

£500,000 for Radstock

Amanda Leon, Radstock Action Group B&NES Cabinet 10 April 2013

Radstock Action Group congratulates B&NES on identifying key works which require urgent attention in Radstock and urges Cabinet to agree the proposals at this meeting.

However, we suggest that the fanfare about £500,000 for Radstock misses the point. The works proposed are all items which are much more about regular maintenance and improvement than a major investment in the regeneration and future of the town. All you need do is compare with the scale of proposals for Keynsham.

We wish to make two points:

1. The £140,000 earmarked for 'Streets, Highways and the Public Realm' is essential to maintain and improve safety for everyone in Radstock. We hope that such highways expenditure which should be a part of any normal budget will recur in future years. Such payments are not to be regarded as windfalls, they are essentials for maintaining the fabric of the town.
2. Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum remains an unaccountable, unrepresentative body which has been awarded £135,000, as opposed to £100,000 which was the sum originally allocated. Please could we have exact details of what this will be spent on.

Many local groups were invited to the initial meeting which took place in August 2011 and undertakings were made to circulate minutes, convene the next meetings and so on. Since this time, the Forum has become invisible to people in Radstock. We have regularly invited Duncan Kerr, as the B&NES leader on this matter, to meetings and put our point of view, and he has always been helpful and positive. But there is never any follow up. We were told in the period leading up to the initial meeting, that 'The aim is to focus on producing a person-centred economic action plan, aimed at increasing economic and social/community growth' and that B&NES 'would bring together an action plan to consult on and bring back to the group in Sept/Oct'. But this has not happened. Local and widespread involvement is essential for the regeneration of the town. This includes in relation to the Victoria Hall on which £160,000 will be spent.

We urge B&NES to take seriously the tourist potential of the town when considering how to foster regeneration – we have repeatedly made the case and hope that this matter will be properly addressed.