

Yeovil Town Council



**Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ**

Phone 01935 382424
Fax 01935 382429
E-mail alan.tawse@yeovil.gov.uk

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

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

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Tuesday 25 November 2014**

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



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Alan Tawse

Alan Tawse
Town Clerk

19 November 2014

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

Martin Bailey

John Hann

Philip Chandler

Andrew Kendall

Bridget Dollard

Mike Lock (Ex-Officio)

David Dollard

Tony Lock (Chairman)

Tony Fife

Wes Read

Jon Gleeson

Darren Shutler (Vice-Chairman) (Ex-Officio)

Peter Gubbins

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

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 minutes)

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 September 2014.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

5. **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID**

(Circulated separately)

6. **ALLOTMENT RENTS**

7. **YOUTH SERVICES**

8. **COMMUNITY HALL CHARGES**

9. **CAPITAL AND REVENUE RESERVES**

10. **SERVICE COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES - 2015/16**

11. **POLICY, RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
REVENUE ESTIMATES - 2015/16**

12. **NEW INITIATIVES BUDGET**

13. **FREEDOM PARADE**

14. **PENSIONS**

15. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2014**

PAGES

2 - 6

7 - 9

10

11 - 16

17 - 22

23 - 24

25 - 30

31

32 - 35

36 - 62

Public Comment (15 minutes)

6. ALLOTMENT RENTS

Introduction

Earlier this month, the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee considered the report attached at pages 4 to 6.

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 Committee and to the Town Council.

Recommendation

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

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

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)

7. YOUTH SERVICES

The Youth Services Review Steering Group has considered various options for delivering youth services across the Town over the remainder of 2014/15 and the next three years using a combination of the transitional grant received from Somerset County Council and suggested contributions from the partner authorities' precepts.

Members will recall that in April this year the County Council withdrew funding for youth services. Following concern by the Town Council and a number of neighbouring authorities, a number of pilot projects have been successfully set up and are operating at the following locations across the Yeovil area by way of weekly sessions.

The areas that are being served and the content of the sessions are based on the findings of an independent wide-ranging consultation exercise that was undertaken of young people in the Yeovil area. The weekly sessions, which are open to all young people between the age of 12 and 19, are being delivered by a qualified and experienced youth services provider commissioned by the Steering Group following a tendering exercise:

- Abbey Manor
- Forest Hill
- Milford
- Westfield

Details of the proposals for the future funding of these services, which are supported by the Steering Group, are set out in the copy letter attached at pages 8 to 9 that has been sent to all of the partners. The Steering Group feel that the suggested funding approach is both sustainable and equitable.

Assuming these proposals are supported by the partners, the Town Council has already made adequate provision in its budget for the contributions that this Authority would be expected to make in the current year and in 2015/16.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note and consider the proposed funding approach for the future delivery of these services.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

Mrs Liz James
Parish Clerk
Brympton Parish Council
Parish Office
Abbey Community Centre
Yeovil
BA21 3TL

20 October 2014

Dear Liz

Youth Services in the Yeovil Area

I am writing to update you on the delivery of youth services in the Yeovil area following the withdrawal of this service by Somerset County Council earlier this year, and proposals for their future provision.

Following on from the success of the initial pilot project, the number of weekly sessions has now been extended to *four* in the following areas:

- *Abbey Manor*
- *Forest Hill*
- *Milford*
- *Westfield*

The need for youth facilities in all of these areas was strongly supported by the youth consultation exercise that the Steering Group commissioned shortly after its formation.

The cost of running these sessions, which works out at £10,000 per venue per year (including accommodation costs), has to date been met from transitional grant assistance secured from Somerset County Council. These sessions are delivered by a qualified and experienced provider (Active Learning and Skills) who were appointed following a competitive tendering process and who regularly attend meetings of the Steering Group as part of the monitoring and review arrangements. Recent reports from the Executive Director of ALS, which outline the work that they are delivering, are attached.

(NB These also include updates on the East Coker village scheme, which is not part of the Yeovil area pilot project and whose costs are being met by East Coker Parish Council).

The Steering Group, which supports the continuance of the initiative for the remainder of 2014/15 and for the next three years, has considered the future funding arrangements – taking into account the remaining balance of the transitional funding (£27,000) and the pledges already made by some of the partner councils towards this initiative.

The Group is also mindful of the pressure on all local authority budgets, and has proposed that the balance of the grant be used on a tapering basis to ease the impact of these funding arrangements on parish precepts over this period.

8. COMMUNITY HALL CHARGES

The Committee is requested to consider supporting an increase in the charges for the hire of Milford and Monmouth Community Halls and the Town Council Chamber by the anticipated rate of inflation of 2% – with effect from 1 April 2015.

