

Notes from the Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting held virtually on Teams 19/10/2023

Those present: Councillors R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), Colin McEwen (South Marston), Val Curtis (Covingham), Dave Griffiths (South Swindon), Ian Jankinson (Blunsdon), Ayo Jimmy (Haydon Wick), Richard Codrington (Stanton Fitzwarren), Gareth Hawkes (Covingham), Vinay Manro (Haydon Wick), Gordon Wilson (Liddington), Neil Hopkins (South Swindon), James Whitehead (Chiseldon), Adam John (Haydon Wick)

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Secretary), Georgina Morgan-Denn (Haydon Wick), Clair Wilkinson (Chiseldon), Emma Sylvester (St Andrews)

Apologies from: Councillor John Hower (Wroughton), Vera Tomlinson (St Andrews) and Steve Heyes (St Andrews)

1. Update from the Meeting held by Councillor Jim Grant on Thursday 5th October 2023

Members received an update from Councillor R Hailstone on the recent meeting held with the Clerks & Chairs on Thursday 5th October to discuss partnership working. The main purpose of the meeting was to meet the new Parish Liaison Officer, Frankie Stec, who will be the first point of call to assist parish and town councils with correspondence with relevant Members and Officers at Swindon Borough Council. Councillor J Grant was keen to discuss the Transfer of Services and review the Draft Protocol which will determine the rules of engagement for both parties to improve working relationships. Councillor J Grant agreed that it was suitable for the Swindon Local Councils Forum to set up focus groups, one for Transfer of Services and the continuation of the one for the Protocol, for the correspondence with the Borough which the representatives could feedback to their individual councils.

2. Update from the meeting held with the existing Protocol Working Party meeting on Tuesday 17th October 2023

Those in attendance Councillors Colin McEwen (South Marston), Ian Jankinson (Blunsdon), Councillor Jim Grant (Swindon Borough Council) along with Laura Cutter (Secretary), Georgina Morgan-Denn (Haydon Wick), Frankie Stec (Swindon Borough Council) and Brian Pinchbeck (Swindon Borough Council).

The background of the document was explained and the need for the Protocol to be adopted to establish better working relationships and expectations. In turn, this will aid a smoother Transfer of Services transition. It was noted that this document will not be legally binding, and it is up to individual parish and town councils whether they wish to adopt the document or not.

3. Nominations for Representatives on the Protocol Working Party and the Transfer of Services Working Party

Protocol Working Party

The current Protocol Working Party consists of Councillors R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), C McEwen (South Marston) and I Jankinson (Blunsdon). It was agreed that the Protocol Working Party has been in negotiation with Swindon Borough Council for two years and the document is almost at its final draft stages, it should be kept small for discussions with Swindon Borough Council, but as there is more interest, it could be expanded to other interested Members to review ahead of the Working Party reporting back to the Forum.

Transfer of Services Working Party

Members discussed the complexity of a Working Party discussing the Transfer of Services Deeds to represent twenty one (21) very diverse parishes. During the Transfer of Services 2017 the process was very piecemeal, and each parish ended up with a different set of services. There should be some unity amongst the Forum to ensure the transition goes smoothly and representatives should give updates on individual matters at the Forum. Recently Brian Pinchbeck sent an email giving examples of works that could be undertaken by parishes, but parishes need to understand the scope, standard and costs required before being able to make an informed decision. It was agreed that the nominations received for the Transfer of Services Deeds Working Party ranged from small, medium and large parish councils and would represent a wide range of parishes.

Members gave update on individual cases and negotiations currently happening with Swindon Borough Council and how it needs to be established who is doing what so that the residents of Swindon understand the difference in the tiers of local government and do not suffer any detriment from being passed from pillar to post. Some of the larger parishes also have facilities that are used by residents Swindon-wide and are not necessarily just to be funded by an individual parish council.

It was agreed that the Protocol Working Party should be the priority as the Protocol should be in place prior to any Transfer of Services. The Working Party was established for when necessary to progress with conversations.

Protocol	Transfer of Services/Deeds
Councillor Richard Hailstone (Haydon Wick)	Emma Freemantle (Wroughton)
Councillor Colin McEwen (South Marston)	Councillor John Hewer (Wroughton)
Councillor Ian Jankinson (Blunsdon)	Clair Wilkinson (Chiseldon)
	Councillor Dave Griffiths (South Swindon)
Councillor Adam John (Haydon Wick)	Councillor Keith Smith (Highworth)
Councillor Ian Kersey (Chiseldon)	Councillor Gareth Hawkes (Covingham)
Councillor Keith Smith (Highworth)	Councillor S Heyes (St Andrews)
Councillor Mick Lucas (Central Swindon North)	Councillor T Charnock (Stanton Fitzwarren)
Councillor V Tomlinson (St Andrews)	G Morgan-Denn (Haydon Wick)
Councillor Dave Griffiths (South Swindon)	Councillor C McEwen (South Marston)
Councillor R Codrington (Stanton Fitzwarren)	Jake Mee (South Swindon)
	Councillor Gordon Wilson (Liddington)

4. Future Meetings

- Members noted that the meeting that was due to be held on the 2nd November 2023 has subsequently been cancelled. This meeting was a follow up meeting from the one held on Thursday 5th October 2023 hosted by Councillor Jim Grant.
- There is a Clerks & Chairs Meeting that is due to be held on Monday 23rd October 2023 and a light agenda has been circulated. The Secretary forwarded this on to any Clerks or Chairs that have not received the invitation.
- The next Forum meeting is due to take place on Thursday 23rd November 2023, this is when the Transfer of Services Working Party will be discussed in further detail.