

Radstock Capital Funding

Radstock Town Council welcomes the capital funding which is desperately needed and has been a long time coming. We are becoming a dormitory town for Bath with around 80% of residents working outside the area. Meanwhile, we have some of the worse figures for child poverty and higher than the national average rates for benefit claimants.

I would like to see more partnership working between B&NES and Radstock Town Council to ensure that local people have a real say in any improvements or changes.

I spoke at a Scrutiny meeting a few weeks ago and raised concerns about the length of time taken to formulate any plans associated with this funding. My first question is when the funding was allocated in February 2012 why did the consultation not happen until October 2012 and why was this only given 4 weeks for responses? This did not allow much time for residents to formulate a considered response.

The short timescale may account for the low number of responses. Having said that, I risk sounding like a broken record in coming to this Cabinet meeting to say once again that we are inundated with surveys and consultations to the point of complete overkill. It is important that more than one method is used to gather meaningful responses.

Another concern is that the results of the consultation have not been shared with either Radstock Town Council or the Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum. These were promised at the last meeting of the forum. My second question is what is the analysis of the responses and why have these not been made available as requested and promised at the last Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum meeting?

There seems to be a general lack of transparency and genuine consultation throughout this process which does not promote good partnership working.

I have said many times that I am concerned about the piecemeal approach to Radstock. The NRR development will take up one of the largest sites in the centre of the town and mean changing the road layout. There are few spaces in Radstock for other developments, especially those for small businesses or affordable accommodation for young homeless people. There is a need for a bigger vision in Radstock, which includes job creation for local people and support for local businesses and anything which contributes towards that is a bonus.

£500,000 is a small amount of money and it is important that this is used as effectively as possible. So what will be the specific, measurable improvements resulting from this funding be?

It's not correct to say that there is no other vision for the town. A number of ideas have been discussed with councillors over the last two years. Meanwhile, Radstock Town Council is working on a longer term strategy and we welcome input from B&NES councillors and officers on this.

My final question is how will B&NES continue to involve Radstock Town Council and the community in future on the allocation of this funding?

The council looks forward to positive outcomes from this funding and would like to see other sources of funding identified to regenerate the town.

Thanks
Cllr Lesley Mansell
Chair Radstock Town Council