

District Councillors Report

2022/23 Budget setting

At the Craven District Council meeting of 22nd February, members approved a fully funded and balanced Revenue Budget of £8.935m for 2022/23. This will be the final budget set by the authority prior to the formation of the new unitary North Yorkshire Council.

This will mean an increase of council tax at Band D by £5 a year to £187.21, or £3.60 per week - an increase of approximately 10p per week. Council tax was frozen in Craven for five years in a row but has been increased by £5 a year in each of the last six budgets, as the Government removed the Council Tax Freeze Grant and reduced the Revenue Support Grant down to zero from April 2019.

Craven District Council's element of the Council Tax bill makes up around nine per cent of the total. In 2022/23 this will equate to £3.60 per week for district council services for an average Band D property.

LGR

A draft Structural Changes Order is now before Parliament and paves the way for elections on May 5 this year (2022). It also states the new council will be called North Yorkshire Council.

Langcliffe Quarry Enterprise Centre (Hoffman Kiln)

Businesses at the new, rural enterprise facility are set to benefit from fast, reliable broadband connectivity as part of a £50k investment by Craven District Council, utilising B4RN fibre connection.

The funding to enable the connection to the B4RN network across Locks bridge from Stackhouse was agreed at the February Full Council meeting.

B4RN, a community benefit society based in the Lune Valley, offers their customers a 1,000Mbps fibre to the premise connection with the network noting itself as being future proof with the option to increase connection speeds as required with a 10Gbs (10,000Mbps) service also currently available.

Completion of the business units at the Langcliffe Quarry Enterprise Centre is scheduled for May 2022. For further information on the availability of business units please contact Atkinson Associates on 01943 666 955.

National Empty homes week (28th Feb – 6th March)

National Empty Homes Week, taking place from Monday, 28 February to Sunday, 6 March, aims to bring empty homes back into use by highlighting the options available to property owners. Two

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Two years ago, there were 74 private properties across the Craven district that had been empty for more than two years (excluding second homes). Since then, the Council has focused its efforts on returning these long term, “problematic” empties to use; first adopting a new Empty Homes Strategy in 2019 and then appointing a specialist, dedicated Empty Homes Officer - Bharat Mistry - to deal with the challenge.

The reasons properties remain empty are many and complex and the Council has worked closely with owners and communities to turn these properties into much-needed homes for residents. This approach has paid dividends, with the number of long-term empties reducing by around 20% (to 60 currently) since 2019 - no small achievement during the pandemic.

Anyone wishing to contact the Council’s Empty Homes Officer, Bharat Mistry, is asked to call 01756 700600 or email bmistry@cravenc.gov.uk