



Devizes Town Council

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Community & Civic Resources Committee

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Community & Civic Resources Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: Tuesday, 4 October 2016

Time: Immediately after the Planning Committee Meeting

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 722160

The Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs Burton)

Chairman: Councillor Giraud-Saunders

Councillors: Mrs Bridewell
East
Hopkins

Carter
Evans
Nash

Corbett
Geddes

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Community and Civic Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 August 2016, which have been circulated alongside the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business

5. VISIT BY WILTSHIRE POLICE

It is hoped that Inspector Nick Mawson will attend the meeting, work duties permitting and give an update on policing issues in the town. At the end of August Inspector Mawson issued a written report which was circulated to members and which is attached for information. (Doc 5/1 – 5/3)

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS PAID

A Schedule of Accounts Paid is attached for information (doc 6/1 – doc 6/3).

7. NARRATIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016/2017

AUGUST 2016 THEREFORE 42%

Members have requested that any variances – or + 10% from the above figure require a narrative by officers.

INCOME

1. Precept received 50% in April and October annually.
2. 8 Commercial Properties are invoiced quarterly in September, whilst 50% reduction agreed in respect of 3 Little Brittox for a 6 month period. 19 The Brittox not occupied until July 2016.
3. Historically low income figures in August bringing down year to date income
4. Café income weighted towards Spring & Summer months, however stronger than budgeted.
5. JBC salary recharge not processed until September 2016
6. Public convenience income projected to be in excess of £8000 in the 2016/17 financial year. No budget provision.
7. Full value of JBC Admin recharge received.

EXPENDITURE

8. Twinning event held in June 2016 in Mayenne therefore significant costs incurred to date.
9. Festival Free use fully expended and Carnival partially expended therefore expenditure will fall back in percentage terms as year progresses.
10. Café salary costs projected at £40,000 for the financial year against a budget of £23,000.
11. Expenditure on Public conveniences projected to be £83,000 in the current financial year. £44,000 of this expenditure is projected to be negated by unutilised additional service provision budget.
12. Christmas festival & lights expended in final quarter of financial year.
13. Town Centre management spend currently at 7.8% year to date.
14. JBC precept paid in September quarter.
15. Superloo barriers cost £3,426 not provided in 2016/17 estimates.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – DEVIZES LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members and officers recently attended a Leisure Centre Joint Management Committee for an update on the centres performance.

Attached is the centre manager's report (Doc 8/1-8/2), which outlines the current position. Whilst running a facility which has conflicting priorities and significant running costs will always be a challenge its usage by local people has been growing over the last year particularly in areas like the fitness sweet, which at times struggled to cope with the demand.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – ACTIVITIES OF DEVIZES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Members of the Devizes Development Partnership board, which has town Council representation, recently met and this reports sets out a summary of that meeting.

CCTV Operation. The CCTV manager submitted are report on the performance of the system. It highlighted coverage issues at the beginning of the year due to equipment failure but these have now been resolved and once again the system is fully operational. These repairs, which included the replacement of equipment was funded they and Area Board grant, uses of DDP reserves and a generous discount from the contractor. The cost of this work was in excess of £7000.

In the six months to June there were 35 incidents where footage has been requested and these comprise of shoplifting, theft, fraud, vehicle related incidents, missing person's assault and directed surveillance. There was recently a Freedom of Information request about the type and location of equipment, however as a private company, the DDP is not required to provide this information.

Currently the Police and Crime Commissioner is considering the possibility of connecting the CCTV control room with the 999 centre. The reasoning behind this is to allow police operators to determine the level of response necessary dealing with a incident. Although this initiative will not be just for Devizes, the equipment must be compatible with the police's system, which Devizes' is. There will be security issues which need to be agreed and if the scheme comes forward it will need to be funded by the PCC.

There has been a request for the system to be extended to cover St John's Street, which will cost between £4000 and £5000, however at this stage there is not funding.

CCTV Funding. The systems normal operation cash flow forecast for the current year indicates that the system will barely break event. Total projected income is £20,170 of which £18,000 comes from the Town Council and expenditure is estimate at £20,524. Whilst the cash flow has an allowance for routine maintenance through the maintenance contract, should there be a failure of equipment the level of reserves held, which are primarily needed to dismantle the system, are unlikely to be adequate.

