



# Yeovil Town Council

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## Policy, Resources and Finance Committee

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

The Time... **7.00pm**

The Date... **Tuesday 26 January 2010**

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

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



*Alan Tawse*

Alan Tawse  
Town Clerk

20 January 2010

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

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

Philip Chandler (Ex-officio)

Clive Davis

Bridget Dollard

Tony Fife

Dave Gooding

John Grana

Dave Greene

Steve Hawker (Chairman)

Andrew Kendall

Pat Martin (Vice-Chairman)

Tom Parsley

Wes Read (Ex-officio)

David Recardo

Alan Smith

# **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 24 November 2009.

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

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

### **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

## **PAGES**

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

(Circulated separately)

### **6. CAPITAL FUND**

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### **7. BIRCHFIELD PARK – LIGHTING**

6 - 11

### **8. PROMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

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### **9. FINANCIAL STATEMENT – OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2009**

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

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Committee will be requested to pass a resolution excluding the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **10. INTERNAL AUDIT**

(Confidential report circulated to Members only)

## **6. CAPITAL FUND**

A copy of the updated Capital Fund statement is attached at page xx. The sum of £5,596 is currently available for allocation to new capital schemes.

### **Former Goldcroft Allotment Site**

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

Last November, 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 December meeting of the Town Council at which it was agreed that the disposal to the highest bidder be permitted to proceed.

### **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 have been 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 have 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 have now been 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 September meeting of the Town Council, at which it was agreed that the bid put forward by the Yeovil Community Church for the redevelopment of the site as a creative arts centre, which met the development brief, be supported in principle.

A progress report was submitted to the October meeting of the Town Council, at which it was agreed:

- (1) that further consideration be given to all of the financial aspects of the bid (including the expansion land at Site B) at a future meeting having due regard to the advice of the District Valuer, the District Auditor, and the Council's Solicitor;

(2) that the following Members be appointed to form a committee to oversee further discussions with representatives of the Church on the proposals, and the Town Clerk, the Council's Property Agent and the Council's Solicitor be authorised to undertake negotiations on behalf of the Town Council in consultation with the committee:

- Mayor
- Chairman of Policy, Resources and Finance Committee
- Vice-Chairman of Policy, Resources and Finance Committee
- Peter Gubbins
- Tom Parsley

(3) that the outcome of the discussions be reported to a future meeting of the Town Council.

Negotiations have commenced with representatives of the Church and the Steering Committee has met with Town Clerk, the Council's Property Agent and the Council's Solicitor following receipt of the District Valuer's report. The financial aspects of the bid are under active consideration and a further meeting is planned for early February, the outcome of which will be reported to the March meeting of the Town Council.

### **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.

### **Redevelopment of Milford Hall**

Tenders have been received for the delivery of this project, and it is anticipated that the appointed contractor will begin on site shortly. The redevelopment works are expected to be completed in September 2010 and their delivery will be overseen by a Project Management Board, on which the Town Council is represented by Andy Kendall and the Town Clerk.

### **Play Areas**

The District Council has confirmed that it has committed the following capital funding at the present time:

<b>Play Area</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Turner's Barn Lane						<b>NIL</b>
Yew Tree Park		£80,000				<b>£80,000</b>
Monks Dale Park			£15,000			<b>£15,000</b>
Milford Park				£20,000		<b>£20,000</b>
Summerhouse View						<b>NIL</b>
Preston Park				£12,500		<b>£12,500</b>
Howard Road Park						<b>NIL</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>NIL</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>£15,000</b>	<b>£32,500</b>	<b>NIL</b>	<b>£127,500</b>

The District Council has indicated that these figures are based on anticipated match-funding of 50% from the Town Council and that the revised list is a result of a districtwide prioritisation exercise that took into account the overall finance available.

