

Report from Cllr David Lomax

I sit on the Corporate Select committee and Development Control committee. I was reappointed as Chair of the Development Control committee last May.

The Council continues to face severe financial pressure. Savings in the delivery of services are always being sought.

The Council successfully transferred the collection of refuse and recycling to a joint management company run by High Peak, Staffordshire Moorlands and East Cheshire Councils. This has produced financial savings, more reliable collection and an improved level of recycling. New vehicle procurement is to be undertaken which again will improve reliability, reduce vehicle emissions and lower costs.

The Council owns many buildings which are not fit for purpose and are also a considerable drain on finances as they continually require major repairs. Whilst some buildings will continue to be owned by the Council others may be disposed of. The Octagon in the Pavilion Gardens has seen major work undertaken. The severe winter weather has delayed its reopening. Further works in other areas of the building will start in October and will cause closure of facilities. The Buxton Cinema in the Arts Theatre has been a great success. However, the building as a whole remains a financial drain.

Many new houses have been built over the last year. Further sites designated for development in the Local Plan have outline planning permission. However, some sites which contribute to the five-year plan are slow to be delivered. Without the ability to demonstrate that the Local Plan remains sound we will continue to face speculative applications. The site off Long Hill was determined at the last Development Control Committee. The application was refused on Landscape grounds. The final design for the Macclesfield Rd/Linglongs Rd site is still to be determined. A small site for affordable housing in Bridgemont has recently been approved. The site south of the Tesco approach road has been approved for office and retail use.

Many applications that have been refused by committee or under delegated powers have been referred to Her Majesty's Inspectorate for determination. All major referrals have continued to be refused for development with the inspector support the case of the Local Authority. For this reason, it is important that reason for refusal are valid. Unfortunately on many applications Derbyshire County Council's highways department do not see problems with access or the extra traffic that will be generated so this cannot be used as an argument for refusal.

Sadly, the attempts to secure the building of the "2nd" bridge have failed so the centre of town will continue to be blighted by HGVs for the foreseeable future.

The state of the roads and parking continue to be areas of concern which residents raise with me. There has been a deterioration in the surface of many roads, with potholes that have been repaired failing within months. This and the poor quality of surface dressing work undertaken has resulted in loose gravel which is particularly dangerous for cyclists.

The threatened closure of a Derbyshire County Council run library is also causing concern.