

Botley Neighbourhood Plan Committee (BNPC)
Report to Botley Parish Council (BPC) meeting 08 September 2020

The last formal BNPC Report to the BPC was given at the meeting on 10 March 2020. The planned BNPC meetings on 14 April, 12 May, 09 June, 14 July and 19 August 2020 were cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. No virtual meetings have been held so far but the first virtual meeting is planned for 16 September 2020.

However, work has continued on developing both the second drafts of the Botley Neighbourhood Plan (BNP).

A monthly Report from March to August 2020 relating to the BNPC and a monthly Change List from March to September 2020 relating to changes in the previously agreed Papers in the Evidence Base have been posted on the Neighbourhood Plan web page on the Botley web site on the tab NP Reports to the Parish Council. These documents are directly assessable to the public via the Botley web site.

New Homes Bonus Scheme

Following instruction from the Botley Parish Council and based on the concerns regarding the New Homes Bonus Scheme (NHBS) expressed by the Botley Neighbourhood Plan Committee (BNPC) I had an informal discussion with Cllr Keith House, Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) on 19 August 2020.

The main points of the discussion were:

- The NHBC replaced the Planning Delivery Grant
- The NHBC was designed to provide a tangible local benefit for new and affordable housing delivery
- The NHBC makes it clear that good practice should include Councils and Communities to work together to decide on how to spend the funding, but this is not a requirement
- EBC made a decision in Cabinet to use the NHBS funding to provide additional Affordable Homes and on infrastructure and capital projects in areas with little or no Section 106 funding, as it was felt this would achieve broad fairness across the Borough
- The NHBS monies are not used for revenue support
- There is no requirement for the NHBS monies to be used for specific capital projects in the area generating the funding
- All Borough Councillors are involved in the annual budgetary process, which includes use of the NHBS monies
- The NHBS funding that comes from Affordable Homes construction goes back to fund further Affordable Homes
- Botley does have a shortfall in Affordable Homes and any additional spending on this is welcomed
- EBC have provided additional capital funding for the new Boorley Park Community Centre and Sports Pavilion
- EBC secured other grants (including £10m from Homes England) towards the cost of the new Botley Bypass, rather than allocate NHBS monies

My opinion:

- EBC are entitled to decide how to allocate the NHBS monies, with this decision being made in Cabinet and during the annual Budget setting process

- My view is that consultation with individual Parish and Town Councils to seek their views on the use of the NHBS monies would have had been beneficial for all and consistent with the spirit of the scheme. In addition it would have been helpful in answering enquiries from the residents
- The support for Affordable Housing, including that within Botley Parish, and help with the additional capital costs of the new Community facilities in Boorley Park is welcomed
- I think the reassurance we have received are acceptable and that we have taken this matter as far as is practicable

David Weeden
Chair BNPC
03/09/2020