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COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock DE4 3NN at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Chris Furness - In the Chair

Councillors Jason Atkin, Martin Burfoot, Neil Buttle, Helen Froggatt, Clare Gamble, Stuart Lees, Tony Morley, Peter O'Brien, Joyce Pawley, Garry Purdy, Mike Ratcliffe, Andrew Statham, Alasdair Sutton, Colin Swindell, Steve Wain and Mark Wakeman.

Paul Wilson (Chief Executive), Sandra Lamb (Head of Corporate Services), Tim Braund (Head of Regulatory Services), Steve Capes (Head of Regeneration and Policy), Robert Cogings (Head of Housing), Lee Gardner (Legal Services Manager), Dave Turvey (Events Manager) and Simon Johnson (Democratic Services Officer).

10 members of the public.

The meeting was recorded and broadcast live on YouTube.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Bull and Susan Hobson. Councillors Jason Atkin and Stuart Lees attended as Substitute Members.

38/19 – MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Jason Atkin, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

RESOLVED

(unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Community & Environment Committee held on 21 February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

39/19 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the procedure for public participation, the following speakers made representations:

Item 6: Gypsies and Travellers

- Councillor Judith Twigg (Derbyshire County Council)
- Dr Siobhan Spencer MBE (Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group)
- Mrs Mary Chaplin (Local Resident of Bakewell)

40/19 – INTERESTS

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests but for clarity Cllr Chris Furness, in reference to Item 10 - Affordable Housing Development Programme, wished it to be noted that he is a member of the Bradwell Community Land Trust.

41/19 – QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO RULE OF PROCEDURE NUMBER 15

QUESTION (A)

Councillor Joyce Pawley asked the following question of Councillor Chris Furness, Chairman of the Committee:

“Figures, sent to me recently by Officers, of card transaction use for our car parking machines show 20 of the 25 District Council Car Parking card payment facilities are having difficulty accepting cards due to poor or intermittent signal quality in the region. Twenty machines only achieving a percentage use of between 3.4% and 14.4% and the remaining five machines alone performing satisfactorily.

If trials and assessments were made of signal strength prior to full installation why did they not show the poor quality of the signal strength?

Current screen interface with the public on the meters offers card service to the public where there is very little chance of them being able to pay in that way. Should we not remove that option from the screens when we know that it is not a reality?

What chance is there for the signal strength improving to a sufficient degree in the future in order for us to be able to say that the overall service is sufficiently robust?”

Cllr Furness’s response was as follows:

In answering the question, it would be useful for members to understand a little of the background to the system of cashless payments.

When the Council resolved, in September 2013, to introduce the option to pay for parking by credit or debit card, a lengthy exercise was undertaken to implement that change. A significant part of that exercise was testing the signal strength of various networks, to determine which sites were capable of delivering that cashless option through the use of 3G, in the clear knowledge that coverage was notoriously poor in many rural parts of the country, including rural Derbyshire.

Following two independent studies, it was apparent that the 02 network provided the best overall coverage, although that was by no means comprehensive and as a consequence, 14 of the Council’s 56 ticket machines have remained as ‘cash only’, whilst the other 42 have a mix of 02 and Mobius sim cards, the latter being a roving network which seeks out the strongest signal from several networks at any given time.

Many of the 25 locations referred to by Councillor Pawley have more than one machine on site and signal strength can vary significantly, such that some machines are able to process card transactions more consistently than others, despite being less than 100 metres apart. It's also worth noting that certain atmospheric conditions will reduce signal strength at strong locations such that they will be rendered temporarily unable to transmit secure transactions over the ether. Rather surprisingly, so too will the excessive or 'peak' use of mobile phones in a given vicinity, where many are vying for a share of the same available network. These phenomena are commonplace throughout the country, not only in rural areas but also in urban settings. (Anecdotally, a university campus is one such example, with students causing peak demand by accessing networks at the end of lectures).

With the above in mind, it's important to state that all of the car park locations which now have card readers installed are carrying out successful transactions, albeit some poorer than others, which has resulted in over £300,000 of payments by credit/debit card being accepted in the past 12 months.

It's clear that more visitors are choosing the cashless payment option and, rather than remove facilities which are underperforming, officers are undertaking trials with the aim of increasing signal strength, wherever possible. One such trial, currently underway in Bakewell, has seen a marked increase in transactions from under 4% to 22%, through the introduction of an external receiver/transmitter, mounted at height on an adjacent lamp column. With that level of success, the intention is to continue to test similar upgrades at several other sites which currently suffer from similar poor signal strength.

