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Shropshire Council
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Date: 19 April 2016

My Ref: CKE/JH

Your Ref

Dear Sharon

DEVOLVED ASSETS

Thank you for your letter dated 11th April concerning the above – the contents of which are noted.

It is unfortunate that the situation has changed in respect of car parks since I attended your Town Council meeting on the 14th January 2016. This change however, has come about by the current financial pressures at Shropshire Council and the need for the Council to protect every pound of its income.

In addition to protecting income and in order to set a balanced budget in 2017/18, many of our discretionary service areas such as leisure, swimming pools, museums, Visitor Information Centres and public open spaces/parks etc will now have to have a zero budget from 2017/18.

This is a “worst case scenario” at this moment in time and we hope that the situation will improve over the coming months. However it is this very serious situation that has prompted the change in approach in respect of car parks i.e. Shropshire Council needs to retail all of its income and unfortunately have zero budget provision in many discretionary service areas in order to set a legal budget in 2017/18. This being the case I have to confirm that car parking income must be retained by Shropshire Council and as such, car parks need to remain “out of scope” in respect of our devolved assets discussions in Much Wenlock.

In respect of other local services such as the leisure centre, swimming pool, library, museum and grounds maintenance, we need to continue to work together in partnership to develop new funding streams and service delivery models. To this end, the work that we have commenced by looking at how these services can be supported by precepting locally needs to continue.

Obviously there is a great deal more work to do on this option but by working together over the coming weeks and months, we should be in a position over the summer to consult with the residents of Much Wenlock on some fully costed options/proposals.

This would then lead onto decisions being taken by both Councils in September/October in respect of future funding and service delivery.

I trust that the above has clarified the reasons why Shropshire Council has had to change its position in respect of the car parks in Much Wenlock.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Chris Edwards
Area Commissioner South Shropshire
Email: chris.edwards@shropshire.gov.uk

Cc Cllr David Turner
Cc Cllr Stuart West
Cc Kerry Rogers
Cc Steve Law