



Committee and Date

Loton and Tern LJC

Thursday 6 November 2014

Item

**4**

Public

**LOTON AND TERN  
LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS STEMMING FROM THE MEETING HELD  
ON 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2014**

**7.00 PM – 8.45 PM**

**AT**

**WESTBURY VILLAGE HALL, WESTBURY**

**Responsible Officer** Mathew Mead

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**Committee Members Present:**

**Shropshire Council**

David Roberts

Loton Electoral Ward

**Town/Parish Councils**

Elliott Blackmore

Bicton Parish Council

Barry Bennion

Upton Magna Parish Council

Pam Furber

Bomere Heath Parish Council

Lesley Stone

Withington Parish Council

Lynne Padmore

Uffington Parish Council

Tony Hill

Montford Parish Council

Patrick Siese

Alberbury with Cardeston Parish Council

Malcolm Colclough

Astley Parish Council

David Sandbach

Westbury Parish Council

**Officers Present:**

Mathew Mead

Community Enablement Officer

Neil Wilcox

Commissioning Manager Shropshire Council

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Mathew Mead welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor John Overall, Councillor David Nunn and Councillor Phil Heath, with Lesley Stone substituting for Councillor Heath on behalf of Withington Parish Council.

**3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2014/15.**

Councillor David Roberts was nominated and unanimously elected as Chair for the coming year, with Malcolm Colclough elected as Vice Chair.

**4. Disposable Pecuniary Interests**

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

**5. Notes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the previous LJC on 13<sup>th</sup> March, and the Chairman signed the minutes.

**6. Update on Locality Commissioning and Local Joint Committees by Neil Wilcox, Locality Commissioning Manager Shropshire Council**

Neil thanked the Committee for inviting him to speak at the meeting. The presentation was a follow on from previous discussions held with the LJC's around the role of Local Joint Committees in supporting the local Commissioning of service, which was a process of devolving decision making and resources to a more local level.

Neil gave examples of some projects that had taken place elsewhere in the county where local councillors and partners had identified key issues for their community through the LJC and then looked at solutions to these issues. Projects so far included

- A project between job centres, employers and unemployed people in Church Stretton to encourage more people back in work
- A falls prevention scheme in Wem, run from the town hall where information on adaptations for homes and other support was made available
- Youth Work in Craven Arms where all the different youth providers had come together and developed support for young people in the community.

The Local Joint Committee's had taken a role in identifying these local needs and as LJC's move forward there is a plan to involve them more in this decision making process and to start to look at devolving some funding to them to deliver on identified priorities. Youth Work and related activities were likely to be the first area of Council spending to be delivered in this way.

However to do this the LJC's have to represent a clear geographical area with shared priorities and the ability to work together to deliver projects. As staff numbers are reduced across the Council there is also a need to reduce the number of LJC's to allow sufficient staff time to be devoted to these new ways of working. In Shrewsbury there are currently three rural LJC's and 8 urban LJC's and there are proposals to rationalise this number. Ideally it is also hoped to align the LJC boundaries with the Place Plan areas, as there are strong links between development and local priorities.

The proposals are currently that:

- The Burnell electoral division south of Shrewsbury is planned to combine with the Stretton Dale LJC which serves Church Stretton and the surrounding area. Parishes in this area have been consulted and are happy with the change.
- It's proposed to reduce the 6 Shrewsbury urban LJC into one town wide LJC, administered by Shrewsbury Town Council. Within Shrewsbury there would be Neighbourhood Forums through which issue can be brought forward to the Shrewsbury Town LJC
- The Longden, Ford and Rea Valley LJC would merge with the Western side of the Loton and Tern LJC and include the parishes of Westbury, Alberbury, Great Ness and Little Ness and Montford. The new LJC would be called Longden, Ford, Rea Valley and Loton LJC
- The Tern (Eastern) side of Loton and Tern would merge with the Severn Valley electoral division to form a new Severn Valley and Tern LJC. This would include the parishes of Bomere Heath, Astley, Uffington, Bicton, Upton Magna and Withington.
- The chairs of the rural LJC's in the Shrewsbury area would be invited to attend the Shrewsbury Town LJC to form a link between the rural and urban areas and to discuss area wide priorities.

Maps showing the proposed new LJC areas were shown at the meeting.

The proposals were designed to try to create LJC's that had shared geographies and characteristics, but which were also large enough to have a big enough population to be able to develop projects and work together on locally agreed priorities. There was no right or wrong answer and across the county exact boundaries are difficult to agree on.

Committee members gave their initial views on the proposals.

Councillors from the Loton division said they could see the thinking behind linking them with the Longden, Ford and Rea Valley LJC, as they perhaps looked more to Pontesbury and Minsterley for some of their services, and these areas also fell within the Mary Webb School catchment area.

