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CENTRAL AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Forum held on 30 October 2012 at 7.00pm at the Whitworth Centre, Darley Dale

PRESENT

Derbyshire District Council **Dales** Councillors Barrie Tipping (in the Chair), Bob Cartwright, Ann Elliott, David Fearn, Lewis Rose, OBE, Andrew Statham, Geoff Stevens, MBE, Jacque Stevens and Jo Wild .

Dorcas Bunton (Chief Executive), Phil Colledge (Head of Finance), Peter Lisewski (Revenues Services Manager), Paul Radcliffe (Benefits Manager), Peter Foley (Director of Community Services), Ash Watts (Leisure Facilities Officer), Mike Hase (Planning Policy Manager), Jim Fearn (Communications and Marketing Manager) and Ros Hession (Democratic Services Officer - Communities)

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service Chris Thornhill (Consultation and Evaluation Officer) and Watch Manager Damien West

Derbyshire County Council Jude Wildgoose (Policy Manager)

Derbyshire Constabulary Chief Inspector Tim Frohwein, Inspector Bryan Hall and Sergeant Nick Reason

Members of the Public A J Mumby, A P Bullock (Darley Dale Town Council), John Lowe, Dave Oakley (Darley Dale Town Council), Julie Morrison (Darley Dale Town Council), Ingrid Pasteur (Darley Dale Town Council), Russ Boyack (Cromford Parish Council), Sue Mosley (Cromford Parish Council), Philip Benfield (Cromford Parish Council), Lorraine Keeble (Maltock Bath Parish Council), Peter Keeble and Jayne Regan plus 3 others (15 in total)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Councillor Tipping introduced the Members and officers from the participating authorities and welcomed everyone to the Forum.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL – LOCALISING SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX

Phil Colledge began the presentation by providing background information:-

- Council Tax Benefit abolished by Government from April 2013
- Local Council Tax support from 2013-14
- 10% reduction in Government Subsidy
- Support will take the form of discounts within the Council Tax system i.e. will reduce the Tax base
- Therefore affects the billing authority and precepting authorities
- Pensioners protected by Government – no change to current benefit entitlement
- Local authorities free to design their own schemes for working age claimants
 - Requirement for consultation with major precepting authorities and all other stakeholders
 - Requirement for equalities impact assessment
- Default scheme will be imposed if local scheme not approved by 30th January 2013

Peter Lisewski then highlighted the options considered:-

1. **Reduce benefits for all working age claimants by approximately 24% to achieve overall saving of 10%**, after taking account of protection for pensioners - may cause significant hardship, particularly with other welfare changes
2. **Amend elements of existing Benefits calculations**, e.g. remove second adult rebate; reduce capital limits - confusing, may not achieve required savings, potential equalities issues
3. **Adopt the default scheme** - does not achieve required savings, would harm other public services or could lead to an increase in Council Tax & not supported by major precepting authorities (DCC, Fire and Police)
4. **Reduce benefit for working age claimants by 10%, and achieve other savings through changes to discounts on second homes and empty properties** - spreads burden widest, simple to explain and implement
5. Variation of Option 1, but **further protection for disabled claimants** - cause even greater hardship than option 1; CTB scheme provides some protection

Derbyshire Dales District Council proposed Option 4.

Draft Scheme Summary

- Eligibility for support based on existing Council Tax Benefit criteria
- Keep existing Council Tax Benefit rules (helping protect the most vulnerable) but reduce final award for all working age claimants by fixed % - proposed 10%
- Pensioners protected from any changes
- Extend payments for people starting work from 4 to 8 weeks
- Continued support for working age war pensioners
- Consider need for extra help for those suffering hardship
- Current claimants moved automatically to new scheme – no need to make a new claim

Changes to the amount of Council Tax we charge for second homes / empty properties will help limit the reduction in benefit for working age claimants to 10% instead of 24%.

