

TDC report Sept 2018

Despite the holiday season, there has been a lot happening in the District during the past couple of months. Major decisions were being made that will have an impact on the future for the District and Town with the Newton Abbot Development plans and the finalisation of our Playing Pitch strategy amongst others.

The development framework plan was agreed that will enable the centre of Newton Abbot to receive the investment it needs to promote the businesses within the town centre and enhance the attractiveness of the town for visitors.

A major decision was reached to pursue the development of the Halcyon Way car park to house a new 74-bedroom hotel amongst other plans that are currently still confidential (because of commercial implications affecting current businesses and ongoing negotiations). The new hotel will provide much needed accommodation in the town and support other local businesses. I have been asked why the town needs a Hotel. The Queens Hotel is too small and cannot be renovated to today's standards economically, the demand is established by the current Premier Inn hotel at the race course being able to have some of the highest charges for rooms outside of London.

It was also confirmed that there would be no loss of car parking during any development as additional spaces were being made available within the town centre.

I was personally pleased that the Strategic plan for playing pitches has also been agreed. The focus of the Council is directed by Government towards making the unfit healthier rather than the already fit fitter! In looking at our strategy, we recognised the needs for playing pitches in the area and the one current shortfall we have is for an all-weather hockey pitch which will be located close to Bradley. Having the policy agreed and in place will enable sports clubs to approach national sports bodies for assistance where they require it.

The Council also agreed to join a new Devon Wide Crowd Funding platform by allocating £20,000 which will support crowd funding initiatives and enable applicants to source matching funding for their charitable projects. We confirmed that our investment can only be used on projects taking place within Teignbridge.

Finance

Another annual event that came before the council was the report on the Council's finances for the last financial year. These showed that the District had managed its finances and delivered its services within budgets and in line with expectations. It was very disappointing to see some of the misleading comments in the Press following the report that related to the need to provide for Council Tax receipts that may not be recovered. This included debts for the deceased and businesses that had become bankrupt. This process takes place every year and much was made of the almost £1million amount over the last two years. In fact, this is a provision, not a write off as was explained and the amounts for this provision in the yearly accounts had not changed for at least each of the last ten years and this 10-year detail had been given to the reporters at the meeting.

The Council chases all outstanding debts through the courts where necessary (Chasing the deceased is a problem!) and has the best record in Devon for collecting almost £200million every year on behalf of DCC, Police, Fire, Parishes and towns plus the business rates within the District. The actual level of uncollected debt each year amounts to less than 30p in every £100.

New foil recycling collections

You may have seen that we have now started rolling out the collection of aluminium foil and trays from the kerbside across the district. This update to the recycling service will be communicated to residents via the new recycling guides which will be delivered to

households by our recycling crews. Information has also been updated on our website, via social media and a press release sent out earlier this month. The Recycling team will be running roadshows later in the year to promote this and will also be working with our Devon County Council Waste and Recycling Advisor to include this as part of the door-stepping work carried out. Residents will be asked to present foil and foil trays in their black recycling containers alongside other tins and cans and plastics. We will be communicating this update to residents in communal properties at a later date.

If you have any questions relating to this, please contact Lizzie Burston, Recycling Officer, elizabeth.burston@teignbridge.gov.uk or phone 01626 215842.

At overview and scrutiny, on 10th September, a proposal from the portfolio holder for planning and housing that the planning site inspection procedure is amended so that Parish and Town Council representatives are no longer invited to site inspections, had been called in. Following a lengthy debate, it was resolved that the call-in be referred to the Executive with a recommendation that:

a) Town and Parish Council's should continue to be invited to planning site inspections.

b) Planning Services meet with Town and Parish Councils to discuss issues raised in the Portfolio Holder decision.

At the same meeting it was also resolved that the Economic Development Plan 2018-2023 be referred to the Executive with a recommendation that the Plan is endorsed, with the inclusion of Brexit and the future relationship with the EU as a potential 'disruptive factor.'

Cllr Dennis Smith
Ambrook Ward