Councillors from the Tern division were less sure about the links their communities had with the Severn Valley. There were long distances between places such as Bicton, Bomere Heath and Astley and Cressage, Harley and Buildwas which were communities in the Severn Valley. There also didn't seem to be very clear links in terms of services with Tern communities looking more to Shrewsbury for their services, while Cressage for example looked more to Much Wenlock (where they share a doctors)

Councillor Sandbach from Westbury felt that the populations of the proposed LJC's should be considered. The expanded Strettondale LJC had a reasonably large, prosperous population; the Longden, Ford, Rea Valley and Loton LJC would have quite a large population by including Minsterley and Pontesbury; while the Tern and Severn Valley area was relatively sparsely populated. It was much more difficult to

deliver services over a sparsely populated area. Councillor Sandbach also circulated a paper outlining his thoughts on the LJC geographies and their future role. He also asked why the StrettonDale LJC had been expanded without consultation with other neighbouring LJC's.

Neil Wilcox commented that this was an issue when looking at the LJC boundaries. There needed to be a balance between developing areas that had common interests and characteristics, but at the same time they needed a significant population to make them viable. In rural areas this often meant there were large LJCs which spread over a large area. Some consideration had been given to just having one large, rural LJC that surrounded Shrewsbury, but this was felt to be too large, and two east/west LJC's was seen as a better option.

Councillor Blackmore raised the issue of Bicton. This Parish was going to have a lot of development with 750 new homes built in and around the parish in the next ten years. Would this mean the Parish joined in with Shrewsbury more in the future or were boundary changes needed to split the urban from the rural. He also felt that overall there were too many Parish Councils and there could be work undertaken to at least share resources such as clerks between them. For example there could be links between Montford and Bicton as they have shared priorities such as a cycle way linking the two parishes.

Reps from Bomere Heath felt that they possibly had more links with communities to the north of them, such as Baschurch than they did with those in the Severn Valley and this also needed to be considered. Councillor Bennion suggested that part of the new LJC's role was to work together on projects, and doing this with new parishes they hadn't worked with before might take time. While Loton and Tern LJC was large and covered a wide area everyone was comfortable with working with each other.

Parish Council representatives were asked to take back these proposals to their Parish Councils for further discussion and to feed back their thoughts to Neil and Mathew.

## **7. Review of Parish and Community Led Plans in the LJC area**

Mathew Mead explained that within the new LJC's the Place Plan documents would be used as a resource outlining local issues and priorities, and would become increasingly important in the coming years as a resource to aid the commissioning work Neil Wilcox spoke on. Regardless of which LJC Parishes would ultimately be in it was important that their issues were included in the Shrewsbury Place Plan.

Work was progressing to make this document more user friendly for Parish Councils and community members. It is primarily a planning document but should also be used to help govern local decision making in the future.

The aim of this section of the meeting was to highlight local issues in each parish, which had been identified by Community Led Plans, Parish Council meetings of other forms of consultation in the community. These would then be drawn together into the Shrewsbury Place Plan and shared again with the Parishes in the autumn. Each Parish representative then gave a short presentation on issues in their area.

## **Uffington**

The Community has recently undertaken a Parish Plan consultation, which has generated a group of 12 volunteers willing to get involved in local activities such as footpath clearance, litter picking and improving community facilities

The plan also identified a need to provide more community cohesion through groups and activities in the village, and communicate what's happening more effectively

Speeding in the village was also identified as a significant issue

The car park at the village hall is in need of improvement, and car parking at the local pub is also an issue, as it gets busy at weekends and when bowls matches take place there.

## **Upton Magna**

The last community consultation took place in 2006 but still forms the basis of the work the parish council undertakes. Key issues at the current time are:

Speeding in the village – 30mph signs are in place but enforcement of these restrictions is an issue

HGV and Farm vehicles – The parish is a rural agricultural community where there is a need to move farm vehicles around needed. However the size of vehicles is increasing and local roads are not always suitable, leading to damage to roads and verges as a result. HGV's also get stuck on the lanes often as they are using Satnav's which don't recognise the size of small local lanes.

Development is also a big issue. A new housing development of 31 homes is being developed in the parish, and while there is a need to new housing to support the local services the parish council will need to work hard to integrate the new homes into the existing small rural community

Support for community assets such as the church, village hall and pub are also important issues. These facilities need money to continue to keep them in good working order, and raising funds for these is an important issue for the Parish

The local primary school is an important asset to the community and we have good links with them, but issues of parking around the school are an issue. We are looking to provide a new off road solution to this problem.

