

## **BRAMFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING HELD IN THE PARISH ROOM, BRAMFORD ON MONDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2019**

**PRESENT:** Cllr M Brand, Cllr J Gardiner, Cllr A Horn, Cllr G Key, Cllr L Powell, Cllr C Ransom

County Councillor J Field

50+ members of the public

#### **1.8 OPENING INCLUDING QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Councillors received a petition, signed by members of the Bramford W.I. while a representative of the group stated the majority of its members were over 60 years old with some being unable to drive and relied upon buses to get to various amenities and services, including banks and doctor's surgeries. Increased congestion and pollution was queried with the potential of many more cars on the local roads into Ipswich.

County Cllr Field stated Suffolk County Council were intent on saving £350K across the county through the removal of bus subsidies which has triggered the reorganisation of a number of First Buses services, including the 88/89 route, which is no longer to go through Bramford from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

He stated the 111 service, provided by Galloways, was still to go through Bramford, via Sproughton, but was county sponsored and up for re-tendering in the near future.

He stated from a County point-of-view he would expect to see an increase in the frequency of the 111 service, but that Bramford was likely to see an overall reduced service, contrary to its position as a large village of approximately 1000 houses and further ongoing development, which seems out-of-place in the circumstances.

A member of the public suggested the OAP cards could be an issue with some County Councils charging for them and whether a charge would help in this situation, to which County Cllr Field suggested it probably wouldn't.

A member of the public stated the County Council wanted to save money and that there was no consultation with users.

A member of the public stated the 88 would only pick up from Old Norwich Road whilst another stated buses 8, 9, 10, 113 and 114 all serve Ipswich and whether 89 could service Sproughton, Bramford and Claydon where it would pick up more passengers.

County Cllr Field stated it was difficult to obtain passenger numbers and went on to say that the over-riding concern of First Buses was to speed up the service whilst assuming more people would use it on that basis.

Cllr Horn stated the 88 bus was not a new service and that the 111 bus had to travel over a weak bridge at Sproughton.

A member of the public suggested that the 111 service was due to end at the end of October 2019, potentially leaving Bramford with no bus service at all.

County Cllr Field stated this was a viable service to be tendered but was aware of possible legal obligations.

A member of the public stated they worked in Ipswich twice a week and now had no means of getting home.

A member of the public asked how disabled people were going to cope.

A member of the public stated the 111 bus didn't go to Claydon so people may be unable to make doctor's appointments with the Claydon surgery.

A member of the public stated the elderly were being forgotten.

A member of the public stated the 111 bus only went to Bildeston, not Stowmarket.

A member of the public stated the 111 bus was not enough for families.

County Cllr Field stated, as an opposition Councillor, it was difficult to understand the decision from First Buses to remove the 89 service, adding they seemed to be under the illusion the 111 service could fill the gap and that he would point out this was not the case, whilst stating changing the decision was not easy.

A member of the public stated no one would buy houses without a bus service

County Cllr Field added it was not good on the environment and not helpful for children schooled out of the area as the 111 bus wouldn't get them to school.

A member of the public stated bus passes used to be issued at the Post Office for a fee so no payment was required on the bus with County Cllr Field suggesting people may be happy to pay if the costs were aligned with Ipswich Buses.

A member of the public asked if the No 8 bus could be re-routed through Bramford.

Cllr Key stated it seemed everyone was of the same opinion with regard to the loss of the 89 bus service.

He went on to state the Parish council had not been consulted on this and there had been no public consultation. He went on to say the Parish Council wanted to respond as it was as upset as local residents. He suggested the mood of the meeting indicated people wanted the Parish Council to make representations to First Buses to which members of the public answered in the affirmative.

County Cllr Field stated it was not just a matter of appointments, etc. but a social life.

A member of the public stated an article in the InTouch magazine had indicated Suffolk County Council were looking to 'go green' as part of their 'climate emergency' and whether they had an obligation to explain the loss of the bus service to residents as a result.

County Cllr Field stated it didn't seem right to encourage less use of cars and then take away the buses.

A member of the public asked if a meeting could be convened to speak with decision-makers to which County Cllr Field stated he would speak with Mary Evans as the relevant portfolio-holder but was mindful that the service was to stop on the 1<sup>st</sup> September.

A member of the public stated there was no parking in Ipswich if working all day and that buses were needed to assist with this.

A member of the public stated buses were available every seven minutes at nearby Castle Hill and Bramford was a good village, expanding almost daily, and it wasn't good enough to have no buses.

A member of the public commented that the public were initially told there were too many people on the buses and now there's not enough.

A member of the public made reference to the Joint Local Plan consultation document stating the Paper Mill Lane and By-Pass Nurseries developments were not included and only future developments identified. He stated this indicated approximately 360 dwellings outstanding in the figures supplied.

He also asked why potential developments were not within the settlement boundary.

Cllr Key stated he was unsure as to these queries and pointed out that the Fitzgerald Road proposal had been halved to 100 houses with no explanation why to date.

