

Buxton Area Forum
Questions and Answers

Thursday 15th March 2007

Pre-Forum questions

Question

Can the Policy Team explain the reason for the swimming pool increase in charges for the over 60's, which was well out of proportion with the normal adult price increase?

Answer from Mark Warburton, Leisure Services Business Manager, High Peak Borough Council

Prices for over 60's at Buxton Pool have been held at £1.20 since 2004. This was due to the ongoing refurbishment at that site. The price has now been increased to £1.90 per visit to bring Buxton Pool in line with the other leisure sites across the Borough who didn't benefit from this price freeze.

Question

Would like to know why the rent and council tax can't be frozen for a year so the council can obtain some of the money that is owed back instead of increasing the housing rent and council tax each year?

Answer from Ben Jay, Head of Finance, High Peak Borough Council

The simple answer is that council tax rises are necessary in order to keep pace with inflationary increases to expenditure - especially pay which accounts for the majority of council costs, but also wider inflationary pressures within the economy (e.g. utilities and fuel costs). That said, the council is always looking to secure more efficient ways of working. We have an impressive record of past savings achieved and a challenging programme of savings built into current and future years' budgets. Where possible, these savings are shared between improvements to services and ensuring low increases to council tax (the increase into 2007-08 of 3.2% is well below the national average of 4.2%).

However, to work through the proposal in detail, if council tax was frozen at current levels for 2007-08 (next financial year), the impact on the High Peak council tax payer would be to save around £5 in total over the course of the year - we could not control the actions of the other precepting bodies (Derbyshire county council, derbyshire police and derbyshire fire authorities) who account for over 85% of the total bill to the High Peak taxpayer and who could be expected to continue with council tax increases driven by wider inflationary and service pressures.

Within High Peak, a zero Council tax increase would result in a budget deficit of about £197k. If all outstanding council tax was collected, this would potentially generate additional income to the council of £114k. This would therefore create a net budget deficit of about £82k. This deficit could be met by a more vigorous savings programme, or by delaying significant service changes - such as recycling or major capital investment. Either way, there would almost certainly be an adverse impact on service delivery. However, in the following financial year (2008-09), even if the current increase to council tax was used

(3.2%) the £82k budget deficit created in 2007-08 would remain. The same would also be true in the year after, and so on.

In conclusion, the question for the council tax payer is really whether the £5 saving in the year is worth the likely deterioration in council services or the delay in implementing service improvements such as recycling. It may be better to settle for lower than average rises than for a zero rise.

(the same logic would apply to rent figures, although we have less control over these as they are set by central government).

Question

Reported roofing problems over 12 months ago and was told just before xmas it was aborted and put on roofing programme, why wasn't the tenant informed at the time of this?

Answer from Louise Pearce, Corporate Excellence Manager, High Peak Community Housing

Reparis supervisor visited, inspected inside loft space and found that no repair is required.

Question

A big concern for me is litter. Living in a very rural area (Hollinsclough) we see a lot of fly tipping, which I have to say the High Peak Council are very good at collecting when I report it to them, but for some reason it seems to be a growing problem, especially tyres. Also there is masses of general litter along the roadsides, is it ever cleaned up? I find it sad to see it spoiling the beautiful countryside that we live in but also I am in the process of getting planning permission for a B&B business and think that from a tourism point of view it is even more of a problem. Driving into Buxton on any road, the A6, A515 or A53 or any minor roads and you can see loads and loads of unsightly litter. I think the more litter there is the more people don't care and just add to it. Would it be possible to encourage local groups (such as walking groups), communities to help the council out by doing litter picks in their areas?

Answer from Tony Robinson, Business Manager for Environmental Services, High Peak Borough Council

Recently, the fly-tipping of tyres has been a particular problem in the Leek Road area of the Borough. We collected about 1000 tyres last week that have to be transported to Chesterfield for disposal. We are working with the police and the Environment Agency in an attempt to identify the culprits so that court action can be taken.

General litter on the roadsides is particularly noticeable at this time of the year due to the dying back of roadside vegetation. All rural roads are scheduled to be litterpicked but some only receive 1 or 2 visits a year. If we receive complaints about a particular area we will send out a clean team to attend to the problem.

Some local groups do carry out litter picks and we do support these with skips bags etc. However, litterpicking roadside verges does have health and safety implications and great care must be taken when identifying areas for voluntary groups to carry litterpicking activities.

Any groups wishing to help can contact the Environmental Services Supervisor for the area for assistance

Questions asked during the forum

Recycling

Question

Where does the land that will be used for the new composting plant relate to?

Answer

The land is at Waterswallows, past Goodwin and Forbes and on the left.

Question

The new bins will have colour coded lids, but is there something identifiable on them that doesn't rely in colour?

