



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SUMMONS

To: Cllr Harvey (Chairman), Cllr Pestell (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Cook, Cllr Hicks, Cllr Lewer and Cllr Proctor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the General Management Committee to be held on Tuesday 19th November 2013 at 7:00pm in the Mayor's Parlour. *Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: the three aims of the general duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty (eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.*

.....
Nicola Duke -Town Clerk
12th November 2013

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council and Committees, unless specifically excluded due to the confidential nature of the business. Enquiries to Nicola Duke on 01747 852420 or email nicolajduke@shaftesburytowncouncil.co.uk

AGENDA

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

01. Apologies for Absence

- a) To receive apologies from those unable to attend
- b) To consider for acceptance apologies from those unable to attend

02. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations to participate

- a) To receive declarations of interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers and the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members.
- b) To receive any dispensation requests received by the Town Clerk and not previously considered.

03. Open Forum

Members of the public are invited to address the Council on matters relating to this parish

04. Updates

- a) To report any significant information on matters not included on this agenda or delegated to the Council, a Committee or a working group, such information to be received but not debated
 - i. Town Clerk
 - ii. Councillors

- b) To agree any attendances required at meetings additional to those scheduled in the Council's calendar

05. Correspondence

To receive and note any correspondence relating to the business of the General Management Committee.

BUSINESS ITEMS

06. Shaftesbury Leisure Facilities – Football and Tennis Clubs

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Town Clerk will provide an update to the Committee in respect of the Clubs' request for leases for land and/or buildings at Coppice St. *Please note a meeting is being arranged with stakeholders' week commencing 11th November 2013 and relevant information will be sent to members following this meeting.*

07 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Town Clerk will submit advice on the process for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor to the Town Council (paper attached) and members are asked to agree an appointment process for recommendation to Full Council.

08 Local Councils Annual Return for the year to end 31 March 2014

The Town Clerk will submit advice regarding the completion of the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/2014 (paper attached) and members are asked to consider recommending an order for an external audit of the Town Council's governance controls in order to develop improvement measures for the weaknesses identified.

09 Shaftesbury Community Speedwatch Group

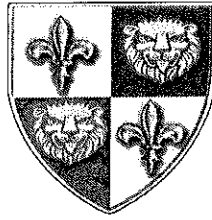
Cllr Tippins will submit a request for the release of £300 to purchase kit for a speed watch at Longcross (paper attached).

10 Grounds Team - capital purchase request

The Town Clerk will submit a request from the Grounds Team for capital purchase of equipment (paper attached). Members are asked to consider approving release of the required capital funds totalling £12,400.

11. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

To receive information from NDDC in respect of the above scheme, an update from the Cabinet meeting of 4 November 2013 and to consider any submission the Committee may wish to make to NDDC in respect of the proposals to not pass on the Transitional Relief Grant for 2014/2015.



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2013

AGENDA ITEM 2013/07 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Report author:	Barbara Carter, Project Officer
Purpose of report:	To provide members with a description of requirements and selection process for the appointment of a new Internal Auditor
Financial Implications:	Budgetary allocation: Legal & Professional, Audit
Statutory Authority:	Accounts & Audit Regulations 2006 s 6
Appendices:	Appendix 9 of the PG Governance and Accountability for Local Councils, the Internal Audit Service plan for 2012/2013, the Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit 2012/2013, the Terms of Reference for the Internal Auditor 2012/2013 (please note the papers for the audit of the financial year 2013/2014 will be presented to Council in March 2014)

The Town Council will need to establish an agreed description of the services required of its Internal Auditor, in order for quotations for the appointment be on a like-for-like basis.

This document should include:

- The completion of audit work as set out in appendix 9 of the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils (Practitioner's Guide).
- Completion of s4 of the annual return for submission to the Audit Commission within statutory timescales.
- The provision of an agreed Internal Audit Plan.
- The provision of a report on the results of audit testing, noting significant finds and related recommendations (if any).
- Interim in year Audits and site visits (to be determined).
- To carry out a Risk Assessment on the Council's financial systems and day to day internal controls, as required.
- Each area of provision to be costed separated to enable selection of the service options to meet the needs of the Council.

The submission should include ways of working with the Council, and how they would meet the criteria for the appointment.

