

Verwood Town Council Meeting –Tuesday 29 May 2012

County Councillor Report –Cllr. Spencer Flower

Purple Haze Mineral and Waste Plan –Dorset County, as one of a number of consultees, raised an objection during the last public consultation on technical grounds, which includes the Purple Haze site, as the plan did not include enough flexibility to cater for any increase in aggregate demand over the plan period. Dorset County Council suggested amendments to overcome this concern. HCC has now modified their overall plan in accordance with the DCC request. As result DCC withdrew its objection as there were no longer reasons to object on technical grounds. However, after a meeting with officers at County Hall last Wednesday, it has been made clear that the withdrawal of the technical objection does not mean that Dorset County support the proposals, as has been suggested by some residents. There are other more far reaching environmental issues that still remain a concern.

Dorset County Council had also made other observations, particularly with concerns about the impact mineral extraction could have on the Ebblake Bog, which is of significant international importance as a SSSI and RAMSAR site. The Ebblake Bog must continue to be protected at all costs.

There is absolutely no evidence from HCC to prove that mineral extraction from the proposed Purple Haze site would not have a serious and detrimental impact on the hydrology of the area and therefore damage the very sensitive eco system of the Ebblake Bog. The opinion of your Local Dorset County Councillors is that the 'precautionary principle' should be applied and that the Purple Haze site be struck from the plan. Other serious concerns have been brought to the notice of HCC and the Planning Inspector. The campaign against these proposals continues to get the full support of Local Councillors at all levels in wanting to get the Purple Haze Mineral and Waste proposals removed from the HCC Minerals and Waste Plan.

The EIP [Examination In Public] will take place in Winchester, on Tuesday 12 June. The author of this report will be attending, as Leader of East Dorset District Council, to put the case that this site should be struck from the plan as it is unsound for the reasons expressed above.

Robert Walter MP has become involved again and has written to the national office of Natural England. He is concerned about the inconsistent approach taken by Natural England in Hampshire in not applying the 'precautionary principle' compared to the far more diligent approach adopted by Natural England in Dorset. In other words if there is no evidence that mineral extraction would not cause harm the Ebblake Bog then the proposal should be struck out of the plan.

Adult Social Care -Meeting Future Challenges - The Adult and Community Services Programme comprises of 43 savings projects with total savings of £16.5 million forecast over 4 years to 2014/15.

As at April 2012, a total of 30 individual savings projects have been completed with an approximate saving of £8 million. The savings have been achieved through efficiencies (getting more for the same or less), transformational change (changing the way our services look, deliver and organise themselves) and budget cuts (reducing provision).

The remaining 13 individual savings projects comprise 9 pending for Social Care and 4 pending for Community Services. The majority of these services carry significant saving targets, which have dependencies on other activities, are generally more complex to and therefore take longer to deliver.

It remains a challenging period, particularly given the demands already placed on our services, and further Budget Working Groups are scheduled to look for further savings in the forthcoming years.

Re-ablement service takes off -There has been a rapid expansion of the domiciliary re-ablement service which is now fully operational in all Dorset localities. Thanks to the hard work and positive approach of all the staff involved, the response we can offer when people first need adult social care has now radically changed. Over 1500 people have regained independence between April 2011 and the end of March 2012. In addition the Community Support Service has seen a significant increase in the numbers of compliments and thanks from service users who have benefited from a prompt and enabling service.

Now that re-ablement is established, we are looking at ways to develop closer working arrangements with NHS rehabilitation and intensive nursing services within each locality. These services and re-ablement have many shared features and aims. This second phase of development will involve managers from across services and will be an incremental implementation of practical changes to support closer working, for example shared documentation, agreed cooperative working processes and co-location.

Day Services and Vocational Services update - Cabinet decided on 14 December 2011 to develop the 'Partnership Option' in relation to the development of day and vocational services. Each service then engaged with their communities in a range of different ways that included holding large meetings, coffee mornings or one to one meetings. Draft business plans were completed by all services by 5 March 2012. These plans identify how the required MFC savings of £600,000 will be made and also make a range of proposals for service development. Further development of the services will take place in conjunction with the voluntary sector and other partners using increased income and flexibilities once agreed.

On the 2 May 2012 Dorset County Council Cabinet approved the recommendation to move to a second phase of consultation in order to consider the proposals submitted by day and vocational services for the future development of their services. The consultation phase will run from 14 May 2012 and will include locality based staff consultation, user and carer consultation at each day service and nine evening community meetings.

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