Answer

The top of the recycling bin lid will be embossed to allow identification. Large print and braille literature will also be available when the scheme is being rolled out. The twin-bins scheme will be starting around September.

Question

Looking at the current amenity site in Glossop, it's not the prettiest, therefore what provision is to be made for landscaping etc on the new site.

Answer

There will be screening on the road side. We are also seeking to improve the look of the Glossop site. Waterswallows will be designed better.

Question

The new site will reduce trips to other areas of the Borough, therefore will local people be involved in the design of these facilities?

Answer

Any suggestions are welcome although plans are not usually published in advance. The waste management company will be involved in the design of the new site. Reasonably flat land is being used, with ramps incorporated to provide access to skips. The site is mainly designed as a manufacturing site.

Question

How will plastics be disposed of?

Answer

Plastic bring sites will be introduced around the Borough. Market forces will decide which plastics will be needed for recycling. End product is needed and high cost is involved in recycling all types of plastics. This may take some time to introduce.

Question

The change to a recycling scheme is welcomed. What are the relative costs of the 2 separate systems that are operating?

Answer

There is more admin involved. The increased costs are not unbearable. The freighters are still emptying the same number of bins over time. Main cost is in setting up the scheme.

On-going annual requirement to pay contract to run site. The contractor receives monies gained from selling the recyclables.

Increased costs were mainly contained in the increased take up of recycling. This will be the same across the Borough.

Question

Recycling bottles and cans in another Borough had a lid, do the new boxes have lids to deter rodents?

Answer

Lids are available now.

Question

Does unwrapped kitchen waste in a bin over summer creates a health risk?

Answer

This was a concern in Glossopdale. Good housekeeping measures are encouraged, e.g. wrapping food items. Aware of residents concern and Health agency was contacted.

They stated no increased risk in the extra week storage of waste in bins. Food waste can be put in either Green or Black bins if you have concerns.

Question

Will there be a charge for TVs etc left at recycling site?

Answer

There will be no charge

Question

Happy to participate but other won't. Some people may contaminate collection?

Answer

Yellow/Red card system will be in operation. Firstly contamination stickers will be used, this will detail the contamination and bin will be left. Yellow card will be issued within 3 months if same thing occurs. If contamination occurs again a red card will be issued and the bin will be removed and they will be left with a black bin for collection every fortnight.

Question

How much has been donated to charity so far through the recycling scheme?

Answer

Not sure, last years donation to Save the Children was roughly £2000.

Question

What are opening times of new site and will assistance be provided at site?

Answer

Yes and opening times are going to be 8am to 6pm. They will be open these hours throughout the year.

Question

Collection site is to be screened from roadside, what about visitors/caravan site behind the location?

Answer

That side already has high buildings and this new development will be no different than those already there.

Questions asked during the forum

Leisure

Question

Any view on the application to be submitted on the Tom Thorn site, just outside Buxton?

Answer

Very attractive concept on face, significant barriers to scheme going forward though.

Question

Temple Field village green application, I have a lot of sympathy for temple fields site. The new facility needs to be accessible, will the village green application be resolved?

Answer

Recent history shows that 4/5 year process needed on current temple fields village green application. Process is long. This site is out of the equation in short term. Site has been abandoned at the moment.

Question

If you need a site near the University, why can't the Pavilion Gardens complex be used?

Answer

Future use of Pavilion Gardens needs a lot of thought, but any potential use could be looked at. Fit for purpose facilities needed.

Question

If facilities were shared would University have sole use in daytime?

Answer

Details still being looked at with Swimming pool probably for Community use at all times. University would use dry facilities during the day.

Question

Do the repairs to the current leisure site indicate that the current facilities will be used for some time and whats the cost of the roof?

Answer

Things won't happen over night so current facility needs to be fit to use in short term. Pool cover has paid back the investment through energy savings. Roof is necessary expenditure as building needs to be water tight. Cost of roof not known at time.

Question

Access to sites needs to be looked at. Temple Fields not readily accessible. Central location accessible to whole town. Provision of fun pool as well as serious swimming pool. Schools use pool a large proportion of the day. What time will be allocated to this?

Answer

Planning issues and access is a very good point, planning issues should be investigated earlier in future before consultation takes place. Early view from people was sought last time.

Sheet left on seats for people to suggest ideas for future leisure centre. What is the purpose of the new facility. Please feed any comments in using sheet provided.

New facility will provide the balance of uses required, this will be specified before any development takes place.

Questions

What were the voting figures for the different sites in the recent consultation?

Answer

Roughly Temple Fields gained 49%. Brown Edge Road gained second. The current site gained third and fourth most votes.

Question

How confident are you that that is accurate? Was vote wrongly recorded?

Answer

Results would be presented as results mentioned above if just first choice site was listed.