



Yeovil Town Council

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Yeovil Town Council

The Meeting... **Yeovil Town Council**

The Time... **7.30pm**

The Date... **Tuesday 2 December 2014**

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

The Town Council will be discussing all the items listed overleaf

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



**QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Alan Tawse

Alan Tawse

Town Clerk

25 November 2014

Please contact Alan Tawse at the Town House for more information about this meeting

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

Mike Lock – Mayor of Yeovil
Darren Shutler – Deputy Mayor

Martin Bailey	Peter Gubbins
Kris Castle	John Hann
J Vincent Chainey	Kaysar Hussain
John Clark	Andrew Kendall
Philip Chandler	Tony Lock
Tristan Cobb	Sarah Lowery
Bridget Dollard	Sophie Phillips
David Dollard	Wes Read
Tony Fife	David Recardo
Jon Gleeson	Manny Roper
David Greene	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

Race

Disability

Religion or Belief

Gender Reassignment

Sex

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Sexual Orientation

Pregnancy and Maternity

Prior to the start of the meeting, Members are invited to join the Mayor's Chaplain in the Council Chamber for prayers.

Members are invited to join the Mayor in the Mayor's Parlour at the close of the meeting for seasonal refreshments

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 4 November 2014.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(See attached at pages 8 to 10)

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

6. **ALLOTMENT RENTS**

Introduction

The Council has agreed to review the allotment rents on an annual basis.

Earlier this month, the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee considered the report attached at pages 11 to 13.

The report includes a proposal by the Finance Working Group to recharge allotment tenants the actual cost of mains water provision on a site-by-site basis using the approach set out in the report. Bearing in mind that the total cost of mains water provision in 2013/14 amounted to £6,984 – which was 66% above the allocated budget – the Working Group felt that the current arrangements where such charges are paid direct by the Town Council, were inequitable and unsustainable.

Under the proposed approach, the total cost of mains water for each site would be divided by the number of plots with regard being given to the size of each plot. The tenants of those plots below 125 sq. m (standard half plot) would be charged 50% of the charge to tenants of larger plots.

Details of how this could impact on tenants were given at the meeting and, by way of example, it was noted that taking the average of the past four year's water usage, the annual charge to tenants of the Goar Knap allotment site under

this proposed arrangement would be £4.42 for smaller plots and £8.84 for larger plots. However, it was acknowledged that a greater use of water recycling by tenants would help to reduce these costs further and at the same time achieve environmental benefits.

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

Following a discussion about the merits and practicalities of this proposal, the Committee agreed to support the approach put forward by the Finance Working Group which it was noted if implemented would not only ensure that all tenants were given direct control over these charges, but would ensure that tenants would be meeting almost 60% of the cost of providing and maintaining allotments rather than the present 50%.

This is in line with Council policy which states that given the individual benefit of allotment plots to individual tenants, the Town Council seeks to recover an increasing proportion of the net cost of providing allotments from the tenants thereby reducing the level of subsidy by council taxpayers.

The Finance Working Group had further agreed that, in light of this proposed change, there was scope for this year's increase in allotment rents to be kept to 1p per square metre - which equates to an extra £1.43 per year (or 3p per week) for the average plot.

To put matters into perspective, the average annual rent of an allotment plot is currently £41.47, which equates to 79.5p per week.

An increase of 1p in the current rate of 29p per square metre would result in an additional annual charge of £1.43, which equates to an extra 3p per week - making a new yearly total of £42.90 - equivalent to 82.5p per week. This additional proposal was supported by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

It was noted that if these proposals were agreed by the Town Council, both of these changes would come into effect in December 2015 after tenants had been given twelve months' notice of their planned introduction.

The Committee also acknowledged that the approach taken by some tenants to grow their crops - including the use of polytunnels and similar structures - undoubtedly contributes to the level of mains water usage. With this in mind, the Committee further agreed to add a new condition requiring all future applications for polytunnels to include an adequate water collection and retention system.

The Allotment Tenants' Working Group has been advised of these proposals and any representations received will be reported to the Town Council.

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

The views of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee will be reported to the meeting.

Recommendation

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the adoption of the above proposals with effect from 10 December 2015 and, if supported, to agree to all existing and future tenancy agreements being amended to include a reference to the obligation for tenants to pay the rent *and the water recharge*.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

7. COMMUNITY HALL CHARGES

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to consider adopting the following proposed charges for the hire of Milford and Monmouth Community Halls and the Town Council Chamber with effect from 1 April 2015. These charges have been increased in line with the anticipated rate of inflation and are supported by the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee. The views of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee on the proposals will be reported to the meeting.

Milford and Monmouth Community Halls and Town Council Chamber – Hire Charges		
Type of Hire	Current Rate of Hire (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)	Proposed Rate of Hire (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)
<i>Rate for commercial organisations/persons</i>	£12.80	£13.00
<i>Private Functions</i>	£5.90	£6.00
<i>Damage Deposit for Private Functions (returnable if hall left in a satisfactory condition)</i>	£100.00	£102.00
<i>Non-profit making organisations</i>	£5.20	£5.30
<i>Use of Main Hall Kitchen</i>	<i>£7.50 per hire (included in hall/room hire charge for non-profit making organisations)</i>	<i>£7.65 per hire (included in hall/room hire charge for non-profit making organisations)</i>
<i>Town Council Chamber – Provision of tea/coffee</i>	£5.00	£5.10

8. ESTIMATES 2015/16

To consider the *provisional* adoption of estimates from the Council's Committees as attached to the Minutes of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee meeting held on 25 November 2014 (to be circulated) it being noted that the Town Council has until 3 February 2015 to set its precept for 2015/16.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

9. **SOMERET COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY CONSULTATION**

On 3rd November 2014 Somerset County Council is started a 10 week consultation on the future of Somerset Library Services. The feedback from this consultation will be used to create a final set of proposals for decision in early 2015.

The purpose of this consultation is to understand as many views as possible on a series of proposals for 2015/2016 to change the way the library service will operate. These proposals will see no libraries close but will make savings of almost £500,000, helping to protect the most vulnerable in Somerset.

The Economic and Community Infrastructure Operations Director at Somerset County Council states:

"I wanted to specifically draw your attention to this consultation because proposals affect the mobile library service. I want to ensure that all those potentially affected have a chance to comment on the proposals before any decisions are made."

Details of the proposed changes to the mobile library service and the potential impact of the changes on current stops are available at www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation<<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation>>.

The proposals for 2015/16 have been developed in order to:

- Ensure that Somerset Library Services are able to respond to changes in customer expectations and demography
- Reflect the public's strong preference that we do everything we can to keep local libraries open.
- Ensure Somerset has modern Library Services that are comprehensive, efficient and affordable.

