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SOUTHERN AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Southern Area Community Forum held on 13 February 2017 at 7.00pm at Hulland Ward & District Millennium Village Hall

PRESENT

Derbyshire Dales - District Council Councillors Richard Bright (In the Chair), Susan Hobson, Angus Jenkins, Lewis Rose OBE 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)

Ashbourne Community Transport Iris Raile

Members of the Public Ashbourne & District 50+ Forum – John Dick, Roger Ewbank
Hognaston Parish Council – Dave Jackson, Julia Jackson
Bradley Parish Council – E M Mitchell
DALC – W Amis
Osmaston Parish Council – John Naylor
Shirley Parish Council – A Taylor
A & D Cooke, Stephen Gibbons, J Neville, Derek Puplett, Marion Shaw, Richard Shaw plus one other
16 in total

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Bright 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

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

- In response to a member of the public commenting on the lack of public conveniences in Ashbourne, particularly as the town is a tourist destination, Councillor Bright noted that there is a facility in Ashbourne. As a non-statutory service, the District Council is not obliged to provide public conveniences which can be costly to maintain & repair, particularly if vandalism occurs.
- Dorcas spoke of the review of public conveniences and that it was unlikely that there would be more provision. The review will look at possible income streams and she also highlighted that this is a discretionary service.

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:-

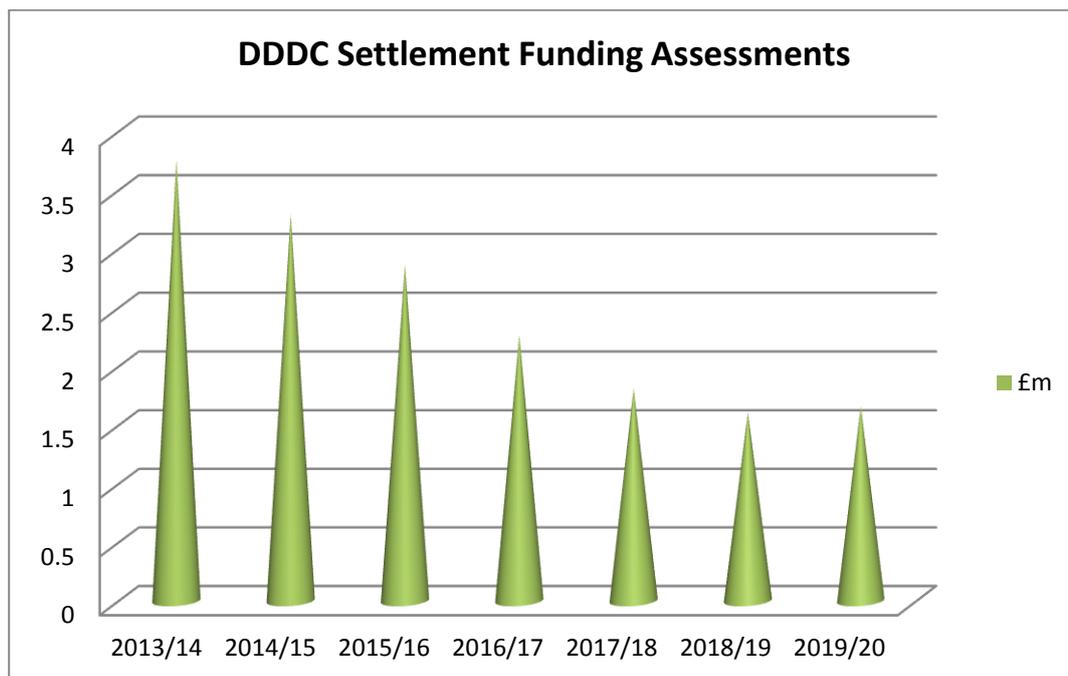
- Low inflation, now rising;
- Brexit & value of £;
- Minimum / Living Wage introduced;
- Lower levels of interest on Council investment;

- 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.



	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£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 your 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> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2017/18</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2018/19</u> <u>£'000</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>2019/20</u> <u>£'000</u>
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 queried money being spent on Civic Square in Ashbourne.
- Karen advised that works were being carried out with a view to a possible re-location of the stall market to Civic Square.
- Ashley added that the Ashbourne Thursday Stall Market had been failing and it was hoped that a move to Civic Square, with increased footfall, would re-vitalise the market. Work to the surfaces was required to make them more suitable for market stalls and to remove trip hazards. Works should be completed by the end of the week.
- A member of the public talked about a possible £200,000 plus donation from developers for a link road in Ashbourne.
- Paul Wilson noted a significant contribution from the developers and the District Council contributing by securing monies from the Local Enterprise Partnership as pump priming.
- Paul advised that the District Council's Economic Development team had worked closely with businesses.
- Comments were made that that the district is currently losing businesses because there aren't the right sites, more opportunities could be created with the right investment.
- John Dick asked if this gave strength to a by-pass for Ashbourne.
- Councillor Bright advised of central government monies being diverted elsewhere.

