

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING** OF THE **STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Hocking (Chairman)

Mrs C Bunday	K Purchase (Mayor)
C Coyle-Moore	Ms L Roberts
D Howe	M E Ryan
M Joyce	T Ward
C Parker	

In attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk  
Alex Robinson – Committee Administrator

**SP12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors David Corney-Walker Mrs Julie Cleave, Richard Jenks (Dep Mayor) and Mrs Ann Jones.

**SP13. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were received and signed as a correct record.

**SP14. INTERESTS**

None Declared.

**SP15. SLCC – EXTRACT FROM CLERK JOURNAL**

The Chairman drew Members attention to an extract from the SLCC Clerk Journal entitled; 'Financial Matters', in which it advised that some meetings should be held in private session to allow Members to discuss matters fully and raise strategic ideas, prior to formalising the Council's budget and publicising the decisions.

The Clerk reminded Members of their statutory obligation to set a Precept based upon an annual review of the budget. The two Strategic Planning Forum meetings would enable Members to discuss the budget in detail prior to making recommendations to the Finance & Audit Committee in January and finalising the Precept at Full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The Chairman emphasised that the discussion on the budget would remain confidential, until the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee and Members were advised not to disclose matters raised at the meeting.

**SP16. BUDGET 2019/20**

**A. Review of Draft Budget 2019/20**

The Chairman introduced the **Budget Summary for 2018/19 and draft budget for 2019/20**, previously circulated, and invited the Town Clerk to take Members through the budget and raise questions or seek clarification. Members reviewed the current budget and projected budget for 2019/20.

## APPENDIX A

Councillors noted that the redevelopment and delivery of Newton's Place to the community would remain as the key priority for the Council for the next financial year.

The Chairman introduced each Committee and cost centre within the draft budget and Members raised the following points under specific budget lines:

Page	Budget Line	Item	Proposal
1	100 - 4258	PWLB repayments	Confirmed related to Victoria Gdns
	101 - 1077	CIL Income	<b>Include £38,000</b> to cover repayments to PWLB. Noted that CIL is capital funding for infrastructure and therefore would not be included in revenue budget other than this specific amount. Cross reference page 14 line 1003.
2	101- 4107	IT Support	New server purchased and installed this year but need to make provision for upgrade/replacement hardware over five year programme. <b>Include 1/5<sup>th</sup> provision on annual basis.</b>
3	101 - 4999	Miscellaneous Exp	Clarified exp for 2017/18
5	103 - 4200	Members Training	<b>Include additional £900</b> to cover Member Training following May 2019 Elections
6	110 – 4251	TCP Events	Confirmed that related to exp on Town Development Manager events and included inflationary rise
7	121 - 4164	War Memorial Main.	Refurbishment costs to be met by Grant Funding or CIL income therefore <b>no impact on budget</b>
8	130 - 2000	Staffing Repayment	Clarified the process of grant fund to CIC and salary repayments
10	210 - 4349	Easter Events	Check allocation of expenditure on event
11	211 - 4397	ECO Grants	Historic Code – no longer in use
13	226 - 4451	Town Quay Maint.	No budget allocated to the code but <b>overall budget has allocation of £1841</b>
	290 - 4502	Buckland Skate Pk	Council Handyman's time
	290 - 4507	Grass Cutting	Contract for up to six cuts but only pay for cuts actioned – <b>no impact on budget</b>
14	291 - 1003	PWLB Income	Cross reference pg 1 CIL to cover loan repayments
	291 - 4520	St Leo Church R/Pr	Rename to Newton's Place

The Chairman referred Members to the supplementary sheets as tabled at the meeting and invited the Deputy Town Clerk to explain the draft budget and effect on the precept. Mrs Scott advised that the draft budget figure was £695,631 and the Council had a statutory obligation to maintain reserves of £173,907.75 (25%), which brought the **budget to a total of £869,583.75.**

In order to meet the shortfall from the cessation of Council Tax Support Grant and include a contingency a further £44,000 would be added. Having deducted the estimated cash at bank at the year end the **final figure of £828,538.75** would be the Precept based on a stand still budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained how this would affect the Council Tax. Based upon a Band D property, there would be a rise of 0.12p per week (equated to 6.76%) a lower rise than the 2018/19 precept and the annual cost would still remain under £100. Following a discussion among Members, accordingly it was;

**AGREED** to note the draft budget and authorised the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to make the revisions as discussed for a revised draft budget to be presented at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 together with a draft Budget Report for consideration in advance of the Finance and Audit Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

### **SP17. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT**

The Town Clerk advised Members that further to Minute 18/11(268) that he had sought clarification from the District Authority on the cessation of the Council Tax Support Grant and how had Town and Parish Council's been notified of the change. The Clerk had been informed that the District Council decision had been published in the Council Minutes.

In addition, the Clerk advised that he had written on behalf of the Council to the local MP, the Right Honourable Ann-Marie Morris to express concern at the increasing pressure on town and parish precept in the light of the removal of the Council Tax Support Grant. Mrs Morris MP had responded in support of the situation and had raised the matter in writing with two key Ministers and had noted the potentially detrimental affect such cuts would have on town and parishes particularly where they were absorbing devolved services from District and County authorities. Members expressed their appreciation of the local MP for taking such action on behalf of the Town Council.

Members further recorded their thanks to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their preparation of the budget and associated papers which helped to inform and clarify the Council's position.

### **SP18. NEWTON'S PLACE**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the funding for the Newton's Place project. The Clerk confirmed that the Newton's Place Project remained as the key priority for the Council for the forthcoming year but advised Members that it would be more difficult to determine the budget given that the Town Hall and Museum would be moving premises some nine months into the financial year and therefore some costs would have to be estimated. Members acknowledged that this was an unusual situation. The Clerk advised Members that the Council had received a very generous grant from H B Allen Charitable Trust and that this was particularly welcome, The tremendous effort on the part of the Funding Group who had continued to seek funding for the project was acknowledged. This now meant that the Project was funded without the need to take a mortgage on the existing Town Hall prior to its sale.

Members discussed the potential options now available to the Council and welcomed the opportunity to consider the matter further at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

The Chairman reminded Members of the sensitivity of the matters discussed that required confidentiality at that time. Following a lengthy discussion, accordingly, it was:

**AGREED** that the options available for retaining the existing Town Hall as an asset of the Council be further considered at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

**SP19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018.