The Council aims to make the consultation as widely available as possible through:

- The County Council website www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation
- Promoting the consultation and making details available in all local library buildings and mobile library vehicles
- Holding a series of drop-in sessions around the county when Councillors and officers will be available
- Holding 1 hour drop-in sessions in every library when a member of the Library Service Senior Management team will be available
- Raising awareness of the consultation in many ways, including through press releases, social media, emails and letters
- Answering questions and making the consultation document and questionnaire available in different formats or languages by emailing libraryservicereview@somerset.gov.uk or phoning 0845 345 9177

The consultation document is attached at pages 14 to 27.

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to consider a response to the consultation.

10. NEW INITIATIVES BUDGET

Background

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 2014/15 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 and £4,000 towards Christmas Lights, which leaves a balance of £21,300. A further £20,000 has been earmarked for new initiatives.

Last year, the following initiatives were agreed, which have been funded from the 2013/14 budget:

- Outdoor gym at Milford Park - £10,000 (in principle)
- Hire of temporary marquee for Town Council events at Public Entertainment Area - £735

It has 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 and the November cycle of meetings.

The agreed definition of a new initiative is set out below;

“A proposal which will result in a new service, facility, activity or new equipment being procured by the Town Council, for the benefit of the people of Yeovil Town, in partnership with other organisations as appropriate”

It was further agreed that supported bids would be considered at the November meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and referred to the December meeting of the Town Council for determination. This gives all committees an additional two months to develop their bids using the assessment sheet and put them forward for consideration.

This extended process will enable all committees to make bids at the same time thereby giving them an equal opportunity to apply for funding and enabling the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council to consider their relative merits having regard to the budget available. However, in the interests of flexibility, the budget may also be used to enable the Town Council to respond to an unforeseen opportunity that might arise at short notice to fund a new initiative.

Proposals

All of the proposals identified by each of the service committees during the July cycle of meetings have been investigated by the officers and the outcome of their investigations reported back to the relevant committees earlier this month. As a result of this exercise, the following bids have been made by the service committees, details of which (including completed assessment forms) are attached at pages 28 to 31.

Buildings and Civic Matters Committee – none

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee – none

Planning and Licensing Committee

- Interactive Computer Screen at Town House - £3,000

Promotions and Activities Committee

- The installation of a water slide in the Town Centre for one day (estimated at £3,000) – costs are still being investigated and a further report will be brought to the January meeting of the Promotions and Activities Committee.

The above bids will be considered by the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee at their meeting on 25 November, and their views will be reported to the meeting.

Recommendation

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to consider and determine upon the bids made to date by the service committees for possible funding from the New Initiatives budget, having regard to the views of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk & Sally Freemantle, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

11. DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING CONSULTATION

To consider the following consultation from Dorset County Council. Whilst the Planning Application site is not within the Town Council administrative area, it is immediately adjacent to it.

Planning Application: WD/D/14/002835

Location: Yeovil Golf Club, Sherborne Road, Bradford Abbas, Sherborne, Dorset, BA21 5BW

Development Proposed: Tipping of soils to allow reshaping of area adjacent to 9th and 18th green at Yeovil Golf Course.

The details of this application can be viewed online at

www.dorsetforyou.com/ePlanning/searchPageLoad.do (Search WD/D/14/002835)

Documents attached at pages 32 to 35 and plans are in the Town House and will be available at the meeting.

12. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEETINGS

(The Minutes of the following meetings are open to discussion. Where a Committee has made a recommendation that will be listed on a separate sheet circulated with the Agenda).

Planning and Licensing Committee

3 November 2014
17 November 2014

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

10 November 2014

Promotions and Activities Committee

11 November 2014

Buildings and Civic Matters Committee

18 November 2014

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

25 November 2014

13. REPORTS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Yeovil Youth Council

13 October 2014

36 to 39

Members who represent the Town Council on Outside Bodies may wish to take the opportunity to report on any matters of interest.

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

List of Engagements attended/to be attended by His Worship the Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler from 4 November to 6 January 2014

06/11/14	The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler attended the Preston Academy Leavers Presentation Evening
06/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the Yeovil Community Arts Association Literary Dinner
07/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended Westland Conference and Leisure Complex's Fireworks Extravaganza
09/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock led the Civic Parade to the War Memorial for wreath laying and then onto St Johns Church for the Remembrance Day service
11/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the service at the War Memorial to mark Armistice Day
14/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the Chilton Cantelo School Nursery Launch
15/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the Yeovil & District Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Show
15/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the Children's Lantern Parade in Yeovil Town Centre
15/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Christmas Light Switch on
18/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Midwest European Communities Association AGM
19/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler attended the Institution and Installation of The Reverend David Anderson as Priest in Charge of St Michaels' & All Angels Church
20/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Knightstone Parliament Week
22/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock hosted the Mayor's Charity Ball at Westlands Conference & Leisure Centre
23/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Yeovil Division Guide HQ Craft Day

26/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Yeovil College Apprenticeship Award evening
26/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler attended the Good Fellowship Club Christmas Lunch
27/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Grand Opening night of the new Bombay Dining Indian Restaurant
28/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Blandford Christmas Tree Lighting
29/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended St Peters' Church Hall for a Christmas Meal and entertainment
29/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock, attended the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Social Evening
30/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock attended the Verwood Mayor's Winter Reception
30/11/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler attended the St Margaret's Hospice Light Up A Life Service
04/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the ESA Presentations of certificate
04/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend Weston Super Mare Carol Service
05/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend The Mayor of Chards Turkey & Tinsel Evening
06/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the Flying Colours Christmas Market
06/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler will attend the Gryphon West Gym Club Christmas Gala
07/12/14	The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Darren Shutler will attend the Salvation Army Christmas Carols
07/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend The Mayor of Shaftesbury Civic Carol Service

12/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the commemorative Tree planting for the 30 th Anniversary of Yeovil & Herblay Twinning
14/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the Salvation Army Christmas Carols
15/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the Mayor of Blandford Civic Carol Service
16/12/2014	The Mayor of Yeovil will attend the Ivelhurst Nursing Home Christmas Party
18/12/2014	The Mayor of Yeovil will attend the Chairman of North Dorset District Council Carol Service
21/12/14	The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Mike Lock will attend the Mayor of Gillingham Civic Carol Service

13. ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW

Introduction

The Council has agreed to review the allotment rents on an annual basis.

The last allotment rent review was carried out in 2013 when it was agreed that an increase of 7p be made to the 2012/13 annual rent charge of 22p/sq metre. All tenants were given twelve months' notice of the increased charge of 29p/sq metre, which takes effect from 10 December 2014. At that point, the average annual rent of an allotment plot will be £41.47, which equates to 79.5p per week.

Last year, the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee concurred with the view of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee, who felt that such an increase was necessary to ensure that the level of subsidy was reduced.

This view was echoed by the Town Council who approved the proposal and further agreed that, as a matter of policy and having regard to the individual benefit of allotment plots to individual tenants, the Town Council seeks to recover an increasing proportion of the net cost of providing allotments from the tenants thereby reducing the level of subsidy by council taxpayers.

Following the planned implementation of last year's agreed increase, the budgeted income from allotment rents (£14,311) will equate to 50% of the overall costs (£28,708) of maintaining allotments across the Town, rather than the previous figure of 38%.

It was felt that taking such an approach was sustainable and was justified given the personal benefits that allotment tenants derived from their individual plots; the wider implications of subsidising the costs of providing allotments, and the ongoing help and support that the Town Council gave to the management, maintenance and improvement of these facilities.

As the allotment rent helps to offset the costs of the maintenance of allotments, which are subject to inflation, it is in the tenants and the Town Council's interests that a realistic level of income achieved to ensure that the costs of carrying out this work can continue to be met.

To assist with the annual budget-setting process, the Council has agreed, as a matter of policy, that the views of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee on the annual review of allotment rents by the Town Council, be submitted to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee for consideration as part of that process. Any decision to amend these charges will need to be taken by the Town Council.

Update

The Finance Working Group met last month and considered the draft estimates for 2015/16, which are set out elsewhere on the agenda. The total of the provisional budgets for proposed allotment-related expenditure (excluding mains water charges) has been increased from £24,428 to £24,930. This includes a 2% allowance for forecasted inflation.

The Working Group were concerned to note that the total cost of mains water usage in 2013/14 amounted to £6,984, which was 66% above the allocated budget. An analysis of mains water usage, which is metered on each site, has shown stark variations between allotment sites with some sites using considerably more than others. The cost of providing mains water is currently included in the allotment rent.

A summary of the mains water usage/cost at all of the Council's eleven allotment sites over the past four years is set out below:

Allotment	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Volume	Cost	Volume	Cost	Volume	Cost	Volume	Cost
Sunningdale	481	£853.23	344	£655.87	149	£315.00	476	£1,050.43
Larkhill	105	£201.33	86	£177.48	43	£105.16	109	£255.58
Goar Knap	205	£375.26	162	£316.12	57	£133.38	158	£360.96
Monks Dale	59	£120.76	49	£107.60	21	£60.74	41	£110.28
Hillcrest	15	£43.78	14	£43.57	8	£34.34	17	£59.09
Turners Barn Lane	77	£152.80	78	£164.80	80	£181.85	73	£179.18
Rustywell	87	£169.90	75	£159.42	26	£71.19	122	£286.77
St George's	202	£370.22	156	£309.10	99	£218.99	207	£470.44
Elizabeth Flats	87	£169.39	72	£151.35	34	£86.20	75	£184.86
Newtown	413	£738.89	479	£918.08	480	£994.93	606	£1,332.49
Milford Dip	639	£1,134.27	587	£1,110.54	213	£454.50	1230	£2,693.51
Total	2370	£4,329.83	2102	£4,113.93	1210	£2,656.28	3114	£6,983.59

Whilst the meters have yet to be read for this year's usage, early indications are that the overall charges will be in the region of £4,600, which again is above budget.

The Finance Working Group felt that the current arrangement is inequitable and unsustainable as it means that the tenants who use hand-watering methods and who have adopted rainwater collection and recycling practices are paying the same level of rent (29p per sq metre) as other tenants.

Whilst it is recognised that water usage will vary from year to year dependent on the weather, there is no doubt that the approach taken by some tenants to grow their crops – including the use of polytunnels and similar structures – undoubtedly contributes to the level of mains water usage.

Proposal

For these reasons, the Working Group felt that in future mains water charges should be recharged to each allotment site and collected from tenants on an annual basis. This approach has been successfully taken by a number of other local authorities.

Not only would this approach be more equitable - as the tenants on each site would be paying for the mains water that they have actually used - but it would encourage tenants to adopt alternative more environmentally-friendly ways of collecting and recycling rainwater thereby reducing their dependency on mains water and saving them money. Furthermore, it is in line with the Council's values of raising awareness of environmental issues, improving the quality of the environment and encouraging an environmentally friendly ethos.

To help encourage such practices, arrangements could be made with a local supplier of water butts and similar storage devices to hold an open day on one of the larger

allotment sites to which all tenants would be invited. Practical advice on rainwater collection and recycling would be given and their products made available for sale at a discounted price.

If this new charging approach were to be taken, it is proposed that the total cost of mains water for each site would be divided by the number of plots – with consideration being given to the size of each plot. The tenants of those plots below 125 sq metres (standard half-plot) would pay 50% of the charge to tenants of larger plots. Arrangements would be made for water meter readings to be taken towards the end of the summer growing season to ensure that the costs could be calculated and included in the invoices that are sent out in October each year.

The Finance Working Group, who would otherwise be faced with the prospect of recommending a substantial increase in rent to recover the increasing cost of mains water provision, feel that this is a more equitable and sustainable approach and if adopted will enable this year's rent increase to be kept to 1p/sq metre.

Financial Implications

To put matters into perspective, the average annual rent of an allotment plot is currently £41.47, which equates to 79.5p per week.

An increase of 1p in the current rate of 29p per square metre would result in an additional annual charge of £1.43, which equates to an extra 3p per week - making a new yearly total of £42.90 - equivalent to 82.5p per week.

This would generate additional income of £495, which would cover the proposed additional expenditure in 2015/16. Along with the proposed changes to mains water charging, it will help to achieve a more equitable balance between the cost of allotments to individual tenants and local council tax payers by reducing the level of subsidy from 50% to 41%. In line with Council policy, these charges will ensure that tenants are meeting an increasing proportion of the net cost of providing allotments from the tenants thereby reducing the level of subsidy by council taxpayers.

The Finance Working Group have supported this approach and have agreed that the views of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee be sought on the matter and reported to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council, along with the Working Group's views, as part of the budget process.

Recommendation

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note and to consider the views of the Finance Working Group and to express their views on the matter to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Town Council.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

Somerset County Council

Proposed changes to Somerset Library Services

Public Consultation Proposals
November 2014

WWW.SOMERSET.GOV.UK



Introduction

The purpose of this consultation is to understand your views on a series of proposals to change the way Library Services will operate in future in Somerset.

The proposals will see no library buildings close but will make savings of almost £500,000 in the year from April 2015 to March 2016, helping to protect the most vulnerable in Somerset and reflecting the Council's financial pressures. The proposals have been developed in order to:

- Ensure that Somerset Library Services are able to respond to changes in customer expectations and demography
- Reflect the public's strong preference that we do everything we can to keep local library buildings open
- Ensure Somerset has modern Library Services that are comprehensive, efficient and affordable

Somerset County Council would like your views on the proposals. We would also like to hear about any other ideas you may have that we may not have already considered. The feedback from this consultation will be used to create a final set of proposals for decision in early 2015.

You can obtain a copy of the questionnaire by:

- Clicking online at www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation
- Picking up a copy in your local library/mobile library
- Emailing libraryservicesreview@somerset.gov.uk if you require the questionnaire in a different language or format

You can return your completed questionnaire by:

- Completing it electronically online
- Dropping it off at any Somerset library or mobile library
- Posting it to any Somerset Library

The consultation closes on Sunday 11 January at midnight. If you have any questions or want to understand more about the proposals either:

- Email libraryservicesreview@somerset.gov.uk
- Attend a drop-in session to be held in each District - details on www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation
- Attend one of the sessions held in each library - details on www.somerset.gov.uk/libraryconsultation
- Speak to a Library Services member of staff
- Phone 0845 345 9177

Proposal 1: Enable and inspire all to take advantage of the digital age

Summary

This proposal aims to build on Somerset libraries' digital services. The library service currently provides access to computers and supports people to get online. To improve this we propose to widen access by removing charges for the use of all library computers and install free wireless internet access (Wi-Fi) in all libraries. This will be an investment in the service of around £20,000 per year. Furthermore, we want to continue to improve online services, work in partnership with other organisations to help people develop more of the digital skills they need, and to encourage people to make the most of the possibilities of the digital world.

Background

Somerset Library Services already offer many digital services and supports those who can't access the internet (i.e. the digitally excluded) through:

- A network of 241 recently upgraded computers in libraries. Use of these computers is currently charged for and this has contributed to a decrease in the number of people using them
- Wireless internet access (Wi-Fi) already installed in 5 libraries (Bridgwater, Frome, Minehead, Taunton and Yeovil), allowing customers to use their own mobile devices for free. More and more people have mobile devices such as smart-phones, tablet computers and laptops
- A website (www.librarieswest.org.uk) which enables members to renew and reserve their library loans online, update their personal details and browse a shared catalogue of almost 2 million items. Customers can also access an e-audio and an e-book service
- Free and comprehensive online reference information available in the library and from home computers, such as Ancestry Online, COBRA (business information) and Access to Research (academic articles)
- 13 libraries run UKOnline courses to help people develop their digital skills so that they can benefit from the online world, and all front-line library staff are being trained to help people build their digital skills
- 12 libraries have self-service technology enabling members to make payments, borrow, return, and renew their books and other items

What changes are proposed?

- Removing charges for using library computers
- Installing free Wi-Fi in all libraries:
 - Initially in a further 21 libraries at a one-off cost of around £45,000
 - In the remaining 8 libraries (Bishops Lydeard, Dulverton, Highbridge, Milborne Port, Nether Stowey, Shepton Mallet, Somerton, Sunningdale) as soon as possible after that, subject to identifying an affordable network connection to these 8 libraries

- Continuing to develop a libraries app (for mobile phones) and further improve the library service website
- Working with partners to provide more support for those who are currently digitally excluded
- Working with partners to explore ways in which libraries can do more to inspire people to make the most of the digital world. This may involve:
 - Providing opportunities to use new technologies such as 3D printers in so-called 'maker spaces' (enabling current and potential library customers to use technology to develop and share skills)
 - Using libraries to support massive open online courses ('MOOCs' – short free online courses, often led by world class academics)
 - Potentially running coding clubs (fun after-school clubs for children where they can learn coding and other skills)

Why are we proposing this change?

Public libraries were founded as a way to bring education to those without access to it. Enabling access to the digital world and inspiring people by the possibilities it opens up continues that tradition. Changing technologies, changing customer expectations and the national move to deliver public services digitally means Library Services need to look at how and what we deliver digitally now and in the future.

What will be the effect of these changes?

Somerset County Council expects these changes will:

- Widen access to computers and encourage more people to use libraries
- Support the 'digitally excluded' through support, training and providing access to the internet
- Continue to meet customer expectations of what modern public Library Services should offer
- Increase e-lending and the number of transactions carried out online
- Help people to experience, experiment with, and be inspired by new technologies
- An investment of £20,000 each year - funding that will therefore not be available to other parts of the library service

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- Whether there are other things Library Services should consider doing to enable and inspire everyone to take advantage of the digital age
- Suggestions of other partners Library Services should work with to achieve its ambitions

Proposal 2: Develop and expand our outreach services for those that cannot visit a library

Summary

Somerset County Council currently provides a Home Library Service for those who cannot access a library. Increased annual funding of around £10,000 will enable us to help more vulnerable people receive a personalised service. It would also help ensure we are ready for the expected increase in the elderly population in Somerset.

Background

The Council currently funds a Home Library Service for those who cannot access a library, provided by the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS). The RVS delivers books to housebound individuals. Whilst usage of the Home Library Service has almost doubled over the last 18 months (to 243 service users in April 2014) this is likely to be supporting only a small fraction of those that could benefit from it. The Council also operates a Good Neighbour Scheme to help people borrow books on behalf of someone else by offering free requests and no overdue charges. Awareness of this scheme is very low, though we believe that many informal arrangements exist. The library service also provide books to residents of 51 residential homes (less than 15% of all such homes in Somerset). This service is not always personalised to the needs of residents, for example often a box of books is simply dropped off at the home.

What changes are proposed?

The Home Library Service will be expanded to support more vulnerable people and to provide a more personalised service to more residential homes. Increased promotion of the Good Neighbour Scheme will aim to increase take-up.

Why are we proposing this change?

This will help ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are more effectively supported. Somerset has a high proportion of people aged 65 and over, and this is predicted to grow substantially.

What will be the effect of these changes?

Expanding these services should help more people live independently in their own homes and stay mentally active. For example reading can help prevent the onset of dementia by 35% (New England Journal of Medicine).

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- Whether there are other partners we should explore working with
- How we can raise the profile of the Good Neighbour Scheme

Proposal 3: Implement criteria for mobile library stops and introduce alternatives to the mobile library service

Summary

Introducing criteria for mobile library stops will ensure Somerset County Council only provides the mobile service to those rural communities that need it most (based on distance from a library building and distance from another mobile stop) and those where there is demand (based on the number of users). This proposal would save £60,000 each year.

Affected customers would be helped to access alternative library services (such as the Home Library Service or Good Neighbour Scheme) and the Council proposes to provide £15,000 one-off grant funding to support communities to implement further locally-led alternatives.

Background

Somerset's Mobile Library Service (mobiles) currently makes 574 stops once a month in 344 communities, including 41 at schools and playgroups and 13 at residential homes or similar institutions. The length of stops varies from 5 minutes to 2.5 hours and around 2,600 people used the mobile library service between April 2013 and March 2014.

The cost of providing the current level of service is approximately £114,000 per year. The cost for every item borrowed is more than twice that of the Council's smaller libraries. Analysis of records held on the Library Management System shows that 47% of those users registered to a mobile library also used a library building in 2013/14 and that around 400 users account for half of all items borrowed.

What changes are proposed?

The proposed criteria are based around need and demand:

Criteria	Rationale
Need: No mobile library stops within 3 miles (in a straight line) of a library building	This criteria aims to ensure that the mobile service is maintained in communities where it will be most difficult for people to travel to a library building. Around 95% of communities potentially affected by this change are covered by some form of community transport scheme.
Need: No mobile stops within 0.5 miles (in a straight line) of each other	This criteria aims to combine multiple stops that are very close to each other to ensure that the service can still be provided to the maximum number of communities. The timing and location of any combined stops would be based upon engagement with affected users and communities.

Demand: Mobile library stop to be withdrawn if it is unused for 3 consecutive visits	These criteria will ensure that the service does not continue to be provided where there is very low demand for it, where there are more cost-effective ways of delivering library services (such as the Home Library Service). Making savings means that the Council can continue to afford to provide services where demand is greater. A regular user is proposed to be defined as someone using the mobile library 6 times in a year.
Demand: Mobile library stop to be withdrawn if there are less than three regular users	

In exceptional circumstances the criteria may not be applied because to do so would not adequately reflect need and demand. An example of this might be the mobile library stop in Steart which, whilst less than 3 miles in a straight line from the nearest library (Burnham), is separated from Burnham by the River Parrett and is more than 3 miles from the next nearest library (Nether Stowey).

The Council proposes to provide £15,000 one-off grant funding to support affected communities develop alternative library services which meets their needs, with potential individual grants of up to £500. The approach to these grants is deliberately not fixed at this point in time to enable affected communities to help contribute and shape the Council's thinking. For example, a grant might support a community in establishing a pick-up/drop-off point for books in a local pub, shop or village hall, or to purchase e-readers for use by the local community.

In addition to communities, mobile libraries also visit many institutions, and the following changes are proposed to these services

Type of institution	Proposed change
Playgroup/children's centres/schools – 41 currently visited	Maintain service and have discussions with individual institutions about how their needs can be best met.
Residential / Nursing home – 13 currently visited	Transfer to the Home Library Service in order to provide a more personalised service, and to expand this service to serve more people in more homes.

Why are we proposing this change?

The Council recognises that the mobile library service provides a valued service to rural communities where need and demand justifies it. The proposed criteria reflect:

- The availability of alternatives, including the Home Library Service (available to those who cannot easily visit a library) and the Good Neighbour Scheme (where someone accesses a library on a members behalf to borrow books) though only 5% of mobile users told us that they were aware of these services
- The increased range of resources, including e-books, available online (with 51% of mobile users telling the Council that they have access to the internet at home, though only 22% were aware of the online resources available)
- The evidence that many mobile library users also use library buildings

- The availability of transport to library buildings. 58% of mobile users previously surveyed told the Council they have access to their own vehicle, and 95% of those communities within 3 miles of a library building are covered by community transport
- Many stops are currently poorly used - 121 of current stops have less than 3 registered members, and 141 stops had less than one person visit them on average each time the mobile stopped in 2013/14
- The phasing in of the criteria reflects the Council's view that services should first be limited to those communities with greatest need (those more than 3 miles from a library building or more than half a mile from another mobile stop), that where there is no demand for the service it should be withdrawn, but those communities where there is little regular use of the service should be given more time to get used to the changes

What will be the effect of these changes?

If these proposals were implemented then this would result in:

- Savings of around £60,000 per year through reducing from 4 mobile vehicles to 2
- A reduction in the number of stops made from 574 to 235, with further potential reductions in future if the level of use remains very low. Before any changes to stops are made there will be engagement with the community and affected users to support them in accessing suitable alternative library services. Of these changes:
 - 267 stops would be withdrawn in August 2015 because they are within 3 miles of a library building
 - 100 stops within 0.5 miles of each other would be combined into 41 revised stops in August 2015
 - 13 stops at residential homes or sheltered housing would instead be supported by the Home Library Service from August 2015

From August 2015 onwards we will regularly review whether any stops have been completely unused for at least 3 months. These will be potentially withdrawn following engagement with the community. It is not proposed to withdraw services from those stops with less than three regular users until 2016.

A table showing the potential impact of these criteria is available online, in mobile library vehicles, in library buildings and upon request.

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- Whether there are any impacts on affected communities which need greater account taken of
- Where there might be cases for exceptions to the criteria
- Whether there is demand for a grant to support communities to develop a locally-led alternative to the mobile library service

Proposal 4: Phase out the lending of CDs

Summary

In response to falling demand and income from the CD lending service the Council proposes to stop purchasing new CDs, saving £10,000 in 2015/16. The current stock of CDs would still be available in the 9 libraries that currently offer this service. The service will be completely withdrawn when it is no longer cost effective to provide it.

Background

CDs are available in Bridgwater, Burnham, Chard, Frome, Glastonbury, Street, Taunton, Wells and Yeovil libraries. In 2013-14 6,032 people hired CDs with a total number of 24,680 transactions made. CDs are loaned for a period of 2 weeks at a charge of 75p. In 2013-14 the Council spent £14,200 on purchasing 1,775 new CDs.

What changes are proposed?

The proposed change is to stop purchasing new CDs from 2015/16 onwards. The current stock of around 15,000 CDs would still be available in the 9 libraries that currently offer this service. It is proposed to withdraw the service entirely when the level of demand means that it is no longer cost effective to provide it.

Why are we proposing this change?

The borrowing of CDs has been declining for some time, with income falling by over 50% in the last three years. This trend is expected to continue, and soon income is likely to be below the cost of providing the service. Only 22% of CD issues in the period April-July 2014 were from new CDs (items purchased in the previous 12 months) and in a recent survey of users, only 32% told the Council that they mainly browse new stock in order to find something they like. This suggests that while new releases are of interest, users mostly find something to borrow from the existing stock. The survey revealed that the vast majority of current users also buy their own CDs (82%) and have access to the internet at home (89%), though less than half currently listen on-line or download music.