It has also confirmed that the developer of a nearby new housing scheme has allocated £11,170 towards capital improvements at the Monks Dale Park play area which, when added to the combined pledged allocation of £30,000 from both authorities, will enable an enhanced scheme in the overall sum of £41,170 to proceed. A working group, which includes representatives of the local community and ward members, has been set up to oversee the delivery of this project.

The Town Council has agreed that its share of the cost of this particular scheme will be met from the anticipated capital receipt arising from the planned disposal of the former Goldcroft Allotment Site and, in the event that the receipt is delayed, the contribution be met instead from the General Reserve.

Tenders have been received for the planned upgrade of the Yew Tree Park play area, and the appointed contractor has started on site. Despite the recent adverse weather good progress is being made and arrangements are in hand for a formal opening to take place in April.

### **Recommendations**

Members are **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) to note the position concerning the Capital Fund; and
- (2) to note the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements.

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



## **7. BIRCHFIELD PARK – LIGHTING**

### **Introduction**

Last week, the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee considered the attached report of the Community Development Officer (SSDC), which sought funding towards the installation of improved lighting in Birchfield Park and improvements to the pathways in the Park. The proposals had been drawn up in response to recent member, public and agency concerns.

### **Proposals**

The Committee was asked to consider a contribution of £4,000 to the project, and it was confirmed that since the publication of the report, the County Councillor budget had been increased to £3,000 and that the Area South Community Safety Panel had also allocated £3,000. It was also noted that Yeovil Without Parish Council, whose administrative boundary bordered the site, was due to consider a funding request that evening. (The Parish Council subsequently agreed to allocate £2,000 to the project).

It was noted that the application for a £86,000 SSDC capital grant had yet to be determined. However, it was pointed out that a contribution from the Town Council would increase the chances of this bid being successful as bids with external funding sources score higher than those relying solely on District Council funds.

The Committee was advised that the remaining balance of this year's Town Council Community Safety budget amounted to £3,720, and they agreed to allocate these funds towards the estimated £13,000 cost of lighting improvements.

They further agreed to request the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee to allocate an additional £4,280 from Contingencies to enable an overall contribution of £8,000 to be made towards the lighting improvements in the current financial year.

The Community Development Worker confirmed at the meeting that the project would not commence until the 2010/11 financial year, and it was noted that any funds allocated by the Town Council in the current financial year would need to be carried forward into 2010/11 and added to any that the Council may decide to allocate from that financial year's budgets.

### **Funding Options**

The unallocated balance of the Contingencies Fund currently stands at £19,000. However, there are two months remaining in the current financial year and at this stage it is difficult to predict what future calls may be made on this Fund.

Given the fact that funding towards the project is not required in the current financial year, an alternative way of financing the additional £4,280 sought by the Committee would be to ask the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee at their next meeting on 23 March to carry forward any identified underspends in their other budgets - by which time the Committee's final outturn will be known. Any shortfall could be met from a carry forward from the balances in the Contingencies Fund.

Another option would be to ask the Committee to allocate funds from its 2010/11 budget, which has been set at £4,380. However, this would result in almost the entire budget for that year being allocated to this particular scheme if this was the only source of funding used for this purpose.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the request from the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee.

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

## **Birchfield Park Lighting (Executive Decision / Key Decision)**

<i>Strategic Director:</i>	<i>Rina Singh, Strategic Director – Place and Performance</i>
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	<i>Martin Woods, Assistant Director - Communities</i>
<i>Service Manager:</i>	<i>Kim Close, Area Development Manager - South</i>
<i>Lead Officer:</i>	<i>Natalie Ross, Community Development Officer</i>
<i>Contact Details:</i>	<i>natalie.ross@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462956</i>

### **Purpose of the Report**

Request funding towards the installation of lighting in Birchfield Park and towards improvements to the pathways across the park.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- (1) That members agree to allocate funding towards the project.