The Auditor should be fully qualified, holding CIPFA, FICA, ACCA, FMAAT or other relevant qualification, together with a license to practice and full Professional Indemnity insurance cover. They should also have a strong background in audit and governance within Local Authorities.

Members are asked to consider forming a selection panel for the appointment of an Internal Auditor and this selection should be recommended to Full Council for ratification. It would be appropriate for the Committee to consider appointing the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman together with one independent member of the Council.

The selection panel will need to work with Mrs Carter to:

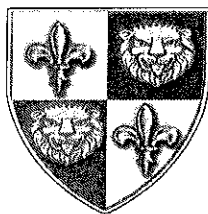
- Consider the appropriateness of the four identified companies/individuals for inclusion in the selection process
- Consider alternatives to those identified and consider the appropriateness of advertising for the post
- Agree the tender documents/ adverts to be issued
- Agree which documents they wish to receive from the applicants and in what format
- Agree how the tenders received will be assessed
- Agree those companies/individuals to invite to interview
- Agree the interview process and questions to be asked. Suggested areas of focus for the Selection Panel are:
 1. Qualifications
 2. Current and previous experience working with Town Councils
 3. How they would work with the Council to provide Internal Audit services.
 4. Other services they would be able to provide, over and above the basic Audit and completion of the Annual Return for submission to the Audit Commission – that may be required from time to time by the Council.
 5. Additional costs i.e. Travel

Appendix 9 – An approach to internal audit testing

- 1 The council will determine the scope and coverage of the work to be carried out by internal audit in accordance with proper practices guidance. Internal audit testing of internal controls will be sufficient for the proper completion of the annual internal audit report. The annual internal audit report should provide an adequate level of assurance for the council to complete assertions 2 and 6 in its annual governance statement.
- 2 In completing the annual report at section 4 of the annual return, internal audit will have planned and carried out the work necessary to give the assurances called for. The ten key control tests in the annual report represent the minimum level of internal audit coverage required. Additional testing and reporting should be tailored to local circumstances.
- 3 Internal audit work always requires the application of judgement and should only be carried out following risk assessment. The scope and frequency of testing should reflect that assessment, and therefore should always be in proportion to the likelihood of fraud, error or misstatement that could occur. It should be directly related to the size and level of business activity of the council.
- 4 The following schedule suggests an approach to the testing of key internal controls to provide assurance that the minimum level of coverage has been met.

Internal Control	Suggested testing
Proper bookkeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the cashbook maintained and up to date? • Is the cashbook arithmetic correct? • Is the cashbook regularly balanced?
a) standing orders and financial regulations adopted and applied; and b) payments controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the council formally adopted standing orders and financial regulations? • Has a Responsible finance officer been appointed with specific duties? • Have items or services above the de minimus amount been competitively purchased? • Are payments in the cashbook supported by invoices, authorised and minuted? • Has VAT on payments been identified, recorded and reclaimed? • Is s137 expenditure separately recorded and within statutory limits?
Risk management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity? • Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment? • Is insurance cover appropriate and adequate? • Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?
Budgetary Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept? • Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council? • Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?
Income Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is income properly recorded and promptly banked? • Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification? • Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?
Petty cash procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts? • Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting? • Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?

Internal Control	Suggested testing
Payroll Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all employees have contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions? • Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council? • Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council? • Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?
Assets controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care? • Are the assets and Investments registers up to date? • Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?
Bank Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a bank reconciliation for each account? • Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion? • Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation? • Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?
Year-end procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are year-end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (Receipts and Payments or Income and Expenditure)? • Do accounts agree with the cashbook? • Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts? • Where appropriate, have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?



**SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL
THURSDAY 14TH MARCH 2013**

AGENDA ITEM 2013/125 – INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE PLAN 2012/2013

Report author: Nicola Merefield
Purpose of report: To advise members of the internal audit service plan being carried out for year ending 31st March 2013

Introduction

1. In accordance with best practice an internal audit programme of work has been devised, after taking into consideration the following: the Council's priorities, the risks to Council services as identified by officers and members and the requirements of the external auditor.
2. This report details the areas of council administration recommended for inclusion in the draft internal audit service plan for 2012/2013.