Those trials and upgrades are set to continue over the next few months and the relative success, or otherwise, will be apparent to members in the proportion of successful transactions made in the months to follow.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Pawley

Would the results of the testing be reported back to the Committee?

Response from Councillor Furness

Yes

QUESTION (B)

Councillor Mike Ratcliffe asked the following question of Councillor Chris Furness, Chairman of the Committee:

“Concerned residents tell me that a disappointing number of playgrounds under District Council responsibility are suffering from a lack of maintenance, repairs or equipment replacement.

Could we please institute an audit of our recreational spaces as a precursor to a review and prioritisation of financial investment in them, thereby keeping our communities and particularly the young, healthy and active, a DDDC strategic priority?”

Cllr Furness's written response was as follows:

All sites have safety monitoring undertaken some sites are weekly and the high volume sites such as Hall Leys Park are done on a daily basis as per the regulations. These are all recorded onto the PSS software on hand held devices and checked by the relevant supervisor. Any maintenance required will be picked up during these inspections. On an annual basis all our sites also have detailed checks undertaken by an external body, instituted by our insurers, that in itself acts as an audit of our play areas.

The last review of play areas was undertaken in 2014. There are no immediate plans for a further review.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Ratcliffe

The proportion of Council spend in high profile areas seems to be diverting resources away from smaller rural areas. What right do the public have to ask for a more equitable distribution of resources?

Response from Councillor Furness

Councillor Furness agreed to provide a written response.

42/19 – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Committee received an update report in respect of a Gypsy and Traveller family who have presented themselves as homeless, which required determination for an appropriate course of action in order to discharge the Council's statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The report also provided further information to Members in relation to the scale of unauthorised encampments experienced across the District and the nature of the responses to those encampments.

Following the resolution of the Community and Environment Committee on 15 November 2018, the Traveller family submitted a homelessness application which was accepted by the Council. The basic circumstances in relation to this application were that although the family had caravans in which to live, they had no land on which they could legally site these caravans. The acceptance of this application has placed a duty of the Council to provide a series of temporary tolerated sites for the family whilst the search for a permanent site has continued.

The Committee was informed that the District Council receives no prior notice of unauthorised encampments in the majority of cases and is left to react to any such encampment through the use of legal powers to recover possession. The powers most often used by the Council are Part 55 of the Civil Procedure Rules The Police also have discretionary powers to take action under sections 61 and 62 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. Recent action taken under Part 55 has indicated that it is becoming more difficult to use these powers effectively and it is intended that the available, alternative powers be thoroughly reviewed by officers.

One method of protecting vulnerable locations from unauthorised encampments would be through target hardening, or physical protection. Officers have been investigating options for car park entry systems, based on barrier controls, which may be either staffed or unstaffed (automated).

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Jason Atkin and

RESOLVED

1. That the Council's duties and responsibilities to Gypsies and Travellers under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 are acknowledged.
2. That it is agreed that the Travellers currently sited on an unauthorised encampment at the Agricultural Business Centre be directed to return to the temporarily tolerated site at Old Station Close, Rowsley.
3. That the on-going search for a suitable permanent site is noted and that the approach outlined at paragraph 4.3 and 4.4 of the report is endorsed
4. That the information provided in respect of car park entry systems is noted.

Voting:

For	16
Against	0
Abstentions	1

43/19 – DERBYSHIRE DALES ECONOMIC PLAN UPDATE

The Derbyshire Dales Economic Plan was adopted by the District Council in September 2014 which was a result of a workshop held with District Councillors in June 2014. A progress report was last considered by the Community and Environment Committee on 12 July 2018, with subsequent updates reporting the results of the 2018 Business Survey and seeking authority for proposed site feasibility work on 15 November 2018. The Plan aims to enhance economic growth and job creation, with a particular focus on the creation of higher value jobs (to replace lower-skilled, lower-paid roles). This reflects the fact that jobs in the Derbyshire Dales suffer from low pay – only 37 out of 326 districts in England have lower average workplace pay levels than the Derbyshire Dales.

