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SOUTHERN AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Southern Area Community Forum held on 24 October 2017 at 7.00pm at the Henmore Suite, McMurtry & Harding Veterinary Practice, Ashbourne

PRESENT

Derbyshire Dales - District Council

Councillors Sue Bull (In the Chair), Albert Catt, Richard FitzHerbert, Tony Morley and Andrew Shirley
Paul Wilson (Corporate Director & Deputy Chief Executive), Karen Henriksen (Head of Resources), Sandra Lamb (Head of Corporate Services), Tim Braund (Head of Regulatory Services), Ashley Watts (Head of Community & Environmental Services) and Ros Hession (Community Engagement Officer)

Members of the Public

Ashbourne Town Council – Anthony Bates, Sean Clayton
Bradley Parish Council – E Mitchell
Clifton Parish Council – Ron Taylor
Marston Montgomery – P M Butler
Osmaston & Yeldersley - J Naylor
Osmaston & Yeldersley Parish Council – John Hall
Shirley – Derek Puplett
Shirley Parish Council – Alvin Baker, Anthony Taylor, Hugh Tyler
Mr Stevenson, Peter Dobbs, Midge Dobbs, Betty Garside, Roger Garside, J Turpin, Andy White
18 in total

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL – GOOD NEWS

Paul Wilson talked about some of the District Council's recent successes which included:-

Leisure Centres: We have completed a fabulous refurbishment programme of each of the Fitness Suites, plus the new functional space at Ashbourne and new viewing area too. New Indoor Cycling Studio at Arc is amazing and has seen participation rocket.

Hall Leys Park MUGA: Work has been completed to convert the single tennis court in Hall Leys Park into a Multi-Use Games Area, improving recreational facilities in the park, including enclosed football and basketball activities and - we hope - reducing anti-social behaviour.

Ashbourne Thursday Market: Is now at its new location, prompting us to consult on the possibility of switching the Saturday market to the same site.

... and we awarded the tender to The Market Co. for a monthly artisan market in Ashbourne Market Place, this started in September.

Great British Spring Clean: Following on from the success of the 2016 'Clean for the Queen' initiative, this year we encouraged more than 25 groups to take part in the 'Great British Spring Clean', including schools, parish councils, women's institutes, businesses and various community groups.

Invoices: For 2016/17 99.65% of invoices were paid on time. This is our best ever performance, and helps the Council's suppliers operate successfully (many are local firms)

Minor Planning Applications: 77.9% determined in 8 weeks, well above target and second best performance in 5 years.

Business Advice: In the last 12 months, our Derbyshire Dales Business Advice Service has helped 22 local firms win £800,000 in grants – creating 72 new jobs in the Derbyshire Dales.

...**26 New Businesses** were started in the Derbyshire Dales last year with direct assistance from the District Council's business support schemes, and a further 101 existing firms got business advice from us.

CCTV: We have tendered and are now installing a new CCTV System to cover our 4 main town centres and help people who live, work and visit the area feel safer.

Regeneration: We have worked with the residents' association on Hurst Farm estate in Matlock to win a £200,000 investment from DCLG to identify the regeneration needs of the estate.

Vulnerable People: Derbyshire County Council has agreed a two year deal with us for £300,000 additional Council Tax raised on 2nd homes to be invested in services for vulnerable people threatened with homelessness in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Accreditation: Our Homelessness Team has achieved the Bronze level of accreditation with DCLG's Gold Standard award and is now working towards the Silver level.

Housing Investment: Working in partnership with Derby City Council and all of the Derbyshire authorities, we have led a project to fund a 2-year post that will help to bring additional housing investment to the county. Financed from an external grant, it will start in September.

Disabled Facility Grants: We completed 59 of these grants in 2016/17 – the highest ever number, meaning more people helped than ever before.

Jack Rabbits, The Green Man, Ashbourne and Sudbury Courtyard were both Building Control project finalists - the Sudbury Courtyard was an actual winner in the Best Small Commercial Project category at the East Midlands 2017 Building Excellence Awards.

Matlock Town Centre: We've given £10,000 to Matlock Community Vision (a local community-led company) to carry out a viability assessment of their initial plans for land off Bakewell Road.

