



Committee and Date

Item

1

Public

**LOTON LONGDEN FORD AND REA VALLEY
LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS STEMMING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2017
AT
LONGDEN VILLAGE HALL, LONGDEN**

Responsible Officers Mathew Mead and David Fairclough
e-mail: mathew.mead@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252534
david.fairclough@shropshire.gov.uk

Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council

Roger Evans Longden Ward

Town/Parish Councils

David Sandbach	Westbury Parish Council
Tony Hill	Montford Parish Council
John Pritchard	Pontesbury Parish Council
Geoff Brown	Minsterley Parish Council
Neil Evans	Longden Parish Council
Bill Clyne	Ford Parish Council
John Fox	Great Hanwood Parish Council

Officers Present:

Mathew Mead	Community Enablement Officer
David Fairclough	Community Enablement Officer
Chris Taylor	Connecting Shropshire

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chair

As this was the first meeting of LJC during the Council year Roger Evans was elected as Chairman and then chaired the remainder of the meeting

2. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Roger Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Apologies were given from Patrick Siese (Alberbury with Cardeston PC), David Roberts (Shropshire Councillor) and Tudor Bebb (Shropshire Councillor)

3. Substitutions

No substitutes were in attendance

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made

5. Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the meetings held on 21st April at the Mary Webb School, Pontesbury were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and were signed by the Chairman

6. Presentation – Chris Taylor, Connecting Shropshire

Chris thanked the Committee for their invitation to the meeting. He started by explaining some background to the Connecting Shropshire project which aimed to provide high speed broad to properties across Shropshire that weren't covered by commercial operators.

The first phase of the project was nearly complete and 52,000 premises have broadband as a result; and an additional 4000 properties are covered by phase 2; These first two phases were carried out in partnership with BT Open Reach, but the final phase is currently out to tender and open to a range of providers. This final phase aims to provide a broadband solution for the 16,000 premises left without high-speed broadband.

A map has been produced showing areas without fast broadband, and work is taking place with commercial operators to see if they are interested in working with communities in need of new services. In this LJC area the commercial company SWS may come forward to provide some solutions. The plans of these commercial operators are needed to help plan where best to use public money to provide the remaining 16,000 premises with broadband.

The remaining £11.5 million probably won't provide a solution to all 16,000 properties, so the Connecting Shropshire project will need to carefully plan where to get the best value for money. In rural areas properties are often some distance apart and so finding cost effective ways of linking sparsely populated

communities to super-fast broadband is difficult. Where communities aren't part of phase three of the Connecting Shropshire project they can bit for community funding from BT for other solutions, which could include buying an exchange at a cost of around 30,000. As technology improves other solutions such as 4G and 5G and wireless might be an option.

Communities wanting to know the status of their broadband services should look at the type of provision available on the Connecting Shropshire website

www.connectingshropshire.co.uk/when-and-where/

Staff from Connecting Shropshire can also do searches and are happy to attend individual Town and Parish Council meetings and can be contacted on

Phone: 01743 252203

Email: connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk

The Committee and members of the public then asked Chris questions

Roger Evans asked if “not spot” areas of broadband were similar to issues with mobile coverage. Chris said there were similarities although there were differences across the county. The difficulty with broadband in rural areas of Shropshire is that communities are sparsely populated over large areas so traditional phone line solutions are costly to provide, but alternative solutions such as mobile are also not available in those areas. Difficult decisions will have to be taken on where best to spend the funding available.

David Sandbach stated that Yockleton has a box which is enabled with high speed broadband but that only reaches part of the community - what is the plan for connecting the rest of Yockleton them? Chris replied that individual communities have their own challenges and it might be that in Yockleton the copper wiring from the cabinets to properties is poor, so the 2km “reach” of the new service is a lot less, or there might be an issue with the exchange. Chris suggested that individual areas could contact him directly, for a more in depth look at why services in their area were not as good as expected.

David made the further point that access to high speed broadband played an important role in accessing health and medical information, and this should be an important consideration for the Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group as they consider the future of health care in Shropshire. David asked how the CCG work with providers to support this work.

Chris replied that the CCG area aware of the issue, but the CCG do rely on commercial operators and the Connecting Shropshire project to help roll out broadband. Members of the committee stressed that technology will become increasingly important in other walks of life such as business, education and employment and broadband will play a very significant role in the sustainability of communities.