Antisocial Behaviour by Young Car Drivers. The board discussed the issue of cars being racing around Station Road car park by younger drivers. Whilst this is principally an issue for the land owners and police to resolves evidence gathering will be needed if there are to be any prosecutions. The CCTV manager indicated that temporary cameras could be installed to monitor the area, but this will have a cost impactation.

Business Improvement Districts (BID). There have been several discussion by the DDP about creating a BID for the centre of Devizes. There has been mixed review about their success, however it would appear to the DDP that the less tangible the outcomes, such as increasing foot fall, the more open to criticism for the scheme.

It was agreed that a mechanism to discuss the issue with local business would be advantageous, then the idea could be progressed or abandoned. What is clear, that event in areas where a BID has been agreed, very often small business are more resistant than larger ones, therefore these business need to be involved with any discussion right from the outset.

10. REPORT FOR DECISION – COUNCIL TAX REFERENDUM PRINCIPLES

Recommendation

That the committee decides how it wishes to respond to the Government consultation on its proposal to include town and parish councils within the referendum principles for resourced collected by Councils.

Purpose of the Report

To provide the Town Council with an opportunity to comments on proposed Council Tax referendum principles for town and parish councils.

Background

In its Technical Consultation Paper, the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Statement, Central Government has outlined a proposal.

Section 3.3 of the document states that since introducing the principles of referendum for Council Tax increases in 2012/13, parish and town councils have been not been included although it has been made clear that this may happen.

Whilst recognising the value of town and parish council and the role in service delivery many undertake including significantly ambitious project, Government is concerned that the average increase in Band D council tax level of 6.1% set by town and parish councils in 2016/17 is notably higher than those in the previous 5 years.

The Government is now minded to apply the referendum principles in 2017/18 for larger town and parish councils whose Band D precept is higher than that of the lowest charging district council for 2016/17 which was (£75.46) and where the total precept is at least £500,000. Both of these qualifying criteria relate to Devizes Town Council. The principle of the referendum for these councils is that it will be triggered if the band D council tax charge goes up by £2% or higher or by more than £5.00, whichever is the greater.

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In the consultation paper it states that the Government wishes to ensure that parishes continue to have the flexibility to take on responsibilities from other tiers of local government therefore the referendum principles will not apply where there has been a transfer of responsibilities and where the following three conditions are satisfied:

- I. The parish council and the principle council covering the area of the parish have each resolved that a particular function carried out by the principle council in relation to the parish area in the financial year 2016/17 is to be carried out in financial year 2017/18.
- II. The parish council and the principle council have agreed the reasonable costs of the exercise of that particular function in the parish council's area by the parish council in the financial year 2017/18.
- III. If the agreed costs, if collected by way of the parish council precept, would take the council over the threshold of 2% or £5.00 increase on the previous year.

Government is now seeking views on the proposal.

In deciding how to respond to the consultation, the committee will need to consider the principle that parish councils are funded through local taxation only and not from central Government; therefore, there is a view that the level of taxation charged should be determined locally and not be constrained by outside influence. 2% is little more than inflation and therefore will significantly reduce a parish council's ability to undertake capital projects or enhance a service which needed locally potentially with the cost of undertaking a referendum pushing council tax itself over the Council Tax limit.

The consultation asks the following questions:

- Do you agree that referendum principles should be extended to larger, higher spending town and parish councils in 2017/18.
- Do you agree with the proposed approach to take account of the transfer of responsibilities to town and parish councils.
- Do you agree that referendum principles may be extended to all precepting authorities
- What are the Committee views on the practical implications of all precepting authorities being included within the referendum principles.

An extract of the Technical Consultation Paper, the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Statement is attached at Doc 10/1 to 10/2.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide how it wishes to respond to the consultation.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Whilst the impact is not fully known yet, the principle is set out in the report.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

11. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Chairman for councillors to ask questions on matters which are not on the current agenda but which are related to matters which have been previously discussed on an agenda relevant to the committee.

At least 24 hours' notice must be given to officers of the intended question. All other matters should be raised on an agenda and the request should be submitted through the Town Clerk

DEPUTY TOWN CLERK