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CENTRAL AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Central Area Community Forum held on 7 February 2017 at 7.00pm at Dale Road Methodist Church Hall, Darley Dale

PRESENT

Derbyshire Dales - District Council Councillors Ann Elliott (In the Chair), Jason Atkin, Sue Burfoot, Joyce Pawley, Peter Slack, Jacque Stevens and Colin Swindell

Dorcas Bunton (Chief Executive), Paul Wilson (Corporate Director & Deputy Chief Executive), Karen Henriksen (Head of Resources), Ashley Watts (Head of Community Development), and Ros Hession (Community Engagement Officer)

Derbyshire County Council Stephen Cannon (Transport and Accessibility Manager) and Chris Hegarty (Senior Project Officer – Public Transport)

Members of the Public Age UK Bakewell – Bryan Lomas
Cromford Parish Council – Sue Mosley
Darley Dale - Ingrid Pasteur
Darley Dale Town Council - Kath Dyson
League of Friends – Boys' Brigade / Tennis Club / First Taste – Tom Pilkington
South Darley Parish Council – Geoff Green, Jayne Regan
Stanton in Peak Parish Council - Ros Griffith
N Dibben, A A Foster, Ranald MacDonald, Geoff Stevens
12 in total

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Elliott welcomed everyone to the Forum, introduced participating Councillors and officers then outlined the plan for the evening.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL – GOOD NEWS

Dorcas Bunton talked about some of the District Council's recent successes which included:-

- The District Council has been allocated £383,000 of the Government's Community Housing Fund. The Housing Team is exploring ways to determine how best to use this funding and will be consulting with community groups to gain their views.
- Planning consent was recently achieved for 33 new affordable homes in Wirksworth with the scheme due for completion in early 2018.
- We have supported 12 local firms win over £450,000 in grants from the European LEADER fund, helping local businesses grow and take on new employees.
- Agreements signed to enable our Building Control Team to work across borders in Amber Valley and High Peak (additional income).
- Building Control income is up at £135K.
- Planning income is at £520K.
- Disabled Facilities grants completions already well above annual target (target = 35, completed = 40) meaning more people living with disabilities have been assisted.
- 99.6% of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days;
- 78.9% of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days;
- Average time taken to pay an undisputed invoice is 7 days.
- New play area installed on Hurst Farm Estate, Matlock (official opening 8 February).
- 94% of residents satisfied with refuse collection.
- New Touchtone Telephone Payment line to be introduced in April.
- 28% of the households in the Derbyshire Dales responded to last year's electoral registration canvass electronically. In cash terms that saved over £5,000 in postage costs.
- We will be supporting the 'Great British Spring Clean' (3rd - 5th March 2017) by loaning out equipment and arranging for the litter collected to be picked. Town / Parish Councils, community groups and Schools will be encouraged to participate.
- With the support of DDCVS, we are in the process of finalising the design / details for the Ashbourne Skate Park Project, which is now being taken forward by a community group, Skate Ashbourne, following the community meeting organised last year. Skate Ashbourne is leading on the project with support from DDDC, DDCVS and Ashbourne Town Council.
- Healthy Hurst newsletter in partnership with Friends of Hurst Farm to keep residents up to date with what is happening in the estate
- Another successful Hurst Farm holiday hunger session where we had 50 children and parents attend during the holidays. We now have plans to continue this throughout the school holidays this year
- Matlock Bath Illuminations had another good year in terms of tickets sales, selling £15k+ more in 2016 when compared to the previous year. Our online presence improved from 5k likes on Facebook to 14.5k, with a total reach of over 2m people. In turn this helped improve our online ticket sales by 102% compared to the 2015 event.
- The contract for a monthly Artisan / Specialist market in Ashbourne is currently out to tender.
- Partnership health walks with Enable start up again in March (first Monday of the month). Our previous walk along Cromford Canal had 64 walkers from disability groups across the District.

'YOU SAID, WE DID'

Councillor Colin Swindell gave a short presentation 'You Said, We Did'.

