrangements have largely been in place for a significant number of years. They no longer reflect the current situation or the pressures on resource. The public sector financial climate is such that Parishes will need to be more active in seeking alternative funding for local initiatives (there are existing examples of local good practice). All sides have recognised that the current consultation/engagements arrangements do not facilitate the sort of relationship that will need to exist between the District and the Parishes if we are to effectively address the challenges facing our local communities.

3.5 The Parish Council Liaison Group considered a report on these issues and the authority supported the recommendation to establish a Joint Working Party. This group would examine the current remit of the Parish Council Liaison Group in promoting a two way dialogue between Parishes and the District and consider whether an alternative might be more relevant and effective, and look at the broader issues of communications between the District Council and parishes.

WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Bassetlaw District Council

District Councillor Hazel Brand (Chair)
District Councillor Patricia Douglas
District Councillor Sybil Fielding
District Councillor Frank Hart
District Councillor Kath Sutton

Town/Parish Councils

Parish Councillor Gordon Brown (Mattersey PC/NALC)
Steve Bowman – (Executive Officer Harworth Town Council)
Councillor Hugh Burton (NALC)
Peter Goulding – Clerk to Carlton-in-Lindrick Parish Council
Dave Langmead – Clerk to North Leverton with Habbleshthorpe PC, North and South Wheatley PC, South Leverton PC and Sturton-le-Steeple PC

3.6 The full report and the recommendations from the Working Party is attached. The recommendations are being submitted to the District Council's Cabinet for consideration.

4. Implications

a) For service users

An element of the review would include access to services and information for rural residents.

b) Strategic & Policy

Rural issues have been identified as a priority area for the Council.

c) Financial - Ref: 14/52

The review will be contained with existing resources.

d) Legal – Ref: 122/04/13

None.

e) Human Resources

None.

f) Community Safety, Equalities, Environmental

The District Council's Equality Scheme recognises rural inclusion as an area for specific consideration.

g) Whether this is a key decision, and if so the reference number.

No.

5. Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

The options are either to support a review taking place or not. As the Localism Act will impact on the District/Parish relationship and that there is an outstanding commitment to review the Parish Charter, it is recommended the review should be progressed.

6. Recommendations

That the Liaison Group notes the report and its recommendations.

Background Papers

Location

DISTRICT/PARISH RELATIONS REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The District Council has indicated that rural issues will be one of the key priorities for the authority. Part of the development of this agenda is an examination of how the relationship between the District and Parish Councils can be improved and strengthened.

The District Council has always recognised that Parish Councils are the 'local' level and oldest form of local government. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, Parish Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their communities. They offer a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities. In turn, the Parishes recognise the strategic role of the District Council of balancing the needs of the wider community.

Over the recent time there have been a number of developments arising from both the national and local situation that are/will impact on the future agenda. It is felt these issues will need to form part of the dialogue with parish representatives:

Localism Act – there have been presentations to Parishes as the detail from the Act have started to emerge. Key focus has been:

- Community Right to Challenge
- Community Right to Bid
- Neighbourhood Planning

Standards in Public – a recent training session was held

- The new Code of Conduct
- The role of independent reviewers in relation to complaints
- The relationship with local councils in dealing with complaints under the new Scheme
- Disclosable pecuniary interests

Rural Ambassador – link to Cabinet

All councils are facing some major uncertainties in 2013/14:

- The change to the NNDR (National Non Domestic Rate Relief) system
- The change to the council tax benefit system

- A new two year Local Government Finance Settlement; and limits on income through the council tax referendum

There is a recognition from both the District Council and Parish representatives that there needs to be a more dynamic relationship between the various partners. The financial arrangements have largely been in place for a significant number of years. They no longer reflect the current situation or the pressures on resource. The public sector financial climate is such that Parishes will need to be more active in seeking alternative funding for local initiatives (there are existing examples of local good practice). All sides have recognised that the current consultation/engagements arrangements do not facilitate the sort of relationship that will need to exist between the District and the Parishes if we are to effectively address the challenges facing our local communities.

The Parish Council Liaison Group considered a report on these issues and the authority supported the recommendation to establish a Joint Working Party. This group would examine the current remit of the Parish Council Liaison Group in promoting a two way dialogue between Parishes and the District and consider whether an alternative might be more relevant and effective, and look at the broader issues of communications between the District Council and parishes.

WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Bassetlaw District Council

District Councillor Hazel Brand (Chair)
 District Councillor Patricia Douglas
 District Councillor Sybil Fielding
 District Councillor Frank Hart
 District Councillor Kath Sutton

Town/Parish Councils

Parish Councillor Gordon Brown (Mattersey PC/NALC)
 Steve Bowman – (Executive Officer Harworth Town Council)
 Councillor Hugh Burton (NALC)
 Peter Goulding – Clerk to Carlton-in-Lindrick Parish Council
 Dave Langmead – Clerk to North Leverton with Hablesthorpe PC, North and South Wheatley PC, South Leverton PC and Sturton-le-Steeple PC

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OBJECTIVE

To consider mechanisms for providing a positive relationship between the District and Parish Councils and supporting their roles in serving the local community.

To make recommendations to District Council's Cabinet on proposed improvements.

To give consideration to the following issues (and others that may be identified during the review):-

Parish Council Liaison Group

To review the role and function of the Parish Council Liaison Group as the primary mechanism for providing the decision making interface with Parish Councils. To consider how effective that Group is in achieving the objective set by the review.

Communications

Examine how major strategic and tactical issues can be discussed in a manner that facilitates a two way engagement between the District and Parish Councils and allows earlier input into the decision making process and provides feedback.

Consider how the use of new technology could improve two-way communication.

Pursue closer links and use of Bassetlaw NALC meetings in order to share capacity and encourage wider involvement.

Improve links between District Councillors, as Ward Members, with Parish Councils.

Capacity

Examine the resource and capacity of Parish Councils and mechanisms for continuation of service provision in light of the financial constraints placed upon the District Council.

Consider how capacity and training support for Clerks and Parish Councillors could be improved.

Other

Review the usefulness of the Parish Charter.

Take heed of the outcomes from Rural Conference and development of a Rural Action Plan for Bassetlaw.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Review will be:-

- A time limited working group (November 2012 – March 2013)
- Frequency of meetings to be determined by the Members of the Working Group, but not less than monthly
- The Working Party may co-opt others, as it feels appropriate, to its business or a specific issue
- There will be no substitutes
- To report recommendations to Cabinet

CURRENT SITUATION

Opinions about the District Council

- Perception that rural issues are not high on the agenda
- Not articulating its view on the future of local government funding, future structures of local government
- Appears unwilling to involve Parishes in consultation on major decisions
- Patronising towards Parish Councils
- Poor communications
- It is felt that there is too much party politics and that influence matters more than working for the general good of the community. Elections by thirds do not assist this situation.
- Lack of understanding of how Parish Councils operate

Opinions about Parish Councils

- Often very insular and unwilling to contribute to wider issues
- Poor communications within some Parish Councils
- Quality of some Parish Councillors is questionable
- A number are very small and lack capacity
- Poor links and co-operation between Parish Councils
- Some poor Clerks, who do not assist effective communication
- Poor understanding of how District Councils work
- Pressure on available time for Clerks and lack of support
- Lack of use of new technology and lack of support

Opinions about the Parish Council Liaison Group

- Seen as a “talking shop” with no outcomes
- Lack of attendance by Cabinet Members and Management Team
- Confusion about attendance by Parish Councils
- Felt to be too formal and not aiding communication

- How major strategic and tactical issues can be discussed in a manner that facilitates a two way engagement and earlier in the decision making process and provides feedback
- Closer links and use of Bassetlaw NALC meetings in order to share capacity and encourage wider involvement
- Look at the Rushcliffe Annual Conference Model that involves a range of issues, all Parishes invited, Senior Members and Officers
- Capacity and training support for Clerks and Parish Councillors
- Better use of new technology to aid two-way communication
- Improving links between District Councillors, as Ward Members, with Parish Councils

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The following are the main form of contact between the District council and the Town/Parish Councils in Bassetlaw:

A: Parish Councils Liaison Group

This feeds into the District Council's decision making process with its minutes being reported to Cabinet. As such it has Terms of Reference under the Constitution as follows:-

1. To undertake formal liaison with nominees of the Parish Council's Associations representing parishes within the District with a view to securing harmonious relations and mutual exchange of information and comment to the benefit of the community and the quality of life.

