

Budget 2017/18 – Member’s Questions & Factual Responses

As part of the Budget process for 2017/18, Members have been able to use a dedicated electronic mailbox facility to ask any questions of fact or about the interpretation of the papers, in advance of the Joint Scrutiny meeting. The questions posed and the answers given are detailed below are circulated now and at the Joint Scrutiny Budget meeting on Monday 30th January 2017.

Date Question Received	Question	Answer
13 January 2017	<p>A current frustration for Newton Abbot, but one which must be common place across Devon, is the failure to have suitable basic infrastructure in place prior to the construction of housing developments. As an example, in Newton Abbot we currently have considerable house building progressing, but without a footpath along a significant length of main road, requiring pedestrians including primary school children, to walk to and from school along a busy "A" road. This is nothing short of madness, Similarly, a new roundabout has appeared on the same main road without any signage or appropriate lighting. New road junctions are being constructed with no warning signs provided. Speed limits are currently not legal. Much if not all of this will eventually be resolved to most peoples satisfaction, perhaps by the end of the year, by which time some will have been living under these conditions for at least 2 years. I could mention numerous other deficiencies....e.g. lack of broadband. We would all probably agree that these infra structure features should ideally be in place before homes become occupied. So why aren't they? Because either Section 106 or CIL money is withheld until a certain amount of progress with the development has been made, and only then are these vital infra structure considerations provided. Could a reserve of money not be made available to undertake at least the critical works and then when cash is available, put back in "the pot" for future developments elsewhere? While this proposal would require a relatively small initial investment, it need never become an on going drain on finances as it would always be topped up by funding which is currently associated with the development, but not available at the start of the programme. Lives are being put at risk by the current highly unsatisfactory methodology. What is to stop DCC Place Committee recommending exploration of this proposal? It would make a huge beneficial impact on Devon residents lives and give confidence to purchasers of new properties that their lives wont be blighted for many months by inadequate infrastructure. This would make a really positive contribution. Can this committee agree to so recommend?</p>	<p><i>[This is a matter for the Committee to express a view on]</i></p>

17 January 2017	In the event of new roads being constructed in a given area, does that area then receive a higher maintenance allowance to cover potential increased costs? I am thinking of course of the SDH. Do extra miles of highway responsibility equate to higher maintenance funding?	Funding is not allocated on an Area basis. It is allocated in accordance with the Highway Asset Management Plan recently considered by the Place Scrutiny and approved by Cabinet. The process takes account of road category, based on its strategic importance, as also recently discussed at Place Scrutiny. Highway maintenance money will be allocated for routine, emergency and reactive work as necessary and, in time, capital funding will be allocated in accordance with the Highway Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity of the asset.
17 January 2017	Has any allowance been made in the budget for damage caused by the construction of the SDH to neighbours property and other equivalent compensation claims? (or are these all being covered by insurance?) How many claims have so far been received? How many settled? How many rejected?	<p>Whilst any works are being carried out under the Construction Contract, responsibility for damage to third party property, rests with the Contractor who is responsible for managing such claims and who must, as is required in the Contract, have the necessary insurance cover. For claims resulting from the new scheme, there is an allowance in the scheme budget for compensation claims (Part 1 claims) - for example, as a result of increased noise levels resulting from the works. Devon follows the published procedures to establish the data that will be used in assessing Part 1 claims.</p> <p>One formal claim has been received for damage to property during the construction phase and that has been passed to the contractor to handle in accordance with his obligations under the contract. To date 369 Part 1 claims have been received which will be determined following a programme of noise surveys due to commence shortly which will allow the noise model to be validated and claims assessed.</p>