### **Background**

The Birchfield park is situated on a former landfill site known as Birchfield Disused Landfill Site and is owned by South Somerset District Council (SSDC) and managed by the Council's Environment Department. The site is a large area of predominantly open space divided into two parts by Lyde Road at the eastern end of Yeovil. Historically this land formed a valley that was used as a landfill site, the last tipping occurring around 1984. Through this period the valley was filled in an easterly direction and in some places the refuse is some 17m deep particularly at the lower end (east) of the site.

SSDC acquired the site from Somerset County Council (SCC) over 20 years ago for use as open space and playing fields, although eventually ground conditions proved unsuitable for the latter. The site is used extensively as open space and connects with the Country Park at the eastern end of the site adjacent to the River Yeo.

### **Project Detail**

There have been recent member, public and agency concerns regarding lighting at Birchfield Park. In response a recent meeting has taken place between officers and SSDC members to explore the situation and suggest a potential way forward.

Birchfield Park forms an important green corridor on the eastern side of Yeovil separating two densely populated residential areas, around Lyde Road and Cavalier Way, and between Lyde Road and Birchfield Road.

Pedestrian routes have been established through the park and now form an important part of the footpath network for residents, linking homes, shops, schools, pubs and other community facilities.

These routes are well used, as they provide direct links to all the facilities described above, and the alternative routes around the road network are less direct.

Lighting on the two principal east west and north south routes has been provided by the council, but the lighting is susceptible to vandalism and is concentrated around the school area.

The result is there are frequently lights that are not working, and when they are repaired they often are broken shortly after. The paths themselves are adequate but narrow in places and the surface would benefit from improvement.

In July 2008, the Birchfield community survey identified the need for:-

- More lighting at night and more bins
- Bigger and better playground
- Lights near the park
- Birchfield Park to be cleaned and new equipment

The local beat manager has also confirmed that these issues have been raised during his beat surgeries with residents. The lack of appropriate lighting in the area increases residents' fear of crime.

This project will enhance the local path network around this vital pedestrian link for the local community, as shown on the plan attached at page 11. Whilst there are existing paths and lighting in the area this is predominantly in the eastern end of the Park around the school and play area. This infrastructure was put in place some 30 years or so ago and is in need of updating. The paths are relatively narrow and the lighting is subject to vandalism, which is not helped by the design of the columns and the lantern heads.

The proposal will provide a shared surface pedestrian/cycle route running west to east along the spine of the park and will link in with the local services at Birchfield Road and the new infrastructure including cycle paths from the Lyde Road key site, the construction of which is underway at the moment.

It will also improve two of the existing paths running north to south and provide new more robust lighting to these paths.

Maintenance costs (potential settlement) for the first 3 years have been built into the project costs and shown in the appropriate area of this document.

With regards to the issue of siting the lamp columns on the landfill site, the risk is considered low by designing out the hazard. The main hazard and therefore risk would be for landfill gas to permeate from the ground and up into the lamp column at levels considered to be a hazard. On switching on/off a spark could be produced igniting this gas. This potential pathway would be designed out by sealing both the lamp column and the ducts serving the lamp and therefore would remove the need for intrinsically safe switchgear. The new cable runs will be where possible out of the landfill site area and therefore reducing the risk further.

## **Anticipated Benefits**

The project would have the following benefits: -

- Encourage people to travel between school, homes, shops, medical centre and community facilities on foot rather than take the car.
- Reduce fear of crime and improve community safety in the area.
- The lighting would be designed to minimise vandalism.

- This investment would demonstrate further commitment to this part of Yeovil which is going to complement the work done in the community to start the Community Association, and the investment that will take place in the play area shortly.
- Schools are increasingly being used outside of school hours for after school clubs etc and this will provide a well lit path to the school for this purpose.
- The scheme sets out to provide a shared surface pedestrian / cycle link between the school and Lyde Road. The benefits of a cycle route are in terms of health and well-being, off road cycling and linking to the proposed cycle route to be produced by the Lyde Road key site development.