Key Financials

1. Cash and bank procedures
2. Cheque control
3. Accounts payable and procurement
4. Payroll
5. Precept
6. Accounts receivable
7. Petty cash system
8. Budgetary control
9. Financial regulations
10. Service charges – hall hire, burial, rentals including street markets, public conveniences

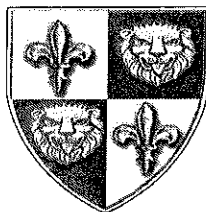
Other Key Systems

1. Corporate governance

2. Risk management
3. Strategic and annual planning
4. Community grants
5. Service Level Agreements
6. Section 137 payments
7. General IT controls review
8. Disaster Recovery planning
9. Internet and file security
10. Value added tax
11. Partnerships and Service Level Agreements
12. Insurances
13. Capital accounting
14. Members allowances and expenses
15. Project management control
16. Loans owing to the Town Council

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to consider the draft audit plan for 2012/2013 for approval.



**SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL
THURSDAY 14TH MARCH 2013**

**AGENDA ITEM 2013/125c – REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL
AUDIT**

Report title:	Review of the effectiveness of the internal audit
Report author:	Nicola Merefield - Town Clerk
Date of meeting:	14 th March 2013
Purpose of report:	To review the effectiveness of the internal audit
Statutory Authority:	Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006
Financial Implication:	None
Recommendations:	That the Committee consider and adopt the report

Introduction

1. Shaftesbury Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
2. In discharging this overall responsibility the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
3. The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level and is based on an ongoing process to manage those risks efficiently and economically.

Legislative framework

1. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 introduced a new requirement for smaller bodies to undertake each year a review of the effectiveness of their internal audit.

2. The purpose of this regulation is to ensure that a smaller relevant body understands the role of the internal auditor and ensures that this person is auditing the key risk areas relevant to that smaller relevant body.
3. The requirement requires the findings of the review of the system of internal control to be considered by a committee of the relevant body. In the case of Shaftesbury Town Council this responsibility lies with Full Council.
4. The requirement for the findings of the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control does not require the establishment of an audit committee to carry out the review.
5. A key point is that it is the responsibility of the body to conduct the annual review; it is not a review that will be carried out by the external auditor as part of the annual audit.

The content of the review

1. The review is an assessment made against the internal audit standards and includes making an assessment in relation to:
 - Scope of Internal Audit
 - Independence
 - Competence
 - Relationships
 - Audit planning and reporting
2. The effectiveness of the internal audit should not, however, solely be judged by the extent of the compliance with proper practice. The review is primarily about effectiveness, not process. In essence, the focus of the review should be on the delivery of the internal audit service to the required standard in order to produce the required outcome i.e. an assurance on internal control and the management of risks in the body that can be relied on.

Sources of evidence in support of the review of the system of internal audit

1. There are many possible sources of evidence. In Shaftesbury Town Council the following apply:
 - Annual report of the Internal Audit
 - Any reports by the external auditor covering internal audit work
 - Results of the annual risk assessment review, on which reliance may safely be placed

The Review

Scope of Internal Audit

1. Terms of reference were approved in March 2012 and should be considered and confirmed or altered by the Council as part of this review. (Paper attached)
2. The Internal Auditor takes into account risk management and annually reviews the Risk Assessments undertaken by the council both in terms of general operating systems and financial control. The Internal Auditor includes a statement on the council's risk management in his annual report to council.

Independence

1. The Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance and this is supported by the council's financial regulations, which are reviewed on an annual basis.
2. The Internal Auditor makes independent, self generated reports to the council.
3. The Internal Auditor does not have any other role within the council beyond the annual assessment of the clerk's role as Responsible Finance Officer. The Internal Auditor when required to give advice or reports to council and its committee does so as an independent professional and is not in possession of a vote.

Competence

1. The Internal Auditor is suitably qualified for carrying out the duties of the internal auditor.
2. There has been no evidence that internal audit work has not been carried out ethically, with integrity and objectivity.

Relationships

1. The Responsible Finance Officer is consulted on the internal audit plan and on the scope of each audit.
2. Responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters. These responsibilities are laid out within the council's financial regulations, now incorporated within the Council Constitution, and are reviewed annually as part of the internal audit process.
3. The responsibilities of council members are understood.

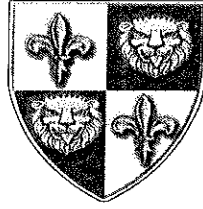
4. The Internal Auditor understands Shaftesbury Town Council and the legal and corporate framework within which it works.