The public consultation process included:-

- Wide promotion via partner agencies / article in dalesMATTERS / letters to those affected and support agencies
- On-line / paper survey; Community Forums; 'drop in' information sessions; community meetings with voluntary and community sector partners

- Questions seeking views on changes proposed and impact on those people affected
- 8 weeks / Closing date for responses 21st November 2012
- Results to be brought back to Members to inform final decision in January 2013
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Residents are invited to have their say through a variety of channels:-

- Guide and questionnaire available at Forums meetings
- Online at www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/ctbenefits
- Via our Twitter or Facebook channels
- Email: ctbenefits@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
- Phone: 01629 761260 / 01629 761271
- Closing date: 21st November 2012

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

- Councillor Fearn asked about timescales for the implementation of the new scheme and how those affected were being kept informed. Peter advised that every claimant has received information on the proposals together with a questionnaire. They will be contacted again in January 2013 after the decision has been made.
- In response to a question from Russ Boyack, Peter replied that parish councils were not being consulted as they are not directly affected, although anyone is welcome to complete a questionnaire.
- In response to a question from Councillor Cartwright, Phil advised that pensioners are exempt and will remain unaffected by any changes.
- Councillor Cartwright also noted that there were many second homes in the Derbyshire Dales which put the District Council in a better position – Phil confirmed that the District Council was able to use this income to offset benefit expenditure.
- In response to a question from Mr Mumby, Phil advised that the current value of Council Tax benefit is £4M.
- In response to a further question from Mr Mumby, Phil reported a 98.5% Council Tax collection rate. Overall the rate is 99.3% as some is collected during the following financial year – very little is written off.
- Councillor Tipping emphasised that a decision on the preferred scheme would be made in January 2013.

SETTING THE FUTURE DIRECTION FOR DERBYSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Chris Thornhill began by highlighting that the aim of the presentation was to inform of the Fire & Rescue Service's current situation and to ask some key questions, the responses of which would be used to feed in to the Service's long term planning process.

A risk map of Derbyshire showed higher risk areas where resources are targeted. Some fire stations were retained which meant that personnel were in alternative full time employment and called upon when required.

Future budget reductions would impact on the level of services that could be delivered.

Attendees were then asked (Q 1)

- If the Service continues to face restrictions on its budget, do you support the principle of matching the Service's resources to the level of risk in each area?
Yes / No / Any Comments

The Fire & Rescue Service would summarise responses and feedback.

Chris continued with information on the Domestic Sprinkler Campaign

- 2010 to 2011 – 388 people died, 7400 injured (fires) in Great Britain (CLG figures)
- 2010 to present – 27 people died (fires) in Derbyshire
- 2010 to 2011 - 70 people injured (fires) in Derbyshire
- The fire at Hulland Ward in which four children under the age of ten died and the fire at Victory Road where six children lost their lives serves as a reminder that a fire in the home, whatever the cause, has a devastating effect on families and leave communities in mourning. Yet the risk to human life in fires like these can easily be minimised.
- 10 children in 2 fires – Hulland Ward and Victory Road, Derby

Why sprinklers?

Figures from government

- Cost of a Death (2010) = £1,692,000
- Cost of a serious Injury (2006) = £155,000
- Cost of a minor injury(2006) = £12,000
- Average cost of damage (2004) = £7,300

The presentation included a evidence of a sprinkler demonstration which showed significant damage of fire after 10 minutes with no intervention. However, the same demonstration, but with sprinklers fitted, showed some water damage, but the fire was prevented from spreading and possibly saved a life.

Sprinkler Campaign's Main objectives

- Highlight the benefits of sprinklers within Derbyshire and to other County and Local Authorities
- Mainstream sprinklers within all new build homes
- Establish 'Homes for Life'
- Retro-fitting of sprinklers to vulnerable homes through partnerships

The second question to attendees (Q 2) - Do you support the Service in funding the fitting of sprinklers in targeted high risk premises?

Yes / No / Comments

The Localism Act gives Fire & Rescue Authorities the right to charge for certain actions other than for commercial purposes. There are 3 response categories:-

- Non emergency
- Fires
- Emergency special services

Benefits of costs recovery

Incentive for people to call relevant service rather than requesting a Fire Engine
Ensure Fire Engines are available to respond to life threatening incidents

Examples where cost recovery could be used

- Repeated false alarms
- Leaking pipes
- Removal of loose roof slates / chimney stacks

- Person locked out of their premise
- Releasing a stuck lift car

A further question (Q3) - would you support the Service recovering these sorts of costs?
Yes / No / Comments

How do we manage risk?