The present and proposed scale of charges is as follows:

Milford and Monmouth Community Halls and Town Council Chamber – Hire Charges		
<i>Type of Hire</i>	<i>Current Rate of Hire (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)</i>	<i>Proposed Rate of Hire (per hall/room per hour or part thereof)</i>
<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>	£7.50 per hire (included in hall/room hire charge for non-profit making organisations)	£7.65 per hire (included in hall/room hire charge for non-profit making organisations)
<i>Town Council Chamber – Provision of tea/coffee</i>	£5.00	£5.10

The charging structure at Monmouth Community Hall was brought into line with that adopted at Milford Community Hall – with effect from 1 October 2012. This enabled the former Hall to be hired at identical rates on a more flexible basis.

Members will recall that charges for the Council Chamber were introduced in April 2014 after the Finance Working Group recommended that a charge of £5.20 per hour or part thereof (same as the community rate for the Town Council's community halls) be made plus a flat rate of £5.00 for the provision of tea/coffee if required. The income raised ensures that the additional costs of the facilities being used by outside organisations are met.

These proposals were considered by the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee earlier this month who agreed to support the introduction of the proposed charges with effect from 1 April 2015 and have referred the matter to this Committee and to the Town Council for approval and adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider supporting the views of the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee, and to express their views on the matter to the Town Council.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

9. CAPITAL AND REVENUE RESERVES

Introduction

Set out below is a breakdown of the Capital Fund and the General Reserve. These show commitments less creditors/debtors for which additional provision has been made. The allocation of these reserves is consistent with the advice of the District Auditor who has previously commented on the Council's level of uncommitted reserves.

There is currently £5,503 available within the Capital Fund to finance additional items of a capital nature. This will increase following the capital receipt that will arise from the planned sale of the former Goldcroft allotment site.

The General Reserve is at a comfortable level and, provided a minimum of £230,000 remains uncommitted, should provide sufficient resources to meet any unexpected revenue needs beyond those which can be funded from contingencies over the forthcoming year.

Capital Fund

The current position concerning the Capital Fund is as follows:

CAPITAL FUND

Balance of Capital Fund as at 31 March 2014	£10,690
Summerhouse View Play Area Upgrade (revenue contribution to capital)	£10,000
<i>Plus Capital Receipts:</i>	<u>£0</u>
Sub-total	£20,690
<i>Less Capital Expenditure:</i>	<u>£0</u>
Balance of Capital Fund as at 25 November 2014	<u>£20,690</u>
Less Commitments:	
Yeovil Country Park – contribution to signage	£180
Sunningdale Doorstep Green (Phase 3)	£2,415
Roundabout Enhancements	£334
Yew Tree Park Play Area Upgrade – YTC final contribution	£2,258
Summerhouse View Play Area Upgrade – YTC Contribution (RCCO)	£10,000
Total Commitments	<u>£15,187</u>
New Balance (unallocated)	£5,503

Notes

- 1 All future Cemetery capital improvements to be met from revenue contributions to capital by the Joint Burial Committee
- 2 Essential play area repair work beyond routine maintenance budgets to be charged to capital (subject to matching contributions from SSDC)

Former Goldcroft Allotment Site

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following detailed consideration of the bids received and the options available, the Council agreed that no action be taken, at this stage, to dispose of the site, and that the land continue to be marketed and an update report be submitted to the March 2013 meeting of the Town Council.

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

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

Former Ski and Activity Centre

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The outcome of these discussions was reported to the December 2010 Town Council meeting at which it was agreed that representations be made to the Planning Authority seeking the inclusion of the site in the emerging master plan for the nearby urban village. Representations were made and, as reported to the January 2012 Town Council meeting, the site has been included in the master plan, copies of which have been circulated to all Members.

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

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

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 last 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	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Totals
Preston Park	£12,500						£12,500
Summerhouse View		£10,000					£10,000
Kingston View			£7,750				£7,750
Grass Royal				£10,000			£10,000
Fielding Road					£5,000		£5,000
Turners Barn Lane						£10,000	£10,000
Total	£12,500	£10,000	£7,750	£10,000	£5,000	£10,000	£55,250

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

Allocations have been made by both Authorities for the Summerhouse View project, which is currently being upgraded. The Policy, Resources and Finance Committee identified how the Town Council would meet its proposed contribution of £10,000 towards this scheme, which is via a combination of savings and underspends that were identified by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee in their budget and carried forward as a planned underspend to 2014/15.

The Committee has also agreed to the funding of the remainder of the programme being considered each year as part of the budget-setting process leading up to the fixing of the precept. With this in mind, consideration will need to be given to the Town Council funding its share of the cost of its contribution (£7,750) towards the upgrade of the next play area in the Rolling Programme – Kingston View.

Existing Programme

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

The Steering Group has carried out a consultation exercise with local residents and having regard to the outcome of this exercise, final designs were produced which have recently been approved by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee. The project is expected to be delivered during the present financial year.

General Reserve

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

The Committee agreed last November that, as a matter of policy, a minimum balance of £180,000 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. The net unallocated balance is £147,321 (82%) *above* the agreed minimum balance. However, given the ongoing economic climate and in line with national governance and accountability guidance published earlier this year, it is proposed that this minimum balance be increased to £230,000, which would reduce this figure to £97,321 (42%).

The current position regarding the General Reserve is as follows:

General Reserve

General Reserve as at 31 March 2014 **£469,269**

Plus Revenue Receipts :

HLF Grant towards restoration of Preston Plucknett War Memorial £1,930

New Balance of General Fund **£471,199**

Less Net Commitments:

Yeovil Area Youth Services Project	£27,032
Sunningdale Road/Greendale Road Traffic Safety Project	£12,200
Future Town Centre Environmental Improvements	£16,000
Replacement Christmas Lights (2 x £12,000)	£24,000
SSDC Contribution towards 2014 Christmas Lights	£2,000
Community Safety Project (CCTV Enhancement)	£4,830
Future Transport Support Project	£4,080
Grants Provision	£4,530
Milford Park Outdoor Gym Initiative (in principle)	£10,000
SSDC Contribution towards Petter's Way Public Toilets (2 x £12,909 pa)	£25,818
Summerhouse View Play Area Upgrade (revenue contribution to capital)	£10,000
Contribution towards refurbishment of allotment site water supply	£2,200
Public Entertainment Area – Marquee Hire	£735
Customised Souvenirs	<u>£453</u>
	<u>£143,878</u>

New Balance (unallocated) **£327,321**

Recommendations

Members are **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) to note the position concerning the Capital Fund and the General Reserve;
- (2) to agree, as a matter of policy, that a minimum balance of £230,000 remains uncommitted in the General Reserve to meet to meet any unexpected revenue needs beyond those which can be funded from contingencies over the forthcoming year;
- (3) to note the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements, and to await confirmation of the District Council's match funding towards the next planned project (Kingston View) included in the programme; and
- (4) in anticipation of the District Council's decision to support this project, to identify how the Town Council's matching contribution of £7,750 towards this project should be funded.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk - 01935 382424)

10. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES - 2015/16

The service committees have met during the current cycle of meetings to consider their draft estimates for 2015/16. These are attached at pages 19 to 22.

Budget Strategy

In setting recent year's budgets, the Council has drawn attention to the importance of officers and committees making bids for growth to give careful consideration to the impact of such bids on the overall finances of the Council as part of the initial budget process.

With this in mind, the Finance Working Group has met and, taking into consideration known growth bids and inescapable increases, has worked with the officers in drawing up the Committees' draft estimates for 2015/16. The Working Group were grateful for the support provided by the officers and wished to record their thanks for their contribution to the work of the Group.

To help co-ordinate the overall process, each Committee has once again been asked by the Working Group to keep their expenditure within the suggested maximum limits – with any proposed increases beyond those suggested being matched by reductions elsewhere in the draft budget.

This approach worked successfully last year, and the Working Group feels that following the same approach this year will ensure that a balanced and sustainable budget is set for 2015/16. However, in reviewing the draft estimates, the Group have had to make a number of assumptions – including the anticipated level of Government Council Tax Support Grant and the Council's Tax Base – both of which have yet to be confirmed by the District Council. A further review of the draft estimates may need to be undertaken if the final figures are substantially different to the indicative forecasts.

The Working Group has again proposed that contingencies continue to be included in a separate budget and that bids for the use of these funds be considered by the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee. This approach is consistent with the way in which unspent revenue balances are now dealt with, and it ensures that all Committees have the same opportunity to put forward bids for additional expenditure during the year.

This approach has been successfully followed for the last twelve years, and the Working Group feel that the same approach should be followed next year.

The Group have also proposed that to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the use of any unspent allocated budgets, committees wishing to carry forward any underspends to the following financial year continue to seek the prior approval of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

The Finance Working Group has provisionally included a further allocation of £49,300 in the 2015/16 estimates towards new initiatives of which it proposed that £29,300 continues to be available to enable contributions to be made towards threatened services currently delivered in Yeovil Town. It is further proposed that the service committees continue to be invited to put forward bids that meet the agreed definition of a new initiative for the use of the £20,000 balance of this fund during the next financial year.