The Committee considered a report on the further progress on the Derbyshire Dales Economic Plan 2014-2019 and noted the Performance and spend of the Launchpad business start-up programme against the contract. The report also sought approval for a revised expenditure programme and financing from the Economic Development Reserve which will be presented as a new Economic Plan for consideration at Council on 21 November 2019.

The activity undertaken under the Plan has focused on the following priority themes. Progress on theme 1 (employment sites) remains challenging but good progress is reported to have made on the other four themes.

- Employment sites
- Business engagement
- Derbyshire Dales Business Advice
- Visitor Economy

- Enterprise Peak District partnership projects

A plan for expenditure of the Economic Development Reserve was agreed by Council on 27 September 2018. The Reserve had £163,944 remaining at 31 March 2019. However, of this, £95,940 is committed and a further £68,004 is proposed against identified Economic Plan activities. These include £43,504 to support site delivery work, focusing on key employment sites in the central area of the district and further work necessary to support delivery of the Bakewell Road town centre site, Matlock.

It was moved by Councillor Helen Froggatt, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

- RESOLVED**
(Unanimously)
1. Progress to date in delivering the Derbyshire Dales Economic Plan 2014-2019 is approved
 2. Performance and spend of the Launchpad business start-up programme against contract is noted
 3. Council be recommended to approve the revised expenditure programme as set out in section 5 of the report, and its financing from the Economic Development Reserve
 4. A new Economic Plan is prepared for consideration at Council on 21 November 2019.

44/19 – MARKETING PEAK DISTRICT AND DERBYSHIRE: PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 2019-2022

The Committee considered a report that sought approval for a Partnership Agreement between the District Council and Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire (the official Tourist Board for this area).

An in-depth review of the tourism service was conducted during 2014 and the outcomes were determined by the then Environment Committee on 17 July 2014. The review out of necessity took into account the tightening budget position of the District Council, and whilst making savings it resolved not to cease the tourism service altogether. Instead, the service has focused on the economic value to be gained by improving the quality of tourism in the district.

The tourism resource at the District Council now principally comprises:

- 0.5 FTE tourism officer capacity
- £5,100 p.a. net budget for tourism publications
- £2,750 p.a. IT support for Visitor Information Points in the district
- £17,000 p.a. contribution passed directly to MPDD

The draft Partnership Agreement between the District Council and Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire in Appendix 1 of the report set out:

- shared aims and objectives
- obligations of both parties
- outputs and outcomes that MPDD agrees to achieve in return for the £17,000 p.a. contribution made by the District Council

The Agreement confirms that Derbyshire Dales District Council will provide MPDD with £17,000 in 2019/20. Subject to available resources and achievement of the Outputs specified in the Agreement, it would be the intention of the District Council to continue to contribute funding at this level in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Performance against the Agreement will be reviewed annually. Should resources not be available at that level, or should the outputs/outcomes not be achieved in full, then the Agreement states that the funding contribution from the District Council may be reduced.

It was moved by Councillor Tony Morley, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

- RESOLVED**
(Unanimously)
1. That the Partnership Agreement between Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire and Derbyshire Dales District Council 2019-2022 is approved.
 2. That the Head of Regeneration and Policy is authorised to negotiate and enter into the agreement.

45/19 – DARLEY DALE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Committee considered a report setting out the responses received during the statutory publicity period on the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan. The report also informed the Committee of Officer comments made in respect of the contents of the plan and outlined the next steps to be taken with regards to examination of the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish of Darley Dale was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in accordance with Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) on the 18th August 2014. The designation of a Neighbourhood Area is one of the statutory requirements to enable a Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted and formally become a part of the Development Plan, and be used in the determination of planning applications by the District Council.

In accordance with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012), Darley Dale Town Council submitted the draft Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council on 30th November 2018. Following submission of the Plan, the District Council assessed whether the Plan met the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012).

Public consultation on the draft Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan consultation was undertaken for a period of six weeks, commencing on 26th February and finishing on 9th April 2019. As part of the consultation on the draft Plan, the District Council sent a letter to all residents and businesses within the Parish of Darley Dale, statutory stakeholders and local groups, advising them where the documents could be viewed and how representations could be made upon the Plan. Further to this a press release alerted the local media.

It was moved by Councillor Jason Atkin, seconded by Councillor Andrew Statham and

- RESOLVED**
(Unanimously)
1. That the representations received during the statutory publicity period for the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Section 2 of this report be noted, and forwarded to the examiner appointed to undertake the Examination of the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan.

