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COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 7 September 2017 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT Councillor Joanne Wild - In the Chair

Councillors Jason Atkin, Jennifer Bower, Sue Bull, Martin Burfoot, Albert Catt, Ann Elliott, Susan Hobson, Vicky Massey-Bloodworth, Tony Morley, Joyce Pawley, Garry Purdy, Mike Ratcliffe, Andrew Statham, Colin Swindell and Philippa Tilbrook.

Paul Wilson (Corporate Director), Sandra Lamb (Head of Corporate Services), Tim Braund (Head of Regulatory Services), Robert Cogings (Head of Housing), Simon Beynon (Housing Strategy Officer), Marie-Christine Schmidt (Estate Regeneration Manager), James Riggott Collins (Corporate Support Apprentice) and Annette Reading (Democratic & Electoral Services Assistant).

1 member of the press

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lewis Rose. Councillor Garry Purdy attended as Substitute Member.

124/17 - MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Jason Atkin, seconded by Councillor Joyce Pawley and

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the Community & Environment Committee held on 15 June 2017 be approved as a correct record.
(unanimously)

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Tilbrook arrived at 6.04pm.
Councillor Statham arrived at 6.06pm.

125/17 – QUESTIONS (RULE OF PROCEDURE 15)

Councillor Mike Ratcliffe asked the following question of Councillor Jo Wild, Chairman of the Community & Environment Committee

“The Car Parking Review, like many others that have preceded it, has been criticized as merely a “tick box exercise” on behalf of an authority that has a predetermined view of what outcomes it wishes to achieve. In order to serve the best interests of open democracy and transparency, members should be aware of all concerns and objections and the full impact of any proposals in order to come to decisions that are both in the best interests of Derbyshire Dales residents and representative of their views and opinions.

In order to allow for a clear and objective determination of strategic proposals, at the appropriate time, will the Chair please ensure that the full results of the consultation are made available to members of the Community & Environment Committee, rather than a condensed and summarized version?”

Councillor Wild gave the following response:

“As Members will be aware, the consultation process for the review is still underway and I am pleased to report that as of Monday afternoon over 1,200 responses have been submitted. With regards to Cllr Ratcliffe’s question, the short answer is ‘yes’. However, there some instances where full disclosure will not occur, such as:

- Where the response risks identifying individual residents or respondents*
- Where responses are irrelevant to the question or the topic and whilst they may be noted, these would usually be filtered out from any analytical report (e.g.: comments on welfare provision which is central government policy or personal comments relating to Members or Officers)*

Also, given the size of the document and the amount of paper and printing required, it will be made available on request as a Background Paper.”

126/17 – PROGRAMME OF HOUSING PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE 2ND HOMES PROGRAMME

The Housing Strategy Officer presented a report that sought approval for the proposed second homes programme of activities for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

In 2004 an agreement was reached between Derbyshire Dales District Council and Derbyshire County Council to fund a programme of projects from the increased Council Tax on second homes. Since the programme began the District Council had been able to support several important projects which would not have otherwise existed. These include the Older Persons Housing Advice Service which had seen a year on year increase in the number of people supported and had helped generate over £2million in unclaimed benefits. Numerous other outcomes include the prevention of homelessness, support for older people to remain in their existing home or move to more appropriate accommodation and an increasing take up of nationally available grants such as those to support affordable warmth.

Derbyshire County Council had recently approved funding for DDDC of £301,000 per year for 2017/18 and 2018/2019 and the following were included in the proposed programme of services and were detailed in the report:

- The provision and adaptation of homes for people with physical disabilities; this remained a high priority for both Councils. It was proposed to set aside £80,000 per year for this purpose.
- The Housing Options Advice Service for older people provided by Age UK. It was proposed to continue the funding of £93,000 per year.
- It was proposed to continue the post of Rural Housing Enabler over the period of the agreement with funding of £38,000 per year.
- Funding for the Escape Project was proposed to remain at £35,000 per year.
- It was proposed to allocate £5,000 in order to support the Friends of Hurst Farm to appoint an independent body to act as a consultant who would then act on their behalf.
- The Supporting Vulnerable Adults working with Adullam Housing Association project offers responsive, intensive 1:1 support to those aged 18+ who are homeless or facing homelessness. It was proposed to allocate £50,000 to the project.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Martin Burfoot and

RESOLVED That the programme of activities for 2017/18 and 2018/19 are
(unanimously) approved.

127/17 – THE REDRESS SCHEMES FOR LETTINGS AGENCY WORK AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT WORK (REQUIREMENT TO BELONG TO A SCHEME ETC)(ENGLAND) ORDER 2014

The Committee considered a report that informed Members of the content of The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.)(England) Order 2014 and recommended that the District Council adopts a monetary penalty for the offence of failing to belong to a redress scheme and a scheme of delegation for the enforcement of the Order.

From 1 October 2014 new legislation was introduced that required all lettings agents and property managers in England to join a Government approved redress scheme. The purpose of the legislation was to enable tenants and landlords with agents in the private rented sector, and leaseholders and freeholders dealing with property managers in the residential sector, to be able to complain to an independent body in the event that they had received a poor service or if the agent or manager had engaged in unacceptable practices.

If a lettings agent or property manager fails to join an approved redress scheme local authorities have a duty to impose a monetary penalty of up to £5,000. It is recommended that Derbyshire Dales District Council approves £5,000 as the amount it will apply should it find that any lettings agent or property manager that should have joined one of the approved schemes has failed to do so.

A scheme of delegation for the issue of notices and penalties was detailed in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Jason Atkin and

- RESOLVED**
(unanimously)
1. That the amount of monetary penalty to be imposed for the offence of failing to belong to a redress scheme is set at £5,000.
 2. That the scheme of delegation set out at paragraph 2.7 of the report is adopted.

Councillor Vicky Massey-Bloodworth left the meeting at 6.59pm

128/17 – REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – INTERIM REPORT

The Committee considered an interim report from an internal working group set up to review the provision of public conveniences and recommended a public consultation on the introduction of a Community Toilet Scheme and a policy for charging for facilities, subject to public consultation.

In March 2017 the Council agreed to a review of public toilets as one of its high priority measures for bridging the funding gap currently standing at £1.6M over the next four years. The report sets out the initial findings and recommendations of the group.

The Group had considered five options, and these were set out in detail in the report.

Charging for use

Local authorities are allowed to charge for toilet provision under the Public Health Act 1936 and is seen as an option to recover the costs of maintaining facilities and to help minimise anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Community Toilet Scheme

A number of authorities have adopted a Community Toilet Scheme whereby local businesses work in partnership with local authorities to provide access for the public to clean, safe toilets and may provide a payment to participating local businesses.

Sponsorship

No direct offers of sponsorship have been made to date to support public conveniences. That is not to say however that sponsorship is ruled out within the overall strategic approach. It may be that paid for advertising could be displayed within particular toilet blocks to promote events or products that complement the District Council's Corporate Plan.

Community Asset Transfer

Local town and parish councils had been asked if they would be willing to take on the facilities. All councils were provided with costings and estimated visitor numbers. A one-off sum of £3000 was offered for any council wishing to take on responsibility of the toilets although initial responses had been mostly negative. More time was required to get a definitive view on potential transfers and an update would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

Closure

Closure of facilities was seen as the last resort and the group was carefully considering the cost effectiveness of facilities in regard to running costs, maintenance, vandalism, complaints received, equality considerations and the proximity to other facilities. A comprehensive report

of findings would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Jennifer Bower, seconded by Councillor Jason Atkin and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That a 6 week public consultation exercise be carried out on the concept of introducing a charging policy for the use of public toilets, initially in the following locations:
 - Matlock Hall Leys Park
 - Granby Road Bakewell
 - Shawcroft Car Park, Ashbourne
 - Baslow
 - Memorial Gardens, Matlock Bath
2. That the adoption of the Community Toilet Scheme shown at Appendix 4 of the report is included in that consultation exercise.
3. That the results of the public consultation exercise and a detailed financial appraisal be presented to a future, potentially Special Meeting of the Committee.
4. That discussion continues with town/parish councils and other potentially interested bodies on the prospect of transferring responsibility for the remaining public toilet facilities being presented to a future, potentially Special Meeting of the Committee.
5. That an assessment be made on the remaining public conveniences in accordance with paragraph 7 of the report and recommendations on potential closures be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

MEETING CLOSED 7.16 PM

CHAIRMAN