Finally, the Working Group noted that the Promotions and Activities Committee is intending to reconsider the possibility of using its Town Centre Environmental Improvements Budget to help fund an ongoing Town Centre Maintenance Programme

once the draft maintenance schedule has been finalised, quotations have been obtained for the first year and other funding sources have been investigated. Given the nature of this Budget which, in the past has been used to help fund town centre enhancements, and the possibility of its application being broadened to include ongoing maintenance works, the Group felt that it might be more appropriate for its future management to come under the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee instead.

The views of both of these Committees on this possibility has been sought as part of the budget-setting process. The Grounds and General Maintenance Committee has indicated that it would have no objection to the Town Centre Environmental Improvements Budget being included within its remit. The Promotions and Activities Committee has expressed no objection to this Budget being transferred to another Committee - possibly the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee - and has requested that the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee consider its future management.

Contingencies

At present, contingencies are calculated at 5% of the overall budgets set by the Town Council. In view of the fact that inflation is predicted to rise by 2% over the coming year, and given the ongoing discussions over the future of the Ski and Activity Centre, it is proposed that these continue to be set at 5%.

Recommendation

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) to note and support the budget strategy drawn up by the Finance Working Group;
- (2) to consider the draft estimates of the service committees with a view to making recommendations to the Town Council, which it has been confirmed has until 4 February 2015 to set the precept for the Financial Year 2015/16, and
- (3) to discuss the above-outlined suggestion by the Working Group regarding the future management of the Town Centre Environmental Improvements budget, taking into account the views of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee and the Promotions and Activities Committee, with a view to determining its future management.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

		<u>YEAR 2013/14</u>		<u>YEAR 2014/15</u>			<u>YEAR 2015/16</u>		
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year spent 30.09.14	Full year estimated spend to 31.03.15	Estimated over/under spend	Estimated required	To be allocated
Income to 30/09/14	Licensing Direct Costs	12,600	11,490	12,730	6,753	12,730		12,990	
Licensing 9,681	Planning Recharge	14,188	14,188	14,480	7,094	14,480		14,770	
Est Income 1/2 Year	Total	26,788	25,678	27,210	13,847	27,210	0	27,760	0
Ending 31/03/15									
Licensing 12,400							Estimated recharge (+)		27,760
Total	22,081						Estimated 2015/16 income (-)		22,400
							Estimated underspend (-)		0
									5,360
Estimated Income 2015/16							Plus contingencies (5%)		<u>268</u>
									5,628
Licensing 22,400									
Notes									
1	Income for 2014/15 includes fees and charges which will be received before the financial year end which relates to 2015/16 financial year								
2	Planning recharge increased in line with inflation								

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

GROUNDS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

		YEAR 2013/14		YEAR 2014/15		YEAR 2015/16				
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year spent 30.09.14	Full year estimated spend to 31.03.15	Estimated over spent	Estimated under spent	Estimated required	To be allocated
INCOME 2014/15	Materials and equipment	840	695	750	263	750			760	
1/2 Year to 30/09/14	Water Mains Refurbishment/Repairs	2,200	0	2,000	0	2,000			2,040	
	Water charges	4,200	7,006	4,280	321	4,280			0	
Lease 1044	Allotment Maintenance (SSDC)	7,650	8,759	7,810	5,586	7,810			7,970	
Taps & Keys 55	Allotment Maintenance (Tenants)	3,280	3,246	3,350	1,754	3,350			3,420	
Allotment rents 589	Allotments - Fence Repairs	1,920	1,535	1,960	141	1,960			2,000	
1/2 Year 1688	Leases	400	335	400	0	400			400	
	Goar Knap - Building	1,430	1,111	1,330	660	1,330			1,360	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Newsletter	160	140	140	0	140			150	
2014/15	Best Kept Allotments Competition	230	192	210	158	210			220	
Taps & keys 100	Labour	15,150	12,896	15,300	6,466	15,300			15,610	
Rent 14311	Vehicle	970	1,119	990	453	990			1,010	
Lease 2088	Protective clothing	160	68	160	0	160			160	
Est 2014/15 16499	Dog Bins	210	500	220	0	220			230	
	Open spaces:									
	Open Spaces	142,150	142,150	145,000	72,500	145,000			147,900	
ESTIMATED INCOME	Play Area Repairs/Enhancements	11,260	11,260	11,490	0	11,490			11,720	
2015/16	Country Park	30,220	30,220	30,830	7,708	30,830			31,450	
	Enhancements	3,210	3,210	0	0	0			0	
Taps & Keys 100	Play and Landscape Officer	11,480	11,480	11,710	0	11,710			11,950	
Rents 14806	Holiday Playscheme contribution	5,000	3,335	8,380	0	8,380			8,550	
Lease 2088	Door Step Green	740	847	760	274	760			780	
Est 2015/16 16994	Yew Tree Park - Gate Opening	1,470	1,375	1,500	580	1,500			1,530	
	Total expenditure	244,330	241,479	248,570	96,864	248,570	0	0	249,210	0
Notes:							Estimated underspend (-)			0
									249,210	
1	Budget prepared on a year on year basis, with adjustments made for previous year's accruals						Estimated 2015/16 income			16,994
2	Water mains refurbishment/repairs budget allocated to meet planned programme of phased improvements									232,216
3	Income of £2,090 pa receivable from lease of land at Higher Ryalls						+ contingencies @ 5%			11,611
4	Enhancements budget used to increase Holiday Playscheme contribution - to help meet cost of new scheme in Yeovil South Ward									243,827

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

PROMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

		<u>YEAR 2013/14</u>		<u>YEAR 2014/15</u>		<u>YEAR 2015/16</u>					
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year	Full year	Estimated		Estimated required	To be allocated	
					spent	estimated	over	under			
				30.09.14		31.03.15					
INCOME 2014/15	Town Team	3,150	3,000	3,000	0	3,000			3,000		
1/2 Year to 30/09/14	Christmas Lights	20,770	38,835	21,190	0	21,190			21,620		
Festive Lights	Yeovil in Bloom Working Budget	15,170	15,173	15,480	7,760	15,480			15,790		
- SSDC	0 Yeovil in Bloom Officer	22,890	22,890	23,350	11,675	23,350			23,820		
- Traders	0 Town Crier	950	745	970	0	970			990		
Sponsorship	300 Yeovil Open Town Crier Competition	1,800	1,645	1,840	1,714	1,714		126	1,880		
Souvenirs	0 Customised souvenirs	540	87	550	0	550			560		
	300 Town Guide/promotional publications	220	0	230	125	230			240		
	Town Centre Environmental Improvements	8,000	8,000	8,000	0	8,000			8,000		
ESTIMATED INCOME	Christmas Lights Competition	30	0	30	12	30			30		
2014/15	Yeovil Flower and Gardeners' Market	2,550	1,956	2,600	2,332	2,400		200	2,660		
Festive Lights											
- SSDC	0										
- Traders	0										
Sponsorship	800										
Souvenirs	50										
	850										
Estimated Income											
2015/16											
Festive Lights											
- SSDC	2,000										
- Traders	0										
Sponsorship	500										
Souvenirs	100										
	2,600										
	Total Expenditure	76,070	92,331	77,240	23,618	76,914	0	326	78,590	0	
Notes:								Estimated underspend (-)		-326	
										78,264	
1	Christmas Lights - Estimated additional costs of £14,000 to be met from earmarked reserves including contribution of £2,000 from SSDC (received in 2013/14)							Estimated 2015/16 income		2,600	
2	Town Centre Environmental Improvements budget previously used to help meet costs of Middle Street. and Princes Street Enhancement Schemes. Possible top-slicing to fund ongoing Town Centre maintenance programme?							+ contingencies @ 5%		75,664	
										3,783	
3	Yeovil Town Centre Flower and Gardeners' Market - maximum guarantee against loss (offset by income from stalls and sponsorship)									79,447	

YEovil TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

BUILDINGS AND CIVIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

		YEAR 2013/14		YEAR 2014/15		YEAR 2015/16				
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year spent 30.09.14	Full year estimated spend to 31.03.15	Estimated over spent	Estimated under spent	Estimated required	To be allocated
INCOME 2014/15	Yeovil Town Band - Sponsorship	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000			3,000	
1/2 Year 30/09/14	Litter/Grit bins	650	732	670	0	670			680	
Monmouth Hall 1,882	Monmouth Hall	15,970	12,676	16,290	5,805	16,290			16,620	
Milford Hall 8,628	Town House (excluding services)	6,120	6,334	6,250	2,951	6,250			6,380	
Town House 680	Town House - business rates	10,280	10,362	10,570	6,364	10,570			10,790	
Library 0	Town House - water charges	320	267	330	133	330			340	
	Town House - electricity	1,580	1,385	1,400	541	1,400			1,430	
1/2 year 9,308	Town House - gas	1,800	1,846	2,040	793	2,040			2,080	
	Town House - repairs and maintenance	3,150	2,218	3,220	1,336	3,220			3,290	
	Civic Items (Town Twinning)	210	0	210	18	210			0	
ESTIMATED INCOME 2014/15	Sports Development Officer (SSDC)	2,040	2,000	2,080	0	2,080			2,120	
	War memorials	320	0	330	0	330			0	
Monmouth Hall 3,500	Public noticeboards	320	0	330	0	330			340	
Milford Hall 17,340	Community safety	4,830	0	4,930	0	4,930			5,030	
Town House 1,360	CCTV	30,600	30,600	31,220	15,610	31,220			31,850	
Library 1,800	Millennium Clock	280	239	290	0	290			300	
	Transport support	4,290	0	4,380	0	4,380			4,470	
Yr to 31/03/15 24,000	Public toilets - Peter Street	17,150	15,338	17,500	8,878	17,500			17,860	
	Public toilets - Petters Way	0	7,579	4,400	5,119	4,400			8,980	
	Milford Hall	22,100	29,247	22,550	11,976	22,550			23,000	
ESTIMATED INCOME 2015/16										
Monmouth Hall 3,570										
Milford Hall 17,690										
Town House 1,390										
Library 1,840										
Est. 2015/16 24,490										
	Total expenditure	125,010	123,823	131,990	62,524	131,990	0	0	138,560	0
Notes							Estimated underspend (-)			0
										138,560
1	Transport Support budget to meet cost of contributions towards new bus shelters and related matters						Estimated 2015/16 income			24,490
2	Estimated additional costs of operating the Petters Way Public Toilets (£8,509) to be met from earmarked reserves.									114,070
3	SCC funding for deleg functions (removal of highway obstructions) withdrawn from April 2014						+ contingencies @ 5%			5,704
										119,774

11. POLICY, RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REVENUE ESTIMATES - 2015/16

General

The Committee's provisional budget for 2015/16 is attached at page 24. In preparing this budget, consideration has been given to this year's budget and, overall, this is likely to be underspent by £15,149. The reasons for this are set out below:

Insurance

This budget covers the costs of the Town Council taking out a comprehensive insurance policy as part of its risk assessment strategy. Savings of £1,347 are anticipated as a result of negotiations undertaken by the Town Clerk earlier in the year following a further review of the existing cover arrangements with the Council's appointed insurers.

Stationery/Supplies

This budget is likely to be underspent by £330 following anticipated savings in the use of office stationery.

Audit Fees

This budget covers the cost of carrying out the internal and external audit. An underspend of £102 is anticipated as a result of savings in this year's internal audit.

Professional Fees/Subs

An overspend of £420 is forecast owing to the increased cost of various subscriptions that the Town Council has taken out to provide officers with professional and technical support – including the SAGE accounting/payroll package and membership of the Somerset Association of Local Councils. (SALC).

Salaries

An underspend of £3,520 is anticipated. This has arisen due to savings arising from unavoidable delays in filling an unexpected vacancy, and the deferred implementation of a national pay award.

Best Value

An underspend of £150 has arisen as a result of the tendering exercise undertaken earlier this year to produce the Council's annual newsletter.

Youth Services

An underspend of £9,700 is expected following the successful securing of additional transitional grant provision towards the new local partnership arrangements that the Town Council has put in place to deliver youth services in the Yeovil area following the withdrawal of funding by the County Council last March.

Recommendation

Members are **RECOMMENDED** to note the above-outlined variances in expenditure, and to consider this Committee's Revenue Estimates for 2015/16.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL - ESTIMATES

POLICY RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

				YEAR 2013/14		YEAR 2014/15		YEAR 2015/16		
NOTES	Item	Allocated	Spent	Allocated	1/2 year	Full year	Estimated		Estimated required	To be allocated
					spent 30.09.14	estimated spend to 31.03.15	over spent	under spent		
Income	Grants	20,000	20,050	20,000	4,514	20,000			20,000	
2013/14	Insurance	9,000	7,837	8,500	7,153	7,153		1,347	8,000	
	Telephone	2,320	2,209	2,370	1,091	2,370			2,420	
Investment Int	4,813 Postage	4,080	3,940	4,000	1,539	4,000			4,080	
Ski Centre	700 Stationery/supplies	4,730	3,869	4,830	1,522	4,500		330	4,590	
	5,513 Furniture, office equipment & servicing	3,500	2,968	3,570	2,203	3,570			3,650	
	Advertising	750	200	770	303	770			790	
Income 2014/15	Audit fees	4,000	2,876	3,000	2,898	2,898		102	3,060	
1/2 Year to 30/09/14	Prof. fees/subs	5,470	6,388	5,580	3,160	6,000	420		6,120	
	Books/periodicals	220	64	230	92	230			240	
Investment Int	2,244 Salaries	171,800	159,884	173,520	82,217	170,000		3,520	176,990	
Ski Centre	600 Mayoral allowance	8,380	8,380	8,380	4,880	8,380			8,380	
	2,844 Courses/conferences	5,250	1,950	5,360	188	5,360			5,470	
	Costs of Democracy	25,540	23,521	25,800	11,200	25,800			26,320	
Estimated Income	Regalia	700	44	720	15	720			740	
2014/15	Youth Council	1,340	0	1,370	72	1,370			1,400	
	Best Value	2,140	1,650	1,800	1,000	1,650		150	1,800	
Investment Int	4,500 NVQ Trainee Administrator	5,350	1,556	5,400	3,158	5,400			5,510	
Ski Centre	1,200 Franking Machine	550	492	560	-19	560			570	
	5,700 PC Support	7,650	8,353	7,810	2,817	7,810			7,970	
	Delivery of Yeovil Vision	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000			10,000	
Estimated Income	Yeovil Shopmobility	5,470	5,470	0	0	0			0	
2015/16	PWLB Loan Repayments	30,704	30,704	30,704	15,352	30,704			30,704	
	New Initiatives Fund	49,300	4,000	49,300	0	49,300			49,300	
Investment Int	4,500 Youth Services	0	14,335	17,700	12,874	8,000		9,700	14,000	
Ski Centre	1,200 Ski Centre	6,300	6,147	6,430	2,951	6,430			6,560	
	5,700 Contingencies	39,222	40,129	39,795	18,112	39,795				
	Total Expenditure	423,766	367,016	437,499	189,292	422,770	420	15,149	398,664	0
Notes:								Estimated underspend (-)		-14,729
										383,935
1	Investment income set to reflect anticipated interest rates							Estimated 2015/16 income		5,700
2	Capital Fund commitments set out elsewhere on the agenda									378,235
3	PC Support budget extended to include Members' PC support and internal/external broadband connections							+ contingencies @ 5%		18,912
4	Costs of Democracy budget set to reflect anticipated Members' allowances									397,147
5	Salaries budget adjusted to meet anticipated national pay awards, Employer's pension contributions and previously agreed increments									
6	Regalia budget to meet rolling programme of civic robe refurbishment and repairs									
7	PWLB loan repayments reflect cost of servicing £265,000 ten-year loan to meet costs of replacement Town Centre public toilets and contribution towards upgrade of Yew Tree Park Play Area and redevelopment of Milford Hall									
8	Youth Services budget reflects proposed three-year funding arrangements (report elsewhere on agenda)									

12. 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 2014/15 New Initiatives budget.

As reported to the last meeting of the Committee, 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 - budget provisionally earmarked)
- 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 attached 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 27 to 30.

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

Town Centre Waterslide Event - £3,000 (estimated)

(bid to be confirmed - clarification of costs and feasibility of proposal to be further investigated and report to be submitted to the January 2015 meeting)

Recommendation

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the bids made to date by the service committees and to make recommendations to the next meeting of the Town Council on the possible funding of supported bids from the New Initiatives budget.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

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

13. **FREEDOM PARADE**

Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War with VE Day taking place on 8 May and VJ Day on 15 August. A number of organisations across the UK are starting to make plans to commemorate these historic events.

Discussions have taken place with representatives of RNAS Yeovilton who have kindly offered to mark this historic occasion by arranging for troops from the airbase to exercise their right to march through the Town led by the Band of the Royal Marines on a suitable date between these two key anniversaries. Similar parades have been successfully held in 2007 and in 2010.

The Promotions and Activities Committee support the proposal and have agreed that the parade be held on Wednesday 3 June 2015. RNAS Yeovilton have been advised of the Committee's decision and have provisionally booked the Band for this date subject to funding.

It is estimated that the costs of such an event would be in the region of £3,000. This would include the hire of a PA system, road traffic signage/barriers and the provision of refreshments for those taking part. It is suggested that the costs involved be met from a planned carry forward in the 2014/15 contingencies budget.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note and support the views of the Promotions and Activities Committee, and to agree to the costs involved in the event being met from a planned carry forward in the 2014/15 contingencies budget.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

14. **PENSIONS**

New Pension Discretions

Following the change to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) earlier this year, all employers are required to provide, publish and keep under review their policy on the discretions available to them under the LGPS.

A written statement of policy must be forwarded to the Superannuation Authority (Peninsula Pensions) and employers are required to formulate and publish their agreed policy.

The employer discretions cover the following key areas:

- Funding of additional pension – Reg 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)
- Flexible retirement - Reg 30(6)
- Waiving all or part of any actuarial reduction – Reg 30(8)
- Award of Additional Pension

A copy of the employer discretions adopted by South Somerset District Council is attached at pages 33 to 35. It is proposed that the Town Council considers adopting the same discretions with appropriate modifications.

These have been modified so that the approval of the Town Council's Policy, Resources and Finance Committee will be required in the exercise of any of these discretions.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider adopting the employer pension discretions for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014 as set out in the attached appendix.

Automatic Enrolment

The law on workplace pensions has changed. Under the Pensions Act 2008, every employer with staff in the UK is required to automatically enrol those who are eligible into a workplace pension scheme and contribute towards it. Under the LGPS, member authorities such as the Town Council already contribute to such a scheme along with those employees who have chosen to join and make contributions.

The Pensions Regulator has recently written to the Town Council confirming that the staging date for the Council is 1 October 2015. This is the date when the law will be applied to Yeovil Town Council.

Arrangements will be made for the necessary procedures to be put in place to ensure that the Town Council complies with this new legal requirement from this date.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the matter.

(Alan Tawse, Town Clerk – 01935 382424)

South Somerset District Council ~~Yeovil Town Council~~ (updated April November 2014)

PENSION DISCRETIONS – Local Government Pension Scheme 2014

Regulation	Discretion	Written policy required?	SSDC YTC Policy
Reg 16(2)(e) & 16(4)(d)	Funding of Additional Pension Option to fund additional pension via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contract.	Yes	The Council does not offer in any circumstances.
Reg 30 (6)	Flexible Retirement Employers may allow a scheme member from age 55 to draw their pension benefits they have already built up while still continuing in employment. Discretion on whether to allow benefits to be paid if member reduces hours/grade and wishes to take flexible retirement.	Yes	Management approval of any request for flexible retirement will depend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operational viability of the request • The impact of any up-front costs to the council <p>The employee must reduce their salary by at least 20%, either through a reduction in hours or grade.</p> <p>Management Board Policy, Resources and Finance Committee approval required where employer costs are involved. Where there are no employer costs involved the approval is with the Assistant Director or above.</p>
Reg 30 (8)	Waiving of Actuarial Reduction Discretion on whether to waive any actuarial reduction on early retirement (age 55 - 60).	Yes	That the District Executive Policy, Resources and Finance Committee will decide on a case by case basis whether to waive any actuarial reduction on voluntary early retirement following consideration of the financial interests of the council or any compassionate grounds.
Reg TPSch 2, para 2(2) & 2(3)	Power of employing authority to ‘switch on’ the 85 year rule for voluntary retirements before age 60. Discretion on application of 85 year rule to a		The 85 year rule will not be applied to voluntary retirements or flexible retirements on or after age 55 and before age 60 except that the District Executive Policy, Resources and Finance Committee can decide on a case by case basis whether to waive any

Regulation	Discretion	Written policy required?	SSDC YTC Policy
	scheme member wishing to voluntarily draw benefits on or after the age of 55 and before age 60.		actuarial reduction following consideration of the financial interests of the council or any compassionate grounds. In redundancy or "leaving in the efficiency of the service" situations, where the employee is aged over 55, then pension is awarded automatically with no reduction and SSDC YTC bear any costs in these circumstances. This will follow LGPS rules.
Reg 31	Award of Additional Pension An employer can choose to grant additional pension to a scheme member.	Yes	The Council does not apply this discretion under any circumstances.
B 30 (2)	Leavers between the 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2014 Employers can allow the early payment of deferred benefits to former members of the LGPS between the ages of 55 and 59.	Yes	Consent will be provided where there is no cost to SSDC YTC . In such cases pension benefits will be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables. Consent will not be given where costs fall on SSDC YTC except where approval has been received from the District Executive Policy, Resources and Finance Committee to waive the reduction on compassionate grounds.
B 30A (3) B 30 (5)	Suspended Ill Health Pension Whether to grant an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60.	Yes	Not to automatically bring into payment a suspended ill health retirement pension at age 55 and before age 60 but for any decision to be based on the recommendation of a further Independent Medical Advisor report.
	Pension Transfers Whether to extend the 12 month acceptance limit on new members to the scheme on a pension transfer from another pension scheme.	No	The Council does not permit the acceptance of a pension transfer after the 12 month limit.

Regulation	Discretion	Written policy required?	SSDC YTC Policy
	<p>Contribution Rates Determining employee contribution rate</p>	No	<p>The contribution band for employees will be reassessed each April based on the following expected pensionable earnings for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual pensionable pay received in the previous scheme year, or • The annual rate of pensionable pay at the beginning of the new scheme year, or • The expected annual pensionable pay for the new scheme year. <p>The contribution band will also be reviewed during the scheme year should the employee have a material change in contractual pay (e.g. a promotion or pay award). Any band revision will be apply from the first full month of the contractual pay change.</p>