2. That the comments made in respect of the policies and proposals contained within the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan set out in Section 3 are noted and that they be forwarded to the examiner appointed to undertake the Examination of the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan.
3. That a further report be presented to the Community and Environment Committee that sets out the Examiner's Report findings and any recommended modifications to the Darley Dale Neighbourhood Plan.

46/19 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee noted a report on the progress towards increasing affordable housing within the Derbyshire Dales district.

As previously reported to the Committee, over the last few years, there has been a rapid acceleration of private developer led sites in the Derbyshire Dales where the Council has successfully negotiated the provision of on-site affordable homes. Some of these sites also provide an off-site financial contribution in the form of payments to the Council which are then used to support our wider housing enabling activity.

The Derbyshire Dales has a strong relationship with several housing association partners, Platform Housing Group (formerly Waterloo Housing Group), Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), Peak District Rural Housing Association (PDRHA) and with private developers to ensure on site homes can be bought by the 3 associations.

The District Council's funding has given NCHA, PDRHA and Platform the confidence to invest more of their resources here rather than elsewhere. The District Council also works with other housing associations, Community Land Trusts and Alms-houses. Derbyshire Dales District Council's funding has enabled housing associations to purchase a greater number of s106 units than their programme allows and has given housing associations the confidence to invest in Derbyshire Dales rather than other areas.

The completion target for 2018/19 of 105 affordable homes has been exceeded with 113 affordable homes completed. The completion target for 2019/20 is 50 affordable homes but current projections are that 56 affordable homes will be completed this financial year.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Helen Froggatt and

RESOLVED That the Council note the progress toward increasing affordable
(Unanimously) housing in the District.

47/19 – MOTION TO CONTINUE

During the discussion of Item 10 - Affordable Housing Development Programme

It was moved by Councillor Jason Atkin, seconded by Councillor Garry Purdy and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

That, in accordance with Rule of Procedure 13, the meeting continue beyond 2½ hours to enable the business on the agenda to be concluded.

48/19 – REVIEW OF STRATEGY FOR EVENTS IN DERBYSHIRE DALES 2019-2022

Councillor Jason Atkin left the meeting at 8:39pm during discussion of this item.

The Committee considered a report on a revised strategy for events on District Council land and the provisions for charging for them, and its implementation from 1st August 2019. The report sought approval for the Head of Community & Environmental Services to be delegated authority to approve applications for events on Council owned land, in accordance with the Events Strategy and approved schedule of fees and for the Chief Executive to be delegated authority to act in the absence of the primary contact or in the event of a conflict of interest.

In 2016 the District Council set up an Events Hub consisting of appropriate departments including the Events Team, Licencing, Environmental Health, Communication, Car Parks, Parks, Tourism and Clean & Green to create an Events Strategy.

Consultation on the reviewed strategy has taken place with the Events Hub including representatives from all relevant departments of the District Council. The consultation was also circulated to Parish and Town Councils who hold regular events within their area and included Matlock Town Council, Matlock Bath Parish Council, Ashbourne Town Council and Bakewell Town Council.

The key aims and objectives of the proposed Events Strategy, are to:

- Attract exciting and vibrant events to Derbyshire Dales and ensure they follow the vision of the Council.
- Ensure organisers of events of all sizes are supported by the District Council throughout the event planning process.
- Ensure that the Council treats each event consistently in its approach and consultation.
- Ensure the Council's involvement is acknowledged.
- Encourage community engagement.
- Promote economic growth through tourism within the District.
- Manage the associated risks for both the Council and event organiser.
- Ensure that the Council's costs are covered

During 2018/19 the District Council's events team processed 78 different event applications. 59 of those events were supported and 18 did not take place due to insufficient notice, rejection during consultation, land availability, failure to meet insurance requirements and Event Organisers withdrawing the application. There were other requests to use Council land which took place using a Letter of Consent.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Joyce Pawley and

RESOLVED
(Unanimously)

1. That the revised Strategy is approved and implemented from 1st August 2019.
2. That the charging provisions recommended in the Strategy are approved and implemented from 1st August 2019.

3. That the Head of Community & Environmental Services is delegated authority to approve applications for events on Council owned land in accordance with the Events Strategy and approved schedule of fees.
4. That the Chief Executive is delegated authority to act in the absence of the primary contact or in the event of a conflict of interest

MEETING CLOSED 8.45PM

CHAIRMAN