

INFORMATION CIRCULATED AT THE MEETING COMMENTS FROM DR T EYNON CC, RE SNIBSTON

As local Member, I share the Friends of Snibston concerns regarding Budget lines S35, S36 and S38 in the Medium Term Financial strategy.

I am concerned that the proposal to reduce the Museum and focus on the Scheduled Ancient Monument will not provide the savings needed and will not maximise the opportunities available from this transformation.

The Coalition's reduction in the Revenue Support Grant at a time when there is increasing pressure on the social care budget has made a challenging position into one that is extremely difficult for Leicestershire County Council.

This Council is committed to protecting vulnerable people as its first priority. It is essential that every proposal to modify the budget is financially balanced and does not expose the Council to increased costs.

Equally, any change to services proposed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy needs to be sustainable, actually provide the expected savings and not work to the detriment of disadvantaged groups.

The Friends of Snibston, who are supported by the Coalville Town Team and North West Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, are concerned that the proposal to focus the new offer on mining and the Scheduled Ancient Monument will not provide an economically viable future for the Museum. Most (60%) of the 100,000 paying visitors to Snibston travel from outside the County to enjoy the gadgets in the 'Shed'. The headstock is not the primary attraction.

A new offer for Snibston needs to be financially sustainable and build on its strengths. The public funds invested in it need to address priorities including Health and Wellbeing and Economic regeneration.

Local industries recognise that a vibrant local community is good for business.

Snibston Discovery Museum is not just a former mine. It celebrates the technology and industries that made Leicestershire the wealthy County it is today. Textiles, fashion, mineral extraction and railway engineering are all represented.

North West Leicestershire no longer exports coal, but it is still at the cutting edge when it comes to other aggregate and mineral industries.

Hanson's brick in Measham have recently won a major award for their low energy, zero waste, soft mud brick factory <http://tinyurl.com/pbka6ln> (attached as Appendix)

Aggregate Industries at Bardon are extending their Quarry. They are working with Leicester University on high tech dust control measures and biodiversity.

As agreed with Leicestershire County Council, Aggregate Industries Bardon Quarry New Extraction Area will not only be returning a levy of £2 per tonne to the Government but also an additional 5p per tonne to a Community Fund up to a total of £400,000. Aggregate Industries are keen to work with local representatives to decide how their contribution should be used to benefit the community.

The previous Director of Public Health, Peter Marks report made it clear that health is linked to wealth. Barriers to wellbeing in North West Leicestershire include low skills and educational attainment.

According to the 2011 census, across Leicestershire only 22% of residents describe their highest Level of Qualifications as 'none'.

In North West Leicestershire that figure is 25%. In Coalville, according to the 2011 census, that figure is 30%. The residents of Greenhill report the figure, according to the 2011 census, to be 33%. The residents of Bradgate Drive (postcode areas 4HG 4HH 4JA) who are most affected by the dust from the nearby Quarry report, according to the 2011 census, that 40% of their number have no qualifications.

Snibston hosts the Learning and Engagement team and provides a wide range of informal educational activities. The Museum is a hub for volunteering, taking on disadvantaged youth and others not in education, employment and training. There are opportunities to access funding for NEETs that could be maximised.

The detailed budget for Snibston includes fixed Property costs that will not be reduced by closing the 'Shed'. The savings to Communities and Wellbeing will only be £237,813, less than a third of the figure that has been promoted in the press.

As local Member, I am concerned that there will be considerable funds invested in 'transforming' the current Museum. Do we know how much closing the Discovery Museum and storing the artefacts will cost the Council? Will any savings made be swallowed up by these new costs?

Disquiet with the proposal to reduce the Museum is not a Coalville issue. More than 8000 people across the County have petitioned the Council to retain Snibston in its current form. The current plan will reduce an attraction from one that generates £750,000 to one that is unlikely to attract visitors and could end up being a community liability rather than an asset.

As local Member, I would urge the Council to engage with the business community in North West Leicestershire and local educational providers. There is a need to 'redevelop Snibston with new offer' that is economically sustainable and makes full use of its potential to regenerate a community that still includes some of the most disadvantaged residents in the County.

APPENDIX

Hanson receives major environmental award

Hanson has gained a major commendation in the Business Commitment to the Environment (BCE) awards for its low energy, zero waste, soft mud brick factory at [Measham](#) in Leicestershire.

The awards were founded by Sir Peter Parker in 1975 and recognise businesses that meet the commercial demands of the present without compromising the environment for future generations.

Companies receiving awards have clearly demonstrated that they are innovative and ahead of the competition and that corporate responsibility is an integral part of their organisation.

Hanson's £50 million brick factory has sustainability and quality at its core and is the most modern and efficient in Europe. It was built on brownfield land and meets the Building Research Establishment's 'very good' environmental standard with a focus on natural lighting and ventilation, employee health and welfare, energy saving and water conservation. With the capacity to produce 30,000 Hanson Ecostock™ bricks an hour; the fully mechanised factory can operate with just 28 staff.

Hanson UK's national marketing manager Paul Lacey said: "The commendation recognises our commitment to sustainable production while meeting the commercial demands of modern industry."