'You Said'	'We Did'
Asked for more publicity, particularly in the venue locality	Worked closely with businesses & local contacts to raise awareness in the host venue parishes
Suggestion to use LED lighting in DDDC premises	Already being used as premises are being upgraded eg Matlock Town Hall & Ashbourne Leisure Centre Pool
Concern about the possible close of Bakewell Post Office	Worked with partners to keep open the existing Post Office
Have a current local issue of interest on the agenda	DCC to talk about local bus services
Suggested that the frequency of black bin collections could be reduced to a 6 week cycle	This will be reviewed as part of any new waste contract in the future
Consider perennial flower bed planting	This has already been implemented within a number of bedding schemes and work will continue to increase the use of perennial plants
Introduce charging for use of Public Conveniences	This is being considered as part of the Public Conveniences Review in 2017/18

SPENDING PROPOSALS FOR 2017/18

Karen Henriksen provided an update on the District Council's financial position and its spending proposals for the forthcoming financial year.

Savings

- Corporate Savings Target to achieve £1m savings from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2017
- Already achieved £900,000 of savings and are on track to meet the target by 31st March 2017

But since that target was set:-

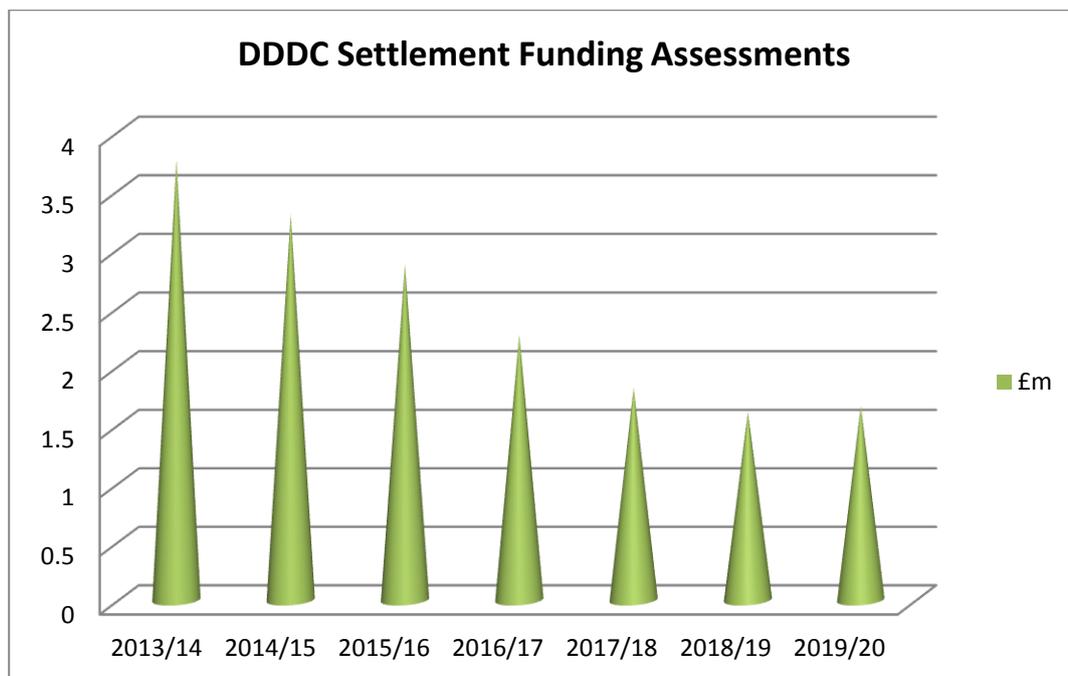
- Low inflation, now rising;
- Brexit & value of £;
- Minimum / Living Wage introduced;
- Lower levels of interest on Council investment;
- Changes to business rates system;
- Reduced government funding

Local Government Finance Settlement (provisional)

	2016/17	2017/18	Change
Settlement Funding Assessment	£2,269,000	£1,816,000	-20%
Spending Power	£9,217,000	£8,647,000	-6.2%

It should be noted that the Government's spending power figure assumes that the council tax for DDDC will be increased by £5 for a band D Property (2.6%) in 2017/18.

DDDC Settlement Funding Assessments



	<u>2017/18</u> £000s	<u>2018/19</u> £000s	<u>2019/20</u> £000s	<u>2020/21</u> £000s	<u>2021/22</u> £000s
Government Grants	1,702	924	827	365	270
Council Tax	5,707	5,819	5,982	6,148	6,317
Business Rates	2,107	1,969	2,036	2,093	2,152
Total funding	9,516	8,712	8,845	8,606	8,739

Where you money goes....

