

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ITS PARISH COUNCILS/MEETINGS

27th October 2004

PRESENT:-

Representatives of South Derbyshire District Council

Councillors Whyman MBE, (Chair) and Councillors Carroll and Southern.

Officers

Frank McArdle (Chief Executive), Ian Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), Andrea McCaskie, (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Helena Stubbs (Derbyshire Rural Community Council) and Julie Bellm (Democratic Services Assistant).

Parish Council Representatives

D. Adams, C. Barker, S. Bell, R. Buxton, I. Chester, J. Clifton, B. Cowley, H. Coyle, G. Edwards, P. Freeman, C. Gerrard, N. Hill, N. Ireland, P. Jesper, B. Lythgoe, F. Mitchell, M. Patrick, B. Payton, C. Scott, V. Shaw, M. South, R. Statham, G. Taylor, H. Thornton, C. Thurman, A. Topliss and J. White.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Dunn and Southerd, J. Green, A. Jackson, C. Peck, N. Tilley, B. Wood (DALC) and Castle Gresley and Willington Parish Councils.

PC/7. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th September 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

PC/8. **MATTERS ARISING**

It was agreed that agendas for future Meetings would be distributed to all attendees of the previous Meeting, in addition to the normal distribution to the Parish Clerks.

PC/9. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

It was reported that at the last Meeting a discussion had taken place with regard to the contribution made by South Derbyshire District Council towards the cost of general Parish Council services. It was noted that whilst the total amount compared favourably to such contributions by other district councils, it was acknowledged that these allowances were determined in 1982/83 and had subsequently been indexed linked to date. As some parishes had changed considerably over the past 20 years, a more equitable system for distribution now needed to be established.

The Chief Executive presented a brief report which reviewed concurrent expenses. He reported that on average South Derbyshire contributed approximately 40% of the costs of general Parish Council services. On average this was equivalent to £6 for every Council taxpayer in South Derbyshire. It was

noted that the contribution was higher when specific support that the Council provided for the Lengthsman Scheme and minor maintenance was taken into account.

The Meeting was advised that concurrent expenses was the main grant that the Council contributed towards Parish Councils costs to deliver the following services:-

- ❑ Cemeteries, Burial Grounds
- ❑ Bus Stations
- ❑ Closed Churchyards
- ❑ Commons
- ❑ Community Centres
- ❑ Drainage
- ❑ Footpaths and Bridleways
- ❑ Grants to Voluntary Organisations
- ❑ Litter Bins
- ❑ Playing Fields
- ❑ Public Clocks
- ❑ Public Conveniences
- ❑ Village Hall
- ❑ War Memorials

The amount South Derbyshire paid was based on historic spending levels (it was based on average spending in each parish on these functions in 1982/83 to 1984/85).

It was reported that on average the grant was equivalent to £6 per Council taxpayer. However, there was a wide variation between parishes, some received as much as £31.67 per band D Council taxpayer, and some as little as £0.94 pence per band D Council taxpayer. Clearly, there would be variations in the level of spending for individual areas. For example, where larger town areas provided facilities to other surrounding parishes. Nevertheless, it was reported that the extent of the variation suggested that the scheme was in need of some review.

The Meeting was advised that the District Council contributed to administrative expenditure on the basis of the proportion of concurrent spending over total spending. This was cash limited and if other parish spending exceeded the concurrent grant limit, in effect no contribution would be made to administration expenses.

The Meeting was advised of the amount of contribution made by the District Council to both the Lengthsman Scheme and minor maintenance works. In both instances the contributions varied greatly from parish to parish.

It was reported that there would always be a limit to the amount of support the District Council could afford to contribute towards parish spending and that consideration should be given to the extent to which the District Council expected local residents to contribute towards services that they benefited from specifically, rather than expecting all residents across the District to pay for them.

In response to a question with regard to proposed timescales for any changes to take place, the Chair advised that there would be no changes in the immediate future. The Chief Executive confirmed that concurrent expense needed to be

looked at in greater detail and that consultation with the Parish Councils would take place before any changes occurred.

The Meeting was advised that the District Council provided £170,000 to Parish Councils by way of concurrent expenses. It was also noted that Parish Councils themselves raised £275,000 in precepts, making a total of £436,000 available for Parish Council expenditure. The Meeting requested that details of concurrent expenses paid by other district councils be provided for the purpose of comparison, prior to the next Meeting.

In conclusion, it was reported that the existing scheme needed to be reviewed as:-

- (1) It was based on very old historic payments which did not reflect the growth of new development since the early 1980's.
- (2) There was a wide variation in terms of grant per band D household, which may not be explained solely by the level of service required.
- (3) The payment of support for administration and other separate payments under the Lengthsman Scheme and minor maintenance works, added further to the confusion.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That full details of concurrent expenses be provided at the next Meeting.***
- (2) That details of contributions to parish expenditure made by other district councils be provided, prior to the next Meeting.***

PC/10. **DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on the Council to work with its partners to produce a Community Strategy that would help to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of South Derbyshire. The South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership (SDLSP) was taking responsibility for preparing the Community Strategy and for making sure that the plans in it were actioned. The Meeting was advised that the SDLSP was established in October 2003. It consisted of a forum which met twice a year and was open to all residents and any organisation with an interest in the area. The Partnership Board (made up of representatives from public, private and voluntary sector organisations) carried out the day-to-day work of the partnership. This included developing the Community Strategy.

The Meeting was advised that the draft Strategy was made up of a number of building blocks which included:-

- (1) An overall vision
- (2) Six broad themes
- (3) Priorities for action
- (4) Examples of the types of action that could be taken

The overall vision for the Strategy (which would cover the next five years) was "Working together for a better South Derbyshire". To help the Partnership to deliver this vision, six broad themes had been identified relating to:-

- (1) Safe communities
- (2) Healthy communities
- (3) A vibrant economy

- (4) A sustainable environment
- (5) Lifelong learning and culture
- (6) Creating opportunities for all

These themes were intended to cover the issues, which were important to local people. The Meeting received a presentation on the contents of the draft Strategy on a theme by theme basis.

Subsequent to the presentation regarding 'Safe Communities' Councillor Southern suggested that recreational facilities needed to be provided for young people in order to try to reduce potential anti-social behaviour. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that if each Parish Council identified its requirements i.e. youth clubs, community centre etc, the LSP would try to provide funding in order that these facilities be made available to the community.

Following a discussion with regard to a 'sustainable environment', the question was asked as to what was affordable housing. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the term was qualified by the Government. He advised that the District Council proposed that a large number of new housing be smaller homes i.e. starter homes. He further commented that all parishes could build starter homes (affordable homes) as the District Council would allow building to take place on land where it would not otherwise be allowed if it were not for the provision of starter homes.

The Chief Executive concluded this item by commenting that Parish Councils and the District Council needed to work together in order to improve the wellbeing of South Derbyshire. He hoped that all parties would take a positive approach to the Community Strategy and urged that the consultation process be fully supported.

RESOLVED:-

That a copy of the Draft Community Strategy be distributed to Parish Councils for consideration and comment.

PC/11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Meeting would be advised in due course.

B. WHYMAN

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.30 p.m.