



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 Southern Area Community Forum held on 25 September 2018 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, Tom Donnelly, Richard FitzHerbert, Tony Morley and Dermot Murphy.

Paul Wilson (Chief Executive), Ashley Watts (Head of Community & Environmental Services) and Ros Hession (Community Engagement Officer)

Members of the Public Ashbourne CIC – Albert Golding, Sarah Wolfe
Bradley Parish Council – 1
Clifton Parish Council – Joanne Harrison, Paul Siddall
DDCVS – Neil Moulden
Osmaston & Yeldersley Parish Council – John Naylor
Peter Dobbs, Betty Garside, Roger Garside, Philip Jones, Marion Shaw, Richard Shaw, Andy White,
Plus 3 others
17 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

- Doveridge Neighbourhood Plan has now been formally adopted following a positive referendum earlier this year. Congratulations to the Doveridge Neighbourhood Plan Group for their achievement.
- 'Inspired by the Peak District' branding now has nearly 550 businesses signed up (46% of these are from the Derbyshire Dales), with a toolkit to help businesses develop a marketing edge from their connection to the area
- District Council facilitated a Business Chiefs' Forum held in Cromford for Dales CEOs in July. Key discussions focussed upon how the public and private sector can work closely together to grow Dales businesses

- All 5 of the Dales' towns – Ashbourne, Bakewell, Darley Dale, Matlock and Wirksworth have Fairtrade status. In July, Derbyshire Dales was successful in its bid to gain District status
- Matlock Town Council has agreed terms for a Community Asset Transfer of the toilet block close to the play area in Hall Leys Park, Matlock. The District Council will be providing financial support to the project
- The Annual canvass of the Electoral Register is well underway with 77% of households having responded so far. It's not too late to reply by returning the form or by going on line. We will be knocking on doors to chase the information in October
- We launched a new Limestone Way walking guide in the Spring, and sales are going very well
- Free workshops held throughout the Dales for start-up and new businesses
- Assistance from Derbyshire Dales Business Advice has resulted in £275,000 in new grants being obtained for Derbyshire Dales businesses, which is expected to create at least 24 new jobs
- Planning 'Development Management' Pre-application advice service goes from strength to strength, delivering clear focussed advice to residents and businesses engaging in our planning service which supporting service delivery costs.
- National praise for Derbyshire Dales as Ashbourne is named as the best town to raise a family in the UK in research undertaken by online estate agent Yopa
- Y Not Festival – improved event, management and infrastructure tested by weather but overall arrangements were much improved
- 16 New Welcome signs in situ on all major approaches into the Derbyshire Dales. The project has been successful in attracting over £10,000 sponsorship to date which covers all costs and generates a new income stream for the District Council. Also offers a welcome facelift
- Successful transfer of Leisure Centre Management arrangements to Freedom Leisure from 1st August, facilitating significant investment in our leisure facilities and delivering circa £5 million savings to the tax payer over the duration of the 10 year contract
- Your District Council has given the Ashbourne Sports and Community Partnership the commitment of a long term lease and a £70,000 cash injection to help transform the Pavilion complex on the town's Recreation Ground. The project will see the replacement of three existing aged pavilions with a new modern 'Pavilion in the Park', which it is planned to become a sport and community hub in the town
- Our Cowshed Beer Festival showcased 30 ales from within 30 miles of the popular market town of Bakewell, plus local ciders, a prosecco bar, food stalls and music. We staged the festival at our Agricultural Business Centre in June as part of our target in the coming years is to take a more commercial approach to what we do
- Hall Leys Park is awarded Green Flag status for the 11th consecutive year

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

- In response to a question about the Fairtrade status, Paul Wilson replied that the bid had been assessed and awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation. In order to achieve the district status, a number of goals must be fulfilled including support from local businesses (pubs, cafes, and shops), accommodation providers, employers in the district, faith communities and schools as well as District Council support and evidence of regular activities and meetings.

- Albert Golding noted the progression of the Ashbourne Pavilion and thanked Rob Wilks and his team at the District Council for their ongoing support for the project. He also announced that Sport England had indicated an in principle grant of £100,000.

