

NOTES OF THE **MEETING** OF THE **STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2025** NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT AT **7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors: M Joyce - Presiding (Chairperson)
P Parker (Vice Chairperson)

L Cooke (Deputy Mayor)
C Davieson
A Hall
C Parker (Mayor)
M Ryan
L Wood

In attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk
Samantha Scott – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator
Nigel Canham – Communications Advisor

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Valid reasons for absence were received from Councillors D Corney-Walker and G Jennings.

Councillor P Bullivant did not attend the meeting.

26. INTERESTS

None declared.

27. MINUTES

The notes of the Strategic Planning Forum held on Wednesday 10th September 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

Cllrs A Hall and P Parker abstained from voting.

28. STRATEGIC MATTERS

Members considered a recommendation from the Events Sub-Committee (Minute No. 25/08(E10b)) that a budget of £40,000 be requested for 2026/27 to allow for the inclusion of an additional Pride event and to accommodate inflationary increases. Following a discussion, the RFO advised the proposed increase has been reflected in the draft budget and should be considered as part of the wider budget deliberations.

29. BUDGET

Members discussed the draft budget report for the 2026/27 period, as tabled at the meeting. The RFO advised that the proposed budget had been increased in line with inflation.

Page	Nominal Code	Title	Comment
1	4124	Grants	Grant budget doesn't include financial support for Community Transport or CAB as a separate provision has been made.
2	1077	CIL income	Discussion regarding CIL issues.
2	4013	Recruitment	A discussion took place regarding whether the budget is sufficient to cover the Town Clerk recruitment. Members were advised that the current budget is adequate, and it was agreed to leave it unchanged.
3	1032	Allotments	Increased income as there are more tenants.
5 & 6	Various	Events	Agreed to increase in line with recommendation from Events Sub Committee.
7	4260	GLS	Reduction due to the current refurbishment work.
8	Various	Museum	It was noted that any remaining surplus budget at the end of this financial year will be carried forward to help offset the shortfall in the What's in Store project.
9	4454	NFW toilets	Increased to reflect an increase in cleaning contractor costs.
9	4394	Newton In Bloom	Budgeted for participation in Southwest In Bloom competition.
11	4459	Grass verge cutting	A discussion took place regarding the cost and management of the grass-cutting contractor, including the potential to bring the service in-house in the future.
12	5564	Defibrillators	Members asked for a report on the use of the defibrillators.
13	4209	Refuse at wharf road depot	The Town Clerk highlighted that the proposed increase is due to the volume of work being carried out by the FMO team and recent changes to recycling legislation.

Arising from consideration of the draft budget or 2026/27, it was:

AGREED that the Strategic Planning Forum **recommend** the Budget and Precept for 2026/27, as set out below, and the draft Budget Report for 2026/27 to the Finance and Audit Committee meeting to be held on 7th January 2025:

APPENDIX B

Precept £ 2026/27	Multiplier	Actual Band D cost	Actual Band D Incr.	Band D % Incr.	Band D cost per week	Band D cost per day	Diff in pence per week	Diff in pence per day	Total Precept
£1,776,075	9002.5	£197.29	£6.62	3.47%	£3.79	54p	0.13	0.0181	£1,776,075

The Town Clerk highlighted the potential impact on the budget if the asset opportunity is progressed, noting that the cost of the lease and business rates would increase the total to £1,826,507, representing a 6.41% rise.

30. ITEMS ARISING AND FUTURE AGENDAS

- a) Any relevant issues, which Members wish to raise, not already included on the agenda.

None.

- b) To identify items for the next meetings of the Strategic Planning Forum.

None.

31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reminder to complete survey

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd July 2026 (tbc).

The Meeting closed at 19:38 hours

Chairperson.....Date.....