- Waste and recycling collections
- Four leisure centres
- More than 30 parks and gardens
- Keeping your streets clean
- Helping local business
- Providing affordable homes
 - + much more!

Capital Programme

	<u>2016/17</u> £'000	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2017/18</u> £'000	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2018/19</u> £'000	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2019/20</u> £'000
Affordable Housing	817	1,352	520	1,020
Leisure Centres	676	15	25	120
Market towns	546	59	0	0
Public conveniences	354	41	16	0
A clean and safe district	1,034	928	257	137
Business growth & job creation	25	215	0	0
Other	729	242	145	55
Total	4,181	2,852	962	1,332

- We are working hard to provide the services that you need, but to do this.....

- We propose an increase in the District Council's share of the Council Tax for 2017/18 of £5 for a band D property, which equates to 2.6%

	Council Tax 2016/17	Proposed Council Tax for 2017/18	Increase on previous year	Increase per week
Band A	£128.89	£132.23	£3.34	£0.06
Band B	£150.38	£154.26	£3.88	£0.07
Band C	£171.86	£176.30	£4.44	£0.09
Band D	£193.34	£198.34	£5.00	£0.10
Band E	£236.30	£242.42	£6.12	£0.12
Band F	£279.27	£286.49	£7.22	£0.14
Band G	£322.23	£330.57	£8.34	£0.16
Band H	£386.68	£396.68	£10.00	£0.19

Key Messages

- We've balanced the books for 2017/18 without a significant impact on frontline services, but we propose a 2.6% increase in council tax;
- We've achieved this by reviewing services to make them more efficient; some services are now delivered differently;
- We've looked critically at our revenue and capital spending, reviewed and rationalised reserves and sought ongoing savings or additional income;
- However, our medium term financial plan shows that we still have significant savings to make over the next 4 years, amid uncertainty over funding levels;
- This will require some difficult decisions to be made.

New Corporate Savings Target:

- To save £1.6m over 4 years

Future savings to come from:

- Continuing with the programme of comprehensive service reviews as a means of reviewing & reducing spending levels across all services;
- Transformational and organisational changes e.g. considering shared services and other alternative service delivery methods;
- Reducing fixed and variable employee costs, whilst protecting existing employees as far as possible;
- Review of grants & discretionary rate reliefs;
- New income streams;
- Assessing the utilisation of reserves and balances;
- Consider future Council Tax increases.

What it costs you....

- The DDDC proposed budget for 2017/18 will cost 54p a day for a Band D property, but we also collect Council Tax for others:
- Of the whole bill for 2016/17:
 - 70% goes to Derbyshire County Council
 - 12% to Derbyshire Dales District Council
 - 11% to Derbyshire Police & Crime Commissioner
 - 4% to Derbyshire Fire & Rescue
 - 3% to your local town or parish council

Consultation

- This presentation will be placed on the Council's website www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk
- Councillors will meet on 2nd March to consider the proposed increase.
- Please use the feedback forms to let us know your views or email finance@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues were raised as follows:-

- A member of the public asked about the impact of financial cuts on the District Council's workforce.
- Dorcas responded that there had been one compulsory redundancy in the last four years and in addition voluntary redundancies had been accepted and natural wastage looked at. In the last 10 years, the District Council's workforce has reduced by one third. Many staff are employed on a casual basis such as leisure centre coaches and fixed term contracts are applied.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BUS SERVICE UPDATE

Stephen Cannon and Chris Hegarty gave an update on local bus services.

Background

- Most bus services in Derbyshire are operated commercially
- In 2015/16 these services carried over 23.7million passengers 85% of the total bus journeys in county
- DCC's role is to work in partnership with the operators to develop these services
- We also fund the journeys made on these services using the Gold Card and B line schemes
- DCC does pay directly for a network of non-commercial bus services, these are either –
 - Local bus services in less populated areas
 - Additional evening and Sunday journeys on local bus services which are commercially operated during the day Monday-Saturday
 - Dial a Bus and Active Travel services
- In 2015/16 these services carried 4.2million passengers

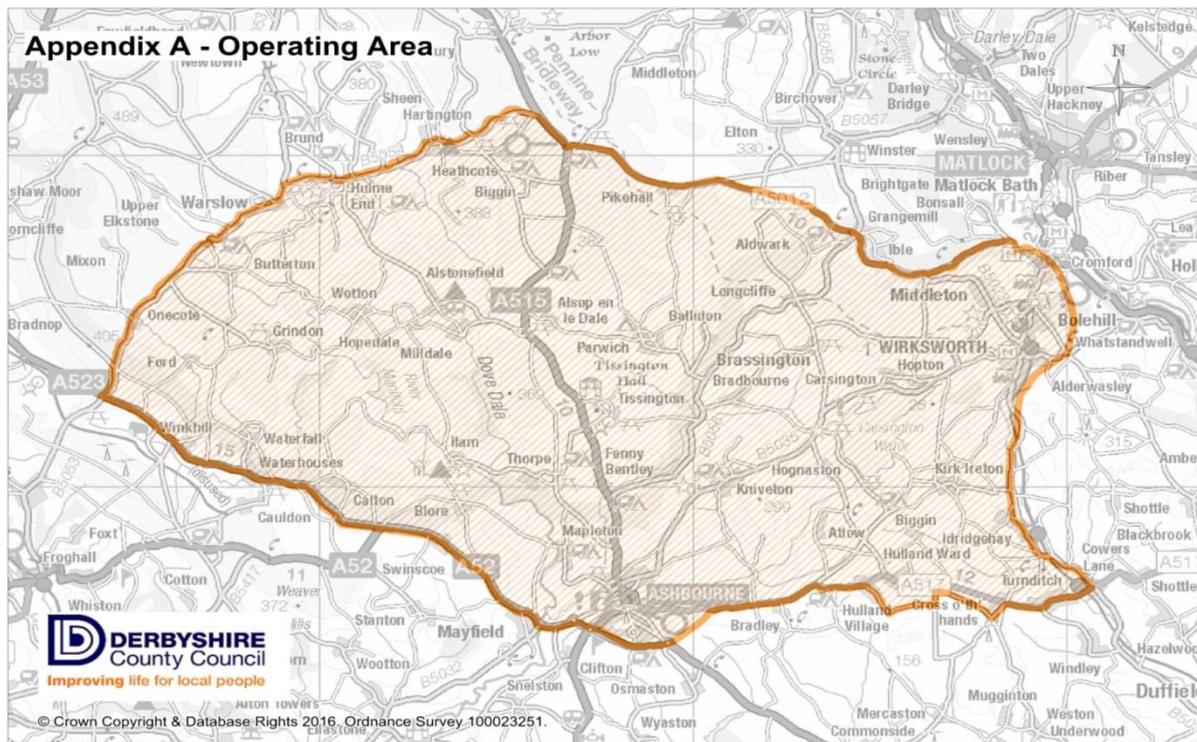
2016 Public Consultation

- Feb-April 2016 public consultation on proposals to end most funding for DCC supported services
- Over 4200 responses to consultation received back from individuals and groups
- Overwhelmingly against proposals
- In November proposals were reviewed and new arrangements were agreed by DCC cabinet

What will happen now

- Current network of DCC supported local bus services to be reviewed on an area basis over next 2-3 years
- Dial a Bus and Active Travel to be replaced by a new service from October
- More partnership working with operators
- Develop a bus strategy
- Pilot a new style service in the Ashbourne /Wirksworth area

Derbyshire Connect Pilot Service Area



Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues were raised as follows:-

- A member of the Imperial Road (Matlock) Patient Participation Group stressed the importance of patients' needs in accessing health care – people can be very isolated. It is a challenge for many to get to appointments at the Chesterfield Royal Hospital.
- Chris advised that the County Council had been talking to Ashbourne Hospital, as part of its pilot project.
- Stephen added that Community Transport run Active Travel, a scheme to specifically help with getting patients to doctors and hospital appointments. This is funded until 2020, but may be run by a different operator in the future as tenders are currently being sought to run this contract.
- Stephen noted that non-emergency patient transport costs are high eg children with special needs. The County Council are looking at how they might provide these services, working more closely with the ambulance service to ensure the most appropriate level of transport.
- Sue Mosley asked if you had to pay to use the Derbyshire Connect Pilot project bus.
- Chris advised that fees are the same as a conventional bus ie free for Gold Card holders, £2 single, £3.80 return for adults, and £1.20 single, £2.40 return for children.

Councillor Pawley raised 3 points:-

- 1) Have DCC negotiated for operators to use smaller buses?