## **Total Project Cost: -**

### **Phase 1**

1. To widen/tidy edges of north to south path to east of school  
Cost around **£6,500**
2. To widen/tidy edges of the north to south path to north of school  
Cost around **£2,000**
3. To provide a shared surface cycle path in front of school  
Cost around **£32,000**
4. To replace the existing lights with new columns and lanterns  
Cost around **£13,000**

Total Phase 1 **£54,000**

### **Phase 2**

1. Extending the shared surface (cycle & pedestrians) path above including lighting

Total Phase 2 **£40,000**

## **Funding**

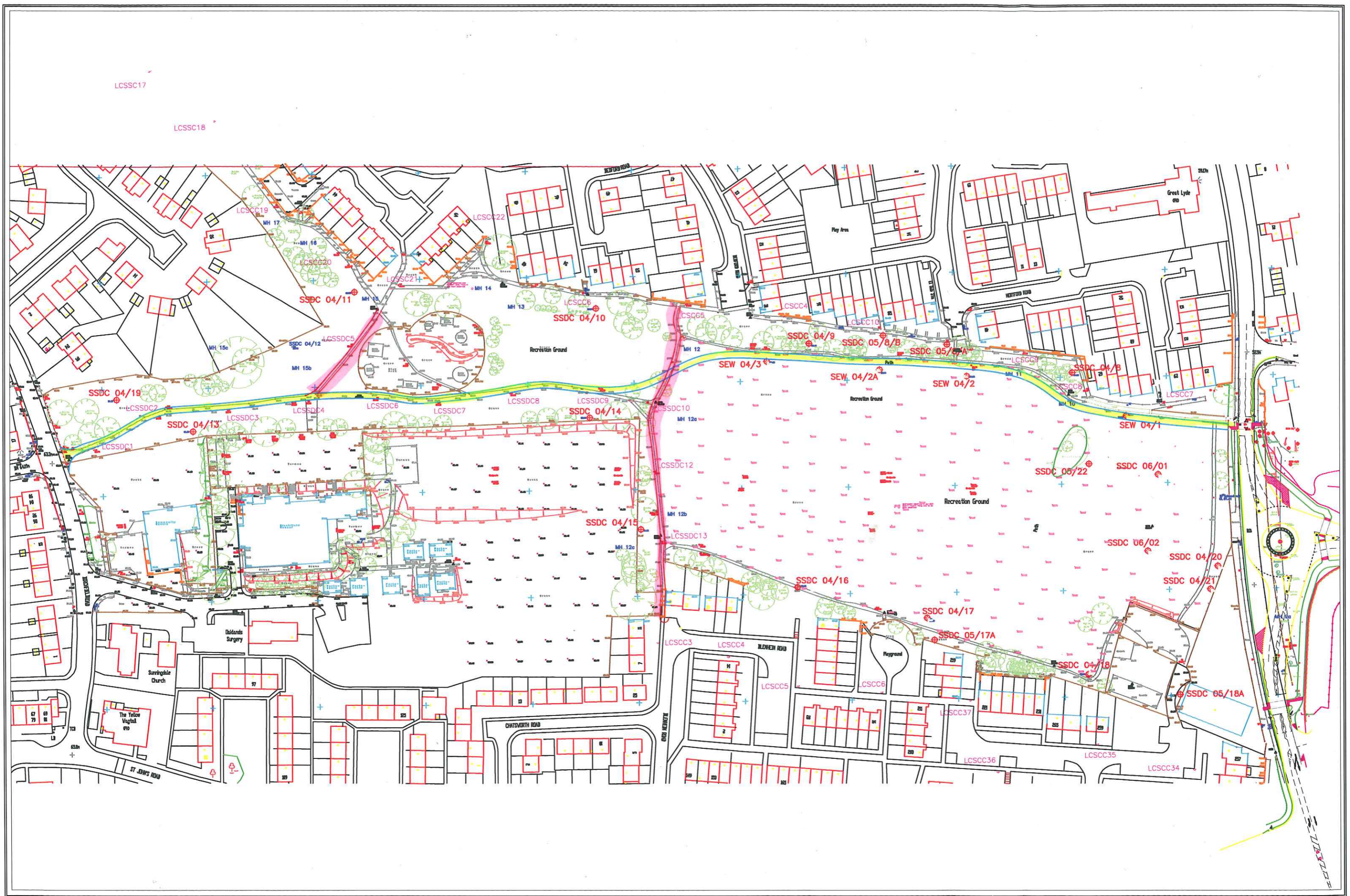
£2,000 from County Councillor Budget – secured  
 £86,000 SSDC capital grant – requested  
 £2,000 Area South Community Safety Action Panel – requested  
 £4,000 – This application

A contribution from Yeovil Town Council would help to increase the likelihood of the SSDC capital bid being successful, as bids with external funding sources score much higher than those relying solely on SSDC capital funds.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

**Background Papers:** None



Date	Amendments	Ints
JAN 07	additional boreholes added (SSDC/06/1 to 1D) & butyl barrier plotted	1/c

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Project  
**BIRCHFIELD DISUSED LANDFILL SITE**

Drawing  
 Update to lights & footpaths  
 Survey Plan

**South Somerset District Council**  
 Engineering & Property Services



Drawing No.	AS/064/25
Drawn by	IJC
Date	Sept. 2009
Scales	1 : 500
Plotter scale	1 : 1
Template Updater	Jan 2009

## **8. PROMOTIONS AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

### **Introduction**

At the last meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, reference was made to the merits of disbanding the Promotions and Activities Committee and the potential savings that might arise therefrom.

It was proposed that the matter be considered during the January cycle of meetings to give all the committees that would be affected by such a change an opportunity to consider the matter and express their views to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee before a decision was made by the Town Council.

### **History**

The Promotions and Activities Committee was established by the Town Council in May 2004, and was allocated a number of subsumed duties from other committees of the Council which continue to exist. The following extract from the current Delegation Scheme sets out the Committee's current terms of reference and highlights the previous arrangements. It is assumed that should the Committee be disbanded, these would be returned to their originating body:

- (v) **Promotions and Activities Committee**
  - (a) *Yeovil in Bloom. (GGM)*
  - (b) *Development of Town Centre initiatives, activities and events. (NEW)*
  - (c) *Yeovil Town Centre Partnership. (PRF)*
  - (d) *Town Centre Streetscene development. (NEW)*
  - (e) *Festive Lights. (PRF)*
  - (f) *Publication of town guide and other promotional literature. (BCM)*
  - (g) *Customised Souvenirs. (BCM)*
  - (h) *Policy on Banners in the Town Centre and use of the Entertainments Area. (P&L)*
  - (i) *Town Crier - appointment, conditions of service, uniform and the Annual Town Criers' Competition. (BCM)*
  - (j) *Policy on requests for the use of the Town Crest. (NEW)*

As indicated above, two *new* responsibilities were added to the Committee's remit upon its inception, namely:

- (b) *Development of Town Centre initiatives, activities and events*
- (d) *Town Centre Streetscene development*

The following *additional* responsibility was subsequently added at the suggestion of the Committee:

- (j) *Policy on requests for the use of the Town Crest*

Should the Promotions and Activities Committee be disbanded, these would need to be transferred to an alternative committee's remit.

### **Costs**

A detailed analysis has been carried out of the costs of administering the Promotions and Activities Committee, which has taken into account the additional costs that would be incurred should it be disbanded and its responsibilities dealt with by the other four committees of the Town Council.

Estimated savings in staff overtime of £305 per annum would be achieved along with £300 in administrative costs (including stationery, postage, photocopying, heating and lighting) which equates to an overall total of £605 per year.

### **Budgetary Issues**

It is assumed that should the Committee be disbanded, the relevant budgets would be incorporated into the appropriate committee which takes on the allocated responsibilities.

The proposal, if implemented, would cause no problems for the Town Council's SAGE financial reporting and monitoring system and again, the relevant budget headings and income and expenditure would be incorporated into the appropriate committee's spreadsheets, which are presented to members on a regular basis.

### **Views of Service Committees**

The Services Committees have all been given an opportunity to consider the matter during the January cycle of meetings, and their views are set out below:

#### ***Grounds and General Maintenance Committee***

*Supports the disbanding of the Committee, which it felt had run its course, and recommended that its delegated responsibilities be transferred back to the originating committees, and that the following new responsibilities be allocated as indicated:*

- (b) Development of Town Centre initiatives, activities and events (PRF)*
- (d) Town Centre Streetscene development (BCM)*
- (j) Policy on requests for the use of the Town Crest (BCM)*

#### ***Promotions and Activities Committee***

*The following points emerged from the discussion:*

**Points in Favour:**

- *Poor attendance over a number of months*
- *Much of the work of Yeovil in Bloom undertaken by the Steering Group, which would continue to exist*
- *Not much of substance on the agenda in recent months*
- *Additional work to Councillors' already busy diaries*
- *Committee has run its course*
- *An additional, unnecessary, administrative expense*
- *Budget seemed to be pre-determined – not much scope for new initiatives*
- *Cost savings*

**Points Against:**

- *Committee has successfully promoted Town Council*
- *If disbanded, projects might be overshadowed by other Council business*
- *Council would lose 'legacy' of successful projects*
- *In disbanding the Committee, there would only be a relatively small financial saving*
- *It would reduce representation on the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee*
- *May overburden workloads of other Committees*

*Rather than disbanding the Committee, Members felt that a comprehensive review be undertaken of all of the Council's service committees to establish whether all four committees are necessary and whether the responsibilities are equitably spread and correctly allocated; and that a working group comprising the Chairmen of the four service committees along with the Mayor, be requested to undertake the review and report its findings back to the Council.*

**Planning and Licensing Committee**

*The following points emerged from the discussion:*

**Points in Favour:**

- *Poor attendance*
- *Not much on the agenda – short meetings*
- *Sub-Committees run themselves – they could report to any of the main service committees*
- *Budget seemed to be pre-determined – not much scope for funding new initiatives*
- *Cost savings*

**Points Against:**

- *Committee has track record of successfully promoting the Town*

- *Ongoing/future P&A projects may lose their prominence*
- *Benefit of having a Committee dedicated to promoting the Town*
- *There would only be a relatively small financial saving*
- *May lead to the other service committees having much longer agendas*
- *P&A would lose its collective voice, i.e. a number of the elements in the Committee's remit complement each other and are better managed by a single committee*

*The Committee felt that the P&A Committee should continue in its present form.*

### **Buildings and Civic Matters Committee**

*The following points emerged from the discussion:*

#### **Points in Favour:**

- *Will help to bolster workload of other service committees*
- *Will help to free up Councillors' already busy diaries*
- *Need to change arrangements to reflect changed circumstances*
- *Cost savings*

#### **Points Against:**

- *Committee has helped to ease the burden on other committees by spreading the Council's workload – its disbanding may overburden the workloads of other Committees*
- *In disbanding the Committee, there would only be a relatively small financial saving*
- *There may be a negative impact on the delivery of its functions as a number of the Committee's areas of responsibility complement each other and are better managed by a single committee*

*Rather than disbanding the Committee, Members felt that a comprehensive review be undertaken of all of the Council's service committees to establish whether all four committees are necessary and whether the responsibilities are equitably spread and correctly allocated; and that a working group comprising the Chairmen of the four service committees, the Chairman of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee and the Mayor, be requested to undertake the review and report its findings back to the Council.*

### **Way Forward**

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to consider the matter taking into consideration the views of the service committees, and to express its views to the forthcoming meeting of the Town Council.

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