What will be the effect of these changes?

If no new CDs are purchased it is likely that, whilst people will continue to borrow CDs, fewer will be borrowed and income will fall. Informed by the consultation, the Council will work with affected customers to identify whether any support or potential alternatives are suitable.

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- How the Council could support CD borrowers to access suitable alternatives

Proposal 5: Deliver the Performing Arts Library service in a different way

Summary

The Council proposes to deliver the Performing Arts Library service in a different way by a combination of reducing costs and increasing income. This would enable a specialist performing arts service to remain open for public access in Yeovil Library.

Background

The Performing Arts Library (PAL) provides a specialist music and drama lending service based in Yeovil library and opens 6 days a week (47.5 hours). Approximately 200 individuals and 700 groups are registered with the service, and it is a particularly important resource to amateur groups such as choral and amateur dramatic societies. Music and drama sets are lent for around 4 months on average.

Somerset has the largest such library in the region. The direct net cost of providing this service is around £75,000. The only charges for the service are request fees applied in certain circumstances. There is no restriction on how long an item can be reserved for, nor how many sets are reserved.

What changes are proposed?

Reflecting on the feedback from focus groups held with a cross-section of PAL users on what they most value about the service, the Council's preferred approach is to:

- Retain the specialist service in Yeovil library but reduce costs by around £30,000 through:
 - Reducing the availability of specialist staffing to 36 hours per week (for example 10am – 4pm, 6 days per week)
 - More effectively integrating PAL staff with other parts of the library service, in particular in Yeovil library, so that specialist staff are focussed more on performing arts related activities
- Introduce annual subscription charges for groups. The indicative annual charge would be in the region of £30 to £60, with higher charges for larger groups and highest charges for those groups located outside of Somerset. This may realise around £30,000 in additional income, though this will be highly dependent upon the number of groups that are willing to pay to retain the specialist service.
- To introduce:
 - Loan periods of around 3 to 5 months and to introduce overdue charges
 - Further charges for customers outside Somerset to ensure that full costs are recovered

- A revised set of charges for transactions for Somerset users, for example to ensure that a greater proportion of the costs of sourcing and delivering stock from other libraries are passed onto users

The Council will also look to work more closely with the music and drama sector, for example through a potential friends group, and to promote the service more effectively across Somerset and beyond.

Why are we proposing this change?

We are proposing this change because the Council wants to keep this specialist (but largely non-statutory) service as it provides many benefits to the local performing arts sector. However, it needs to cover a much greater proportion of its current costs in order for the service to be affordable for the Council. The service currently costs more than the 6 smallest libraries in Somerset put together.

Charges can potentially be made for other aspects of the service. Some other authorities apply other charges, including subscription charges, loan fees, and delivery charges. Review of other Performing Arts Libraries and focus groups held with a cross-section of users of Somerset's service suggested that a subscription charge, set at an affordable level, could make a significant contribution to reducing the net cost of the service.

Whilst it is estimated that around 80% of customers access the service by phone or email rather than face to face, users have stressed the high value they place on both specialist advice and the ability to browse stock. Proposals to reduce the cost of the service have therefore been designed to retain specialist face to face access.

Whilst PAL is a county-wide service over 66% of its customers come from the South Somerset area, only 2% come from West Somerset and some 20% come from outside the County. This has driven the Council's thinking that it needs to work more closely with the sector to promote PAL across the whole of Somerset, and that it is not considered reasonable that Somerset taxpayers effectively subsidise users outside of the County where the Council has no statutory duty to provide services.

In the medium term there may be other options which could be explored including trading the specialist service outside of the County or exploring working in close partnership with other such services, other similar organisations or creating a Trust. Implementation of the Council's preferred option would not preclude these medium term options.

What will be the effect of these changes?

The effect of reducing costs is expected to realise annual savings of around £30,000, and the introduction of subscription charges may realise around £30,000 additional income – though this will be highly dependent upon the number of groups that are willing to pay to retain the specialist service.

The changes will ensure that the face to face access, ability to browse stock and specialist knowledge that users have told the Council they value will remain.

Introducing loan periods will help ensure that stock is more widely available through greater turnover.

The risks associated with getting transaction costs wrong (e.g. setting them too high and significantly reducing demand for services) means that the Council is consulting now on the principle of additional transaction costs, and intends to work with users of the service to ensure that these are set at an appropriate level.

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- How the Performing Arts Library can work more effectively in partnership with the performing arts sector in Somerset
- The potential level for any transaction charges
- Alternative options that exist to deliver the service differently, including but not limited to:
 - Removing face to face access by moving PAL out of Yeovil library, but retaining specialist advice accessible by phone or email and making it easier for customers to borrow stock through online transactions
 - Ending the specialist service, relocating the service and ending face to face access. Customers would be able to browse a catalogue online at home or from a local library, with some stock available to browse in libraries
 - Transferring most of the stock to an existing voluntary or community sector group with no future library service involvement

Proposal 6: Seek alternative suggestions for changes to Library Services that ensure we meet need and demand in a value for money way.

Summary

The set of proposals described in this consultation seek to ensure that Library Services are comprehensive and efficient whilst reflecting the Council's financial challenges.

The County Council has made no decisions on what savings or changes might be needed in Library Services beyond March 2016 and will continue to explore all options. These include:

- Making more efficient use of space thereby reducing running costs, in particular in those libraries serving larger communities where there is more opportunity to bring a number of services together under one roof
- Exploring different ways that library services can be delivered for example by social enterprises, charitable trusts or other organisations outside the Council. The Council wants to continue to work closely with Friends Groups.

What is the Council looking for feedback on?

Whilst all views and comments are welcome and will inform any decision, the Council particularly welcomes views on:

- Alternative proposals and ideas, particularly those with outline levels of expected savings.

To request this document in an alternative format or different language, please contact:

Call: 0845 345 9177

Email: LibraryServicesReview@somerset.gov.uk



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Planning and Licensing Committee – Interactive Computer Screen

At the 22 September meeting of this Committee it was agreed to investigate the possibility of installing an interactive touch screen in the reception area of the Town House.

An estimate of the budget required is £3,000 which would include the cost of a large screen and computer, a touch pad mouse and the necessary software. The aim would be to provide equipment that is user-friendly along with easy to follow instructions so that people with little or no experience of using computers could comfortably use it. Reception staff would be trained to use the equipment and help visitors as necessary.

The aim of the screen is to provide the ability for local residents and visitors who visit the Town House to readily access local information, and in particular information about planning applications. Other information such as waste collections, doctors, dentists, etc. could also be accessible via the screen. Whilst the screen is not actively being used it would display information and photographs of Town Council events and services, and also advertise forthcoming events.