Ashbourne By-Pass: We've given £10,000 to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) as a contribution toward the work required in assessing the feasibility of a by-pass. Together with an Officer from DCC and a local representative, the Corporate Director attended a meeting with the Secretary of State (arranged by the MP) to discuss potential funding sources.

Active Everyone: Our popular Active Everyone project is to be extended thanks to Sport England funding. Since 2014 it has engaged with 1,500 people in some of the Dales' most deprived communities.

Walking for Health: This growing scheme hosted Nordic Walking taster sessions at Whitworth Park - a huge success with more than 60 people attending.

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

- A member of the public noted the £300,000 additional income from Council Tax.
- Paul explained that the District Council has the ability to charge Council Tax on 2nd homes. This charge is being levied and additional funds being used to progress projects to help the vulnerable, making maximum use of the monies.
- Andy White asked if the 2007 report on potential routes for the proposed Ashbourne by pass was still valid.
- Paul replied that some of the Scott Wilson report from 2007 study may still be relevant. He added that Derbyshire Dales District Council wanted to demonstrate to the Secretary of State that it is committed to this project. There will be opportunities to bid for funds in the future.
- In response to a question from Ron Taylor of Clifton Parish Council, Paul advised that consultation would take place in the future, but that was a few stages away yet.
- Anthony Bates welcomed the CCTV system in Ashbourne and asked if it was being monitored.
- Ashley replied that the system feeds back to the Town Hall. It is not constantly monitored, but can be reviewed and a member of staff is employed 3 days a week for this purpose.
- Paul added that technology has moved on significantly since the previous system and the images are now of a much higher quality.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR EFFICIENCY PLAN?

Karen Henriksen gave a presentation on the District Council's Efficiency Plan.

We need to find ongoing savings of £1.7m a year by 2020/21.
That's almost 17% of current spending!

Q. How do we hope to achieve those savings?

A. With the projects set out in our Efficiency Plan

This is your chance to give us your views on the proposals

An overview of the proposals

	2018/19 £'000s	2019/20 £'000s	2020/21 £'000s	2021/22 £'000s
Savings required (as MTFP)	683	1,049	1,709	1,513
Service Reviews	-625	-775	-775	-775
Service Changes	-485	-485	-485	-485
Transformation	-130	-155	-165	-165
Additional Income	-150	-150	-150	-150
Net Spending Requirement	-707	-516	134	-62

Proposed savings from service reviews

	2018/19 £'000s	2019/20 £'000s	2020/21 £'000s	2021/22 £'000s
Outsourcing management of leisure centres	-350	-500	-500	-500
Public conveniences: close some	-200	-200	-200	-200
Public conveniences: introduce charging	-75	-75	-75	-75
Total	-625	-775	-775	-775

Proposed savings from service changes

	2018/19 £'000s	2019/20 £'000s	2020/21 £'000s	2021/22 £'000s
Markets Review	-40	-40	-40	-40
Boundary Review Fewer Members	-25	-25	-25	-25
Cease pest control service	-15	-15	-15	-15
Gulley Emptying	20	20	20	20
Review of leases	-425	-425	-425	-425
Total	-485	-485	-485	-485

Proposed savings from transformation

	2018/19 £'000s	2019/20 £'000s	2020/21 £'000s	2021/22 £'000s
Review of car user expenses	-40	-40	-40	-40
BSU savings	-15	-15	-15	-15
Support services following outsourcing of leisure management	-75	-100	-100	-100
STEP Review			-10	-10
Total	-130	-155	-165	-165

Proposed areas for additional income

	2018/19 £'000s	2019/20 £'000s	2020/21 £'000s	2021/22 £'000s
Charge for car parks that are currently free	-60	-60	-60	-60
Council Tax Premium for Empty Homes (DDDC share)	-10	-10	-10	-10
Planning fees, pre-application, waste bins etc	-80	-80	-80	-80
Total	-150	-150	-150	-150

Efficiency Plan: Key Messages

The MTFP shows a balanced budget for 2017/18 with savings required for later years; Our EP has identified savings that will balance our books. Members have already given approval for officers to explore the areas but some tough decisions will have to be made; If these savings can be delivered, we shouldn't need to look at any other areas for savings over the next few years.....

Further public consultation will be required before some of these proposals can be implemented.