COMMERCIALISATION – A BALANCED INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

COMMERCIALISATION – A Balanced Investment in our Future

‘A Presentation on a potential new joint venture to maximise commercial value in the District Council’s assets to generate new income streams’

Context

- Sustained pressure on Council budgets and resources
- Corporate savings target of £700,000 by 2021/22
- Reducing service costs alone will not be sufficient
- A balanced approach is needed to delivering future savings
- Commercial Board established May 2018

Commercial Board

Primary Purpose:

To create additional revenue streams for the Council to enable the Council to sustain its long-term financial future enabling it to maintain its current services and add value to the communities of the Derbyshire Dales

Corporate Aims:

- Grow the economy
- Create prosperous thriving communities
- Deliver transformation in services

Exploring Commercial Opportunities

- Trading services directly
- Maximising the value of existing assets
- Sharing and selling services amongst peers
- Business transformation and automation of service delivery
- Investment opportunities

Maximising the Value of Existing Assets

- Property is a valuable resource that directly impacts on the performance of a wide range of local authority services BUT costly to run and maintain.
- Maximising the potential and value of Council’s property assets is critical to the prudent management of the Council’s financial resources.
- New Asset Management Plan in preparation
- Need to explore options to maximise revenue income or revenue savings

Option A - In-House Asset Management

This is the traditional option of the Council continuing to manage our property and assets in-house on an individual basis through our own staffing and financial resources.

Advantages:

- All decisions made by the District Council
- All risks managed by the District Council
- All income retained by the District Council

Disadvantages:

- Limited capacity to deliver significant projects
- Limited access to external expertise or market intelligence
- Limited funding available without external borrowing
- Requires high level resource at planning and implementation stages

Option B - Development Partnership via Tender Procurement

This option would involve the Council entering into a partnership agreement with a private sector developer who would provide professional services and expertise to help us maximise the benefit of particular sites or schemes as required.

Advantages:

- Increased access to market intelligence and expertise
- Increased access to staffing and financial resources
- Access to private sector funding streams
- Development costs and risks shared

Disadvantages:

- Development costs and profit shared with the developer
- Contractual relationship with developer limits flexibility
- Development schemes dictated by the market rather than local need

Option C – Developer Partnership

This option would involve the creation of a formal partnership with a private body to create a business, probably taking the form of a Limited Liability Partnership. This model would enable us to transfer assets into the partnership and in return the Partnership would use its expertise and resources to develop the assets on our behalf. All profits would be shared.

Advantages:

- Access to significant levels of Capital investment
- Highly flexible and creative in operation
- Presents an additional option to Option A and Option B
- Does not remove ability to consider other options
- Allows projects to evolve and be assessed before any commitment
- Baseline value remains with the council with only the added value shared
- Investment of private sector funds into projects of mutual benefit.
- Supports the Council in the development of its strategic review of the property portfolio

Disadvantages:

- Decision making would be by a Board including District Council representatives. This may be seen as being less democratic.
- The model is dependent on the District Council and the partner to reach agreement on key decisions
- This model is heavily reliant on project research and planning

Option D – Combination Approach

An approach where we make use all of the options to maximise the benefit to the District.

Your Views

Comments invited on the District Council's website www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Deadline for comments: 14th October 2018

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

- In response to a member of the public asking if the initiatives are likely to involve significant borrowing by the District Council, Paul Wilson confirmed that this would not be the case. Some councils are borrowing. Derbyshire Dales' approach is not 'risk averse', but will not be reckless.
- Albert Golding noted the interesting presentation and it was good to see the District Council thinking laterally to maximise potential. In response to Mr Golding's assumption that the Local Plan would be the foundation for any development, Paul affirmed this.
- Mr Golding further asked if parks & open spaces would come into the equation to which Councillor Catt, as Chair of the 'board', confirmed this would not be the case.
- Mr White asked if the board is to become a company.
- Councillor Catt explained that the board is a committee of the District Council and is proportionally constituted, with powers similar to other committees. The committee is proceeding cautiously and he re-iterated that the District Council would not be borrowing and parks & gardens would not come into the equation.

WASTE & RECYCLING 2020

The Challenge

To maintain high quality waste & recycling when:

- Statutory requirements and recycling targets are rising
- Costs of collection are growing
- Prices for recyclable materials have fallen significantly

Why are we consulting?

- Our waste and recycling contract with Serco comes to an end in 2020
- We will let a new contract by inviting new bids during 2019
- To do this, we must decide the shape of the new service on 29 November 2018 (no later)
- **We want your views before making any decisions on the new service**

Setting the scene

- **Best waste & recycling performance in Derbyshire (57% recycling rate), but...**
 - 'Optional extras' may be compulsory in future (e.g. food waste collection)
 - 65% recycling target likely to be imposed
- **Cost of collection has risen very significantly in recent years**
 - Prices for recyclable materials have fallen

- Currently costs more to collect some materials than they can be sold for
- Good value currently but bidders now cautious

Our goal

- To procure a waste and recycling contract that is affordable whilst meeting residents' needs and statutory recycling targets

What have we done so far?

- Used the Government WRAP programme to model service options for waste and recycling
- Procured technical expertise (Eunomia Ltd.)
- Engaged with potential contractors
- Spoken with other local authorities
- Developed a risk register
- Consulted the public about food waste
- Consulting the public about waste and recycling options

What do we know?

- Market evidence tells us that the same service we have now would cost much more than at present and may not be available
- We therefore have to look at other service options...
- ...whilst keeping the best of the current service
 - and increase recycling
 - whilst controlling costs

What are the options?

- The main options open to us are -
 - Charging for garden waste collections
 - Collecting residual waste (black bins/sacks) less often
 - No requirement to collect garden waste
 - Nearly half of those councils that collect garden waste now charge for it
 - Annual charge varies widely from £20-£80 per bin
 - Collecting residual waste (black bins/sacks) every three or four weeks costs less than fortnightly, and boosts recycling

What does consultation tell us?

- People like the service as it is!
 - 97% think recycling is important
 - Two thirds of people use the weekly food waste collection service
 - Blue bins are nearly full
 - Paper/card inserts are always full
 - 40% of people's grey bins are three-quarters full or less when they put them out for collection

What else have people said?

- Around half of the respondents say they would pay for garden waste collections
- If a charge had to be introduced, 73% think £25 is reasonable
- Of the available options, charging for garden waste collections (and keeping everything else as it is now) was most favoured
- Separate weekly nappy collections could help some people if grey bin / black sack collections were to become less frequent

Relative benefits & costs of options

	Food	Recyclables	Residual	ORDER OF RECYCLING	OF COST
	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>	<i>Fortnightly</i>		££££££
A	Weekly	Fortnightly + charged garden	Fortnightly		££££
B	Weekly	Fortnightly	Three weekly		£££££
C	Weekly	Fortnightly + charged garden	Three weekly		££
D	Weekly	Fortnightly	Four weekly		£££
E	Weekly	Fortnightly + charged garden	Four weekly		£

Next steps

- Consultation ended 23 September
- Council to decide shape of new service on 29 November
- Procurement of new contract commences 2019
- New contract starts 2020

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

- In response to a suggestion that fly tipping may increase if emptying frequencies reduce, Ashley Watts advised that there was no evidence to suggest this where other councils had reduced frequencies.
- It was acknowledged that there is currently some fly tipping.
- The member of the public noted incidents of fly tipping at the industrial airfield, particularly at weekends. If on farmers' land, do they have to foot the bill to remove the rubbish?
- Ashley explained that it depends where fly tipping takes place, if on private land it is the responsibility of the landowner to deal with.
- Measures are in place to deal with fly tipping and the District Council has had some success with prosecutions.
- In response to a question about the impact of additional housing on the refuse service, Ashley explained that the District Council, as the refuse collection authority, has to collect the waste and it will be factored into the overall contract.
- It was suggested that if green waste is taken to Vital Earth in Ashbourne, this should reduce the waste collection costs in Ashbourne, but Ashley explained that the whole area has to be factored in and there may be other benefits / disbenefits in other areas.
- In response to a further remark that Vital Earth may not be able to deal with increased volumes of green waste, Ashley advised that he did not believe this

would be the case, but predicted tonnages would be included in the contract specification.