Parent Body

The Parish Councils Liaison Group is a Consultation Group reporting to the Cabinet.

Appointment of Substitutes

Any Member of the District Council may act as a substitute Member to the Parish Councils Liaison Group.

Lead Officer

Senior Manager Support Services

The Working Group undertook a quick assessment of perceptions of the Liaison Group.

Strength

Regular
Cross Party
Links to Cabinet
Officer attendance (if requested)
All Parishes invited to submit
Question Time
Lack of awareness
Talking shop/no outputs

Weakness

No early involvement
Too formal
Lack of influence
Whose agenda?
Lack of items from Parishes
Attendance not clear

B: Bassetlaw NALC Branch meetings

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is the nationally recognised membership and support organisation representing the interests of around 9,000 parish councils and many parish meetings in England. NALC is made up of 40 County Associations of which the Nottinghamshire Association (Notts ALC) is one. Every parish council in Bassetlaw is a member of the Notts ALC.

Notts ALC is represented in Bassetlaw by the local committee which meets four times per year with Parish Councils to discuss matters of mutual interest to Parish Councils within the District. Most of the other Districts in Nottinghamshire at one time also had local committees but now the Bassetlaw committee is the only remaining one of its type.

Attendance at the quarterly meetings is quite variable with anything from 10% to 50% of parishes being represented. All the members of the committee are unpaid volunteers in addition to their other roles within the community.

The District Council provides facilities for quarterly meetings where representatives of the District, County and other relevant organisations are able to explain their policies and processes to representatives of the Parish Councils in Bassetlaw.

C: North East Bassetlaw Forum

The focus of the NEBF is on issues of common interest to our members; it tries to avoid duplicating the role of the PC Liaison Committee, many of the issues do not directly concern liaison with BDC.

It is a “doing” rather than a consultative body. Its aim is to support collective working amongst Parish Councils and Community Groups in the area covered by the Parishes of Misterton, West Stockwith, Walkeringham, Beckingham, Gringley-on-the-Hill, Everton, Mattersey, Ranskill (recently joined) and Misson. There is a possibility of Torworth joining - this would complete the Forum in terms of the Wards we considered as NE Bassetlaw. As well as the Parish Councils, the Misterton Area Partnership is also a member.

In particular the Forum seeks to:

- Encourage greater involvement from local communities in issues that affect them
- Identify specific issues and develop local responses
- Articulate the needs of the area
- Provide a forum for service providers to gain closer contact with residents and local organisations
- Share best practice

We invite outside speakers to talk on topics of common interest, e.g. CEO and Chairman of the new Isle of Axholme and North Notts Water Management Board, representatives of the police, an IT company, Martin Suthers on localism and the lengthsman scheme.

All meetings are open to the public, who have the opportunity to raise issues. The forum has recently launched its own web site.

On behalf of the Forum members we are represented on the Robin Hood Airport Consultative Committee. RCAN is also represented at all meetings.

The NEBF chairman is also a member of the network established by Cllr Hazel Brand to help advise her on rural issues in her role as advisor to the BDC Cabinet.

Recent work includes Village Web sites, Rural Broadband, Policing, Affordable Housing, Transport and establishing a Clerk’s Forum.

D: Individual Service contact with Parish(es)

Key contacts include Planning, Engineers and Environmental Health. These are generally seen to be positive. Particularly work has included work on Flooding, involvement in the Local Development Framework and Neighbourhood Plans. There are a couple of areas that

work with Support Services/Customer Services on access to services utilising videoconferencing.

KEY ISSUES

The Working Group identified a number of specific areas for consideration that were seen to underpin the future relationship:

1: HOW STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL ISSUES CAN BE CONSIDERED IN A MANNER THAT FACILITATES TWO WAY ENGAGEMENT

There needs to be a greater understanding what is happening in the public sector and the potential impact for the District and Parish Councils over the next five years.

Consideration needs to be given to creating closer links between Clerks and work at the ground level to generate interest and capacity within Parish Councils. The merit of trying to facilitate local groupings of parishes to provide a conduit for local issues to be fed into the decision making processes was discussed. A series of seminars could be established as a mechanism for developing a strategic framework. These would involve District Councillors as Ward Members. Topics might include:-

Finance for the Future
Planning

In this scenario the Parish Council Liaison Group would operate along the lines of a Panel. The discussion would be an open debate to facilitate wider engagement.

