



This information is available free of charge in electronic, audio, Braille and large print versions, and in other languages on request.

For assistance in understanding or reading this document or specific information about these Notes please call Ros Hession on 01629 761302 or e-mail communityforum@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

SOUTHERN AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Forum held on 30 November 2009 at 7.00pm at Wyaston Village Hall

PRESENT

Derbyshire Dales District Council

Councillor Andrew Lewer (in the Chair)

Councillors Ian Bates, Ken Bull, Steve Bull, Albert Catt and Lewis Rose, OBE.

David Wheatcroft (Chief Executive), Phil Colledge (Head of Finance) and Ros Hession (Overview & Community Engagement Officer)

Derbyshire County Council

Louise Swain (Project Manager : Stakeholder Engagement and Coproduction), Peter Leigh (Highways) and Kay McIntyre (Democratic Services Officer)

Derbyshire Constabulary

Chief Superintendent Peter Lewis, Inspector Bryan Hall and Sergeant Steve Edwards

Police Authority

Netta Christie

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service

Chris Thornhill and Steve White (Consultation Officers)

Ashbourne Telegraph

News D Harrison

Members of the Public

Denise Brown (Deputy Mayor, Ashbourne TC), Caroline Cooper (Mayor, Ashbourne TC), R Archer, Tony Taylor (Shirley P C), Nick Boileau (Wyaston resident), Andrea Cooke (50 + Forum), Derek Cooke, Vic Carpenter (Commonside, Brailsford), Guy Millington (Cubley P C), Pat Laughlin, Mr & Mrs Dixon, George Dutton (Bradley), David Stoakes (Ashbourne) plus 4 others. (18 in total).

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Andrew Lewer introduced the Members and officers from the participating authorities and welcomed everyone to the Forum. He expressed thanks to Mr and Mrs Dixon, of Wyaston, for preparing the venue and serving refreshments.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL'S SPENDING PLANS AND PRIORITIES

Phil Colledge gave a presentation on the District Council's spending plans and priorities.

Priorities 2008 to 2011 – four priorities with six target areas which had been arrived at through extensive consultation with residents

1. Affordable, decent housing	Affordable homes
	Decent homes
2. Safe communities	Environmental crime
	Alcohol related crime
3. Street scene	Public realm
4. Active, healthy communities	Central Area Leisure Centre
	Encouraging healthy lifestyles

The results of the Autumn Citizens Panel had revealed:-

Priority Services that the Council should spend most on

- Tackling crime & anti-social behaviour 33.4%
- Creating & sustaining local employment 26.1%
- Improving the supply of affordable housing 24.6%
- Keeping streets & public areas clean 22.6%

Services that the Councils should spend least on

- Subsidising special events 37.7%
- Encouraging visitors to stay longer 27.1%
- Ensuring the public know what the Council is doing 22.0%
- Providing Tourist Information Centres for visitors 17.6%
- Tackling climate change 17.1%

Services we should spend more on

- Tackling crime & anti-social behaviour 59.0%
- Providing public toilets 56.2%
- Keeping streets & public areas clean 56.0%
- Creating & sustaining local employment 55.8%

Services we should spend less on

- Subsidising special events 42.4%
- Encouraging visitors to stay longer 27.5%
- Tackling climate change 22.5%
- Ensuring the public know what the Council is doing 18.6%

Rank in order of preference for balancing the budget

- Increasing Council Tax 10.3%
- Increasing fees and charges 20.4%
- Reducing service levels 7.9%
- A combination of the above 43.9%

Phil went on to outline how the recession had impacted on the District Council, for example through loss of income in services such as planning and building control and an increased demand for benefits. The District Council had also suffered from a reduction in government grant, 20%, over the last three years and a loss of grant for concessionary bus fares, £150,000. Despite this, the Council is required to achieve a balanced budget whilst maintaining existing service levels and making new investment eg in public conveniences.

He concluded by showing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan

	Estimate 2009/10	Forecast 2010/11	Forecast 2011/12	Forecast 2012/13	Forecast 2013/14
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cumulative Deficit – No reduction in Government Grant	28	91	110	316	423
Cumulative Deficit – 10% reduction in Government Grant 2011/12 to 2013/14	28	91	271	633	891

Questions and comments were then invited and issues raised as follows:

- Nick Boileau asked if employment was one of the District Council's objectives? Phil clarified that this was an area identified by the Citizens' Panel as one which the Council should focus on, but it is not one of the District Council's current priorities. Mr Boileau acknowledged that encouraging tourism creates local employment. He went on to ask if the Council's budget would be published to which Phil responded that it is a public document and undertook to send Mr Boileau some detail on the recycling budget, as requested.
- A member of the public asked how many people the Citizens' Panel comprised of to which Phil replied 1,000 who are broadly representative of local people in terms of age, gender and geographical area.

DERBYSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service are currently undertaking a consultation exercise on its Service Planning for 2010 to 2013.

Chris Thornhill outlined Derbyshire Fire & Rescue's 9 service priorities, namely:-

- Improvement
- Engagement

- Governance
- Service Delivery
- Equability & Diversity
- Partnerships
- Employees
- Assets
- Environment

She then went on to expand upon each priority and how it would be achieved. Members of the public were invited to express their views through a consultation questionnaire.

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

- Councillor Bates noted that there were no focus group consultation events in the Ashbourne / southern Derbyshire Dales area. Steve gave his assurance that, as well as via focus groups, the Fire & Rescue Service were also utilising other opportunities, such as the District Council's Area Community Forums to consult. Steve offered for a focus group to take place in Wyaston or a venue in Ashbourne on 14 December 2009, provided that 10 to 12 people would commit to attending – Councillor Bates thought this doubtful owing to it being short notice.
- Councillor Lewer enquired what the format for the focus groups is. Steve explained that following a presentation, the group is split into smaller groups to each discuss a different issue. The information is then captured and fed back to the wider group and into the consultation process.
- Councillor Rose asked Steve how he viewed the Service's finances over the next two years, he was conscious that the Fire & Rescue Service could not raise revenue through fees and charges like the Council could. Steve advised that, like other public sector organisations, the future looked grim. Detailed financial information is readily available if further breakdown was required and could be provided at a future Forum.
- Caroline Cooper asked who would co-ordinate proceedings in the event of a major flood in the area. Steve advised that the authorities (eg police, fire, local councils) worked in partnership to develop and put in place various emergency plans. She went on to ask if money could be claimed back for example from the Environment Agency, in the event of a flood, or was this an area which could be looked at to generate income. Whilst some things (eg pumping out a swimming pool) are chargeable, many are not, Steve advised.
- Mr Boileau noted that the public already contribute to the fire service and to make charges for specific services would be almost privatising the service.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Louise Swain introduced and then showed Derbyshire County Council's DVD 'Making Care Personal: Your Choice, Your Life' which shows the way in which social care services for adults is being transformed.

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

- An Ashbourne resident spoke of his own experiences with the new personalisation programme which he could see already making a difference to his son who regularly attended the Bankcroft Centre. However, the resident had concerns for the future of his son, who could live alone, if supported, but noted the lack of suitable accommodation in the area. Louise acknowledged how important it is to address individual needs and hoped that there would be suitable facilities in or around Ashbourne.
- Mr Boileau asked if the County Council was planning to use more volunteers to which Louise clarified that the volunteers referred to in the DVD are volunteers who are involved in consultation and commenting on the service in order to shape it for the future. She added, however, that volunteers are invaluable in assisting in the provision of services, such as through the Council for Voluntary Services.
- Louise clarified that the term, 're-ablement' described the development and extension of the home help service.
- Mr Boileau commented on a use of words which was not always clear to the public to which Louise accepted that professionals often slip into jargon, although the aim is to try to use everyday language. Louise went on to explain that many initiatives had previously been in existence, but have been enhanced and brought together to provide a holistic approach.
- In response to a question from Caroline Cooper, Louise confirmed that 8 centres were planned for Derbyshire and it was hoped to have one in each district / borough area. Caroline would like to see a centre in the Ashbourne area.
- Caroline Cooper went on to talk about her daughter who currently lives independently in a Dales Housing property, but has been told this is now unsuitable and that the development at Brookside would not be appropriate and under occupancy would result, even though a carer / carers would be living with Caroline's daughter.
- Denise Brown asked if the 8 centres would be along the lines of extra care housing and suggested the integration of younger and older adults. Louise explained that each community centre would have its own individual feel and that extra care housing is being looked at as a separate issue under the capital investment programme.
- Derek Cooke asked if funding was ring fenced to which Louise replied that extra care housing is being funded through a Public Finance Initiative and is separate to main stream funding. Councillor Lewer added that in the long term, no one could predict what the level of government funding would be.
- Andrea Cooke advertised the 50+ Forum which was to take place on 12 December, 10 am to 12 noon, at Ashbourne Leisure Centre, to discuss plans for care centres in the area.