- If there was a limited number of contractors to take on the waste contract, would the District Council consider taking it back in house.
- Ashley replied that it had been well over 20 years since the District Council had carried out its own waste collection service. The costs would be prohibitive and there wasn't the back office staff in place to support the work. If the District Council were to submit its own tender, this may deter others. However, there is a backstop position and Paul Wilson added that if necessary, the District Council had built in a contingency period to upsize if it was necessary for it to take on the service itself.
- In response to comments about the waste contractor taking on trade waste, Ashley replied that the current contractor, Serco, have a trade waste service, but are up to capacity.
- In response to Councillor FitzHerbert, Ashley confirmed that Derbyshire County Council have no plans to close the Mayfield Road civic amenity site.
- Questions were put on the possibility of charging for green / garden waste and Ashley explained:-
 - There would be a sign up & pay facility for those who wished to participate
 - No decision had yet been made on the annual cost
 - If a charge is introduced, it is likely to be per green / garden bin ie additional bins would also attract a charge
 - Paul Wilson added that, in other areas, a charge per bin is levied
- A member of the public noted that some people mow the grass verges around their premises. If a charging system is introduced, householders may end up paying for the disposal of waste not generated from their household
- Paul replied that if individuals chose to mow nearby verges that is a private decision.
- In response to Councillor FitzHerbert asking about green / garden waste from church bins, Ashley was unsure how this would fit in with business rates.
- Ashley noted a good point to consider increasing the grey bin capacity from 120 to 240 litres should the collection frequency be reduced.
- A member of the public asked if the District Council has breakdowns on the percentages for each recycled material.
- Ashley replied that recyclables are measured by weight, not percentages. The contractor takes on responsibility for disposal and will have separation figures.
- Does the District Council have to procure items that are recycled by a certain percentage for example wheeled bins?
- Ashley explained that there are only 2 wheeled bin providers. The District Council's procurement process includes criteria such as sourcing of Fairtrade products. The agenda is being pursued elsewhere also for example through the leisure contract which included a clause to reduce energy consumption and reduce plastic.

- Sarah Wolfe suggested that selling compost bins cheaply may be an incentive and encouragement for households to home compost.
- Ashley acknowledged this as a good suggestion which he would put forward to the waste group. There were other ideas to promote home composting through gardening clubs, compost hubs and schools.
- Paul Wilson cited an example of a nearby authority that produces a booklet to accompany the green / garden waste scheme which not only promotes local businesses, but also includes discounts and vouchers for householders to reap some rewards for participating in the scheme.

DERBYSHIRE DALES LEISURE REVIEW – UPDATE

Profile: Freedom Leisure

- A well established 'not for profit' Leisure Trust
- Born out of a Local Authority in the south of England
- Portfolio of over 80 sites in England and Wales
- Recently awarded contracts to operate Leisure and Cultural facilities in Stafford, Litchfield and East Staffordshire
- Experience of operating Leisure facilities in rural areas
- Purpose, approach and view on partnership working aligns well with the District Council's
- Experienced in managing mobilisation periods (including TUPE)

Why Freedom Leisure?

- Bespoke approach to Derbyshire Dales
- Greater level of investment and across all sites
- Positive approach to partnership and community working
- Staffing structure and provision of staff
- Improved customer experience and offer (a lot of added value)
- Significant reduction in financial risk, due to variant bid

The Contract: Key Features

- 10 year contract with the option of further 5 to be discussed
- Operational and full lifecycle replacement and maintenance responsibilities (variant bid)
- Offers a total revenue saving of £5.1m over the 10 year contract
- District Council to invest £1.2m of Capital Reserves to support improvements works, resulting in a reduced annual management fee
- Freedom Leisure will invest c.£1m over the life of the contract to continually improve facilities
- Financial assessments and pension and performance bonds are in place
- All affected employees are protected under TUPE regulations and were transferred with current terms and conditions
- Transfer date - 1 August 2018

