

Consultation responses received after the publication of Cabinet papers

Seniors Forum

Councillor Chowney met with the Seniors Forum on 5 February 2018. The following items were discussed:

Question: Do most properties in Hastings fall within band D for council tax?

Response: No, most properties in Hastings fall within bands B and C. Band D properties are used to give an average estimate of the impact of any changes to council tax. Although, it is proposed to increase council tax as part of this year's budget, the council will need to continue to look for new ways to achieve savings and generate additional income in order to offset reductions in its funding from other sources.

Question: What will the impact of leaving the European Union (EU) be on the town?

Response: It's hard to forecast what the impact of leaving the EU will be on the town at this stage. In the past, Hastings has attracted significant amounts of funding from the EU, particularly from schemes aimed at deprived areas, and it's not yet clear if these opportunities will be replaced in the future.

Question: What new options are there to provide temporary accommodation?

Response: The council is investigating a number of options for the provision of temporary accommodation, including acquiring its own premises and constructing temporary units. Any options will need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to changes in government policy.

Question: What does CLLD stand for?

Response: CLLD stands for Community Led Local Development. This is an EU funded project aimed at the most deprived communities in the area to help develop entrepreneurial and employability skills.

Question: What can be done to improve traffic congestion on The Ridge?

Response: Levels of traffic have increased significantly on The Ridge since the opening of the new link road. Highways matters are the responsibility of East Sussex County Council and no proposal has yet been brought forward.

Question: Is there an update on the White Rock Theatre?

Response: The council is currently negotiating a 5 year extension to its contract with the existing theatre operator. It is intended to significantly reduce the subsidy paid by the council to the operator over this period, and facilitate greater community involvement in the running of the theatre. In the long term, the council will be

seeking to develop proposals for a new performance venue, as part of broader plans for the development of the White Rock area.

Question: Have you needed to top up reserves?

Response: It is necessary for the council to add to specific reserves from time to time, for instance to the repairs and renewals fund.

Question: How have the savings from Happy Harold been achieved?

Response: The council has been working in partnership with a group of local volunteers who help to maintain Happy Harold. Last year, the group installed a new diesel engine, which means it will not be necessary for the council to make a financial contribution to the project this year.

Question: Is there an update on the former toilets at Harold Place?

Response: The council has been contacted by a potential operator, who may wish to re-develop the site as a café / restaurant. There may be an opportunity to incorporate new public conveniences as part of the scheme. In the meantime, public conveniences are available at Priory Meadow and at Hastings Library, which is due to open soon.

Question: What are the future funding arrangements for the Seniors Forum office at Hastings Voluntary Action?

Response: There are no plans to change the funding arrangements for the office space as part of this year's budget.

The forum welcomed the continuation of the meteorological service.

The forum welcomed the council's approach to partnership working other agencies, including other local authorities and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Staff and Management Forum

Councillor Chowney met with the Staff and Management Forum on 5 February 2018. The following items were discussed:

Question: How are the allowances for councillors set?

Response: Councillors allowances are set by the Independent Remuneration Panel and reviewed every 4 years. Any increases over the 4 year period, are in line with increases to staff salaries.

Question: is there a cross over between rough sleeping and homelessness?

Response: Homelessness has increased nationally, and this trend has been reflected in Hastings. There are a number of causes of this increase; including changes to the local property market, the impact of the welfare reforms and

reductions to funding of the council and its partner agencies who provide homelessness support services. Whilst rough sleeping forms a small part of homelessness overall, many rough sleepers have multiple and complex needs.

Question: Is there an opportunity to encourage more development to the west of the town?

Response: There are a number of potential opportunities in this part of the town, including the potential development of West Marina as well as a new Sports Village, to provide housing and leisure facilities.

Question: Is there an update on plans for the White Rock area?

Response: The council has been working to develop a masterplan for the White Rock area, to provide a framework for the development of new leisure facilities and housing.

The forum welcomed the focus on income generation activities as a means of supporting the council's work into the future.

Hastings Youth Council

Councillor Forward met with Hastings Youth Council on 12 February 2018. The following items were discussed:

Question: Is there an opportunity to develop more entertainment facilities for young people on the pier?

Response: The charity that owns the pier went into administration recently. When a new owner of the pier has been found, it will be important to make sure it can operate sustainably in the future, and this will include looking at what has worked well in other areas.

Question: It is good that standards of accommodation in the private rented sector have been improved. Who can help if you need to adapt your property, if you live in social housing?

Response: ESCC's Adult Social Care Services can arrange for an occupational therapist to carry out an assessment of your home, to find out what adaptations may be required. The council also administers a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) scheme, which can be used to pay for any modifications. Your local ward councillors can also help raise these issues on your behalf.

Question: Are there opportunities to develop new leisure facilities for young people in the town's open spaces?

Response: It would be helpful for the Youth Council to carry out a piece of work to find out what sort of facilities young people would like to have in the town.

Question: It's good that the council is looking at new ways of generating additional income. What are the priority areas it is looking at?

Response: The council recently adopted an income generation strategy, which sets out the priority areas the council will be looking in to. These include investment in commercial and residential property and energy generation. A copy of the strategy will be circulated to members of the youth council. The council will continue to look into any income generation ideas put forward by councillors, staff and members of the public.

Question: It's a good idea to generate sustainable energy. Has the council looked into hydro power? It would be good if these schemes could also provide employment opportunities for local people.

Response: A copy of the council's plans for energy generation will be circulated for the youth council to consider.

Question: Is there any more the council can be doing to reduce street drinking and anti-social behaviour?

Response: The council has recently introduced Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) which give the police and the council's wardens more enforcement powers to tackle problem drinking. This approach needs to be coupled with an appropriate package of support, and the council continues to work closely with drug and alcohol addiction support services. Two new business units have also been set up in the town centre, which has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Question: Does the council have plans to develop a homeless shelter in the town?

Response: The council will be looking at a number of different options for how it provides temporary accommodation in the future.

Question: Will it be possible for people to fish from the harbour arm, when the works to improve it have finished?

Response: The works to improve the harbour arm will take place in the spring. The works will need to be completed before other uses for the harbour arm can be considered.

Emails

A further five emails have been received from members of the public objecting to the proposed increase in allotment fees. One email has been received in support of the proposed increases.

