

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING** OF THE **STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY 2019** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

PRESENT: Councillors C Parker (Chairman) Presiding
M Hocking (Vice Chairman)

P Bullivant	R Jenks (Mayor)
Mrs C Bunday	Mrs A Jones
D Corney-Walker	M Joyce (Dep Mayor)
Mrs K Crout	M Ryan
D Howe	

Councillors In attendance: C Davieson
B Hayes

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

SP12. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received all were present at the meeting.

SP13. INTERESTS

None declared.

SP14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum held on 29th May 2019 were received and signed as a correct record.

SP15. BUDGET AND STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2019/20 AND FOLLOWING YEARS

The Chairman referred to the budget, previously circulated, and advised Members that no questions had been received in advance of the meeting. The Chairman suggested that Members use the opportunity to raise questions as they reviewed the budget performance for 2018/19 and considered the budget requirements for 2020 onwards. During the discussion Members raised the following points:

- ❖ Grant funding;
- ❖ Christmas Illuminations, infrastructure costs;
- ❖ CIL income;
- ❖ Office IT Equipment as part of transition to Newton's Place;
- ❖ Public Relations to promote town centre events;
- ❖ Savings on utilities, gas, electricity and water;
- ❖ Service provided by Town Development Manager;
- ❖ War Memorial refurbishment;
- ❖ Museum;
- ❖ Public conveniences and mandatory relief for business rates;
- ❖ Grass cutting contract; and
- ❖ Election costs.

Following discussion, accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the budget outturn for 2018/19 be hereby, noted.

SP16. WEBSITE - REDEVELOPMENT

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the redevelopment of the Council's website. The Clerk advised that in order to meet the new website regulations; Public Sector Bodies Accessibility (Website and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Regs. 2018 that the Council needed to upgrade the Council's website. In addition, Mr Rowe reported that the existing website platform Joomla Development Software was no longer supported in the industry and therefore the Council would also need to consider a move to an alternative operating system and suggested that WordPress was an approved open content management system. In order to comply with the new regulations existing websites needed to be compliant by 23rd September 2020 but new websites were required to comply by 23rd September 2019.

The Clerk reported that he had sought the assistance of the Council's IT contractor, Alchemy Systems and they had prepared a Tender and Technical Specification which had been advertised on Contract Finder. Upon receipt of 18 proposals, Alchemy Systems had reviewed the list and prepared a short-list of 5 potential applicants. This has now been reduced to 4, to which Alchemy Systems would conduct telephone interviews to refine the list down to two who would be invited for interview. The Clerk would report back to the Council to make the final decision on the selection of the Council's new website provider. It was noted that it was important that the provider delivered to a high standard and was able to offer the standard of services expected by the Council and would meet the required regulations. Members sought assurance that the Council's IT contractor would carry out the necessary due diligence and noted the implications for the Council's IT budget.

AGREED that the Town Clerk be authorised to make a final short list of Tender applicants to provide a new website for the Council, in consultation with the Council's IT contractor, Alchemy Systems and to report back to the Council in due course.

SP17. NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT

A. The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the Newton's Place Project. The Clerk reported that the overall project was progressing well and there had been a great deal of activity since the last update, particularly in terms of Museum Design. The Clerk reminded Members of the issues in relation to the excavation of the lift pit and he advised that this had impacted on the overall delivery timetable causing a delay of up to ten weeks on the construction programme. The Project Manager and Professional Design Team had met with the Construction Contractor to discuss the technical detail of the programme. Following which, the Town Clerk, Project Manager and Project Coordinator had met with the senior representatives of Pollards, including the Managing Director and Operations Director to review the remainder of the construction programme.

Members raised their concern at the delay in the construction programme and queried the implications for the remainder of the project. It was noted that this had not affected the overall project delivery at this stage, which was scheduled to be completed by early 2020. Members thanked the Clerk for his update and noted that there would be a further update once the Project Manager had submitted his report to the Project Board next week.

The Clerk reported on the recent site visit to the Museum Designers, CORE based in Huddersfield and their sub-contractors, Fuzzy Duck who are responsible for the Audio-Visual displays and CSP Group who are producing and building the display cabinets for the exhibition space. The two day site visits were highly valuable in allowing the Museum team to appreciate the high quality and impressive standard of work undertaken by the Museum Designers and the respective sub-contractors to date. The project team had informed the Museum Designers of the potential impact from the delayed delivery on the construction project and consideration was being given to a staged sign off to work in conjunction with the Museum Designers and Conservators to avoid further delay.

Councillors Mrs Ann Jones and Mike Hocking accompanied the Project Team on the trip and endorsed the tremendous work undertaken to date and commended the quality of the cabinets and audio-visual displays being produced for the new Museum.