- Stephen explained that many of the costs are fixed such as driver and vehicle. Also, at some times of day, a larger bus may be required. It's a case of the operators making best use of the resources they have.
- 2) Also, consider lowering costs to encourage use.
- 85% of the bus operators are privately run and it is their commercial decision to decide on its fare structure – the County Council cannot influence.
- 3) Could the £11 million spend on Gold Card subsidies be reduced? Could some Gold Card users contribute some of the cost themselves?
- Chris explained that the Gold Card scheme is part of the national concession card scheme which cannot be altered at a local level.
 - Councillor Sue Burfoot was staggered at the £11.8 million spent on Gold Card travel and considering that much of the travel was outside of the county.
 - Chris explained that it is the county where the passenger is travelling who pays.
 - Councillor Sue Burfoot highlighted the WASPI campaign www.waspi.co.uk that 'fights the injustice done to women born in the 1950s affected by the changes to the State Pension Law (1995/2011 Acts)'.
 - Stephen Cannon appreciated the dilemma of the 'WASPIs'. He understood the point being made, but things were unlikely to change in the current climate.
 - In response to an observation that Gold Cards expire this year, Chris Hegarty confirmed that they are due for renewal every 5 years, but it is hoped to renew them on a rolling programme in future. Gold Cards can be applied for and renewed at local District & Borough Council.
 - In response to a question about the use of voluntary drivers, Chris responded that future delivery of the service was not yet known as the service was currently being tendered for.
 - Councillor Slack noted that bus drivers & companies complain that they don't make money.
 - Stephen explained that the national concessionary scheme has a requirement that the transport authority is adequately recompensed. There is a complex national formula which takes into account the generation factor and also average fares.
 - Councillor Pawley asked if a percentage breakdown of Gold Card users was available in tourist areas ie is Derbyshire subsidising people from outside to travel in this tourist area?
 - Chris Hegarty advised that a breakdown from each issuing authority is available. He added that usage in Derbyshire is quite insular.
 - Chris advised that public transport is actively promoted in Derbyshire and Stephen added that increasing numbers of tourists are travelling to Matlock by train.
 - Mrs Dyson commented on the excellent local service.
 - Tom Pilkington asked if Dial a Bus collected passengers from their house or a designated point.

- Chris advised that the service is pre-bookable with some negotiation, depending on the demands of the service. The service can be booked up to 7 days in advance and a minimum of two hours in advance.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REVIEW OF LEISURE

Ashley Watts gave a presentation on the current review of the District Council's Leisure Services.

- Internal efficiency and improvement review started in December 2014
- Involved staff, management and customers
- Provided savings of approximately £113k pa

Phase One

- Internal efficiency and improvement review started in December 2014
- Involved staff, management and customers
- Provided savings of approximately £113k pa

Phase Two

- Appointed external consultants to consider alternative management options in 2015
- Provided five options to Members in February 2016
- Decision to outsource the management of the Leisure Centres was made on 1 December 2016

The Coming Year

- Consult with key stakeholders (partners, users and relevant organisations)
- Form a specification
- Advertise the contract
- Aim to implement in April 2018
- Links to the survey and further information on the Leisure Review will be posted on the District Council's website at www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues were raised as follows:-

- A comment was made by the Co-chair of the Highfields School of Governors. The school was currently undertaking a review of its estates and would be interested to know if there was scope to utilise and share each other's facilities.
- Ingrid Pasteur added that schools could offer their facilities when not in use.
- Ashley advised that this dual use approach exists at Wirksworth Leisure Centre.
- Mrs Dyson asked how staff would be affected.
- Ashley explained that they are protected under TUPE and negotiations would be ongoing between staff, the District Council, unions and the new contractor, with staff transferring over.
- In response to a further question, Ashley advised that the contract was likely to run for 10 to 15 years – such contracts are not usually less than 10 years.
- In response to Sue Mosley's question, Ashley confirmed that all 4 leisure centres were in the equation.

- Kath Dyson asked what would happen to the catering concession at Arc Leisure, Matlock. Ashley advised that this would also transfer over, but it has currently been let on an 8 year contract.

QUESTION TIME

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues were raised as follows:-

- An Oker resident noted the 94% satisfaction rate with the refuse service, but that this was not the case in Oker. He was grateful to Councillor Swindell for the time he put in to rectify missed bin collections.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Elliot thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm