



Yeovil Town Council

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The Meeting... **Policy, Resources and Finance Committee**

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Tuesday 28 July 2015**

The Place... **Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil**

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please ring 01935 382424



Sally Freemantle

Sally Freemantle
Acting Town Clerk

21 July 2015

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

To: All Members of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee:

Kris Castle

Graham Oakes

Peter Gubbins

Wes Read (Vice-Chairman)

Terry Ledlie

David Recardo

Mike Lock (Ex-Officio)

Manny Roper

Pauline Lock

Darren Shutler (Ex-Officio)

Tony Lock (Chairman)

Rob Stickland

Equality Act 2010

The *general* public sector equality duty places an obligation on a wide range of public bodies (including town and parish councils) in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

Recording of Council Meetings

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Members of the public exercising their right to speak during the time allocated for Public Comment who do not wish to be recorded or filmed, need to inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording or filming to cease doing so while they speak.

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 minutes)

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2015.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

PAGES

5. **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID**

(Circulated separately)

6. **RESPONSE FROM SHOPMOBILITY**

2 - 5

7. **CAPITAL FUND**

6 – 10

8. **BEST VALUE**

11 - 12

9. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT – APRIL/MAY 2015**

13 - 40

Public Comment (15 minutes)

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee will be requested to pass a resolution excluding the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

11. **ALLOTMENTS**

41 - 42

12. **STAFFING ISSUES**

43 - 44

13. **TOWN COUNCIL POLICY**

(To follow)

(Confidential reports circulated separately to Members only).

Att. Mr Gage
Financial Administrator
Yeovil Town Council

9 JUL 2015

Re Yeovil Shopmobility Proposal for Service Level Agreement

We are in receipt of your letter of 26th June and are most disappointed in the response as it shows a lack of understanding or interpretation of our finances despite our face to face meeting. This is not a direct appeal against the decision but we would like you to bring the following points to the attention of the committee and await their response.

Yeovil Shopmobility is a small non-profit charity aiming to provide a SERVICE to those residents in and around Yeovil and visitors with restricted mobility. In providing this service we try not to impose an unwarranted/unaffordable financial penalty on our users. For many who use our service just once as a visitor or a couple of times a year to go shopping with their family why should they have to add £10 plus £4 to their shopping bill which is why we cannot apply this universally.

We had anticipated that the Town Council who set up the service with us, and are engaged and proud enough to include and promote the SM service on their website, would want to support this asset to our town in the way of a Service Level Agreement which was how we were led to believe after our face to face was the suggested application we were making.

Some comments on points made in your letter which we feel need clarifying:

- The Chairman's recollection of our previous meeting is not the same as the notes I took at the time. We have subsequently explored many potential charging regimes and consider that our latest changes provide the greatest benefit to both our users and financially to the charity.
- It is considered that imposing the £10 joining fee would drive many users away, thus making the office unviable, bearing in mind that only 8 members use the service more than once per week, 7 weekly, 102 monthly, 8 to visit family and 642 irregular use. We shall of course continue to encourage more of the 119 to join as members, although this will not result in a significant financial benefit.
- We have the most economical staff level possible – a manager 3 days per week and an assistant manager 2 days per week. We rely on a good number of volunteers to support the managers within the office and the daily servicing and charging of the scooters. As part of our principles, several of the volunteers are themselves disabled in some way and are specifically chosen to help them gain self-confidence as an aid to future transition to other employment.
- We have allocated additional working hours to the manager to spend specifically on fundraising which is bearing fruit, but as you will realise (even from this exercise) that much

charitable fundraising can be a frustrating and long drawn-out exercise and costs us time and money. During 2014/15 £11,500 was raised by grants requested from 3 organisations and a further £2,370 by various fund raising activities – a different picture to that portrayed in your letter.

- Regarding the Accumulated fund on the Balance Sheet:
of the Total Assets of £26807 £14547 is the value of capital equipment
£10377 is restricted for specific events
leaving a NEGATIVE cash flow, so far from having a surplus we are in deficit. Neither of the above “assets” is available to use as core funding and again a different picture to that portrayed in the letter.

We are surprised and disappointed that the Council does not wish to support this work in the way of a Service Level Agreement, having had the opportunity in our meeting to fully understand our financial position, the SERVICE we provide and an understanding of the ethics of providing a charitable service to the mobility impaired of Yeovil. Also to the perilous state of our balance sheet.

Please read or circulate this to the relevant committee members.

We would like to further discuss this proposal with you, so please do not hesitate to respond to me or let me know if it is a closed application and no funding is possible.