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

- A member of the public noted constant cuts, but questioned why the government gave money to other countries.
- Karen explained that the focus of her presentation was around managing the District Council's finances.

- Andy White asked if representation is made to central government about the grant received by the District Council.
- Karen replied that discussions had taken place with the local MP so he was aware.
- Paul added that the District Council was a member of various lobbying groups including the Local Government Association and District Council Network which is very aware of rural issues. Councillor Rose; the Leader of the Council, is a member of the Network so the District Council does have a seat at the table.
- Councillor Catt noted that when he had become a Member of the District Council ten years ago, funding was one third from central government, one third from residents / Council Tax and one third from fees & charges eg car parking. He emphasised that by the end of 2022 there will be no central government contribution and re-iterated the huge amount of work being done to lobby central government.

- A member of the public asked if the Council had reserves and were these used?
- Karen explained different types of reserve:-
 - Revenue reserves to support day to day spending for emergencies. This is usually 10% of net spending and stands at around £2 million.
 - Capital Reserves for items such as buildings, vehicles and projects for forthcoming years. Some authorities borrow money for such items of expenditure, but Derbyshire Dales District Council generally does not.

- Mr Stevenson felt unable to build up a full picture of the savings when only round estimate figures were provided – are detailed figures available?
- Karen explained that the presentation included officer's best estimates for savings that can be worked on. As an example more will be known through the procurement process about the estimated £0.5 million savings from the leisure review.
- Mr Stevenson went on to note experiences in Birmingham where the council did not have power to monitor contracts.
- Karen advised of a detailed specification for the leisure contract which Ashley would expand upon in his presentation.

- In response to a query from a member of the public, Paul confirmed that the £20,000 expenditure on gulley emptying relates to emptying drains. Derbyshire Dales District Council is one of only three authorities who operate on behalf of Derbyshire County Council, the highway authority. DCC is looking to let a countywide contract for gulley emptying so DDDC will no longer be involved. This will initially produce a net additional cost, but achieve long term savings as an example there will be no need to purchase gulley vehicles, which are coming to the end of their life. The new contract is likely to provide a better service also.

REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Purpose of the Review

- District Council funding gap of £1.6M over next 4 years
- 26 Public Conveniences owned/managed by the District Council
- Cost of Public convenience service is £470K per year
- Derbyshire Dales is a tourist area attracting 4.2 million visitors per year
- Trying to find ways of saving money whilst maintaining services

Options for the Review

- Charging for use
- Community Toilet Scheme
- Sponsorship
- Community Asset Transfer
- Closure

Current Position

- Assessing numbers that use facilities
- Consultation on charging at:
 - Matlock Hall Leys Park
 - Granby Road, Bakewell
 - Shawcroft Car Park, Ashbourne
 - Nether End, Baslow
 - Memorial Gardens, Matlock Bath
- Consultation on basis for Community Toilet Scheme
- Criteria agreed for assessment of closure as a last resort

Next Steps

- Completing the public consultation
- Assessment of consultation responses
- Obtaining quotes for charging units
- Report to Committee in New Year with recommendations for each facility

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

- Andy White had put forward a petition with regard to the public conveniences review and asked what sort of methodology was being applied. For example how many people would have to give support to enable a facility to remain open and non-charging.
- Tim added that specific questions had been included in the consultation questionnaire eg would you pay, yes or no, and then a scale of charges were suggested. There was also scope in the questionnaire for open comments to be made. Recommendations will be objective, but must have an awareness of political elements also.
- In response to a member of the public about privatising public conveniences, Sandra replied that this option had been thought about. However, the review needed to be progressed first to establish if outsourcing was a viable option and to inform the contractor of what was 'in the basket of goods'.