Members thanked the Town Clerk for his informative update on the Newton's Place Project.

- B. The Chairman invited Members to consider the additional staffing requirements for the Newton's Place Project and invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the specific posts required. The Clerk advised that as part of the application to the Heritage Lottery the Council had committed to providing additional employment opportunity and had therefore agreed to an additional part-time **Museum Assistant Post**. The post would be supported by the HLF up to 40% of the cost for two years but the Council would need to meet the balance of the costs and would need to take account of this when reviewing the budget later in the autumn.

The post of **Community Engagement Worker** had been in place since the start of the project and the HLF would support 40% of the employment costs for the duration of the project but the Council would be required to meet the ongoing costs post the Delivery Phase for a period of two years post opening to ensure that there continued to be community engagement within the new Museum. The Clerk advised that the Council would need to account for this expenditure when reviewing the budget in the autumn.

The third post was that of **Caretaker** and whilst it was not a direct requirement of the HLF contract it was seen as necessary to fulfil the operational management of the new building. The existing housekeeper would need the assistance of the caretaker to prepare the community spaces for the range of meetings and functions held within Newton's Place. Some of these events would be held in the evening and would also require the postholder to secure the building.

Members agreed that all three additional posts would be necessary to deliver the aspirations of Newton's Place and noted that the Caretaker role may be able to work in conjunction with the Council's existing Handyman to provide extended services in the town. The Clerk would provide projected staffing costs at the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum in the autumn to assist in the preparation of the budget. Following a discussion among Members, accordingly, it was;

AGREED that the Town Clerk report the budget cost implications of the additional staffing requirements for Newton's Place, to the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum on 13th November 2019.

SP18. CLIMATE EMERGENCY - UPDATE

Further to Minute 19/05(SP10.B) the Chairman referred to the summary paper on Climate Emergency, previously circulated and thanked Councillors Mike Joyce, Mrs Karen Crout and Brian Hayes for producing the paper for Members. The Chairman invited Councillor Joyce to update Members on the matter. Councillor Joyce noted that both the County and District Authorities had declared a Climate Emergency and the motion proposed that the Town Council support these declarations where it was possible to do so. Councillor Joyce reported the efforts made to ensure that the Newton's Place Project was refurbished using environmentally friendly products. Members queried the actions of other town and parish councils in meeting the Climate Emergency and Councillor Joyce advised that this varied but was being monitored. Following a discussion among Members, accordingly it was;

RECOMMENDED that at the meeting of the Full Council on 24th July 2019 that the Motion for Climate Emergency be adopted.

SP19. STRATEGIC MATTERS

The Chairman noted the Strategic Matters as listed for consideration and invited Members to raise additional items affecting the Town Council in the short, medium and long-term. Members considered the following key areas and raised points under each item:

- A. CCTV Town Security
 - ❖ Membership of NAST;
 - ❖ Annual contribution to NAST;
 - ❖ Financial stability and management of NAST;
 - ❖ Police support and contribution to NAST in comparison to commitment from Dorset Police Constabulary for county wide security;
 - ❖ Five-year business plan and
 - ❖ Potential support from District Authority under new administration.

- B. Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure
 - ❖ Noted the arrangements as set out in the summary document and

AGREED that the Summary Document, Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure, be hereby noted and adopted subject to minor amendment.

- C. Grass Cutting
 - ❖ Existing contractor had given notice from end of the current year;
 - ❖ Concern at quality of service provided
 - ❖ Discrepancies between areas cut by different service providers;
 - ❖ Responsibilities not being met by District and County Authorities;
 - ❖ Deterioration of the town and affect on appearance and well-being of residents;
 - ❖ New housing developments managed by commercial contractors;
 - ❖ Consideration of extending Town Council service provision;
 - ❖ Management of in-house service;
 - ❖ Revenue cost implications of extending services; and

- ❖ Matters to be raised with Teignbridge District Council.

Members had a lengthy discussion on the matters concerning the town, its appearance and the effect on the well-being of residents. They expressed their grave disappointment that the District and County authorities had diminished the level of service delivery and that ultimately it would deteriorate the standard and appearance of the town. The Mayor expressed his concern on the matters being raised and emphasised the importance that it would need to be raised with the newly appointed Leader of the District Council.

D. Budget Consideration for 2019/20 and forward years.

- ❖ Recommend a stand-still budget for all Committees of the Council dependant upon the cost implications of the strategic matters to be reviewed again in the autumn; and following the
- ❖ Outcome of the discussion with the Leader of the District Authority.

SP20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 13th November 2019.

CHAIRMAN