Keith Andrews

Chairman of trustees

Cc Mr Marcus Fysh, MP
17 The Park, Yeovil BA20 1DN

Mr Keith Andrews
Chairman of Trustees
Yeovil Shopmobility
72 Ilchester Road
Yeovil
BA21 3BL

26 June 2015

Dear Mr Andrews

Grant Application

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of your grant application to the Town Council.

The Policy, Resources and Finance Committee met earlier this week and considered your original application along with the additional papers that you forwarded last month.

At the meeting, the Chairman referred to the meeting that he had attended, along with the Town Clerk, with representatives of Yeovil Shopmobility, and he pointed out that the Town Council had not made the suggestion set out in the correspondence subsequently received from the organisation, which was attached to the agenda.

He added that, in line with the previous views of the Committee, the merits of the organisation charging the same level of annual membership fee (£10) - but making it compulsory - had been raised by the Town Council at the meeting, and that reference had also been made to the approach taken by a number of other Shopmobility schemes in the area, which offered much lower hire fees to members thereby creating a bigger incentive for users of the service to take up membership and greater potential to generate a higher level of fixed income from their activities.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was again made to the importance of the organisation developing a sustainable approach to its future funding arrangements – including the setting of membership fees and hire charges, and the appropriate use of reserves.

It was noted that these issues had been raised with the organisation following the Committee's initial consideration of their application, and Members were disappointed that the suggestion of introducing a compulsory membership fee – which would help spread the cost of providing the service amongst all the active

users of the service and provide a larger regular amount of fixed income – did not appear to have been explored.

Whilst it was noted that the revised charging proposals put forward by the applicant were estimated to raise an additional estimated annual income of £1,442, the organisation's suggestion of continuing the current voluntary membership arrangements whereby only 51 (6.6%) of the 767 active users paid the annual £10 membership fee was regarded as unsustainable and a missed opportunity to develop a more effective and sustainable charging policy.

Attention was also drawn to the relatively small level of funds generated from fundraising activities, which had raised £69 in 2013 and £6 in 2014. It was noted that the cost of fundraising activities in these two years were £82 and £100 respectively, which had resulted in a loss in both years. It was felt that this was another area of potential income that the organisation needed to explore along with staffing costs, which currently amounted to almost 70% of annual expenditure.

Reference was also made to the level of the organisation's Accumulated Fund, which currently stood at £26,807 and which, according to the latest set of audited accounts, included unrestricted funds of £12,026. Whilst it was acknowledged that the development of a new and more sustainable charging policy would take time to develop and implement, it was felt that this balance would enable the organisation to continue to fund its operations as it moved towards the adoption of a more sustainable approach to its future funding arrangements.

The Committee resolved:

- (1) that no further action be taken regarding this application, it being noted that the organisation has an Accumulated Fund of £26,807; and
- (2) that Yeovil Shopmobility be advised that whilst they are welcome to submit a future grant application, if deemed necessary, any such application would need to demonstrate that the organisation has adopted a more sustainable approach to the funding of its operations.

Please let me know if you wish to make a further application in the future and I will provide you with an application form. Alternatively, this may be downloaded from our website (www.yeoviltown.com).

Yours sincerely

Neil Gage
Finance Administrator

7. CAPITAL FUND

Introduction

A copy of the Capital Fund is attached at page 10. The sum of £8,607 is currently available for allocation to new capital schemes. This includes a saving of £1,299 in the Town Council's pledged contribution of £10,000 towards the recently completed upgrade of the Summerhouse View Play Area, the total cost of which amounted to £17,402 and was shared equally with the District Council, and a capital receipt of £1,805 arising from the sale of a small parcel of unusable cemetery land to an adjoining landowner.

Former Goldcroft Allotment Site

Future sources of funding include the proceeds arising from the sale of surplus land at the former Goldcroft allotment site.

In November 2009, the Town Council agreed that approval be given to the acceptance of the highest bid received for the disposal of the above site subject to the bidder providing formal satisfactory evidence within the next two weeks of their ability to fund the acquisition.

The response was reported to the following meeting of the Town Council at which it was agreed that the disposal to the highest bidder be permitted to proceed.

The disposal of the site proceeded as expected and, following completion of the S.106 agreement, the Planning Authority issued a planning certificate on 23 July 2010 granting outline planning approval for the residential development of the site. In accordance with the agreed disposal arrangements, a draft contract was prepared by the Town Council's solicitor and submitted to the purchaser's solicitor.

Following on from the March 2011 Town Council meeting, the outstanding issues were progressing towards a conclusion and, as reported to the October 2011 Town Council meeting, contracts were expected to be exchanged at the agreed price in the near future whereupon it was anticipated that the purchaser would apply for detailed planning consent or reserved matters approval within the following two months.

The position was reviewed at the February 2012 Town Council meeting, at which a strategy was agreed to resolve the outstanding issues. The disposal arrangements were further reviewed by the Town Council in May 2012 and a revised plan of action drawn up to advance the matter.

