

BRAINTREE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Supporting Parish and Town Councils in the District of Braintree

Chair: Cllr Martin Lee

*Association Clerk: Kevin B. Money
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MINUTES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19th. JULY 2023 VIA ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT WITHAM TOWN HALL AT 7pm

In attendance: Martin Lee (Chairman), Paul Lees (Vice-Chairman), Mark Lovell Gt. Yeldham, John Kelly Silver End, Matt Burgess Kelvedon PC, Ian Pleasance Greenstead Green PC, Mike Eldred Rayne PC, Matt Burgess, David Smith Gestingthorpe PC, Graham McCoyd Halstead TC, Ann Wood and Susan Pedder both Black Notley PC, Garry Warren Halstead TC, Roger Duffin Finchingfield PC, Peter Gentry Lt. Yeldham, Bob Turner Rivenhall PC, Emma Goodings Head of Planning and Economic Growth at BDC & Kevin B. Money (BALC Clerk)

1. Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Emma Goodings from BDC and apologised for the delay in starting the meeting due to technical issues

2. Apologies for absence were received from Derek Hambling Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural PC, Andrew Hull Shalford PC, Jane Taylor White Colne, Paul Heath Witham TC, Ken McDonald Silver End, John Warner Finchingfield PC, Kerry Barnes Steeple Bumpstead PC.

3. Guest speaker from Emma Goodings Head of Planning and Economic Growth at BDC Emma Goodings supplied a comprehensive s106 planning presentation slides which can be found at <https://e-voice.org.uk/balc/braintree-district-council/>

Questions were then asked by members to Emma on a variety of planning issues

- BDC planning department is under-manned
- Recruitment in BDC planning department is taking place but BDC finds it difficult to hold onto planning officers
- s106 officer does not give confidence to Town and Parish Councils
- Over £8m is held by BDC in s106 monies
- Large towns have more s106 monies allocated to them
- A numerous number of complaints have been put into BDC planning department
- s106 monies not being delivered across the County
- If timeframe is expired any s106 monies is returned to the developer
- Can s106 monies be broadened to other areas?
- Sarah Burder is s106 spreadsheet officer – s106 email contact is on BDC website
- Would more money be secured using CIL money against s106. CIL way forward is better
- Is any money for s106 for a travellers site? Many different rules apply but homes under 10 cannot have any s106 monies allocated to the site
- If a shop is converted to residential flats, then no s106 money can be allocated to the site
- With planning application additional response from Town or Parish Council's then send an email to case officer directly can be made
- Planning budget is always under pressure
- Infrastructure levy coming in in April 2026
- 9-10 vacancies in Emma's department from a total amount of 60 officers. Therefore, 10% shortfall in staffing
- What pressure can BDC place on developers to hand over s106 monies. Depending on the way the agreement was set up but are limited legally on what BDC can do.
- Would Emma or Dominic Collins be prepared to attend Council meetings? Emma informed the meeting that she would but to have in-house training for Councillors at BDC offices.
- 5 year housing stock level as at today. 5 year housing supply will be abolished for BDC who have a Local Plan. September 2023 figure is just under a 4.8 year supply.

- Inconsistences use of NP by BDC. Smaller Councils find there is a resistance at BDC with a NP but larger Councils seem to get a positive response from BDC regarding their NP
- NP has equal weight to the local plan. Without the 5-year housing supply it is more difficult to refuse a planning application.
- Are officers still working from home. Yes, BDC are using the hybrid system
- BDC are finding it difficult to retain their officers

The Chair thanked Emma for giving the presentation and answering all the questions fully and honestly. Emma Goodings then left the meeting

4. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of BALC Representatives on 25th. May 2023. **All Agreed**

5. Finance report:

a) To receive the Bank reconciliation as at 30th. June 2023

Members noted the Bank reconciliation as at 30th. June 2023

b) To receive the BALC accounts to 18th. July 2023

Members noted the BALC accounts to 18th. July 2023

6. Local Highways Panel

A further representative will be nominated by Halsted TC.

Jane Taylor to go onto the LHP panel. **All Agreed**

An update from LHP – New projects were discussed. Some projects were removed from the list.

LHP will, in the future, have a greater say. Only ECC Councillors can vote on the LHP panel.

Halsted TC have no right to be on the LHP. Only 3 BALC representatives can attend such meetings

7. BDC Standards Sub Committee

Nothing to report

8. EALC Executive report

EALC met last week. AGM on 21st. September at Colchester Community Stadium

No cost to EALC as it is being fully funded by sponsorships. EALC is getting better. More forward planning.

The Chair of BALC is now on the EALC finance committee as well as Vice-Chair of BALC.

EALC is imposing a 3 month timescale to send in annual subscription.

Training is good and is being promoted regularly. If large number of Councillors who want training are in one area EALC will do out-house training. Micro grants going to £1000. Biodiversity policy by 2024

New website being launched in October '23

ECC going for devolution

9. Information Sharing – an opportunity for Councils to ask questions and share their experiences

BALC met BDC Chief Executive on Monday 10th. July he was open with all his answers

Chief Executive has agreed to attend the next BALC meeting on 18.10.23

Local elections procedures were poor and he recognised their failure. No further excuses were made.

Clerks only Forum – No feedback from BDC.

Communication must be circulated by the Clerk some Clerks are not passing it onto Councillors

Council Chairmen to email their Clerk requesting that all communications are passed onto Councillors

BDC has a £2m deficit

Green charges are coming in to pay for the green bins. Early bird discount for 2023 £27 in 2024 the cost will be £60 and £65 in 2025. All year round except for 2 weeks at Christmas.

No evidence in extra Fly-tipping in BDC area

Annual Parish Assembly held virtually by Feeing PC which had 250 attendees.

BDC Enforcement is letting down Councils. Local BDC Councillors who serve on the BDC planning committee refuse to assist Councils with planning issues.

They should not absolve themselves from their duties to local Councils.

10. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 18th. October 2023 at 7pm

BDC Chief Executive attending meeting

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.25pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

M Lee

Martin Lee Chairman

18th. October 2023