

Your Ref:
Our Ref: SH/EG

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Letter to All Parish Clerks

Dear Parish Clerk

You are probably already well aware of the District wide Local Delivery project. The project planning began during 2006/07 working across all Town and Parish Councils in North Dorset. The aim of the project is straightforward, where support is evidenced:

To retain services currently provided by the District Council through alternative funding or different service provider/s.

I am writing to request your assistance to help me provide information to your Members to encourage full debate on priority services and to make important decisions on services provision in the near future.

The financial planning for the District Council necessitates removal of funding from the discretionary services that are currently provided by the Council. The attached table summarises the planned funding reductions against each of the discretionary services and the year within which those savings need to be made. The District Council has to achieve reductions of £500,000 from discretionary services for the year commencing April 2008; this equates to £18.93 per Band D equivalent property.

There were several meetings arranged with Town and Parish Councils during 2006 both collectively (at Durweston Village Hall) and individually when officers of the District Council and Members attended Town and Parish Council meetings. The Aim of 'Local Delivery' was discussed and there was an opportunity for local Councils to state which of these services are important locally. The consultation culminated with preparation of a Service Level Agreement between most Councils and the District Council, for Phase I (2007/08) of the Local Delivery project. This enabled the District Council to continue providing all these important local services during the current year, thanks to a financial commitment of £235,000 from those local Councils.

Local Delivery Phase II is now well underway, planning for the 2008/09 budget, to retain services after April 2008. Phase II is focused on those services which are important within each Town based local partnership area. We have consulted with each Town Council in an attempt to identify which services are locally important and therefore priorities for Local Delivery. I have written to each Town Council describing each service: the service description, financial statement, the likely preferred option and timing for withdrawal of District Council funding. A copy of the information sent to (Blandford/Gillingham/Shafesbury/Stalbridge/Sturminster Newton) Town Council is enclosed with this letter.

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The two lead District Council Members (the Leader – Councillor Peter Webb and the Leader of the Opposition – Councillor David Milsted) will be writing to all Members of your Council setting out the Local Delivery project and encouraging your Members to identify priority services and to work with the Town Councils, District Council and community partnerships to reach agreement on how to provide these services in the future. We are working together to disseminate information to Parish Councils; specifically this has included Roadshows around Blandford and we are planning similar Roadshows around Gillingham, to add to the meetings between the Town and Parish Councils that have already happened. In addition, we are arranging a consultation with all Parish Councils during early July to discuss Local Delivery Phase II to which your Chairman will be invited.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN HILL
GENERAL MANAGER (DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCES)