

Devolution Devolved

In this statement I wish to revisit the decision taken at the last council meeting to effectively enrol in the Pilot for the Highways Devolution scheme immediately and I want to examine a couple of alternative decisions that I believe are correct for this council to take.

I have just three points I want to outline:

1 Information

We did not have full information available to us when the council voted to go with year one of the Pilot. Unless there has been a subsequent change and this council has been updated to the best of my knowledge no response has yet been received from Cllr Bentley and I have to assume that other councillors, too, are also still uninformed? This was therefore not an appropriate way to take a decision.

2 Process

The people that will be most affected by this decision would be our officers and staff. Yet, with the exception of the Town Clerk, no-one else had been consulted in any way before the decision was made. Inevitably our Ground staff would be involved in the execution of at least some of the duties and they only heard about it the day after this council's decision. And without the full **information** as per my first point their perception and concerns are totally understandable. I submit that, again, for this council to take a decision without this process taking place is completely unacceptable.

3 Timing

One of the repeated mantras of this council is that when our term ends in May we would ensure that we would hand over to the newly elected councillors a council that would be in a much better place financially and logistically. But this decision will only really affect the new council. How can we hand over something that, at this point, we cannot yet even explain fully ourselves and then leave a legacy of a financial black hole. Furthermore we have been aware that within the next few months there is most likely to be a change in personnel within our Ground Staff team. Therefore is not this totally the wrong timing?

So, in conclusion, I propose that we revisit the decision that was made last meeting to perhaps enroll in year two to ensure that the new council is in receipt of the full and detailed information and that all our employees are fully involved in the process.

I commend this to the council.