Additional Benefits

- Free swimming for over 75's
- Free swimming during school holidays for young people aged 16 and under (from areas of deprivation)
- Free casual swimming for children under 5

- Free swimming lessons for identified Year 6 pupils who have not reached the National Curriculum criteria of being able to swim 25m
- An annual bank of 1,000 hours to support Active Communities initiatives
- Programme of free activities during summer holidays
- Access to 80+ Freedom Leisure sites across England and Wales

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

- Councillor Bull noted the contract life of 10 years and that a lot can deteriorate in 10 years and was there a clause to cover this.
- Ashley Watts explained there was a clause. Also, a condition survey had been undertaken on each building ahead of the contract start, there are monthly contract meetings and a District Council has a contract manager to ensure that issues are addressed. It is in no one's interest to out price or scrimp on the facilities.
- In response to a query about £0.5 million savings, Ashley explained that some of this is achieved through savings on VAT and rates which Freedom Leisure is able to make as it is a not for profit organisation.
- Derbyshire Dales pays £56,000 per annum for the running of the leisure facilities which had previously cost the Council £600,000 to run. If Freedom Leisure makes a certain surplus, there is an agreement in place for a percentage to be given back to the District Council.

QUESTION TIME

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

Clean & Green schedules on the website

- A member of the public raised that litter collection schedules for Ashbourne don't appear on the District Council website and grass cutting schedules can be difficult to access also.
- Ashley acknowledged that the schedules could benefit from being clearer and would look into the matter.

Brickyard Cottages play area, Ashbourne

- A member of the public spoke of the general poor state of repair of the Brickyard Cottages play area. There were weeds on the path, the park is flail mown as a pose to gang mown (which the Recreation Ground is), the steps from the higher to lower level are in a poor state and no hand rail, swings have been removed and not yet replaced and the goal posts are loose. Response to emails had been 'unhelpful'.
- Ashley explained that the swings had been removed as they were unsafe and new ones are on order. He would look into the other matters and suggested that future communications be directed to him.

Housing Development in Ashbourne

- A member of the public noted recent development in Ashbourne, but not much of it was affordable.
- Paul Wilson advised that there had been affordable housing in Ashbourne over a number of years. The District Council still has a policy to secure affordable housing

which may be through units or financial contributions. The District Council has to ensure that there are people on the housing register who are ready to move into affordable housing units once built. The Housing and Planning Teams are in constant dialogue to ensure that housing provision matches the local demographic requirements. The Local Plan includes a 30% provision of affordable homes.

- Councillor Catt noted that the definition of affordable homes may mean different things to different people.
- A member of the public noted no natural progression from affordable homes. There were detached properties, but a shortage of semi-detached. Many of the detached properties had limited space.
- It was noted that the Leys Farm (Wyaston Road) development had 28 affordable homes out of a total of 133.
- Paul Wilson commented that the affordable homes target is a target, but not always achieved.
- The National Planning Guidance recognises as significant, but has to assess against viability. The District Council commissions the District Valuer for an opinion. The £0.5 million Section 106 monies are for the benefit of the whole of the district. Section 106 monies are based on planning permission granted, but not all come to fruition – the money is received once the development is completed.
- Ashbourne has seen significant affordable housing in recent years and has possibly achieved its target, but this is not the case in some areas.
- Albert Golding suggested that affordable housing may be the subject of a future Forum presenting an opportunity for transparent discussion about how Section 106 monies are allocated across the district.

Empty property

- A member of the public noted a nearby property, possibly owned by Waterloo Housing, which appeared to have been empty for some time.
- Paul Wilson spoke of the recent project to visit all empty properties. This would be looked into.

Post meeting note - The property is categorised as a Long Term Empty on Council Tax and it is Waterloo Housing. Looks like the last time it was occupied was July 2017. It was visited during this year's Empty Property Review and found to be unoccupied and unfurnished. All details provided to Rob Cogings (Head of Housing) on as per Empty Homes Strategy.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Bull thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm