

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT**

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

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

In attendance: Philip Rowe – Town Clerk
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager
Alex Robinson – Committee Administrator

SP26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mrs K Crout.

SP27. INTERESTS

None declared.

SP28. MINUTES

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum held on 13th November 2019 were received and signed as a correct record.

SP29. BUDGET 2020/21

The Chairman introduced the **Budget Summary for 2020/21** and **Draft Budget Report for 2020/21**, both previously circulated, and invited the Town Clerk to provide Members with a background to the papers.

The Town Clerk reported that further to Minute 19/11(SP"\$) that those items requested for adjustment or amendment to the budget had been made and had been incorporated into the draft 2020/21 budget. The Chairman invited Members to review each page of the revised draft budget and to raise questions as needed. Members made further consideration on the following key areas of the budget:

- ❖ Grants and Financial Assistance applications, the valuable support and contribution made by local organisations in the town;
- ❖ Salaries to include the reinstatement of 0.5 FTE Museum Admin Asst Post;
- ❖ Newton Abbot Security Trust (NAST) request for additional contribution and the Council's acknowledgment that the Town Centre Security is included as a key priority for the town;
- ❖ The Newton Cryer, review of publication and potential consideration of advertising to offset rising cost;
- ❖ Civic Events to accommodate the Opening of Newton's Place and HMS Triumph Freedom of the Town Parade;

- ❖ CIC, the extensive work undertaken in partnership with the Town Council and request for additional support to assist in future community development projects; and
- ❖ Ear Marked Reserves Election contribution to be increased to cover additional election fees.

The Chairman advised Members that following discussion at the last meeting of the Strategic Planning Forum where Members had raised concerns about the extensive weeds in the town and the reduced resources provided by the principal authority the Clerk had investigated the matter further. On Monday 25th November some Councillors had received a demonstration of an Environmental Enhancement System by Weedingtech. The 'foamstream' system was intended for use as weed control and verge management. The equipment could also be used to clean the Council's assets such as benches and amenities in the town. The heated water-based system is safe to use within public spaces and environmentally friendly. Following a lengthy discussion among Members, accordingly it was unanimously:

AGREED that it be **recommended** to the Finance and Audit Committee that a) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, purchase the Environmental Enhancement System from Weedingtech with the associated accessories and transport equipment as a capital purchase and b) £25,000 be included in the revenue budget for 2020/21 for the development and use of the system in the town.

SP30. BUDGET SUMMARY FOR 2020/21

The Chairman reminded members that their consideration of the budget would be in order to make recommendation to the Finance and Audit Committee prior to a resolution to be passed by the Council in January 2020 to agree a Precept for the Council for 2020/21. Following consideration of the revised draft budget for 2020/21 and a lengthy discussion among Members:

The RFO presented a budget summary statement to the meeting as follows:

Budget	£780,694.00
Reserves at 25%	£184,811.00
TOTAL	£965,505.00
Less Cash at Bank	£100,000.00
Precept	£866,039.00* Equates to increase of £2.88 p.a. or 0.6p per week or 2.91%

*The figure of 866,039 being the closest on budget summary statement.

The RFO presented the summary as a realistic budget for 2020/21. The proposed budget and Precept would have the effect of increasing the Council Tax for a Band D property by 0.6p per week (£2.88 per annum). Arising from a detailed discussion the following budget would be recommended to the Finance and Audit Committee 15th January 2020, as represented by the illustrated table below:

Multiplier 2018/19	Annual Band	Inc/Dec £/p	Cost per wk	Band D cost per Day	Diff in in P/wk	Total Precept
8,496.0	£101.93	£2.88	£1.96	27.9p	0.06	£866,039

Councillors expressed their sincere thanks to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) for their efforts in preparing the comprehensive background papers to the draft budget which greatly assisted Members in their consideration of the matter. Following consideration accordingly it was;

AGREED that the strategic Planning Forum recommend the Budget and Precept for 2020/21, as set out below, and the Draft Budget Report for 2020/21 (subject to minor amendment) to the Finance and Audit Committee meeting to be held on 15th January 2020:

Precept £	M/plier 2019/20	Actual Band D Cost	Band D Inc £ & p	Band D % Inc	B/D Cost per wk (p)	B/D Cost Per day (p)	Diff Per wk (p)	Total Precept £
866,039	8,496	101.93	2.88	2.91	1.96	27.9	0.06	866,039

SP31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 20th May 2020.