2: THE RUSHCLIFFE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Rural Conference forms a key part of Rushcliffe Borough Council's engagement with its Parish Councils. It takes the form of a series of seminars and workshops. It is well attended and Rushcliffe's Senior Councillors and the Management Team are all expected to attend and this assists with accessibility and involvement. The date is set in the corporate diary.

The recent Bassetlaw Rural Conference had established support for a similar approach locally.

3: UTILISING BASSETLAW NALC MEETINGS

Bassetlaw NALC branch meetings are regarded as a potential asset that could be developed. No other area in Nottinghamshire meets at the district level. The meetings are already supported by the District Council through the provision of free accommodation and administrative assistance.

AGREED that NALC Branch meetings and future consultation meetings be combined on the same date.

4: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION USING NEW TECHNOLOGY

The following suggestions were considered:

- Creating a Parish Council's Forum on the website

- Chairman and Clerks of every Parish Council should be prepared to receive communications via e-mail and given response timescales
- Use of Social Media techniques to be considered at a later stage

5: IMPROVING LINKS BETWEEN DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AND PARISH COUNCILLORS

The following suggestion was considered:-

- Every Parish Council should have a formal agenda item at the beginning of each meeting to allow two way feedback from District and County Councillors.

To make this proposal more effective it is recommended that more briefings on matters being considered by the Principal Councils need to be given to Ward Members to provide context for the dialogue. This could include more effective use of the quarterly rural update report given to the District Council's Cabinet.

6: PLANNING

One of the most important aspects of the role of Bassetlaw's 45 Parish and Town Council's is considering, and commenting on, planning applications in their parishes. They also have input to the development of the local plan, through formal and informal consultation processes. It is to the benefit of the District Council (in its role as local planning authority) and Parish Councils (in their role as statutory consultees on relevant planning matters and as elected bodies representing local communities) to ensure that, while agreement may not always be possible, constructive communication exists between them.

The development of a Protocol to help all parties better understand the nature of this relationship, would it was felt, be beneficial. Training and other opportunities for all Councillors to better understand the planning process and roles and responsibilities is also of assistance in improving relationships.

7: ENHANCING THE ROLE AND REMIT OF PARISH COUNCILS

Parish Councillor Brown provided an outline of the proposals that National Association of Local Councils are considering. This is in order to stimulate the debate about the future of Quality Parish Councils. It would also be an incentive for Parishes to raise their game by having qualified Clerks and trained Councillors. If Bassetlaw District Council were prepared to adopt these, it could place relationships at the leading edge.

It was recognised that most of these matters fall outside of the remit of the District Council, but it could possibly add to lobbying.

1. Authority to determine minor planning applications relating to their parish area.
2. The right to be a statutory consultee on all planning applications within or affecting their parish area.
3. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to any affordable housing proposal within their parish area.

4. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to the collection, processing, recycling or disposal of waste material arising from or brought to their parish area.
5. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to the provision, removal or redevelopment of sports and recreational facilities, footpaths and bridleways in their parish area.
6. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to the provision or removal of public lighting in their parish area.
7. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to traffic management and highway engineering in their parish area.
8. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to licensing applications within or affecting their parish area.
9. The right to be a statutory consultee with regard to HGV centre approvals and Traffic Management Orders.
10. The right to appoint a representative to sit on school governing bodies which have premises within their parish area.

8: CAPACITY OF PARISH COUNCILS

There is recognition that if parishes wish to develop their role and remit, this will require capacity and capabilities to be improved. Basic levels of training for both Parish Councillor and Clerks should be undertaken. A broad framework for planning, self-assessment, action and review, together with networking and comparison amongst other Councils and the sharing, supporting and developing members needs to be established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the District Council

Strategic

1. That the Parish Council Liaison Group as formally constituted by Bassetlaw District Council be disbanded and replaced by:-
 - i) Two half-day Rural Conferences a year to be held on different days of the week (including weekends) and attendance to include Cabinet Members and Senior Officers. These will be held at strategically important times in the municipal year so that parishes can contribute to the budget debate, and be instrumental in helping to implement the annual objectives.
 - ii) Informal liaison (with relevant contacts when appropriate) 3 to 4 times a year linked with the Bassetlaw NALC business meetings.