The traditional reactive approach

- Proactive approach
 - 1 Analysis of the risk
 - 2 Determine most appropriate way to reduce the risk: through

Risk management tools

Prevention – stop a fire from starting – tools – educations, partnership / community, smoke alarms

Protection – eg adequate fire exits, Think Sprinkler campaign

Response

The final question (Q4) - if you had 5 bronze coins in which money boxes would you put them?

- If you only had 3 silver coins then where would you put these?
Prevention Protection Response

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

- In response to a query from Councillor Fearn about a specific area on the risk map, Chris advised this referred to moorland fires.
- Councillor Tipping asked how the fitting of sprinkler systems may affect buildings' insurance, but Chris was unsure of this.
- Councillor Cartwright asked if planning or building regulations dictated the installation of sprinkler systems. Chris replied that although this was law in Wales, it was not yet in England, although Damien added there was a national campaign to legislate.
- In response to a request for a definition of high risk, Chris highlighted persons at risk as being for example those suffering from drug or alcohol abuse, elderly and disabled.
- In response to a suggestion that if the fire service was reduced, resources could be invested in the properties affected, Chris affirmed that efforts could be concentrated on prevention such as targeting premises that take 10 minutes or more to attend.
- A member of the public who works in sheltered housing noted that sometimes they have an issue with the fire alarm and two crews attend. Damien advised that this is classed as a life risk and the fire & rescue service would not charge to attend. If the call is repeated, it may be a maintenance issue and if genuine a charge would not be made.

DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL – AN UPDATE ON THE NEW WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE

Peter Foley gave an update on the current roll out of the new waste and recycling service which had been taken over by Serco on 6 August. Initially rounds and routes had been retained. There had been some initial problems with vehicle sizes.

From 1 October, new containers were delivered and major changes implemented.

The roll out of new containers to the 33,000 properties in the Derbyshire Dales was, by and large, completed and the new rounds operating.

The new service offers residents with greater recycling opportunities.

Peter was aware that some residents had experienced disruption to their refuse & recycling service and apologised to those affected.

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

- In response to comments made, Peter advised that a huge effort has been put into communications and thousands of enquiries have been dealt with.
- In response to a request for a larger caddy, Peter advised that residents were being encouraged to reduce their food waste and there was also an option to home compost.
- Clarification was sought about food and garden waste – Peter advised that cooked food must be placed in the food caddy, but some uncooked food eg fruit and vegetables may be placed in either bin.
- Councillor Cartwright asked if there was any flexibility with the blue bins to put papers and card in the bottom and use the insert for tin, glass and plastic. Peter suggested that the blue bag be used for any additional paper and card.
- A resident asked if some properties had not received a collection because of a change in crews. Peter advised that the rounds had been organised in a zonal arrangement which had resulted in some round changes and crews who were not yet quite as familiar with the area, but the arrangements would work once the crews were more familiar with the areas in which they operated.
- In response to a question about unwanted blue boxes and food caddies, Peter advised that the District Council would collect these in on request.
- In response to a question about properties requiring assessment, Peter advised that this would be carried out by District Council staff, supervisors or the recycling advisers.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – ESTABLISHING HEALTHWATCH DERBYSHIRE

Jude Wildgoose began by explaining the background to Establishing Healthwatch Derbyshire:-

- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
 - **Establish a local Healthwatch**

What will Healthwatch Derbyshire do?

- Look and feel like a critical friend – inclusive and open to all,
- Seek the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local health and social care services,
- Make the views of local people known, and make recommendations about how local health and social care services could or ought to be improved,
- Provide advice and information about how to access local health and social care services.

Transition to Local Healthwatch

- Current arrangements – Derbyshire LINK until March 2013
- Transition – project team
- Learning lessons from past experiences
- Gathering views from local people
- Implementer organisation
 - Governance and Board

Residents were being invited to help shape Healthwatch Derbyshire through a number of avenues:-

- Fill out a questionnaire - hard copy or on-line
www.derbyshirepartnership.gov.uk/HealthwatchDerbyshire
- Contact - policy@derbyshire.gov.uk 01629 539172
- Or post your views on the board at the back of the room
- Look out for publicity on Healthwatch Derbyshire Board membership.

No questions were asked.

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF BAKEWELL ROAD, MATLOCK

Mike Hase advised that Henry Davies Development had been identified as the preferred developer. Mike believed there to be some confusion and emphasised that no development had been decided upon.

Two periods of public consultation would take place, one at pre planning application stage and a second when the planning application is received.

This would not be until early 2013 and details would be made very widely available.

- Chris Williams had submitted a question, by email, in advance and Mike provided the following response:-
- What economic impact analysis has been conducted to; a] support statements made by the council that an additional large food store will have no impact on other shops in the Town; b] show the economic benefits of the chosen development for the local area in terms of growth in employment and the economy?
- The District Council has never made any statements that an additional large food store will have no impact upon other shops in the Town - any proposals for the redevelopment of Bakewell Road that involves a large food store will, however, need to provide evidence on the anticipated degree of impact upon the other shops within the town centre, as well as the economic benefits to the Town and the local economy. It will be for the District Council, in considering the development proposals to determine whether the level of impact and the economic

benefits are acceptable. Be assured, however that the District Council will not just accept the submitted evidence, it will as part of the assessment process seek wherever appropriate to, commission consultants to undertake an independent review of the evidence submitted by the developers. If the impact levels are considered to have too significant an effect upon the rest of the town centre and the economic benefits are not considered to be sufficient to outweigh these, then be assured that the District Council will not look favourably upon such a scheme.

- What is the Council's vision for the Town for example; a dynamic attractive growing town capitalizing on tourism opportunities from outdoor pursuit and heritage enthusiasts using The Peak District National Park attracting added value retailers who serve tourists and the broader Derbyshire Dales Community, or a centre for bargain price shopping for local Matlock people?
- The Matlock Town Centre SPD set out a vision which was "To build on Matlock's unique character and create opportunities for sustainable investment to ensure the attractiveness, vitality and future prosperity of the town centre for residents and visitors alike" This vision makes it clear that the District Council sees the future of Matlock Town Centre as high quality, attractive town centre that serves the needs of residents and tourists alike.
- Councillor Tipping stressed that there would be opportunities for residents to make their views known.
- Mr Mumby queried how a developer could be appointed when the scheme is unknown. Mike advised that it is primarily a technical exercise to look at the deliverability of a scheme. Indicative plans have been invited as to how something might develop. Mike explained that it is more complicated than a tender exercise – it is about quality and what can be delivered.
- In response to queries raised by Councillor Cartwright, Mike confirmed the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) still exists and will be taken into account.
- Mike assured that results from consultation and representations would be taken into account and discussed with members.
- Councillor Stevens assured that if the developer's proposals are not what the District Council and the public at large want, they will not happen. The developers will look at what is attractive to Matlock.
- Councillor Tipping added that he had worked on the SPD and Matlock Vision for 10 years and then with District Council. Councillors have made the hard decision to move forward.
- Councillors Rose and Stevens assured that if the public don't want a supermarket, this will not be part of the plan.
- A member of the public asked if the re-location of the library was still on the agenda to which Councillor Tipping responded that everything is still in the mix.
- Mike added that Derbyshire County Council do have plans to improve the library facilities.

- Mike was aware that businesses in the area may be affected by any proposed plans and assured that the Economic Development Unit would be working closely with local businesses.
- In response to a question from a member of the public about the legal position if the developer proposes plans which are unacceptable, Mike advised that Members could decide that there is no way forward and no change at all takes place.

QUESTION TIME

- In response to a question from Mr Mumby about the Police Commission elections on 15 November, Inspector Frohwein directed him to use a search engine the internet to ascertain the candidates.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Tipping thanked everyone for their participation and advised that the next Central Forum would take place 11 February 2013, venue to be decided.

Meeting closed at 8.25 pm