



Devizes
Town Council

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DEVIZES TOWN **COUNCIL**

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Devizes Town Council Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: 18 December 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

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

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 722160

Councillors:	Brewer	Mrs Bridewell	Mrs Burton
	Carter	East	Evans
	Mrs Evans	Geddes	Giraud-Saunders
	Hopkins	Johnson	Nash
	Ody	Parker	Mrs Rose
	Smith	Wooldridge	

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 4 November 2014.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosures by a Councillor(s) and/or Officers in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. To receive announcements and communications.
5. To answer questions (if any) under standing order No. 15.

6. MINUTES OF MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Council on 7 October 2014 the following Committees have taken place whose minutes have been approved as a correct record and signed by the appropriate committee chairman.

The minutes of these meetings have been previously circulated to all members.

COMMITTEE NAME	COMMITTEE DATE
Planning Committee	23 September 2014
Planning Committee	7 October 2014
Planning Committee	21 October 2014
Planning Committee	4 November 2014
Planning Committee	18 November 2014
Community & Civic Resources Committee	26 August 2014
Community & Civic Resources Committee	23 September 2014
Community & Civic Resources Committee	7 October 2014
Recreation & Properties Committee	23 September 2014

NOTE: Before dealing with the next item (No 7) the Council will wish to consider whether or not to suspend Standing Order No 5 (members to stand when speaking). If the Standing Order is to be suspended, it must be done by way of a proposition, duly seconded and carried.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – REPRESENTATION FROM UNITARY COUNCILLORS

There were no additional reports.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – PROJECT LIST

Circulated alongside this agenda is a list detailing the current position with regard to ongoing and proposed projects.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION 2014-16 PAYSCALES & ALLOWANCES

Notification has been received from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services relating to the 2014-16 National Salary Award. As from 1 January 2015 all employees will be awarded a 2.20% pay increase and their spinal column pay point will be adjusted accordingly.

Additional to this a Non-Consolidated (one-off) payment of £150 (Spinal column points 8 – 10) or £100 (Spinal column points 11 – 49) is payable in December 2014. One employee is eligible for the larger amount, whilst the majority are eligible for the smaller figure. The two most senior officers of the Town Council fall outside the scope of this payment.

Additional to this a further non-consolidated payment is payable in April 2015. This only applies to two officers of the Town Council with amounts payable of £36 and £29 respectively.

All payments are subject to statutory deductions at source.

10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – NOTES FROM THE NALC CONFERENCE

Councillor Carter, Mrs Williams and Mr Fisher attended the NALC Conference on 3 November. Councillor Carter has written notes and they are issued alongside this agenda.

11. CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

Since the mid-summer update on developments in the campus proposal, Wiltshire Council's cabinet has reviewed the county-wide campus programme – this follows the appointment of Laurie Bell, Director of Communications as the office responsible for the Campus Development Programme following the departure of the former Director of Transformation, Mark Stone. Seven campuses are currently funded and three more are at an advanced stage of consideration. Devizes was not mentioned in the minutes of the cabinet meeting.

This is probably not so much of a set-back as could be inferred. Devizes has a functioning library and a good leisure centre, facilities absent in many of the towns in the 'first tranche of campuses. Whenever Devizes opportunity comes forward, we shall benefit from the experience of those 'early developers'. Nonetheless, we have been informally encouraged to submit a proposal for the Devizes campus and this will be submitted in the week commencing 15 December 2014.

It will identify the former Borough Police Station as the preferred site for a (raze and re-build) development incorporating the library. The site of the current library offers a site for potential sale with the proceeds contributing to the cost of the campus development itself.

There is little likelihood of any response from County Hall until the spring of 2015 with the expectation, therefore, that no new buildings are likely to be built until 2016 at least.

12. REPORT FOR DECISION – POLICY ON FILMING, AUDIO-RECORDING, PHOTOGRAPHING AND REPORTING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Recommendation

That the Council adopts the policy with regard to the filming, audio recording, photographing and reporting of Council and Committee Meeting

Purpose of the Report

That the Council reviews the draft policy attached (Doc 12/1 refers) and agrees to adopt it in this form or as amended

Background

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (2014 SI No. 2095), which came into force on 6 August 2014, require town and parish councils to allow any person to film, audio-record or take photographs of, and to report on, the proceedings of any part of a meeting which the public are entitled to attend by law.

This policy clarifies the parameters in which this can take place

Options Considered

To adopt the policy as in its current form or as amended.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are not aware of any financial or resource implications with regard to this decision.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be giving clarification as to the application of this piece of legislation within the operational activity of the Council

Environmental Implications

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

Risk Assessment

Failure to have a policy that gives clarification could give rise to confusion and challenge should a person be denied the opportunity to record any part of a meeting.

Crime and Disorder

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

13. REPORT FOR DECISION – APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR AS MAYORAL NOMINATION FOR 2015/2016

Recommendation

Members are requested to confirm the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Giraud-Saunders, as the Council's nomination for Mayor for the municipal year 2015/16.

Purpose of the Report

To seek clarification for the Council's nomination for Mayor for the municipal year 2015/16.

Background

It is tradition for the Council to confirm the Deputy Mayor as its nomination for Mayor for the following municipal year.

Options Considered

The Council is requested to confirm Councillor Giraud-Saunders as its nomination.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Each year a budget provision is made for the Mayoralty.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are not aware of any risk implications associated with this decision. The final appointment of Mayor is undertaken at the Annual Statutory meeting in May.

Crime and Disorder

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

14. REPORT FOR DECISION – BUDGET FOR 2015/2016

Recommendation

The Council is recommended to formally agree the draft budget for financial year 2015/2016.

Purpose of the Report

To formally agree the income, expenditure and capital budget for financial year 2015/2016.

Background

At its meeting in October, the Council broadly agreed the estimates which were presented at that time. However, the Finance Governance Working Party was instructed to work with officers to review the detail of the budget.

This work is now complete and based on those discussions; officers have drawn up the attached budget for financial year 2015/16 which members are asked to agree.

Explanation of Budget Headings

Set out below is a commentary on the principal budget headings.

Revenue Budget

Where possible, the 2014/2015 budget has been held. These calculations are based on the presumption that services will be delivered in the same way to the same standard.

Corporate

Democratic Services

This is a revenue budget for the cost of the democracy, and includes the cost of preparing and servicing a meeting, working parties, officers attending meetings and consultation with the public.

Member Support

Members are encouraged to participate in training when available. The budget heading also provides funding for members to attend conferences and networking opportunities.

Twinning

Devizes will host the twinning weekend in 2015. The £3,500 budget provision is additional to £4,244 which officers have placed in an Ear Marker Reserve from previous years. Twinning grants support our local twinning associations.

Civic & Ceremonial

The civic events along with the officers' allowances ensure that Devizes is able to uphold its civic traditions. Consultation with the community has indicated that it is these kinds of events that make Devizes special and add to the sustainability of our community.

Mayoral Allowance

This budget heading has been increased in line with inflation, in accordance with a council policy made some years ago. It would be for members to decide to increase or reduce this amount.

It should be noted, however, that the Mayoral year is very demanding and the budget is intended to defray the costs of the year to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to taking on the role.

Communications

The budgeted value of producing and delivering the Messenger are unaltered. Roundway Parish Council remains invoiced for their contribution towards messenger printing and delivery.

Corporate Management

This is the cost centre where the majority of senior management time is accounted for. It encompasses the cost of running the organisation, managing the various strategic corporate objectives and delivering Council decisions. It also includes items such as audit fees, professional advice and the annual return.

Bank Interest

With the delivery of the Hillworth Park project, the large reserves held by the Council have decreased, thus reducing the capital base to earn interest. Reserves are placed on deposit for different terms as appropriate and are constantly reviewed to maximise returns in a very difficult climate.

Grants

Grace and Favour bookings & Free Lettings

Provided to organisations, which benefit the community of Devizes, technically there is no limit to the value of these bookings as they are allowed in accordance with Council policies. The income element is recorded in Venues income.

There is however a cost to the Council in terms of the buildings not being available for commercial bookings and in staffing and utility costs. Members may wish to place a ceiling on these types of bookings.

General Grants

These have remained the same and are distributed in October and March (when undersubscribed) of each year to organisations who apply.

Annual Grants

There are a number of organisations in the Town who receive a grant each year. Although they need to put their application in writing, historically the Council has taken the view that the activities they undertake for the town are worthy of regular direct support.

Commercial Properties

The Commercial Property Management charges are at a contract price, although the 5-year agreement is due for renewal on 1 April 2015. Legal fees remain the same as last year.

There are three rent reviews scheduled for the 2015-16 financial year, however, given the current climate in the High Street in general it is difficult to anticipate an increase in revenue. 19 The Brittox will be subject to a new lease on the assumption of a successful marketing of the property by the Councils Commercial Property Agent in early 2015.

Arts Development

Devizes Outdoor Celebratory Arts and Devizes Festival

The Council gives support for DOCA and The Devizes Festival provided by free use of its venues and in the case of DOCA direct financial support.

Venues – Town Hall & Corn Exchange

Expenditure

Officers have thoroughly reviewed these cost centres and have stripped back as far as possible without impacting on service delivery. Many of the cost centres relate to items which fluctuate with the usage of the buildings.

Income

Officers remain concerned that the Council's single biggest customer is Wiltshire Council and given the financial pressures that it is facing there could be an impact on the hire of the Town Council venues.

Officers are continuing to explore new markets and customers. However, it is felt prudent to retain Income budgets for the Town Hall room hire, bar and catering at the level of 2014-15 whilst the Corn Exchange is increased by £5,000.

Any changes in venues' policies could have a significant impact on the venues capacity to maintain income.

Expenditure on utility costs and waste management have been reduced by sound financial management.

Devizes Leisure Centre

Devizes Town Council is subject to a 60-year agreement which commenced in 1988 that requires ongoing annual revenue funding which is subject to a calculated formula.

Parks & Open Spaces

Open Space Management

This relates to all the open and recreational spaces owned by the Council other than Hillworth Park. The budgets have been reviewed and officers believe that these figures are realistic to maintain our current level of service delivery. If members wish to reduce these budgets then there will need to be clarity of expectation as to where the reductions in service will be made.

Outsourcing has been explored and in some cases proved a cheaper option than in-house delivery, such as the watering contract and the buying in of plants. However, in the main grounds maintenance delivery, the value of the contract sum is relatively small and the nature of the contract complex, making it difficult to realise savings of enough significance to make it worth the reduction in service flexibility. It is, of course, possible to test the market again for future financial years.

Hillworth Park

There is a separate cost centre whilst the park is still subject to lottery support albeit minimal.

Cemetery

This reflects the cost and income for administering the Cemetery on behalf of the Joint Burial Committee.

Christmas Lights

Christmas Business Trees

This is a project to encourage an increase in the amount of Christmas lights displays in the town. Although the cost of the tree and the lights is covered by the charge made, there is also a staffing cost which is not covered. In past years, the Council have perceived this as a way to increase the lighting, subsidised by the business community.

Christmas Festival & Lights

This is the third year of a five-year contract with Flag and Flagpole.

Admin Support

All costs have been reviewed and it is hoped to be able to manage within these budgets. The cost is spread across all services. Provision of £2,500 is required to enable all users to work from the version of software.

Cemetery

This is the value of the funding demand from the Joint Burial Committee.

Community Safety

The Council has an agreed commitment to support the cost of the Town's CCTV system to a value of £18000.

Town Centre Management

Over the previous years the Town Council has been able to give significant support to groups who have taken on or run services, which manage town centre activities or functions. The 2015-16 financial year will be the third of a three year commitment that the Town Council has made towards the funding of an Events Coordinator at £10,000 pa.

Capital Expenditure

A number of significant capital projects have been identified.

New Roof – 26 The Brittox. The Council has agreed a two-year £15,000 commitment to replace the roof on 26 The Brittox. This will be provided at £7,500 over the next two budget years.

Paving the Chequers Garden. An additional amount of £5,000 is required to complete the works in the Chequers Garden.

Neighbourhood Planning. This is an ongoing commitment to ensure that the Town Council has a significant influence over future development in the town.

Parks Team equipment. A £6,000 spend on equipment to enable the Parks Team to continue their efficient operations. £5,000 of this relates to a ride on mower.

Venues equipment. A £2,100 spend on venues equipment, primarily a new Bain-marie, the current one being unfit for purpose.

Fire server. A provision of £6,300 is required for the replacement of the Town Council file server. The required update of Council software across all users can only be achieved by changing the file server..

Options Considered

The Council needs to decide if they accept the budget as presented.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The budget reflects the Council's ability to fund its Financial and Resource needs for the financial year 2015/16.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

In accordance with section 50 of the Local Government Finance act 1992, the Council must calculate its budget requirement, being the difference between its income and expenditure. This will allow the Town Council to set a precept in accordance with Section 41, of the Local Government Finance act 1992.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Not setting a budget would leave the Council open to challenge by the auditors for financial mismanagement.

In addition, the Council will not be able to set a precept and therefore will have its precept imposed by Wiltshire Council.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any implications Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

15. REPORT FOR DECISION – AGREE PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16

Recommendation

The Council are required to set the precept for the financial year 2015/2016 in accordance with the agreed budget for the same period.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is for the Council to pass a resolution setting the precept for financial year 2015/2016.

Background

Before this agenda item, the committee will have reviewed the proposed estimates for financial year 2015/2016.

In agreeing the budget, there is a calculation for the funding needed to fund the anticipated expenditure.

As with last year, with localisation of Council Tax there has been a reduction in the Council Tax base, which again in turn has reduced the amount of collectable income. Wiltshire Council will be passing on some of the Central Government grant.

The Committee are now required to formally agree this figure and set the level of precept for financial year 2015/2016 which will be served on Wiltshire Council.

Options Considered

Members are required to set a level of precept in line with the budget for financial year 2015/2016.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The precept underpins the agreed financial budget and therefore must be set in accordance with that budget.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

Under section 41 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council has a power to raise finance through local taxation.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with setting the 2015/2016 precept.

Risk Assessment

If the Council was not to set a precept, the Unitary Council has the power to set a precept on the Town Council's behalf. If this was to happen the Town Council might not be able to fund its agreed expenditure.

Crime and Disorder

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

16. REPORT FOR DECISION – QUALITY COUNCIL & LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

Recommendation

That the Council agrees whether to seek accreditation under the Local Council Award scheme, and if so to agree application for free accreditation under grandfather rights until January 2016 to allow for full accreditation at one of the three levels.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the Local Council Award Scheme, the successor of the Quality Council scheme, and to decide whether to seek accreditation at what level.

Background

Quality Council Scheme

The Government first introduced the Quality Council Scheme in 2003 with the aim of encouraging councils, on behalf of their communities, to have a greater say in the running and improvement of local services. The scheme was significantly revised in July 2008.

To attain Quality Council Status, a council had to demonstrate that it had the right attributes and the ability to take on the enhanced role and responsibility that Quality Council Status will bring.

Devizes Town Council qualified for Quality Council status in 2005 and reaccredited in 2010 which meant further reaccreditation was due in January 2014. However, during this period the whole scheme has been subject to a substantial review and Quality Council's have held that status until such time that a new revised scheme was launched

The Local Council Award Scheme

A new scheme has now been launched to replace the Quality Council Scheme, called the Local Council Award Scheme.

There are three levels of Award – Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold Existing Quality Councils have the option of registering for Foundation Award status under “grandfather rights” until end of December 2015. (Issued alongside doc 16/1 refer)

Foundation

The Foundation award is for councils who want to show they meet a set of minimum standards to deliver effectively for their communities. To meet this award the council demonstrates that it has the required documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. The council also has policies for training for its councillors and officers and so has the foundations for improvement and development in place. The Foundation award allows you to benchmark your performance as well as challenging you to consider your councils continuing development and improvement.

Quality

The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Quality councils go above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their communities and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further. To achieve the Quality Award a council demonstrates that it meets all requirements of the Foundation Award and has additional evidence of good governance, effective community engagement and council improvement. Due to the level of this achievement, a council with a Quality Award is eligible to use the general power of competence.

Quality Gold

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities,

bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.

With regard to the current operation of the Council, it would not be difficult to meet the Quality Gold Award. However, one of the key requirements is the publication of many documents on the Council's web site.

As the Council are aware, a new website is currently being created and officers are concerned that it would be a significant duplication of work were the Council to decide to seek accreditation at a higher level by the end of February 2015.

Were the Council to agree to take advantage of the 12 month Foundation Award level, it would allow officers to pull together the requirements of the higher levels of award as the new website is being developed.

Options Considered

It is recommended that the Council register for Foundation Award level until the end of December 2015 as a consequence of Quality Council Status with a view to applying for Quality or Quality Gold thereafter.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The financial implication is limited to the fees which are £50 for Foundation Standard, £100 for Quality Standard and £200 for Quality Gold Standard.

However, there are significant resource implications in drawing all of the requirements together. However, once the process has been undertaken, subsequent submissions should be less onerous.

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

The loss of accreditation may result in reputational damage for the Council and it is unclear whether the Council will lose the right to exercise the General Power of Competence following the

next elections should the Council not attain at least Quality Standard.

Crime and Disorder

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

17. REPORT FOR DECISION – SERVICE DELIVERY IN CONTEXT OF MISSION STATEMENT AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Recommendation

That the Council formally agrees that the current service delivery meets and supports the Council's agreed Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the outcomes of a recent Forward Planning session and formalise a decision through the democratic process.

Background

At its meeting on 7 October 2014 the Council adopted the following Mission Statement and Core Objectives

Mission Statement of Devizes Town Council

To maintain and improve, where possible, the character of the town for residents and visitors

Core Objectives

The Council is committed to working in partnership with statutory and voluntary bodies, groups, agencies and individuals in order to fulfil the following objectives

- *To promote and encourage improvements to the town's environment*
- *To support the delivery of accessible health and fitness facilities for the community*
- *To provide high quality, cost effective services that support the Council's Mission*
- *To ensure our public services are equally accessible to everyone in the community*
- *To provide a focus for the cultural and civic traditions which contribute to the unique identity of Devizes*

At the Forward Planning Session, held on Tuesday 2 December, members of the Council considered whether the services delivered by Devizes Town Council and the way in which the services are delivered support Council's Mission Statement by meeting at least one of the core objectives. The list of services is attached (doc 17 refers)

The view of the Forward Planning Session was that the services being delivered and the way in which they are delivered is appropriate and that no changes are required.

Officers will always explore more efficient and effective ways of delivering services, but members at this time expressed the view that there was no need for any significant changes in terms of reducing or increasing services or levels of service delivery.

Options Considered

The Council needs to decide if it adopts the views expressed in the Forward Planning Session, that the current services delivered by Devizes Town Council are appropriate and that the standard of service delivery is appropriate.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Financial implications are borne through the budget allocation process on the basis of services delivered

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

Consideration of service delivery and levels should reduce the risk of delivering services that do not support the Council's Mission Statement

Crime and Disorder

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

18. TO PASS THE FOLLOWING SEALING RESOLUTION

THAT the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to or the Town Clerk do sign on behalf of the Council where appropriate any Orders, Deeds or Documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters and recommendations contained in the reports received and adopted at this meeting or other decisions of the Council thereat.

19. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Town Mayor 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.

20. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions addressed to the Chairman concerning the administration, function or responsibilities of the Council or upon a matter, which was the subject of debate at the meeting.

A person may also be permitted to make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to local government, or to the Council's administration or upon a subject, which may be of general interest 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.



Town Clerk