Cllr Horn pointed out that this still meant the proposal was greater than the original Joint Local Plan consultation document.

County Cllr Field stated that whilst he was not Bramford's District Councillor representative, the Fitzgerald Road site was believed to be reasonable for development by planning officers.

He went on to state the Joint Local Plan document was still out for consultation and some months away from becoming a full plan but, when adopted, would have significant weight, with the views of local people being taken into account as per the National Planning Policy Framework.

A member of the public stated there was no provision for affordable housing on the Fitzgerald Road proposal and that house prices on the Cemex site were well over the affordability of most young Bramford residents.

County Councillor Field stated a reduction in house prices was dependent on the value of building land, with restrictions on available land pushing prices up.

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council or County Cllr Field were prepared to hold a public meeting regarding the loss of the buses and invite relevant stake-holders.

Cllr Key stated he would like to see such a meeting take place but it would be dependent on who would be prepared to turn up.

Cllr Gardiner agreed with the option of a public meeting but that this wouldn't be possible until after the bus service had been removed.

A member of the public asked if the local press could be made aware of the situation and when Parish Councillors found out about the decision to which Cllr Key stated the Parish council had found out like everyone else and had not been consulted whilst noting the decision-makers were a private company and not obliged to consult with the Council.

## **2.8 APOLOGIES**

Cllr P Kingham, Cllr C Wolton

## **3.8 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST**

None received

## **4.8 JOINT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Cllr Horn stated there were two development sites identified in Bramford both of which the Parish Council had made comments on at the application stages.

He stated the bus route changes were not compatible with the claims made by developers and, with Suffolk County Council's green campaign, development would be complete nonsense without the buses.

Cllr Key stated Highways had requested the Fitzgerald Road application be put on hold, possibly as a result of the buses and was disappointed that this application was still included in the Joint Local Plan consultation document.

County Cllr Field stated making an objection and repeating it was useful for consistency and the District Council had a financial incentive to build houses from the Government.

Cllr Key stated the Fitzgerald Road site had come up before whilst Cllr Powell stated it had now been greatly reduced.

Cllr Key stated the original development was for 100 houses expanding the village towards Sproughton, and threatening the village identity. He stated if Bramford was to have houses it was more appropriate to locate them at the northern side of the village.

Cllr Powell asked who the land-owner for Fitzgerald Road was and Cllr Gardiner stated in the Village Plan from 2005 a change of use would be needed as it was a green-field site.

Cllr Powell asked if the Parish Council could propose its own development ideas, for example a doctor's surgery or more something more amenable to the community.

Cllr Key stated the developer wanted houses adding that the Parish Council had originally opposed the Fitzgerald Road site in favour of the Cemex site.

He stated there was no finite number of houses for each village and if one village couldn't accommodate suitable development, other villages would be required to take up the numbers.

He stated the 559 houses proposed for Bramford was a fair share as far as figures in the Joint Local Plan consultation document showed with County Councillor Field stating it was suggested all

development shouldn't just be restricted to the Ipswich Fringe area and that attempts had been made to share the need.

Cllr Brand stated the strength of public opinion from the public consultation on the Fitzgerald Road site from last year indicated residents were opposed to this development, in favour of the Cemex site.

Cllr Horn stated the Cemex site had received planning permission on the basis of a travel plan including a bus service and that this now no longer applied.

Councillors **agreed** to review policies within the Joint Local Plan consultation document, relevant to Bramford, prior to the September Parish Council Meeting where a formal response could be prepared and submitted.

### **5.8 BRAMFORD BUS ROUTE CHANGES**

Councillors clarified the mood and opinion of members of the public at the start of the meeting.

Cllr Key suggested the Parish Council make written representation to First Buses and relevant individuals at Suffolk County Council, making mention of their 'green climate' plans and the need for more buses in Bramford, not less, as the village continues to accommodate new housing developments.

Councillors considered options for travel payments to be made through the Post Office, rather than on the bus itself to reduce delays, mindful that this is a factor for the removal of some bus services.

Cllr Powell asked if First Buses didn't want to continue with the service could it be put out to tender with County Cllr Field stating the 111 bus service would be out to tender but Suffolk County Council would need to consider any service viable.

Cllr Horn suggested the bus company converse with service users for potential solutions, whilst Cllr Key stated this may offer too many options and that it appeared the decision to cut the service was down to costs not service options.

Cllr Ransom asked if the No 8 bus could come out to Bramford to assist the situation.

Cllr Key stated the changes were to come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> September and whether there was any chance of postponing this.

County Cllr Field stated a similar situation at Martlesham had resulted in the cuts going through regardless.

Councillors all agreed the short notice given was 'out of order'.

Councillors **agreed** for the Clerk to write to First Buses to express disapproval at the loss of the bus service and suggest further communications to establish potential alternative solutions.

9.15pm, Meeting closed

SIGNED

DATE