

# Yeovil Town Council



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## Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

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

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Tuesday 28 May 2013**

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



*Alan Tawse*

Alan Tawse  
Town Clerk

22 May 2013

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

Martin Bailey

Peter Brock

Philip Chandler

Bridget Dollard

David Dollard

Tony Fife

Jon Gleeson

John Hann

Kaysar Hussain

Andrew Kendall

Mike Lock (Ex-Officio)

Tony Lock (Chairman)

Wes Read

Manny Roper (Ex Officio)

Darren Shutler (Vice-Chairman)

Alan Smith

## **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*

*Disability*

*Gender Reassignment*

*Marriage and Civil Partnership*

*Pregnancy and Maternity*

*Race*

*Religion or Belief*

*Sex*

*Sexual Orientation*

# **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 26 March 2013.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

### **5. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID**

(Circulated separately)

### **6. CAPITAL FUND**

### **7. NEW INITIATIVES BUDGET**

### **8. NALC CONFERENCE 2013**

### **9. FINANCIAL STATEMENT – MARCH/APRIL 2013**

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## **Public Comment (15 minutes)**

## 6. **CAPITAL FUND**

### **Introduction**

A copy of the Capital Fund is attached at page 6. The sum of £5,503 is currently available for allocation to new capital schemes.

### **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 will progress the matter whilst protecting the Council's interests. An update report was submitted to the Town Council earlier this month at which it was agreed that the land be withdrawn from the market pending the outcome of the ongoing planning process.

## **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 masterplan 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 masterplan.

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 masterplan, 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.

## **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, which was completed earlier this year, 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	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Totals
Preston Park	£12,500						£12,500
Summerhouse View		£10,000					£10,000
Kingston View			£7,750				£7,750
Grass Royal				£10,000			£10,000
Fielding Road					£5,000		£5,000
Turners Barn Lane						£10,000	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	£12,500	£10,000	£7,750	£10,000	£5,000	£10,000	<b>£55,250</b>

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 2012/13 (Preston Park) which is currently underway, and the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee had identified how it will meet the proposed contribution of £10,000 towards the 2013/14 scheme (Summerhouse View). This will be via combination of planned underspends totalling £7,851 being carried forward to 2013/14 with the balance of £2,149 being met from savings to be identified by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee in their current budget.

However, the Town Council's proposed contribution is subject to the District Council making a matching contribution towards this scheme, and a decision on this is awaited.

The Committee has also agreed to the funding of the remainder of the programme being considered as part of the budget-setting process leading up to the fixing of the 2014/15 precept.

### Existing Programme

As previously reported, the Preston Park project is due to be delivered in 2013. The above table has been adjusted to reflect this change in timing.

S106 contributions amounting to £5,463 have been secured from a local developer towards the Preston Park project, along with a contribution of £5,000 from Cllr Dave Greene who has agreed to allocate part of his County Councillor delegated health and well-being budget, which will enable an enhanced scheme to be delivered at that location. A contribution of £1,500 has also been made by the Well-Being of Yeovil Association, making a total overall working budget of £36,963.

A project plan and sketch designs for the play area have been agreed by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee, and a steering group has been formed to help deliver this project – in consultation with the local community. Tenders will shortly be sought for the final design and the scheme is due to be completed during the forthcoming summer.

## **General Reserve**

As previously reported to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, the General Reserve stands at £282,474 and, after taking into consideration agreed carry forwards totalling £39,193 from 2011/12, the net unallocated balance is £243,281.

The Committee has agreed that, as a matter of policy, a minimum balance of £150,000 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.

Now that the Town Council has agreed to make a similar commitment (£32,500) in respect of the recently completed Milford Park scheme and the ongoing Preston Park scheme, this effectively reduces the unallocated balance of the General Reserve to £210,781 pending the disposal of the Goldcroft site. This is £60,781 (40%) above the recommended minimum balance.

## **Recommendations**

Members are **RECOMMENDED**:

- (1) to note the position concerning the Capital Fund and the General Reserve;
- (2) to note the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements; and
- (3) to await confirmation of the District Council's funding towards future schemes included in the programme.

*(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk - 01935 382424)*



## 7. NEW INITIATIVES BUDGET

Mindful of the need to develop the range of services that we deliver to the people of Yeovil Town, the Town Council has agreed to allocate £49,300 in the 2013/14 New Initiatives budget.

This approach will ensure that funding totalling £29,300 is available to enable contributions to be made towards threatened services currently delivered in Yeovil Town. £4,000 of this budget has been allocated towards the future provision of tourist information services in Yeovil Town, which leaves a balance of £25,300. A further £20,000 has been earmarked for new initiatives.

This may involve a contribution towards the delivery of future youth services following the County Council's decision to withdraw direct funding for these services within the next twelve months.

Last year, the following initiatives were agreed, which have been funded from the 2012/13 budget:

- Solar powered bollard/traffic island in Sunningdale Road/Greenhill Road - £13,000
- Music in the Park (Queen's Diamond Jubilee) – £7,000
- New signage in Sidney Gardens to provide information about stone font - £500
- Replacement Christmas Lights – £24,000 (3 x £8,000 pa)
- New leaflets promoting the Town Council's regalia - £300

It has previously been agreed that all the service committees would be invited to put forward bids for this unallocated part of the New Initiatives budget, and that the Town Council would decide how this portion would be spent having regard to the views of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

Last year, it was agreed that all services committees be reminded of the need for this budget to be used for *new* initiatives and, to allow sufficient time for their ideas to be drawn up and developed, the proposals that emerge during the July cycle of meetings be investigated and reported back to the service committees in the September cycle of meetings.

It was further agreed that supported bids would be considered at the September meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and referred to the October meeting of the Town Council for determination.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the matter and to consider whether it wishes to adopt the above-outlined timetable for the service committees in this year's exercise.

*(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)*

## 8. NALC CONFERENCE 2013

This year, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has again organised identical one-day conferences – in Bristol, Sheffield and in London - to give representatives of town and parish councils the opportunity to learn more about a wide range of topical issues. The theme of the conferences will be “Putting Communities First”.

The event in Bristol takes place on Thursday 19 September, and will be held at the City Centre Mercure Hotel at the cost of £110.00 per delegate. The event will include an update on national and political developments and Brandon Lewis MP, Under Secretary of State at the Communities and Local Government Minister will be giving a keynote address. It will also feature an exhibition of local authority suppliers.

A number of interactive workshops on the following topics are included in the Conference programme:

- *Neighbourhood Community Budgeting*
- *Engaging with the Community*
- *Local Government Finance*
- *Working with Youth*
- *Sustainable Communities Act*

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the Town Council’s representation at the conference to be held in Bristol on 19 September.

*(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk - 01935 382424)*