- A member of the public wondered what percentage of local people use the facilities and suspected that it is visitors who are the greater users and to this end would lean towards a charging structure.
- Tim commented that some of the Town / Parish Councils are already leaning towards charging and Sandra added that this data will be captured from the consultation exercise.
- This prompted a further question about how data is captured from tourists.
- Sandra explained that the survey was designed to capture data from both locals and tourists and had been widely promoted and available on line, for six weeks, as well as notices placed in all the public conveniences.
- Tim added that some parishes have expressed their views on what tourists think.
- A member of the public felt that visitors may be deterred due to parking charges and then possible added charges for use of public conveniences; however, he would prefer to see charges levied for usage rather than lose the facilities.
- Sandra undertook to take on board comments made about paying to park and then potentially paying to use public conveniences. However, she noted that few public conveniences are linked with car parks.
- In response to a further comment, Tim advised that if charges are introduced, the aim is to provide a better service which may include longer opening hours.
- A Marston Montgomery resident noted the lack of toilet provision around Ashbourne Bus Station.
- Tim responded that the District Council is not looking at additional facilities, but agreed that improved signage would help.
- A member of the public questioned if Community Asset Transfer was not just shifting the burden onto Town / Parish Councils.
- Sandra replied that Town / Parish Councils have the ability to increase their precept if required to fund the facility or could consider charging. Some parishes feel they have better control eg opening hours and cleaning, and do it well such as at Winster.
- In response to a question about parishes having problems recruiting cleaners, Tim replied that some make it work whereas others do struggle.
- Mr Stevenson assumed that the District Council had a breakdown of what a facility cost to run, how many people used it and what might be a suitable charge.
- Tim confirmed that running costs are available and usage has been monitored throughout the review some on a weekly and some on a fortnightly basis. The consultation sought views on a 20p, 50p or other charge. Sandra added that quality feedback has been received.
- A remote comment was made 'I am in favour of a small charge being made for the use of the toilets'.
- Via Facebook - A question for the community forum this evening. When you start charging people to use the public toilets, can you assure us that the properties housing them will remain public property? Or will they be sold to private interests?

- Officers have responded that no decisions have yet been made on the future of public conveniences in the district. We have consulted on the possibility of charging and we are currently examining the feedback from that exercise before making recommendations in the New Year.
- Until we have done more detailed work, we are unable to give you a commitment that the properties will remain in public ownership.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROVISION OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR DERBYSHIRE DALES LEISURE CENTRES

Ashley Watts gave an update on the leisure review.

The timetable

December 2014	Introduction of Service Reviews - Does the service have to be provided? - DDDC or other provider? - What level of service is required?
January 2016	Options presented to Elected Members - 5 options
December 2016	Decision on final options
January 2017	Specification and Contract - Consultation
June 2017	Approval of Specification

Specification includes:

- Contract Terms
- Contract Length
- Pricing Policy
- Programming
- Opening Hours
- Maintenance and Lifecycle Cost
- Energy
- Surplus Share Agreement
- Performance and Review

Next steps

July 2017	Advertisement of Contract
October / November 2017	Evaluation Phase One
November 2017	Negotiation
January 2018	Evaluation Phase Two
March 2018	Award Contract
June 2018	Implementation

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

- Andy White commented that the contract seemed to be well tied down and could be for a period of ten years plus. He asked if the charges are likely to alter in the ten years?

- Ashley responded that there will be an overarching pricing policy with fees then being reviewed probably on an annual basis, as is now. The market is aggressive and competitive at present so prices may increase, but not beyond CPI.
- Mr White further asked how the £0.5 million savings could be made with compromising service quality.
- Ashley advised that specifics could be given until the contract is awarded, however, as an example, many providers have charitable status so can attract 80% business rate relief. Options like this are not available to the District Council. There are other savings to be made such as on taxes and through bulk buying (some providers are European wide and can attract large savings).
- Mr White further asked if the District Council could set up an arm's length charitable organisation.
- Ashley explained that the District Council could, but with £160,000 required to set this up and timescales of approximately 18 months, this model could not be achieved within the given timescales to make savings.
- A member of the public asked what would happen to the contracts of employment for staff at Ashbourne Leisure, many of whom are local.
- All staff are aware of the situation, replied Ashley, terms & conditions are protected under TUPE and staff will transfer March to June 2018. Changes may result, but this could be a good thing with greater budgets for training and development.