The Parish looks to the LJC as a forum to raise these issues and find support for projects through Shropshire Council. We have enjoyed working with the LJC and hope the new structures can continue to support this work in the future.

## **Alberbury**

The parish is made up of four separate settlements within a rural agricultural community. We are in the process of consulting the community through a community led plan which will identify local issues.

Current issues in the parish include

Planning – The issues around the Five Year Land Supply have led to a number of planning applications in the parish, which take up a lot of Parish Council time. Applications for renewable energy schemes have also occurred in the Parish. Finding a balance between providing homes for the local community verses the need to protect its character are a very real issue for us.

As the main road to mid-Wales runs through our Parish speeding is an issue, which requires better enforcement.

There are also concerns around the potential loss of local pubs which have changed ownership, and there are concerns these will be lost as community venues if the owners change the use of the pub in the future.

## **Bicton**

The biggest issue in the community is planning. Bicton is on the edge of the Shrewsbury Urban Extension and 750 new homes are planned in, and surrounding, the parish which will massively change its character from a rural parish.

The community have major concerns over planning and how it can be controlled, and also feel that developers don't consult them closely enough about the types of development they have planned. The Parish would like to see all homes have adequate off road parking, and reasonably sized gardens.

Discussions are also ongoing on what is the best way to consult the community – is it a community led plan; neighbourhood plan or another form of consultation?

In the long term the Parish needs to think about whether its boundary might change so the new "urban" development becomes part of Shrewsbury Town Council, and the remaining rural area remains the responsibility of the Parish Council.

In other areas of the Parish there are concerns about speeding on the Bicton to Montford road. The footpaths in this area are narrow and hedges overgrown and we'd like to see this improved, together with a look at providing a cycleway on this route. A cycle path from Bicton to Shelton, and onto Shrewsbury is also an aspiration for the parish.

In the longer term the Parish would like to work through the LJC to see if there could be savings made by getting parishes to work more closely together, and perhaps sharing a clerk. Across the LJC's there could be significant savings made in this way.

## **Montford**

As with other parishes there are concerns about development in the Parish. We had identified preferred sites but new speculative applications have come forward which we have to respond to.

The Parish has had new superfast broadband in part of the parish, but there are still gaps in provision we would like to see improved.

Water and sewerage are also issues in the community which we'd like to see Severn Trent try to tackle.

The village hall is a great community asset but needs improvements, particularly an expanded car park. The Millenium green also needs works to improve it and a store for the equipment volunteers use to maintain it.

The Parish is also on long distance cycle and footpath networks and this can create parking issues when visitors come to these walks, particularly around the church at Montford. Like Bicton we would like to see a dedicated cycleway between Montford and Bicton.

Speeding on the rural roads in the Parish is also an issue, and we have long running frustrations at the lack of consultation the Highways Agency have with the parish council over the junctions onto the A5, which are notorious accident black spots.

### **Westbury**

The Parish is also in the process of completing a community led plan, and run a series of “sad, mad and glad” events earlier in the year. Issues that come out of these meetings were

- Highways and speeding issues
- Footpath maintenance
- Health issues, particularly around difficulties with blood checks in the village
- Lack of public transport
- Lack of control on planning and feeling remote from local and central government decision making.

The Parish Council had debated the issues around the LJC and wanted a new LJC structure that could help them tackle these issues. Councillor Sandbach also circulated a paper to the Committee outlining issues the LJC should address

### **Bomere Heath**

The Parish Council have recently developed a new play area in the village which will be opened shortly. It's been a long term project to increase play provision for older children and has been funded through local fundraising and also 106 agreement funding

Planning remained a significant issue in the Parish. Having established detailed SAMDev proposals the Parish has been concerned with the number of applications coming forward which are outside the identified areas, and which have issues associated with them. The parish is not against development but feels it needs to be carefully planned to integrate new residents into the community and to not place a strain on the parish resources.

Long running issues with flooding and sewerage treatment works in the area have been identified, and additional development does not help improve these issues.

Concerns have been expressed that the parish is served by a small Local Police team who cover a large area, and while this is a low crime area there have been some high impact crimes in the area which give residents cause for concern

Longer term projects for the parish include looking at a cycle way along the River Severn to link into Shrewsbury and other cycle networks; and also to look at providing a public internet access point. Retaining the local Post Office is also important, as is maintaining the two village halls in the Parish at Bomere and at Fitz.

## **Withington**

The parish has produced a Parish Plan on three occasions, the most recent revision was in 2012.

The Parish is small with 95 dwellings and one of the key issues identified in the plan is to maintain the character of the village. At the same time there is very strong support for the communities “assets” which are the church, village green, community room and pub. Volunteer networks have been developed to support these. A mobile library still visits the village and this needs to be maintained.