2. That the existing Parish Charter between Bassetlaw District Council and Parish Councils be reviewed and developed.
3. Examine how the principles of joint working, as outlined in the Local Government Association/National Association of Local Councils publication 'Modelling devolution – working together to deliver local services', can be progressed locally.
4. That the District Council work with the Bassetlaw Branch of NALC to identify areas and issues in which Parish Councils remit as a statutory consultee could be expanded.
5. That the possibility of Parish Councils determining minor planning applications be explored. A report on the issues and implications be produced.

Tactical

6. Better support for new parish clerks with provision of a BDC contact card for Clerk/Chairs and new Clerk information package.
7. That District Councillors are welcome at PC meetings and are given a dedicated time slot early on the agenda.

Development

8. Increase PC capability to handle increased responsibility
9. Consider a Member Development Charter for Parish Councillors/Clerks, as developed by NALC along the lines of the that produced by the LGA for District Councillors.
10. Use Rural Conference for general Parish Council development by raising awareness of the "bigger picture".
11. Work with NALC to provide specific training courses.

Information

12. Use District Council's quarterly rural update to provide information to Parish Councils.
13. Establish Parish Council Forum on BDC website.
14. Provide updates to Clerks/Chairs/Parish Councillors direct to PC e-mail address.

For the Parish Councils

15. Chairman and Clerks of every Parish Council should be prepared to receive communications via e-mail and distribute to parish members.

16. That all Parish Councils should have their own laptops rather than a Clerk's personal one. Common address formats should be used e.g. clerk@xxxparishcouncil, chair@xxxparishcouncil. This would ensure continuity and avoid communications and documents being lost when there were changes in key personnel.
17. Every Parish Council should have a formal agenda item towards the beginning of each meeting to allow two-way feedback from District and County Councillors

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON GROUP

17th April 2013

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGER SUPPORT SERVICES

LOBBYING ON RURAL MATTERS

Cabinet: Support Services
Contact: Stephen Brown
Ext: 3767

1. Public Interest Test

The author of this report, Stephen Brown, has determined that the report is not confidential.

2. Purpose of the Report

To update the Liaison Group on areas where Bassetlaw District Council has, either on its own, or with partners recently lobbied on rural matters.

3. Background and Discussion

3.1 Funding for rural Local Authorities

Bassetlaw is currently a member of the SPARSE Group within the LGA that represents rural local authorities. The Group has been lobbying heavily on the situation faced by the Financial Statement. They recently issued the following statement:-

SPARSE-RURAL was grateful that the Minister was able to see us twice during the consultation period and is similarly grateful that additional resources for rural areas have been found for next year. Nonetheless, the additional one-off £8.5m still means that the total grant to rural authorities has fallen about 2% more than that to urban authorities. This is despite a summer consultation that showed gains of more than £30m for the most sparsely-populated areas, gains that were reversed by the damping mechanism employed by the Government.

"Rural authorities are therefore some £70m worse off than they might reasonably have expected to be and - with so few discretionary services left - face deep cuts into their basic provision while their residents already pay higher council taxes than urban dwellers.

"We also note that the additional resources for rural fire authorities within the £8.5m – just £232k – still leaves rural fire services substantially under-

resourced compared to their urban counterparts and even widens the funding gap slightly.

"Having recognised the strength of our case, we are naturally disappointed that the Government has not made the additional funding a permanent feature of the system and, indeed, apparently intends to preserve the main funding distribution until 2020. It is nonsensical to produce formulae then make no progress towards implementing them for six years – presumably in 2020 we shall be told that there is only room for a small further re-distribution before we freeze for another six years? The simple truth is that the Government has decided that its priority is to pour resources into the urban south east in direct contradiction to where its formulae say they should go. "We also remain deeply concerned that the new business rate retention scheme will operate to the serious disadvantage of rural areas, particularly those furthest from major transport links. With the best will in the world many rural areas will be unable to attract major business ratepayers to the same extent as other parts of the country."