The conclusions of a Working Group set up to review the disposal of the land; to consider future options and to make recommendations on the best way forward were considered at the September meeting of the Town Council and unanimously approved, and a further report was submitted to last December's Town Council meeting.

The report set out further developments that had taken place regarding the disposal of the above land following the adoption of a strategy by the Town Council, and details of the progress made in relation to the course of action agreed at the September 2012 meeting of the Town Council were set out in the report along with copies of the bids received to date in response to the recent marketing exercise.

Following detailed consideration of the bids received and the options available, the Council agreed that no action be taken, at this stage, to dispose of the site, and that the

land continue to be marketed and an update report be submitted to the March 2013 meeting of the Town Council.

In March, the Town Council received an update report and, after giving careful consideration to the options available, adopted a revised strategy that would progress the matter whilst protecting the Council's interests. An update report was submitted to the Town Council in May at which it was agreed that the land be withdrawn from the market pending the outcome of the ongoing planning process.

The application to renew the outline planning consent and the reserved matters application have since been approved by the Planning Authority and, following discussions with the Council's Property Agent and Solicitor, the options for taking this project forward were considered at the April 2014 meeting of the Town Council at which it was agreed that the land be re-marketed. This will be undertaken in the near future following which details of the bids received will be submitted to the Town Council.

Former Ski and Activity Centre

Another potential source of funding is the former ski and activity centre should the Town Council decide to dispose of the freehold as part of the redevelopment proposals.

Alder King were instructed to market this site on behalf of the Town Council and, following a meeting between the appointed representatives of the Town Council and Alder King, arrangements were made for a revised draft development brief to be produced and submitted to the July 2008 meeting of the Town Council for consideration. The final brief was adopted at that meeting and the property was marketed and expressions of interest invited.

Details of those received were reported to the Town Council in March 2009, and Members approved a process for assessing these bids and reporting back on their respective merits with a view to a final decision being taken by the Town Council in due course on how best to proceed.

All expressions of interest received were considered by the Steering Group set up to give initial consideration to the matter, and details of the bids received along with their views were submitted to the Town Council.

Although the bid put forward by the Yeovil Community Church in September 2009 for the redevelopment of the site as a creative arts centre was supported in principle, the proposal was unable to be progressed at that time owing to factors beyond the Church's control.

In May 2010, the Town Council agreed to concentrate on remarketing the property following a review of the current development brief, which were submitted for Members' consideration following the conclusion of the planned investigation by the Council's Property Agent.

The result of this exercise was reported to the October 2010 meeting of the Town Council at which approval was given to Alder King entering into discussions with representatives of the organisation commissioned to prepare an indicative master plan for the nearby urban village - as part of the emerging Core Strategy (Preferred Options) - with a view to exploring the feasibility of the site being included in the master plan.

The outcome of these discussions was reported to the December 2010 Town Council meeting at which it was agreed that representations be made to the Planning Authority

seeking the inclusion of the site in the emerging masterplan for the nearby urban village. Representations were made and, as reported to the January 2012 Town Council meeting, the site has been included in the master plan, copies of which have been circulated to all Members.

Further feasibility work is planned, and further updates awaited on the progress of the future actions. The Town Council will be involved in the planned further feasibility work on the ski slope site.

In the meantime, the proposed development of Yeovil Summerhouse Urban Village has been identified as a strategic location in the emerging Local Plan (Policy YV4) which, if included in the adopted Plan, will strengthen the case for its future delivery at that location.

The recently published Inspector's Report confirmed that the inclusion of Policy YV4 is justified, and supported the proposed location as an "urban regeneration area where there is significant potential to deliver environmental and other improvements".

Other Sources

Any funding beyond these sources will need to be in the form of a loan from the Public Works Loan Board, applications for which are considered on their individual merits and subject to funding availability.

Play Areas

The District Council has been asked to consider the suggested phasing of proposed future upgrades having regard to the condition of the play equipment at all of the sites managed by the Town Council and the availability of contributory funding from the District Council.

This work involved a further audit of the play areas by the District Council's Play and Youth Facilities Team and the results - including an analysis of the findings and suggested priorities – were reported to the March 2013 meeting of the Committee (Minute 8/167 refers) along with the views of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee on the matter.

A copy of the updated programme is set out below:

Play Area	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Totals
Preston Park	£12,500						£12,500
Summerhouse View		£10,000					£10,000
Kingston View			£10,000				£10,000
Grass Royal				£10,000			£10,000
Fielding Road					£5,000		£5,000
Turners Barn Lane						£10,000	£10,000
Total	£12,500	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£5,000	£10,000	£57,500

These figures represent the anticipated contributions from the Town Council and assume that matching contributions will be made by the District Council.