Roads into the village are narrow and have high hedges and verges, and so speeding, tractor and HGV movements in the parish are of a concern. An ongoing issue with HGV's delivering to a local company and getting stuck on the roads is currently being addressed between the Parish Council, Shropshire Council and the company involved.

Many properties in the community rely on oil for heating and the cost of this is a concern, and the parish is looking at ways of collectively purchasing to reduce costs

Planning is a major issue. The community is keen to preserve the character of the area, but the Parish Plan indicated small scale, appropriate infill development might be acceptable. However recent issues with the Five Year land supply had made the parish concerned about unsustainable development in the Parish. Neighbouring Arscott had recently seen a 500 home housing application and there are concerns over the impact this will have on the village while homes are constructed, and also with traffic once it has been completed.

## **Astley**

The Parish completed a Parish Plan in April this year, which identified a number of issues including

- Concerns around speeding on the A53 and A49, and also on the narrow lanes in Astley
- Issues with drainage and flooding
- Lack of connecting footpaths between the rural communities that make up the parish
- The community liked the rural nature of the parish and wanted to see it preserved, but would consider conversion of derelict buildings to support local business or provide affordable housing

The Parish is keen to work through the LJC to receive updates from, and try to influence, larger service providers such as Shropshire Council, The Police and health services and feel they have a stronger voice as a collective group than as a single parish council.

## **Great Ness and Little Ness (Not in attendance at the LJC, issues below are from the Community Enablement Officer!)**

- Need to maintain Nesscliffe Youth club following reduction in Shropshire Council youth services funding
- Difficulty for the parish in the number and range of planning applications they are faced with, many of which fall outside the SAMDev policies they agreed. Issues around need to agricultural businesses to expand and change also result in difficult planning issues
- Maintaining and improving rural roads, and issues relating to the A5 bypass



- Maintaining access and availability of footpaths in the area, with some routes having access issues at the current time.
- Need to maintain the Primary School in the village
- Support for village halls

## 8. Resolutions and updates from the Parish Councils.

No resolutions were made by the Parish Councils.

## 9. Community Enablement Update

Mathew Mead introduced Julie Jones who was in attendance at the meeting. Julie was representing the Shropshire Marches LEADER programme, which was bidding for funding in the autumn from a major European programme. If successful the project would be able to offer grants to businesses and organisations in the area. The focus of the programme was economic development in the rural areas of Shropshire, so there was potential to link in with some of the work of the LJC, and the priorities of the Parishes as identified earlier in the meeting.

Mathew would also circulate Julies contact details for anyone with project ideas to contact her, and Julie would be invited to a future meeting to discuss the work of the LEADER project in more detail.

## 10. Have Your Say - Question Time

Roger Carlyle commented that many Parishes had concerns over housing development, which were influenced by the Core Strategy needing to deliver 26,000 homes in the county between 2006 and 2026. He pointed out that on 29 May 2014 Office of National Statistics published its latest estimates for population growth in the UK. England's overall population is projected to grow at a lower rate than trended within the more recent previous projections (2011-interim and 2010-based projections). This lower trend rate is evident in the figures for the Shropshire Unitary Council area, with the growth per year in Shropshire predicted to be dropping from 1,366 people in 2012-2021, or 1,113 between 2012-2037. This compares with the predicted growth rate in the Core Strategy of 2,044

Based on these figures will there be any review of the Core Strategy targets for Shropshire, and a reduction in the housing target for the county?

**Action:** MM to ask Planning Policy for a Comment on these figures.

Stephen Malloy also commented on the planning and housing issues raised by the Parish Councils. He suggested that there were tools and consultation methods available to them to help better understand the needs of their community. These included the Homepoint Database to help them identify the need for Housing in their community; and well as housing needs surveys that Shropshire Council used to identify need. Public events like the "Rural Toolkits" could also be used to get local opinion on a range of issues including development.

He also suggested that Parish and Town Councils should pay close attention to the Community Infrastructure Levy rules and regulations. Changes to these meant that the amount of money generated by new development was likely to be lower than initially expected.

David Kilby spoke in relation to his role with the Playing Fields Association. There was growing concern that childhood obesity was a growing issue, which the medical profession and government want to target in the coming years. Community involvement in development issues was an important way of making sure new development incorporated green areas for play, cycle ways, safe walking areas and play areas so that young people had space to play and exercise safely. Councillor Roberts invited David to speak on the subject at a future meeting of the LJC and provide advice to Parish Councils on the types of open space provision that they might need to consider when reviewing planning applications.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

### **Full Public Meetings**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015

### **Planning Meetings (Committee members only)**

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Venues to be suggested by Committee Members and alternated between Loton and Tern Wards

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_