Currently paper copies of all planning applications submitted within Yeovil are sent to the Town Council as part of the consultation for each application, and applicants and neighbours are notified of the availability of the documents for inspection at the Town House.

The Development Manager at South Somerset District Council has been approached to investigate whether the initiative can be treated as a 'pilot' to assess the possibility of town/parish councils throughout the District being consulted electronically in respect of planning applications eliminating the need to send paper copies and therefore reduce costs. Therefore, on the basis that the initiative could potentially be of benefit to both the Town Council and SSDC, funding towards the costs involved to install the screen is being investigated.

He has since responded and agreed to reduce the SLA recharge by £500 per annum if the pilot results in hard copies of planning applications no longer needing to be provided to the Town Council.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk and Helen Ferdinand, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

NEW INITIATIVE SCHEME SUBMISSION

Information Required	Why is this being requested?
Description of the scheme and its location	Installation of a large interactive computer screen in the Reception area of the Town House.
What benefits will this scheme provide to the local community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viewing planning applications; - Accessing local information – including travel and facilities - Rolling displays on information/photographs to inform visitors of Town Council services and forthcoming events
What evidence is there of community support for the proposal?	Local residents frequently visit the Town House to view planning applications and to enquire about a wide range of local government issues most of which are currently answered by reference to hard copies of information
Any on-going costs such as maintenance?	The hardware/software will require little ongoing maintenance, and will be included in the existing Information Technology Service Level Agreement to ensure that if any technical problems arise they can be dealt with at an early date.
Is there any partnership funding? If so what %?	The possibility of running the project as a pilot with SSDC (Planning Authority) is being explored along with potential funding towards the costs involved.
Has any other funding been applied for, for example other authorities etc. If so what was their decision and why?	SSDC has been approached and has agreed to reduce the SLA recharge by £500 per annum if the pilot results in hard copies of planning applications no longer needing to be provided to the Town Council.
Is there local funding (or land) available to support delivery of the proposal?	None other than above potential funding.
Are there any constraints to delivery this financial year?	No
Is the initiative usually/has been responsibility provided by another authority?	No – if agreed it would represent a new way of enabling visitors to the Town House to access information – including planning applications.
Any additional comments?	Aside from improving access to a range services and information provision, the project may result in savings arising from a greater use of electronic technology. However, to ensure that public access to planning application documents is maintained, the new service would run in tandem with the current inspection arrangements until such time as the use of electronic access proved to be a satisfactory alternative.

Promotions and Activities Committee – Water Slide

At the last meeting of this Committee it was agreed to investigate the cost of installing an urban water slide for the day in the Town Centre. This had been successfully carried out in Park Street in Bristol and High Street, Chard where a 300ft water slide was used by 360 and 350 people respectively.

An estimate of the budget required is £3,000 which would include the cost of documents from Jerram Artwork (£400), underlay, hay bales, lilos, tarpaulin, road closure, hire of barriers and signage, first aid cover, insurance, refreshments, publicity and some donations to essential volunteers.

The Highways Authority has been contacted with a view to the feasibility of locations in Yeovil Town Centre as the gradient of Park Street in Bristol is 6.5.

The Chard urban slide included community support from local builders, the Fire Brigade (water), Carnival Committee (road marshals), local clubs (slide marshals), local youth groups (lilo runners), volunteers (refreshments), local businesses (sponsorship/refreshments/toilet facilities).

In Chard the slide liner was hired from Jerram Artwork (originally made by Cameron Balloons). A recent quote for the hire of the slide inner was £600, however this is no longer available so an alternative would need to be sought.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk and Sally Freemantle, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

NEW INITIATIVE SCHEME SUBMISSION

Information Required	Why is this being requested?
Description of the scheme and its location	Water Slide in Yeovil Town Centre
What benefits will this scheme provide to the local community?	Increase footfall in Town Centre Fun day out
What evidence is there of community support for the proposal?	Community support in nearby town was good
Any on-going costs such as maintenance?	None
Is there any partnership funding? If so what %?	Not as yet
Has any other funding been applied for, for example other authorities etc. If so what was their decision and why?	Not as yet
Is there local funding (or land) available to support delivery of the proposal?	Highways have been approached
Are there any constraints to delivery this financial year?	We would be planning for summer 2015
Is the initiative usually/has been responsibility provided by another authority?	It was successful as a one off event in Bristol and Chard (locally) and also nationally.
Any additional comments?	Please see attached report

Yeovil Golf Club – Planning Statement

Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Yeovil Golf Club to support the planning application for tipping of material to re-shape area adjacent the 9th, 17th and 18th greens.

The National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles of which the following are relevant to this proposal:

1. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.
2. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
3. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Waste Local Plan (June 2006) has policies that are relevant to this proposal, these being:

Policy 1. Guiding Principles

Policy 4. Landscape Character

Policy 41. Landfilling Inert Waste in North and West Dorset

Policy 1 of the Local Plan considers the proposals for planning permission for waste management facilities. This site has previously been granted permission as a landfill facility and is well placed on the outskirts of Yeovil. The number of vehicles for daily deliveries to the tipping site has been controlled by Condition on the previous consent.

Policy 4 of the Local Plan considers the proposals in conjunction with the landscape character. The proposed works are in scale and keeping with the local landscape and there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the local character of the landscape. The original proposals were discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency, particularly with respect to water quality protection.

By way of application for the original consent, discussions were held with the County Council and the Environment Agency. The Conditions imposed were subsequently discharged by further submissions and approvals to the County.

Policy 41 of the Local Plan looks to include the recycling and recovery of inert waste. However, this site is intended solely for landfill operations, no recycling facilities will be offered on site. A recycling facility would run counter to the objective of the golf club that landfill operations progress as quickly as possible in order to deliver the improved greens and thereby golfing experience. Delivery of an improved sporting and outdoor

activity facility in a timely fashion would accord with policies in the NPPF, the development plan and the emerging local plan.

Promoting Healthy Communities

The NPPF indicates that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Access to high quality open space and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

Requiring Good Design

The NPPF states that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Management of the Landfill Operation

Earlier filling operations have been progressed during the past three years on both sides of the river. The poor winter weather and reduction in general construction activity has meant that suitable fill material has not been available to be placed according to initial programme. However, the applicant has surveyed future expectations of development in the area and concluded that the fill will become available over the next 3 – 4 years.

These include:

80 house development Bunford Heights, Yeovil.

140 house development Holywell, Yeovil

Further expansion at Wyndham Park, Yeovil.

300 house development, Thorne Lane, Yeovil.

Enabling works for 800 house development, Dorchester Road

On completion of the development, the site will be covered with top soil, seeded and maintained as a grassed field to the high levels usually associated with golf courses. The final landform will be very similar to the current landform and appropriate to the landscape character of the area.

Re: Application for the tipping of soils to allow re-shaping of an area adjacent to 9th and 18th Green at Yeovil Golf Club, Sherborne Road, Bradford Abbas, Sherborne, BA21 5BW

Design & Access Statement

Use

The current land is rough scrub/brambles and grass between existing golf greens. The proposal is to fill to create level and extended rough alongside hole 18 and to create a new green for hole 9.

Amount

The proposal will extend the plateau at high level, provide a bank down to the north-west and form a level area for the new hole 9. The total plan area is 11.97ha.

Layout

There will be no works within a zone of 8m from the top of river bank.

The proposed site follows the existing embankment alongside the 18th driveway. Filling will take place progressively in layers from the western to the eastern ends.

The completed operation will improve the existing landscape by removing an area of rough scrub and profiling to create a new well-managed embankment around the 9th and 18th Greens.

The existing ground and embankment is inert fill, covered in brambles and undergrowth, with underlying free-draining sands and gravels.

The new works will comprise inert fill material, with between 10-20% stone, brick etc. This is compacted in layers. The mixed material will provide a permeable substrata over which topsoil will be laid. Grass and the undergrowth will be re-established to act as the 'rough' alongside the golf fairways.

The completed work will provide the same surface water permeability as the existing ground.

Scale

The extent is proportionate to the existing land form, extending an existing plateau to form a useful part of the golf course.

Landscaping

The proposed scheme of trees and underplanting is submitted with the application. The omission of shrub planting is deliberate as the Golf Club requested only trees and grass to allow maintenance of a 'rough' for golf balls, rather than shrubs in which balls can be lost.

The Biodiversity Survey indicated limited animal activity along the river bank but the proposed works will not affect the river edge as a minimum 8m zone will be maintained clear of any construction activity.

It is proposed to trim the area of works three weeks before start of works, to a sward height of 100mm, to encourage the dispersal of any reptiles. The area of 8m from the river bank edge will be closed off with high visibility tape/fence and no disturbance will take place in the protected area.

Access

Access to the greens and 'rough' alongside the driveways is available to exactly the same extent as for the remainder of the golf course.

Sustainability

The proposed works do not affect the river bank. An 8m construction free zone will be maintained along the river bank perimeter.

The proposed works area has no existing trees that might have bird nesting habitat.

The proposed works area will be strimmed prior to the start of works, to encourage the dispersal of any reptiles.

The area of works will be demarcated with high-visibility tape at a height of 1m above ground, and so maintained throughout the works.

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of **Yeovil Youth Council** held in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil, on **Monday 13 October 2014**

(7.00pm – 9.00pm)

Present:

Rebecca Pitts (Chairman)

Zoe Braddick
Luke Brickley
Jack Britten
Chloe Broadribb
Kevin Chan
Isabella Charlton
David Cook
Rhiannon Davies
Louise Golby
Heather Murphy
Bethany Vince

Also Present:

Alan Tawse Town Clerk

(1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Isobel Brennan-Laird, Gill Tomlinson and Hayley Worton.

(2) Election of Chairman

RESOLVED

that Chloe Broadribb be elected as Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(At this point Chloe took the Chair and paid tribute to the work that Rebecca had undertaken during her time as Chairman of the Youth Council)

(3) Election of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED

that Zoe Braddick be elected as Deputy Chairman for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(4) Appointment of Secretary

RESOLVED

that Kevin Chan be elected as Secretary for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(5) Appointment of Treasurer

RESOLVED

that Luke Brickley be elected as Treasurer for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(6) Co-opted Non-Voting Members

RESOLVED

that Rhiannon Davies be appointed as a co-opted non-voting member for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(7) Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2014, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the replacement of the first paragraph of Minute 7 (Music Concert) with the following wording:

Natasha said that Issy had received a letter from the road safety charity Brake, which had been discussed with the family.

(8) Youth Services Pilot Projects

Alan gave an update on the delivery of the pilot projects, which had recently been extended to include the Milford area of the Town. He added that full details of all the weekly sessions that were taking place were available on the Active Learning and Skills (ALS) website: <http://www.als-cic.org/> who had been commissioned to deliver the sessions and who were publicising their availability through local schools, posters and social media.

ALS were also recruiting additional lead youth and support workers, details of which were attached to the agenda.

RESOLVED

that the matter be noted.

(9) New Website

David indicated that he was no longer in a position to take the project forward and suggested that the Youth Council consider alternative arrangements.

Kevin offered to take over the role and agreed to liaise with David ahead of the next meeting with a view to giving an update on recent progress and taking matters forward.

RESOLVED

- 1) that the matter be noted;
- 2) that David's contribution to the development of the new website be recorded,

and Kevin's offer to take on this task be accepted; and

- 3) that Kevin give an update on the progress of the initiative at the November meeting of the Yeovil Youth Council.

(10) Youth Opportunities Group

RESOLVED

that the notes of the meeting held on 22 September 2014 be noted.

(11) Charity Fundraising

Reference was made to problems that had been encountered in seeking the support of a number of local supermarkets to hold a charity bag packing event in aid of *Brake*.

Alan suggested that the road safety charity be requested to approach the supermarkets direct on the Youth Council's behalf with a view to making a formal request and confirming how any monies collected would be used. He added that he would be happy to be contacted by any of the supermarkets should they wish to check the credentials of the collectors.

RESOLVED

- 1) that the matter be noted;
- 2) that Issy approach *Brake* with a view to suggesting that the above-outlined approach be followed, and their response be reported to a future meeting; and
- 3) that Beth approach the Quedam Shopping Centre about a proposed cake sale charity fundraising event.

(12) Music Concert

Rebecca had passed on the address of the Westland Leisure Complex to Chloe, who undertook to contact the Events Manager with a view to organising a meeting with a small number of youth councillors to discuss its possible availability to host the planned concert in aid of *Brake*.

Beth undertook to do the same regarding The Gateway.

RESOLVED

- 1) that the matter be noted; and
- 2) that Chloe and Beth report their findings to a future meeting.

(13) Schools' Update

A variety of forthcoming events and ongoing refurbishment works at various schools were outlined.

RESOLVED

that the matters be noted.

(14) Any Other Business

There was no other business.

(15) Date of Next Meeting

IT WAS NOTED

that the next meeting of the Yeovil Youth Council would take place at 7.00pm on Monday 24 November 2014.

Future Dates

Monday 26 January 2015
Monday 23 February 2015
Monday 23 March 2015
Monday 20 April 2015

Chairman