QUESTION TIME

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor to representatives from the participating authorities and issues were raised as follows:

Speed limits – Ednaston and Brailsford

- Pat Laughlin noted that there was currently no speed limit in Ednaston and yet 95% of the population would like to see a restriction. Councillor Lewer advised that a petition had been received by Derbyshire County Council whose highways section were looking at in detail and the matter would be the subject of a 'cabco' meeting in the future which Mrs Laughlin would be made aware of. The police had also responded to the issues raised and did not believe there to be a problem, however, Inspector Hall reassured that all speeding issues are taken very seriously and that Sergeant Edwards had been looking at the matter and would try to focus resources to address the issues and take actions. A new tactic would be introduced shortly to engage with people in the area, known as 'speedwatch'. Sergeant Edwards elaborated that he had been talking to the community to assess the situation and gain an insight into how it is perceived and hence determine action to be taken.
- A local resident urged that all records and statistics are accurate because there have been a number of fatalities and serious accidents in the Commonsides area over the years and hoped that these were taken into account when speed limits were considered.
- Mrs Laughlin handed over a petition urging for speed restrictions to be introduced on the A52 in Brailsford, particularly in the Commonsides area. Councillor Lewer advised that the County Council had a backlog of requests to deal with, but gave his assurance that they would be looked at.

Pavements in Ashbourne

- Derek Cooke asked why there was no pavement to approach the new parking area on Clifton Road / Mayfield Road. Caroline Cooper reported that the Town Council had been advised that a pavement was not allowed in this area as it was adjacent to a by pass. Peter Leigh believed there should be no reason why a footway could not be installed, but would need to investigate the matter and also secure funding.
- In response to comments made about the state of pavements in Ashbourne, Councillor Lewer was pleased to report that pavements in Ashbourne are coming higher up the agenda and a programme of repair was in the pipeline with the first phase to be implemented in March 2010. He acknowledged that health and safety was imperative.
- Caroline Cooper asked if there were plans to refurbish the pavements around the Brookside estate / development and also sought clarification if it is an offence to park on the pavement. Sergeant Edwards replied that if restrictions are in place or a vehicle is causing an obstruction on a pavement, it is an offence. Caroline cited an example of a gentleman who relies on a motorised 'buggy' to get around the town who constantly experiences difficulties due to parked vehicles obstructing pavements and urged the police to investigate the matter.

Signs in Ashbourne

- An Ashbourne resident asked why a sign for Waterside Park had been erected right next to the site when its location was self evident and yet other signs in the town were lacking for example directional signs to the coach park. Peter Leigh undertook to look into this matter.

Support for the local economy

- George Dutton asked if, in this current economic climate, the District Council had any strategic plans to assist businesses, of all sizes, such as through inward investment or by signposting to government funding. David Wheatcroft advised that regeneration is addressed by working in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and others such as the Derbyshire Enterprise Partnership. He continued that everyone is totally unsure of what government funding will be available for regeneration, but whilst the national picture does not look rosy, the European scene looks better. Funding for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) has been made available, but unfortunately much of the funding is targeted at cities. Councillor Rose added that two companies based on the Ashbourne Airfield Industrial Estate have benefitted from European funding through the LEADER Project.
- George Dutton raised the point that small companies, particularly those starting up, do not know where to go for help and advice, David Wheatcroft talked about a pilot project that the District Council had been involved in (Pathfinder), one of the outcomes of which was to urge the government to simplify the funding application process. Councillor Lewer acknowledged that a single point of contact would be useful and suggested that either Derbyshire Dales District or Derbyshire County Council would assist and / or signpost.

Public / private transport

- David Stoakes enquired about subsidies made to bus companies by councils and went on to cite an example of a Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Route 2 bus which drops off at the Industrial Estate, but believes is a private company whose facilities are not available to the general public. This would be looked into.

Highways issues

- In response to a question raised by Councillor Bates about temporary surfacing at Meadow Road / Old Derby Road, Peter Leigh would check the situation.
- A member of the public raised concerns about the roundabout on the Ashbourne by pass (turn left for Ashbourne and right for Derby from the Leek direction) and queried whether there should be double white lines. Peter Leigh suspected that it was not necessary to have double white lines in this area, but undertook to look at the area in question.

Car parking

- Councillor Bates asked if the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers were aware that parking after 2pm in the District Council car parks with effect from 1 December, would be free, to which David Wheatcroft replied that they were aware.

Preparations for adverse weather

- A member of the public asked if the grit bins were all full and accessible. It was pointed out that various bodies have responsibility for grit bins eg Town / Parish

Council, District and County Councils, and once ownership is established, any problems can be addressed.

- A member if the public asked if the County Council had sufficient stocks of salt this year to which Councillor Lewer replied that the County Council had negotiated with its suppliers for additional supplies this year. The adverse weather conditions last year had meant that all salt stocks were used up and additional grit was then utilised.

Speed limits at Cubley

- Guy Millington asked if there was likely to be a 50 mph speed limit imposed on Long Lane at Cubley. Councillor Lewer highlighted that speed limits were being looked at in order of priority to which Peter Leigh added that the County Council was on target to review all A roads by 2011, after which B roads and others would be looked at.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Lewer thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed at 8.55 pm