Allocations have been made by both Authorities for the Summerhouse View project, which is currently being upgraded. The Policy, Resources and Finance Committee identified how the Town Council would meet its proposed contribution of £10,000 towards this scheme, which is via a combination of savings and underspends that were

identified by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee in their budget and carried forward as a planned underspend to 2014/15.

The Committee has also agreed to the funding of the remainder of the programme being considered each year as part of the budget-setting process leading up to the fixing of the precept. With this in mind, consideration has been given to the Town Council funding its share of the cost of its contribution (now £10,000) towards the upgrade of the next play area in the Rolling Programme – Kingston View.

The total estimated cost of this project has risen to £20,000 and the Town Council's increased contribution of £10,000 will be met partly from the 2015/16 budget (£2,500) with the balance of £7,500 being met from savings identified by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee and agreed by this Committee (Minute 8/327 refers)

Existing Programme

Following the necessary funding being put in place by both Authorities, the development of the Summerhouse View project commenced earlier this year and a steering group was formed to oversee the development and delivery of the project.

The Steering Group carried out a consultation exercise with local residents and having regard to the outcome of this exercise, final designs were produced which were approved by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee. Following a tendering exercise, a contractor was appointed and recently completed the project at a total cost of £17,402, which was 13% below the approved budget. The Town Council's share of the savings (£1,299) remains uncommitted in the Capital Fund.

Earlier this month, the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee met and agreed to set up another steering group of officers and members to oversee the development of a project plan, site specific consultation, design, procurement and the construction work that will be involved in the upgrade of the Kingston View Play Area.

General Reserve

As previously reported to the Committee, the General Reserve stands at £471,199 and, after taking into consideration agreed carry forwards totalling £31,283 from 2013/14 and other commitments totalling £112,595, the net unallocated balance is £327,321.

The Committee has agreed that, as a matter of policy, a minimum balance of £230,000 remains uncommitted in the General Reserve to meet any unexpected revenue needs beyond those which could be funded from contingencies over the forthcoming financial year. This is £97,321 (42%) above the agreed minimum balance.

Recommendations

Members are **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) to note the position concerning the Capital Fund and the General Reserve; and
- (2) to note the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk - 01935 382424)

8. **BEST VALUE**

Unlike their county and district counterparts, town councils are free to choose their own performance indicators. These play an important part in the Best Value process, as they are the yardsticks by which the targets set are measured.

To make sure indicators chosen give a balanced view of performance, the Government has suggested using five dimensions of performance:

- Strategic Objectives
- Cost/Efficiency
- Service Delivery Outcomes
- Quality
- Fair Access

The Council has set corporate health performance indicators as well as setting additional ones for each service. The Policy, Resources and Finance Committee has adopted a list of corporate performance indicators compiled from the mandatory list that all principal councils must adopt.

Service related indicators are just as important. The Council has agreed that these are best chosen by the Service Committees - who are already responsible for monitoring and reviewing the services within their purview. Last year, all the Service Committees were asked to put forward a performance indicator for each of the major services/functions under their control and their achievements have been reported during the current cycle of meetings.

As far as this Committee is concerned, the major services are the processing of grant applications and the management of support services.

Grant Applications

The Town Council considers all grant applications on their individual merits and, irrespective of the outcome, we should strive to ensure that applicants feel satisfied with the process. With this in mind, we agreed last year to set ourselves a target of achieving an 80% satisfaction rate with the grants process.

The actual figure achieved was 100%, which endorses the process we have adopted.

Corporate Service Indicators

In addition to measuring how well we perform in providing direct services, we need to measure how well our support services are provided. The following areas of performance are being measured on an annual basis with a view to seeking real and lasting improvements. The previous year's achievements are in brackets after each indicator.

Customers and the community

- *Percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by their authority – 92.1% (81%)*
- *Percentage of those making formal complaints satisfied with the handling of those complaints – 100% (100%)*

Management of Resources

- *Percentage of Invoices paid in 30 days – 94.5% (96.2%) (100% of invoices paid to terms)*
- *Average time taken to answer the telephone - 10 seconds (10 seconds)*
- *Percentage of letters where a full response is made within ten working days – 93% (94.3%)*

Total Spending

- *Total net spending per head of population - £32.05 (£32.37)*

Staff Development

- *Proportion of days lost to sickness absence – 1.3% (1.3%) (national average is 4.1%)*
- *Average number of days staff training per employee – 1.9 days (2.9days)*

Public Access

- *Number of the authority's buildings open to the public – 3 (3)*
- *Number of such buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to people with a disability - 3 (3)*

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee notes this year's achievements and sets similar targets for next year's performance.

(Sally Freemantle, Acting Town Clerk - 01935 382424)