The Council has made its partners and local rural communities aware of this situation, both through the Rural Conference, Parish Liaison and briefings given by the interim Chief Executive and the Head of Finance to Parishes.

3.2 Ambulance Service in Bassetlaw – Health Panel Review – January 2013

This report was developed in response to local concerns about the Ambulance Service in Bassetlaw. The local community were greatly concerned to learn of proposals to close the Ambulance Stations in the district and replace them with a Hub at Kings Mill Hospital, Mansfield. Therefore, this review was not only timely but necessary to ensure the views of the district were heard. Throughout the review evidence was gathered from a wide range of people and sources. The evidence shows that rural areas like Bassetlaw have poorer response times than urban areas and that the proposals favour urban areas. The review put forward a strong case to retain our Ambulance Stations and for improved services in the district.

It soon became evident that the vast majority of consultees believe Retford and Worksop Ambulance Stations should remain in situ and be enhanced where necessary. The Panel also made recommendations for more investment in the Community First Responders who volunteer their time to help those in need and for better engagement between EMAS and the public.

There are currently 29 CFRs as at January 2013 in Bassetlaw, and they cover the following areas:

- Carlton in Lindrick 2
- Clarborough 3
- Harworth 3
- Misterton (Covering the surrounding 5 villages) 13
- North Leverton 1
- Retford 7

Survival rates in rural areas increase from 10% to 40% for cardiac arrest when there is a Community First Responder Group. There is evidence to suggest that in cases of cardiac arrest, for every minute that goes by without defibrillation a patient's chances of survival decrease by 10%.

The review heard that during the five months June to September 2012 there were 73 calls picked up by the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS); this equates to less than one call a day. Yorkshire Ambulance Service provided information about the cross border agreement and said that there was no extra capacity for them to attend any more calls for EMAS without it impacting on their service. EMAS has to manage their resources to ensure that all areas have sufficient coverage. There is a concern that there will be more calls passed to YAS in the Harworth area if the proposals go ahead and ambulances are being diverted to urban areas and away from the rural areas. Panel Members concern is what will happen if YAS can't take the call.

There was cross party unanimity that there was no confidence in the proposed changes and believe that resources need to stay within the district. There was great deal of community support and these were included in the Health Panel's response to the consultation. The Health Panel unanimously urged EMAS to reconsider their proposals and listen to what local people have said. Members will have seen the recent announcements about the review.

3.3 The Rural Voice in the Sheffield City Region

The Council's Rural Ambassador represented the authority at a meeting on 27th February hosted by Sheffield Hallam University Chaired by the former Head of Sheffield's Planning Service and past (for eight years) Chair of the Peak District National Park, Mr Narendra Bajaria CBE. The aim of the meeting was to consider the establishment of a rural voice for the City Region. It is recognised that there is currently little recognition of the importance of the rural economy to the City Region (over 250,000 people live in communities defined as "rural" within the SCR). Current grant schemes within the region do not reflect the nature and operation of many rural based operations – this is recognised as a matter for national attention.

The SCR have identified the opportunity to address rural matters within the review of the Economic strategy. A group of the Economic Development Officers are dealing with this. A "rural champion" at Board level looks unlikely. Rural interest can be pursued particularly through the Leaders of the Districts. An informal rural network maybe established across the SCR.

3.4 Welfare Reform – Universal Credit

The move to Universal Credit (UC) represents the single most important Welfare Reform in a generation. UC aims to simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working – age benefits into a single streamlined payment that is flexible to accommodate personal circumstances, simple to access and administer and seeks to ensure people are better off in work. It will be rolled out incrementally.

The majority of people will make their claim online and payments will be made monthly and direct to the household (this aims to mirror the experience of those in work). Support will be provided to ensure that claimants who are not yet ready to budget for themselves on a monthly basis, or are unable to use the internet, are protected and assisted onto the new system. The guidance does acknowledge that claimants in certain circumstances may need additional services including "rural isolation". The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is currently engaged in what they refer to as "a conversation" about how support will be co-ordinated locally through a Local Support Services Framework. These are being based on the experiences being derived from a number of pilot areas. The Head of Revenues and Customer services recently took the opportunity to respond to the "conversation" and

made specific (as follows) reference to the issues relating to claimants in rural communities:-

“We have the facilities to provide that extended support in terms of :-

- 2 One Stop Shops, West and East of the District
- A selection of Help point facilities in rural areas, covering geographical gaps.
- The ALMO, the 2 star “A1 Housing” which has an excellent network of tenants and residents centres, well attended.