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

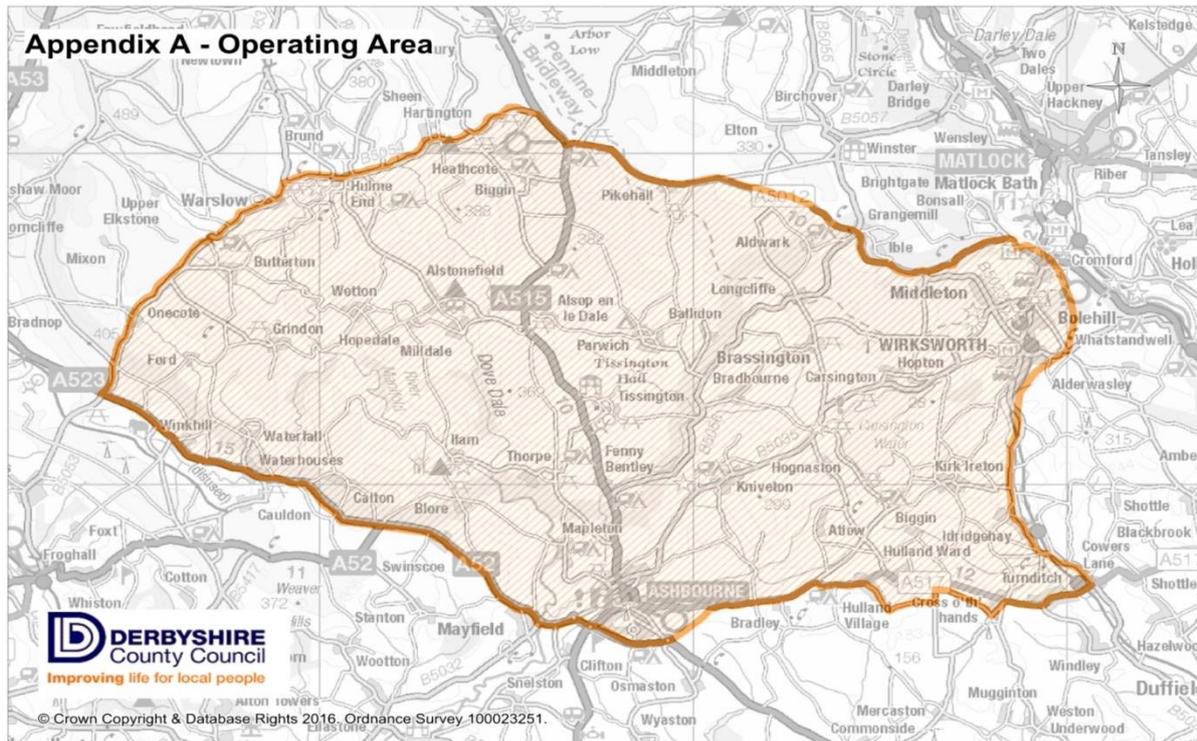
2016 Public Consultation

- 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 launched 13 February and available to view

Derbyshire Connect Pilot Service Area



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

- John Dick recalled an Ashbourne & District 50+ Forum meeting some 2 or 3 years previous with representatives from Trent Barton and Community Transport with a view to co-ordinating services. Bus services are vital for the elderly and they must be encouraged to use them.
- In response to Councillor Bright, Chris Hegarty clarified that the Community Transport's Dial A Bus tends to focus on the elderly and disabled and has limited routes, whereas, the new pilot project is open to all, intending to offer more options and be flexible.
- Stephen added that the traditional Dial A Bus provided a great service, but was expensive to deliver. This new model is more integrated and offers better use of assets.
- Councillor Rose noted the Staffordshire project, on which the pilot was based, had run for six years.
- Iris commented how the Staffordshire project had grown; now running 2 buses which were busy all the time.
- The Ashbourne pilot already has lots of bookings and is being used for a variety of age groups, children and walkers, offering added appeal by making provision for bicycles and dogs.
- In response to a question about school runs limiting usage, Chris reported that runs are usually 8 to 8.45 am and 4 to 4.45 pm. There is currently one bus for the pilot project, but more may be added.