John Pritchard made the point that businesses in the area should, to a certain extent look to provide their own solutions. Commercial companies already offered solutions in rural areas and these could be taken up now by business. Chris said there is a scheme to support this through grants of up to £25,000 but the businesses did need to show economic outcomes to receive the funding. Private residents in areas who had less than 2 mbps speeds could also apply for funding of up to £350 to help fund a commercial solution. It had to be acknowledged through that some commercial solutions didn't offer a full range of broadband services such as TV and film streaming.

With the issue of the Local Plan on the agenda, it was also stressed that broadband access should be considered when reviewing planning applications. New developments won't automatically be linked to high speed broadband so its important communities raise this issue with housing developers. Issues about broadband availability can also be included in Community Led Plan reviews.

The committee asked Chris what a realistic timescale for delivering fast broadband across Shropshire was. Chris said a lot had been achieved. When the programme started 3 years ago there was around 67% high speed broadband coverage in Shropshire and that figure is now at 87%. By 2020 legislation will be in place that that households can demand 10mbps, but it is not yet clear how that will be achieved. The aim remains for 100% coverage but achieving that across the county will be a challenge.

7. Police report

A report from the Police team was circulated. Generally crime in the area was low but issues of rural burglaries and thefts from outbuildings remained. There had also been some high profile drug arrests in the Shrewsbury area but these generally had minimal impact on the local community.

The Community Enablement Officers also provided an update on the "Day of Action" taking place in Ford on 21st February when a range of crime prevention and safety information would be available to the community. Further events will be planned for the future.

8. Youth Activity update

The Committee received a report on Youth Commissioning in the area. The LJC had for the last 18 months used its funding to employ the Shropshire Youth Association to run youth clubs at Westbury and Minsterley. Grants were also given to Parish Councils at Ford, Hanwood and Nesscliffe to support established clubs in those communities. It had been thought this funding would end on 31st March but while the funding was being reviewed by the Councils Scrutiny Committee funding had been extended to December 2017. The Committee therefore had £12,473 to allocate.

The Community Enablement officers recommended that the existing provision should be extended, pro rata until December and then reviewed when Shropshire Councils policy was clearer.

Ford Parish Council requested the funding be reviewed and split equally between all the youth clubs. The clubs had now been running for 18 months and were not new, so each area should be equally supported and the respective Parish Councils asked to provide matched funding.

Westbury and Minsterley indicated their clubs were still in development phase and so naturally had lower numbers, but were progressing and making a difference in their communities. David reported that Minsterley were willing to contribute towards Minsterley youth club, which could be evenly distributed to the five clubs.

The Community Enablement Officers said that an alternative funding allocation could be looked at, but they would need to speak to the Shropshire Youth Association to see if Minsterley and Westbury clubs were viable with less funding.

Roger Evans explained the reasoning for the change in Council Policy around the funding and asked for proposals from the Committee. Proposal A was to accept the recommendations in the report; Proposal B was for equal allocation of the funding and proposal C was for a new distribution on the funding based on Minsterley Parish contributing more funding.

Option A received the majority support of the Committee.

9. Local Plan Review

Copies of a presentation delivered to the Central SALC Committee by the Shropshire Council Planning team was circulated to the Committee. Roger Evans outlined the need to review the Local Plan.

Shropshire's Local Plan, in the form of SAMDev was consulted on extensively and adopted by the Council in 2016. However to keep it up to date with national policies it needs to be regularly reviewed. Elements of the plan are now to be reviewed including the number of houses Shropshire needs, where this growth will be located and how development is managed.

One key change proposed is that "hub" communities – will now be nominated by Shropshire Council rather than opting in. Full details of the consultation are on the Shropshire Council website and Parish Councils within the LJC were urged to read the review and comment on its proposals. It was also important to have evidence behind the plans to support your local policies. Such as a Community Led Plan or neighbourhood plan

The Committee members made the point that while it was important to have housing policies it was still very much down to developers to decide what types

of houses are built and this is an issue in Shropshire. Large executive housing is popular but it doesn't cater for young people wanting to buy their first property, or for essential workers like nurses and care workers on lower wages. It was also important economic development was linked to housing to create and sustain jobs in the area.

10. Shropshire Bus Strategy

Details of the Shropshire Bus Strategy were circulated to the Committee. The strategy was a countywide proposal, but looked at how best to use subsidies to sustain bus services. The likely impact of reduced funding from 2017/18 onwards was that there would be reduced subsidies for rural bus services in areas like this LJC

The Committee expressed concern of the impact this might have on communities and those residents without cars, especially people who used the buses to access employment, education, and health care. The Committee would await the new strategy to be published and may invite speakers from the transport department to future

11. Public Question Time

No questions were submitted by members of the public

Chair _____

Date _____