These are more than the buildings equipped to provide support. They are accessible and well used by a range of providers and residents but not in use, of course, for wholly IT linked facilities, if the connectivity is weak. Rural isolation will present the UC “local access” project with difficulties that need to be ironed out. We note from your statements the view that certain claimant types will require additional support and that rural isolation is identified as one of the key factors. However we feel that not enough evaluation of the needs of **rural claimants** will be provided by the current pilots (whilst some of the pilots are rural in nature they are relatively well covered by public transport, higher level of broadband coverage and closer to major conurbations than is the case for authorities like Bassetlaw). Current broadband coverage means that online transaction is simply not achievable in many parts of Bassetlaw and whilst there are plans for improvement, this is several years away from delivery.

Bassetlaw has been previously recognised for its work on addressing digital exclusion in our rural communities. We have developed the aforementioned network of "Help Points" working with community groups and multi-agency input facilitated via videoconferencing, interactive documents, signature and photo capture. We would see this experience as providing a proven support to the delivery of UC.

We would urge that full consideration is given to the needs of rural claimants in order to assess the level and nature of interventions that may be required. This is required as soon as possible - the document identifies that elements of the payment model is based on those with complex needs (which includes rural isolation). We would be prepared to work very closely with our well established local councils' network to overcome these broadband restrictions by the use of our own and their own facilities.”

3.5 **Bassetlaw Rural Youth Initiative**

A major concern for rural communities, including Bassetlaw, is of the outflow of young people. The Rural Advocate’s Report of March 2010 states that 5% of the rural youth population is being lost per year. This loss is seen as the single greatest threat to the sustainability of the majority of English villages. The Bassetlaw Rural Youth Initiative Group was an informal body of locally based individuals who are trying to develop responses to these issues, against the backdrop of reduced capacity for local intervention by youth workers. BRYI has developed a project called “Stemming the Tide” which aimed to provide training skills and work placements to young people (18-25 year olds) in rural communities. This was developed as a joint project with the Lincolnshire Wolds and North Notts Local Action Zones. A bid to the lottery was unsuccessful. A national scheme (Talent match programme) was launched by the lottery aimed at 18-24 year old NEET (“ Not in employment, education or Training”). Bassetlaw again drew attention to how these schemes are not addressing the needs of young people in rural communities.

3.6 Rural Action Plan

An objective has been to develop a Rural Action Plan for the district. The intention is that the document would focus more on outcomes from the area and on specific topics (along the lines of those identified at the Rural Conference). The document would acknowledge those areas where the responsibility lies with the District Council. It would also indicate those matters over which we have no direct responsibility but can play a role in lobbying. An outline of the key issues is provided (Appendix A).

- 3.7 It is recognised that many hard decisions are having to be made in the context of the financial situation faced by the Country. Nevertheless the opportunity is being taken to ensure that, especially at National and Regional level, that cognisance is given to local factors that are often not recognised when looking at matters from a City centric perspective. This is where, as demonstrated, the District Council can play an important role to help ensure that a local perspective is added to the considerations. The District can help to coordinate involvement and input from local communities.

4. Implications

- a) For service users

There are particular challenges for service users in some of the district's rural communities. Access to public transport, access to some key service providers, lack of broadband provision etc. the rural agenda will help to highlight these issues and look for solutions.

- b) Strategic & Policy

As indicated in the report.

- c) Financial - Ref: 14/195

None from this report.

- d) Legal – Ref: 116/04/13

The Corporate Plan underpins the Council's commitment to this work. The Council's power of well-being covers this area of work.

- e) Human Resources

None from this report.

- f) Community Safety, Equalities, Environmental

The identification of rural work as a corporate priority has arisen from the work on preparing equality objectives for the Council. This has been based on an analysis of the issues facing the Bassetlaw district and the impact on individuals in our communities.

- g) Whether this is a key decision, and if so the reference number.

Key Decision No. 372 refers.

5. **Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations**

The report is for information and therefore there are no options to consider.

6. **Recommendations**

That the report be noted.

Background Papers

Location