- A member of the public asked how people get to know about the service to which Chris replied through promotions, libraries, the District Council Forums, word of mouth etc.
- Iris added that the service is continually being announced on Ashbourne Radio.
- In response to a query, Iris advised that the service can be door to door if the property is accessible, but some passengers prefer to pick up the service from a bus stop.

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:-

- In response to questions raised, Ashley confirmed that leisure centre assets would be retained by the District Council and that is hoped that the outsourcing of leisure management would produce significant savings – this is what soft market testing had indicated. The specification will be shaped through consultation, views of stakeholders and service users with savings in excess of £350,000 anticipated per year.
- In response to Councillor Bright, Ashley confirmed that there would be interest from leisure management operators to run the contract.

- John Dick noted that some funds for the extension to Ashbourne Leisure Centre had been raised by ADCASH, a community group, and asked if leisure centres could have a 'league of friends' similar to a hospital.
- Ashley affirmed that there will be an opportunity, as part of the consultation exercise, for interested parties to voice what is important to them.
- Concern about increased prices would be a major concern, noted a member of the public.
- Ashley recognised this as the most common question, but it is in no one's interest to offer uncompetitive prices. Savings are likely to be achieved through other means such as bulk purchasing.
- A member of the public asked if 50+ exercise sessions would be protected.
- Ashley explained that it depended on the outcome of the consultation. The District Council did not want to be too prescriptive in its specification, but account will be taken of the demographics of the district and doubted that there would be a reduction in 50+ sessions.

QUESTION TIME

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

Highways Issues

- Mr Taylor of Shirley noted the impact on the roads of new investments and developments and asked if money had been put aside for works on the A52 to accommodate an increased volume of traffic.
- Paul reported that the District Council had been in discussion with Derbyshire County Council highways about traffic and transport across the Dales, noting Ashbourne as a problematic area. Opportunities for the coming months and years have been identified. The County Council are monitoring traffic growth and aware of issues. No date has yet been fixed for a new road development, but it is anticipated within the next 5 years, however, this is a major scheme with many issues to take into account.
- In response to a further question, Paul confirmed that traffic light control on the A52 may be a possible option.
- A member of the public noted that now the police station had moved, could the reserved on street parking spaces on Dig Street be released and also could Church Street be considered for one hour parking (currently half an hour).
- These were not District Council responsibilities, but Dorcas undertook to follow this up with Derbyshire County Council, the highways authority.
- Councillor Bright added that he understood that Derbyshire County Council is looking at on street charges as part of an ongoing review.
- A member of the public believed that this would divert more to park at the Waterside Retail Park.
- Councillor Bright suggested that concerns could be raised with local County Councillors.
- Stephen Cannon undertook to liaise with his colleague in traffic on the issues raised.

Post Meeting notes

- The Police bays outside the old Police Station on Compton Street, Ashbourne can be removed, however, DCC records show that this location is subject to a Traffic Regulation Order - No Waiting 8.00am to 7.00pm. Therefore, a single yellow line would need to be put back in place with a new time plate showing the restriction 8.00am to 7.00pm.
- With regard to the 30 minutes waiting restrictions on Church Street, there are various different time limits in the town centre and motorists should choose the time limit based upon their needs. The 30 minutes limit provides a quick turnover of parking which is good for trade. This is how most town centres operate and long stay parking is accommodated in the off-street car parks. Therefore, no changes are proposed.

Traveller site

- A member of the public asked, why when the District Council is trying to save money, are evaluations being carried out on potential traveller sites when it is likely that a by-pass will eventually run through the sites being investigated.
- Paul recognised this as a controversial topic, but explained that the District Council has a legal responsibility to provide such a site and so far little money has been spent. A budget of £10,000 has been approved to look at what's required. As much as everyone would like to see a by-pass in Ashbourne the reality could be 15 years away.

Grant aid for local community projects

- John Dick reported on the Ashbourne 50+ Forum's successful application to the District Council's Local Projects Fund which had enabled them to work with schools on a bulb planting project. He also noted funding available from a scheme run by Tesco.

Great British Spring Clean

- John Naylor of Osmaston asked what support was available for the Great British Spring Clean.
- Ros advised that the District Council can loan equipment, arrange collection of the waste and offer advice. She confirmed that McDonalds were a sponsor of the initiative and undertook to liaise further with Mr Naylor.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Bright thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm