

## **ACRA Informal Meeting with CBC-EDDC Directorate 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

CBC-EDDC was represented by David McIntosh, Neil Farmer and David Barnes.

ACRA were represented by Mike Collard (ACRA Chairman) and Jim Biggin (ACRA Secretary)

### **Budget 2015-16**

The budgetary situation is satisfactory with a balanced 5 year budget in place. However, the margin between income and expenditure narrows each year over the period particularly as Central Government support funding decreases. Standard income sources are based upon charge levels that are reasonable and competitive with little scope for large increase. There thus remains a pressure to find more cost savings and both CBC and EDDC are committed to that path.

The income from the “New Homes Bonus” is not included in the budgets as it is viewed as unreliable, being potentially open to politically motivated variation by Central Government, particularly following the imminent May 2015 general election.

The income from business rates is healthy. Whilst far more reliable than New Homes Bonus it does however represent a higher degree of risk and this drives a need for a higher level of reserves to be maintained.

### **Health and Social Care Act**

Under this Act DCC is required to create a Health and Wellbeing Board charged with creating joined up local health services to replace the sometimes rather fragmented current arrangements. The Act is built around making the patient the focus of attention and putting carers on the same footing as those they care for.

There is a legal requirement to focus upon prevention and the delaying of need for care and support rather than waiting for a crisis to precipitate action by providing a range of high quality local services. The rights of patients to choose their preferred course of action are preserved.

Local Authorities will take on new functions and are charged with ensuring that their residents have access to a range of appropriate service providers and can thus receive services that either prevent their care needs from becoming more serious or delay the impact of their condition. They must also ensure that residents can obtain information and advice to underpin their decision making.

It is believed that this more integrated approach will also be more efficient and will cost less than current arrangements.

### **The Potential Rationalisation of CBC and EDDC Head Offices**

The project based upon using Wimborne as a hub for East Dorset continues.

Plans to facilitate the refurbishment of the Christchurch Civic Offices are now in hand as are the move to new more flexible methods of working for staff utilising remote computer access, including working from home. It is envisaged that many staff will only be in the office for 60% of their working time.

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This move will be assisted by the electronic delivery of services to residents and its implementation has been eased by CBC-EDDC winning £10,000 in total under the LGA Digital Experts Programme.

The Council recognises that not all residents are ready or able to become totally digital so will continue to provide traditional forms of contact but can also envisage reaching a tipping point at which it will be necessary to ask people to attend the Library or Council Offices if they are unable or unwilling to access a service via a remote computer.

### **Police Presence in the Town Centre**

As was the case in autumn 2014, based upon the variety of contacts with the police and their representatives that each participant at the meeting enjoys it was still not possible to detect any evidence of a master plan that is being unfolded.

### **Town Centre Planning**

Progress on the plan is patchy with areas such as heritage making some headway whilst other topics are proving a little more difficult. A presentation of the plan to members by autumn 2015 is still envisaged as a precursor to public consultation.

### **Dorset Waste Partnership**

The predicted 2014-15 over-spend is £2.95 million of which £115,900 will be funded by CBC. This over-spend has arisen from a combination of: additional landfill and waste treatment costs; reductions in the market value of recycled materials; additional vehicle hire costs; and additional operational staff costs.

A 37 point action plan has been developed to both improve on the current situation and to avoid such a large budget variance occurring in the future without proper prior warning. The DWP Management Board will in future meet monthly with the chairman and vice-chairman of the Joint Committee of participating Council's representatives.

Despite this setback, CBC has still made net savings of £215,000 of revenue and £260,000 on capital account since the inception of the scheme in 2011.

### **Meyrick Estate Gravel Extraction at Roeshot Hill**

The increase in the estimated number of lorry movements from 60 to 120 per day was discussed and all agreed that every effort should be made to encourage DCC to mitigate the potential impact of these movements including suggesting weight restrictions on vehicles using those roads.

### **Arson on St Catherine's Hill**

ACRA requested that Robin Harley be thanked for the efforts that he had made and in particular the explanatory note that he wrote for local residents. ACRA confirmed that there was no local animosity towards CBC as landowner, such anger being reserved for the perpetrators

Jim Biggin April 2015

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