QUESTION TIME

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

Social Housing in Shirley

- Alvin Baker of Shirley spoke on social housing and in particular 4 former council houses in Shirley. An elderly occupant of one the houses had recently died and the house was now up for sale. Mr Baker believed that these houses were social housing for the benefit of the village, why had a decision been made to put the house up for sale.
- Paul explained that the District Council had transferred its housing stock to Dales Housing in 2002: Dales Housing has recently been taken over by Waterloo Housing. Paul undertook to investigate the matter and liaise directly with Mr Baker.
- **Post meeting note** – Paul sought advice from the Council's Head of Housing who was aware of the disposal of this property.
- Following the merger of Waterloo Housing Group with Dales Housing in 2016, Waterloo have been reviewing the stock of the former Dales Housing. Some of the Dales tenancies can be very long and when a vacancy occurs it is sometimes the case that extensive repairs are required before a property can be re-let. Waterloo will therefore look at the costs of repairs and the potential to raise a capital receipt from the sale of a property. In some cases, the sale of a property is undertaken if the repair or refurbishment costs are considered to be uneconomic as a social rented property. All receipts from any such sales in the Derbyshire Dales are however, reinvested back in to the Derbyshire Dales.
- This may seem at odds with the Council's desire to provide affordable housing in rural areas but it is common practice to sell homes where it makes economic sense. The money raised from the sale of this property will, when matched with other funding from Waterloo and the government, fund the development of 4 or 5 new

homes. There is therefore a net benefit to the Derbyshire Dales in the form of newer housing stock.

Derbyshire County Council matters

- A member of the public was advised that Derbyshire County Council is the highways authority and responsible for the maintenance of the A52 – concerns were expressed about grass growing out of gullies around the Shirley Hollow area.
- Mr Stevenson was advised in response to his query that Derbyshire County Council highways are also responsible for signage on roads.

Shawcroft Car Park

- Paul confirmed that Derbyshire Dales District Council is responsible for Shawcroft car park in Ashbourne.
- Mr Stevenson felt that the layout was rather old fashioned and that bays should be at a 45 degree angle and a one way system. He noted that approximately 4 spaces would be lost, but would enable re-configuring in a more modern way.
- Paul replied that the car park had recently been altered to create more spaces. Regard had to be given to access and egress for service vehicles such as for Waitrose. Paul would, however, speak to colleagues in car parking about Mr Stevenson's comments.

Remote questions from A & D Cooke

- Can you advise if Section 106 Contributions from local development can be used for parking improvements in the town if not why not.
- Paul Wilson has responded that Planning Obligations (or S.106 agreements) can only be sought where they are needed to assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations may only be secured where they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Detailed guidance on the use of s.106 agreements is contained in Planning Practice Guidance here : <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>
- S.106 agreements are not a means to fund community projects or to seek funds which are not directly related to mitigating the effects of development – that would be unlawful. In order to justify a s.106 obligation which relates to improved car parking provision, there would need to be a clear and demonstrable link between a development and the need for additional car parking provision. However, given that increased demand for car parking arises from many different sources, it is unlikely that such a clear link could be demonstrated. It would therefore be unlawful to seek such contributions. However, in the future the use of monies derived from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be appropriate.
- Noting that Churchill Homes planning application includes an improved bus shelter can you advise what style/type this will be and have you included for a new bus service timetable board. Additionally there is an old style finger post on site - have you included this in your deliberations with the developer for updating to match the rest? Also do you plan to replace the Ashbourne Town map which was on this site by the toilets and removed by the District Council some time ago and somehow lost?
- Derbyshire County Council as the public transport authority would determine the style and type of bus shelter to be provided.

- **Post meeting note** – Planning Officers have now discussed the issue of the bus station / stop, finger post sign and Ashbourne Map with the Councils Facilities and Estates Manager, Mike Galsworthy. They confirm that there will be an obligation on any future developer i.e. Churchill Retirement Living (who have entered into an option to purchase the land from the District Council) to replace the bus shelters and finger post sign. This will form part of the terms of the sale. There was a previous scheme agreed with Sainsbury's relating to these works and this is likely to be the scheme that will be secured. The Council is also aware of the removal of the Ashbourne Map and will seek, as part of the terms of the sale of the land to ensure that it is reinstated by the developer.
- Despite bringing attention to the state of the pavement on Old Derby Hill nine weeks ago the condition is still the same. We agree the new leaves are being swept away but compacted silt which has run from the sides and compacted leaves have not been dealt with leaving certain parts very slippery under the new leaf fall. Can a deep clean be made?
- Believe that this is a County Council matter – urged to contact direct with reference number or officer contact.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Bull thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm