

NOTES of MEETING
HEREFORDSHIRE MARKET TOWNS FORUM
19.00 hrs WEDNESDAY 29th March 2017

01 JUN 2017

Representation as usual from:- Kington, Bromyard, Ross on Wye, Leominster, Ledbury and Hereford City Councils.

Representing Ledbury Town Council:- Cllrs Martin Eager & Bob Barnes

Speakers:- Cllr Paul Rone, Richard Ball, & Alasdair McDonald (speaking on highways and service delivery 2017/18)
Yvonne Coleman & Kevin Bishop (speaking on S106 & CIL)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and there were no matters arising from that meeting.

1. Highways Maintenance Delivery 2017/18 Power Point Presentation.

Richard Ball (HC) gave a brief introduction as to background to service delivery and assured members that the forthcoming year would keep to the current level of service despite further budget reductions and re-categorisation of the budget funding, and that the 2018/19 annual plan was already being undertaken.

Alasdair McDonald (BBLP) gave members a breakdown of BBLP's service delivery including extolling the roles and work of the Locality Stewards.

Overview – last 3 years 450 miles of roads have been resurfaced (approx 20% of the network) 9000 street lights including 3000 columns have been replaced, over 3000 kms verge cutting and over 17,000 highway defects fixed. Around 239 bridges in need of attention with around 20 classed as urgent. Drainage issues on many roads still an issue which leads to pot holes and highway defects.

Many savings in efficiency despite higher costs of service delivery still equates to same level of delivery.

A quick run through of intended road repairs/resurfacing for the Market Towns including for Ledbury – A438 New Mills, A449 Ross Rd & New St, The Homend and also some works to the Worcester Road.

An explanation was given as to how works were categorised and coordinated working with utility companies, also how potholes (highway defects) were categorised and scheduled for attention. This provoked as usual much discussion with many anecdotes from members.

Bob Barnes raised the issues of Ledbury's War Memorial refurbishment and the associated pavement issues that need urgent addressing, Alasdair McDonald promised that he would personally intervene in getting all parties to work with LTC in planning & progressing the work. In April there will be briefing sessions at Hereford re the Annual Plan delivery.

The Power Point presentation (with relevant facts and figures) will be made available to all Parish Councils.

2. Section 106 & CIL

Yvonne Coleman (Hereford Lead Development Manager) & Kevin Bishop (Planning Obligation Manager) updated members on S106 requirements and statutory legal obligations (all available on-line at HM Government website)

New Government thresholds mean S106 applications are based on 10 house developments or more, cannot be used for maintenance or cure for existing problems such as drainage etc.

Contributions cannot now be pooled on 5 or more dwellings S106 contributions.

Vacant Building Credit now introduced to offset affordable housing needs requirement.

New enforcement rules now in place with prohibitory or mandatory injunctions.

Developer viability rules now in place where independent valuers are used to assess the development value and then any viable S106 obligation.

Parish Councils advised to draw up a S106 wish list, preferably within the Neighbourhood Plan document but not compulsory.

Yvonne Coleman is prepared to meet with Parish Councils to discuss unspent S106 funds and allocate against any wish list as appropriate. Match funding towards any agreed funding item is also an option.

CIL update:- current CIL legislation not adopted by Herefordshire Council, now proposed changes by HM Government because of problems with CIL delivery means that CIL has been recommended for changes including renaming to Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT).

Recommendations on approach to developer's contributions (not known yet if NDP is part of requirement), changes in contribution depending on part of country, it will be mandatory for all local government bodies to adopt, will be based on all developments of 10 dwellings or more with a fixed contribution for less than 10 dwellings. Details will be announced and finalised in the Autumn Statement.

Q&A session highlighted historic difficulties in sorting out unspent S106 with Market Towns councils, promised to be addressed with meetings.

Members advised to get their wish lists in so that unspent S106 monies can be allocated before the expiry date requires return of monies to developers.

Some members want help from HC & BBLP to develop a practical and workable wish list, and so also prevent any duplication as to current S106 contribution planned projects.

Asked if there was any way that Parish Councils can spend S106 monies for individual projects; answer, yes subject to agreement and audit.

Re education contribution, though The Local Authority deal directly with schools, it is good practise if Parish/Town Councils also contact schools re S106 allocation.

3. Updates and Confidential Session.

There were no updates from the Market Towns or any matters for confidential discussion.

There was a short discussion on the County's bid for 'County of Culture' with an agreed supporting letter from the forum.

Meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Next meeting Wednesday 24th May 2017