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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

DISTRICT COMMITTEE - DEWSBURY AND MIRFIELD

Tuesday 29th November 2016

Present: Councillor Nosheen Dad (Chair)
Councillors M Ahmed, G Asif, M Bolt, P Kane,
D O'Donovan, M Pervaiz and C Scott

Apologies: Councillors E Firth, M Hussain, V Lees-Hamilton and
K Taylor

In attendance: Approximately 20 members of the public in attendance

1 Welcomes and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Councillors introduced themselves. Apologies had been received from Councillors E Firth, M Hussain, V Lees-Hamilton and K Taylor.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th October 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the public

Agreed – That all items be considered in public session.

5 The Future of the Mansion House, Crow Nest Park and Heritage Services in Dewsbury and Mirfield

Adele Poppleton, Head of Active and Creative Communities, Joe Tingle, Head of Physical Resources and Procurement, and Rebecca Breen, Community Engagement and Development Officer, gave a presentation about why Dewsbury Museum has had to close and how local people can learn about their heritage in the future.

Adele advised she wanted to focus on the future of the Mansion House and that she knows the community feels passionate about the building and how the Council wants to work with local people on supporting the future for that building. She also wanted to let people know, with the closure of the museum, about how they would learn about their heritage in the future. Adele advised that heritage is very important to people; it gives a sense of belonging, helps us learn where we've come from, and lets us learn from the mistakes of the past. The Council needs to make sure that even with the museum closed, local people still have the opportunity to learn about their local history.

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The Council has significant financial challenges due to the level of cuts. The money for museums sits within the £10 million spent on Communities and Leisure. That money is reducing all the time. From 2011 up until 2020 the Council will have lost about £173 million in government funding. The Council will still have to try and find next year another £50 million in savings. The whole funding model is changing. Now 17% of the Council's budget is Council Tax, and 19% from Business rates, 64% is coming from central government. Central government wants to take away the grants it gives to local government, but give local government much more control over the money it can raise from housing and business.

The Council has to look at working in different ways, and spending our money in different ways. Councillors have referred to 'New Council', and what that means is the type of Council in the future. There are three key areas for this, and one of them is about supporting communities to do more for themselves. Another is prioritising the most vulnerable people in communities, ensuring they are safe and helping them to stay in control of their lives. The third is only doing what the Council does. There are certain things only the Council does, and the Council needs to concentrate on that.

The Council has already made £106 million in savings through efficiencies. It has also been redesigning services and a number of things have decreased or stopped, for example the number of events across the District have reduced. The Council is moving more online. It is looking at how it can engage more volunteers in what it is doing.

Museums and Galleries is one of the services which have to redesign. The Council needs to survive and adapt to the environment around it. From 1st April 2017 Museums and Galleries will have half the budget it currently has.

Since 2011 Museums and Galleries already had to save £350,000.00. It has increased its income by 46%. It has introduced charges at places like Red House museum, and it has reduced staffing and opening hours. When it was advised it needed to make another £500,000.00 saving it realised it would have to close some of the museum sites.

Adele showed a map of the six existing Museums sites across Kirklees; Oakwell Hall, Red House, Bagshaw Museum, Dewsbury Museum, Huddersfield Art Gallery, and Tolson Museum. Having done all of the analysis, the Council knew it could only keep three sites open in the future.

Museums have been talking to organisations that may have been able to take things on board, and they have been testing new ideas; such as pop up museums and display cases in Dewsbury Town Hall. They analysed when people like to visit, and they will open at times the public has said they would like to see the sites open such as weekends, school holidays and bank holidays.

They asked property experts to look at the buildings to see what potential uses might be, and to assess how much capital investment each site would need. They

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explored the impact of changes on communities, and they had to look closely at how what they do in the future could help the Council achieve its outcomes.

They clarified what a museum is. People feel very passionate about buildings, but a museum is not a building in most cases. A museum is a collection of objects and how people engage with those objects. The building is a site people can come to in order to engage. With the new model, Museums Service knew it had to have fewer sites, reduced opening hours, reduced staffing, and to work much better with volunteers and community groups and to find out ways of getting out to communities that do not have a museum on their doorstep. The Service is looking at something that has three sites and more outreach and community exhibitions. It also had to look at much more aggressive income generation policies, and has been developing products it can sell, and looking at weddings and room hire.

After analysis, the Cabinet decided to keep Oakwell Hall and Country Park. It is one of the signature tourism venues in Kirklees. It has most potential to generate its own income which hopefully then can be fed back into the service to protect what remains. The Cabinet also felt it was important to have one museum in North Kirklees, and one in South. It chose Bagshaw Museum for North and that unfortunately meant the Council were unable to keep Dewsbury museum open. Bagshaw will have a focus on the communities of North Kirklees. It will be a learning centre. There is a very good schools programme there already, and schools from all over the North of England visit the Egyptian collection there. It is felt that can become a very family focussed site with many activities for families and schools.

The Mansion House is recognised as an incredibly important building in Crow Nest Park. It helps Crow Nest to be this wonderful community asset and to get its green flag status. There has been investment in the building in the last ten years that has made it accessible especially those with mobility issues. It does however require capital investment to reopen the museum room on the ground floor. The museum room ceiling collapsed a couple of years ago and the Council has not had the resources to be able to put that ceiling back up. It did not have as many visitors as other sites. It did not have as many school visits as other sites, and the per capita subsidy per visit was higher than most of the other sites. It also does not have the same potential to generate as much income as some of the others. The Cabinet agreed to withdraw the museum service from the Mansion House, and to work with communities to find an alternative use for that building. It does not want to have to board up the building where it could become a focus for vandalism, and deteriorate very quickly. It is a listed building, and there is a responsibility to ensure it is a viable community asset.

With the closure of the museum, how will in future Dewsbury and Mirfield residents learn about their heritage? Bagshaw Museum will not be the museum for Batley only. It will be telling stories of communities all across North Kirklees. It is appreciated that for residents of Dewsbury and Mirfield it does mean having to travel further to reach the site. The Council wants to be able to support community groups to develop their own exhibitions in their own venues. It is hoping to attract external funding to be able to create community exhibitions in community and council premises. Adele showed some photographs of outreach exhibitions such as a recent one in Huddersfield train station. Museums will also be developing more

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resources such as museums in a box, with items going out to residential homes. More will be going online, so people in their own homes can look objects up and learn about their history online.

Joe Tingle advised that the expressions of interest process had started on 28th November 2016, and is a three month process, and there is an offer of support to any group interested, from the Council's asset management and community engagement teams. There is also help available from an organisation called 'Locality' in support for developing the business case, and obtaining peer to peer support. The Council wants to see a successful and viable transfer. They want there to be ongoing dialogue throughout the three month process. A pack of information on the process and the building has been put together and will be provided.

Rebecca Breen advised there are three strands of support on offer; on the actual procurement itself; supporting the organisation to get in touch with other organisations that have gone through the process; and the link to the support from Locality, who are an independent organisation with wide experience of helping groups up and down the country to go through asset transfer.

Councillor Kane advised the Mansion House is a fantastic building and something cherished in Dewsbury. He was concerned that the funding had never been found to repair the ceiling collapse. He was concerned about the high level of estimated cost for necessary repairs to the building as this would potentially scare off potential interested groups. Joe advised the costs were an estimate, and actual costs would depend on the nature of works commissioned. Councillor Kane wondered why the schools had not been visiting and that should have been addressed. He asked again about the selection process, and Adele advised there had been advice that Bagshaw building itself works better as a museum space. There needed to be a business model chosen that would be most sustainable in the future.

Councillor Scott advised she thought digital could not replace the live experience. Adele agreed, but schools are finding it harder to take children out, and so museums in a box for schools would be further developed.

Councillor Scott had also been involved in an asset transfer of a building and the help from asset management, community engagement and Locality had been invaluable.

Councillor Bolt asked where in Kirklees would be the best place for Kirklees residents to get to a museum. How do the maintenance costs of a Huddersfield museum stack up against the Mansion House? He had been asked by a member of the public to ask if a heritage trust could be set up to run these buildings, and could it be supported by an endowment from the sale of other assets.

Adele advised that not all assets in the Council collection are owned by the Council. The one that always comes up is the Frances Bacon painting. The painting was given by the Contemporary Art Society and if the Council wanted to sell it, the money would have to go back to the Contemporary Art Society. If the Council starts to sell things off the Arts Council would take away their accreditation of museums

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and they could not then access funding from the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery fund. She advised the possibility of a heritage trust would continue to be explored.

Councillor O'Donovan wondered if the Committee could support the development of the Friends of Group proposal through District Committee funding, for example for their planned community event. The Chair advised a proposal for funding would need considered at the Committee Planning meeting, and Councillor Kane advised that as a group can only receive one grant per annum from the Committee, it would be better for the group to wait until a later stage of their proposals. Joe Tingle advised after a successful Expression of Interest, the successful group could apply to Asset Management in the Council for a development grant of £5,000.

There followed a number of questions from members of the public which the Councillors and Adele answered.

Anyone wanting to ask anything further, or who might want to make an Expression of Interest should e-mail adele.poppleton@kirklees.gov.uk or joe.tingle@kirklees.gov.uk or rebecca.breen@kirklees.gov.uk. They can be phoned on 01484 221000.

RESOLVED – To thank Adele, Joe and Rebecca for their excellent and informative presentation.

6 Estates and Environmental Works Budget 2016/17

Noreen Beck from Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing gave an update on progress with the Estates and Environmental Works Budget 2016/17, following the Dewsbury and Mirfield Special Area Forum consultation and voting exercise held on 4th October 2016.

She set out the allocation of the budget in 2015/2016 and rollover and allocation for 2016/2017. She then focussed on Appendix One of the report, which set out the specific proposals for spend on schemes in 2016/1017.

It was pointed out that project W08 Lidgate Lane, Batley Carr is in Batley East, and needs to be removed. Noreen agreed.

The Dewsbury South Councillors asked that project S12 Valley Drive, Thornhill be brought forward as it would still be within budget and Noreen agreed this. Mr Maddox suggested that further consultation with residents would be needed. Noreen advised there would be, and if that consultation indicated local people did not want the scheme, then it would come back again to District Committee. The Dewsbury South councillors agreed S12 should not come forward until the outcome of consultation was known.

Mr Maddox also advised that local people did not want SO5 to go ahead (extensive clearance and security works to Ouzelwell and Blackers Court, Thornhill Lees). Local people would rather have additional parking. Noreen advised this had been an officer recommendation. Councillor Ahmed asked that councillors be provided with additional background information as to why officers were making the

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recommendations they were. Councillor Asif asked that the background be explored before this action was implemented, and Noreen agreed.

Councillor Bolt asked if there had been any benchmarking of costs, especially against costs in a competitive market place. Noreen explained the process of the Council's Quick Quote system, used to get quotes for these works.

RESOLVED: - That members approve funding for the schemes as voted on and prioritised by members on 4th October 2016 as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the points made by Dewsbury South members in relation to schemes S05 and S12.

That members note progress made on schemes approved for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix two of the report.

7 District Committee Devolved Budgets Report

The current balances on the District Committee devolved budgets were highlighted.

To note the following returns to budget as a result of underspends:

- (i) £917.20 underspend – Dewsbury East Ward – Shawcross Recreation and Sands lane – Safeguarding Open Spaces – (approved 13.10.2015 for £4,000 capital).
- (ii) £950.00 underspend – Dewsbury East Ward – Securing Car Parks, Wakefield Old Road – (approved 13.10.2015 for £3,000 capital).
- (iii) £3,750.00 underspend – £1,250.00 Dewsbury East; £1,250.00 Dewsbury West; £1,250.00 Dewsbury South- The Arcade (incorporating the Hive – (approved 13.10.2015 for £15,000 capital).
- (iv) £15,000.00 underspend – Potholing works at Princess Lane, Chickenley) (approved on 01.03.2016) for £15,000 New Homes Bonus.
- (v) £5,050.00 underspend of New Homes Bonus – Improved security at 21 Council owned sites across District (approved on 01.12.2015)

There was one funding request put forward to the Committee for £15,000 New Homes Bonus funding to the Try It, Like It initiative; to develop and deliver a series of activities in all wards in 2017 to include introductory sessions for exercise, to include walking, running, cycling and fitness classes for beginners and families, plus festivals to promote and celebrate being physically active.

Councillor Asif wanted to know how the NHS, KAL, and this initiative would work together to achieve intended outcomes. He would also like additional information on outcomes, such as likely numbers taking part. Councillor Bolt was concerned there had been a delay to the consultation on the Kirklees Walking and Cycling Strategy.

RESOLVED:- To note the returns to budget and to defer consideration of the Try It, Like It proposal until additional information requested by the councillors has been provided.

8 Winter Maintenance 2016/17

No one from Streetscene and Housing Service had been able to attend the meeting to give the presentation on the Kirklees Winter Maintenance programme. The slides had been included with the papers circulated.

The Chair asked the presentation be noted, and that any questions could be directed to the Chair, Councillor Nosheen Dad or to Jackie Ingham.

RESOLVED:- To note the content of the presentation on the Kirklees Winter Maintenance programme 2016/17.

9 Deputations / Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

10 Public Question Time

The following questions were asked and Councillors responded:

- (i) Mr Maddox asked when the zebra crossing on Hostingley Lane would be constructed, given the length of time since approval of the funding.

Councillor Ahmed advised that the advertising package in relation to the works was sent to the appropriate department in early September, but (presumably because of their own busy schedules) the formal advert didn't go out until 29th September. The final date for comments and objections to be sent was 20th October. It is a legal necessity to advertise all Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on-site and in the local press, therefore allowing everyone the opportunity to make their feelings known about the proposals.

If no objections are received, the detailed design and construction package can be prepared and sent to the depot by the end of November for them to add to their programme of works. It is expected to be complete by the end of January 2017.

- (ii) A member of the public asked about the old police box at the top of Pinfold Hill. It is a lovely little building built in 1938, and is bombproof. It is now looking dilapidated, and he had been provided with costs of £500 to £1,000 to get it done up and put a blue plaque on it. The box was compulsorily purchased by the Council in 1974. The Council has advised it has no funding to repair it. He has offered to pay for it himself, but he needs permission to go ahead.

Councillor Bolt suggested an approach the Police and Crime Commissioner to find out if they could fund the works, and an approach Asset Management to find out about permissions. Councillor O'Donovan, as the box is in his ward advised he would take the matter forward with the Council.

- (iii) There was a request for an answer to the question asked at the last meeting about whether there are planned cuts to the Ambulance Service in West Yorkshire.

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Andrew Simpson, the Head of Emergency Operations, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield had replied that Yorkshire Ambulance Service has invested approximately 10 million pounds in frontline services in its current transformation program. He is currently working closely with Kirklees council (HOSC) in regards to the YAS transformation programme and the minutes are available on their website

The Service has:

- * Taken on an additional 242 frontline staff, approximately half of these staff will work in West Yorkshire
- * Increased our flexible staffing from 25% to 35%
- * Introduced a career framework to introduce new clinical skills and development
- * Introduced band 6 pay and responsibility for our paramedics so we can provide additional care to patients.

11 Dates of future meetings

The dates and times are:

Thursday 23rd February 2017, Northorpe Hall 7-9pm

Tuesday 11th April, 2017, Dewsbury Town Hall 7-9pm