Audit planning and reporting

1. The Audit Plan takes account of corporate risk. The proposed audit plan for 2012/2013 has listed for consideration under agenda item 125b for approval by Council prior to commencement of the yearend audit following 31 March 2013.
2. The Internal Auditor reports in accordance with the plan laid down by the council and in accordance with the guidance received from the Audit Commission.
3. The Internal Auditor maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The review of the internal audit has confirmed its effectiveness and members are therefore advised to continue with the current arrangements for the yearend audit 2012/2013 and for the coming financial year.
2. A further review will take place annually prior to the completion of the internal audit.
3. Members are asked to consider and confirm the Internal Auditor's Terms of Reference as attached.



**SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM 2013/125c APPENDIX 1**

TERMS OF REFERENCE – INTERNAL AUDITOR

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with statutory requirements the Town Council has appointed an Internal Auditor.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. That Mr Lumb is appointed as Internal Auditor to Shaftesbury Town Council under the 'lighter touch' audit regulations.
2. That the Internal Auditor is responsible for ensuring an adequate system of internal control and governance and for reporting to the Town Council his findings and recommendations in relation to the control environment.
3. That the Internal Auditor undertakes an audit on the yearend accounts of the Town Council, including an audit of the Annual Return and the areas of administration highlighted in the council's audit plan.
4. That the Internal Auditor provides advice to the Council, as and when required, on any of the above listed.

Section 2 – Annual governance statement 2012/13

We acknowledge as the members of:

SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2013, that:

Statement	Response	Explanation
1 We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.	Y	prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.
2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Y	made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances.	Y	has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.
4 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Y	during the year has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the council's accounts.
5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Y	considered the financial and other risks it faces and has dealt with them properly.
6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems.	Y	arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of the council.
7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Y	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Y	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.
9 Trust funds (including charitable) – in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Y	has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

This annual governance statement is approved by the council and recorded as minute reference

2013/22c

dated 04/06/2013

Signed by:

Chair

dated

19-6-13

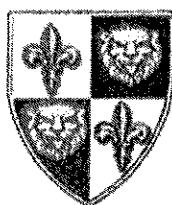
Signed by:

Clerk

dated

19-6-13

***Note:** Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response. Describe how the council will address the weaknesses identified.



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2013

AGENDA ITEM 2013/08 – LOCAL COUNCILS ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR END 31 MARCH 2014

Report author:	Nicola Duke, Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To provide members with the opportunity to consider recommending an order for an external audit of the Town Council's governance controls
Financial Implication:	Anticipated costs of £2,000. Costs would need to be met from the Contingency Fund of which just over £2,000 remains available
Statutory authority:	Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006

The Town Council's accounts and governance controls are audited on an annual basis. The Internal Auditor completes the Internal Audit in May and the Annual Return is then passed to the External Auditor.

There are two parts to the Annual Return:

1. The Accounting Statements
2. The Annual Governance Statement

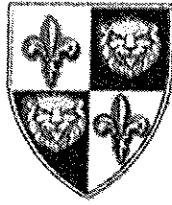
Part 1 lists the Council's receipts, staff costs, payments and assets for the year.

Part 2 asks the Council to acknowledge its responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of internal control. There are nine statements that the Council is required to answer either Yes or No to. A copy of the Annual Governance Statement for 2012/2013 is attached.

Members will be aware of recent issues surrounding the installation of the Rifles Monument on Park Walk. It became apparent that, due to the site being an Ancient Scheduled Monument, the siting of the structure in this location was unlawful. In considering the matter it is the opinion of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) that this has placed the Town Council in a position whereby it cannot answer Yes to Question 3. In other words, the Town Council cannot state that it has only done things it has the legal power to do.

The Town Council will therefore have to state No in response to this Question on the Annual Return for the financial year ending 31 March 2014. This will almost certainly result in the Town Council's accounts being qualified for this year.

In order to address this risk it is the recommendation of the RFO that the Committee requests Full Council endorsement on an order for an external audit of the Town Council's governance controls in order that improvement measures can be identified. Such an audit to be carried out by the external auditor, BDO Stoy Hayward, as soon as practicable with a report to be issued to Full Council on completion of the audit.



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2013

AGENDA ITEM 2013/09 – SHAFTESBURY COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH GROUP

Report author:	Nicola Duke, Town Clerk – <i>please note that Cllr Tippins will speak to this agenda item</i>
Purpose of Report:	To provide members with the opportunity to consider the release of £300 for the provision of speedwatch equipment as detailed in the report
Financial Implication:	£300 – funding could be vired from the Revenue Budget for Local Delivery Repairs and Maintenance which is currently showing an underspend.
Statutory authority:	Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s 30

Cllr Tippins has been working with residents to establish a Community Speed Watch in Longcross. The group wishes to purchase the CSW kit which includes; radar gun, hi-vis jackets.

Officers have verified that the statutory provision exists for this expenditure and identified a sum of money available for the purchase of the kit.

Cllr Tippins will speak to the request to provide the detail behind the request and members are then asked to consider the appropriate release of funds.



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2013
AGENDA ITEM 2013/10 - NEW GROUNDS EQUIPMENT

Report author:	Barbara Carter, Project Officer
Purpose of report:	To provide members quotations for the provision of new Grounds Equipment
Financial Implications:	Budgetary allocation: Equipment Replacement Fund, Commuted Sum – Grounds Equipment and Commuted Sum – Eastern Development
Statutory Authority:	OSA 1906 s 10
Appendices:	Clerks report for the ROSE meeting held on 16 th April 2013, Agenda item 09

The Recreation, Open Spaces and Environment Committee on 16th April 2013 Resolved the following:

09. The committee considered the report circulated. Cllr Harvey **PROPOSED**, Cllr Dibben **SECONDED** and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that subject to receipt of commuted sums from NDDC, grounds equipment be purchased for 2013/2013: Rotating brush and grit dispenser £4250, Trailer £1,000, 2 x small mowers £1,300, Wheeled strimmer £500, Small strimmer £600, cutting deck £3,000, mini tractor £10,000. (*Policy – 0413/ROSE/9*) (*Statutory Authority – OSA 1906 s.10*) (*Financial Implication - £3,000 Equipment Replacement Fund, up to £7,000 – Commuted Sum Grounds Equipment, £10,000 Commuted Sum Eastern Development*) (*Public Sector Equality Duty – Due consideration of the duty was given*)

Quotations have been obtained from three suppliers of Agricultural Equipment.

Two quotes are for the supply of new machines and attachments:

1. Iseki tractor and loader, together with a rotary topper £18,095 +VAT
2. Kioti Tractor and loader, together with a rotary topper £14,620 +VAT

One quotation has been obtained for a second hand Kubota tractor and new rotary topper at a cost of £11,745 +VAT. Other equipment quoted: second hand Twoose hedge trimmer and a Kubota tractor mounted road brush £3,665 +VAT. Total cost: £15,410 +VAT.

The quotation for a Kubota tractor with a rotary topper, hedge trimmer and road brush, is the preferred option. Kubota is a well known, reputable make and spares are readily available. This supplier is locally based, and will include ongoing after sales service. This supplier already provides the Council with their services for the Council's other agricultural machinery.

Advantages of the Grounds team having their own Tractor complete with front loader, brushes, hedge trimmer and grass topper;

- A Multi Purpose vehicle
- Reduce the cost of using outside contractors for Hedge cutting etc.
- The provision of a larger deck will reduce grass cutting time on larger areas.
- Use of brushes to aid with snow and leaf clearing
- The vehicle will be available when it is needed, rather than told when we can use it. Sharing with a neighbouring Council would not be practical.
- The Tractor and attachments would be an investment for the Council, as they tend to hold their value when re-selling.
- Will be beneficial as the Council will be prepared when its takes over the areas of land from NDDC once they have been transferred, as extra machinery will be needed to cope.
- More time would be freed up for the Grounds team to concentrate on other areas and to help keep staffing costs down.
- One person would be required to do some jobs, where as it takes two at the moment.
- Have not been able to obtain like for like quotation on a second hand tractor, only new. This tractor appears to be in excellent condition and very reasonably priced from a local company, who offer a good after sales service.
- Storage will be in the Grounds Unit at Barton Hill, once additional security measures and improvements have been made.



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE RECREATION, OPEN SPACES AND ENVIROMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 16TH APRIL 2013
AGENDA ITEM 09 – GROUNDS

Report author: Claire Commons
Statutory Authority: OSA 1906 s 10
Financial Implication: As listed
Public Sector Equality Duty: None

Summary of meeting with grounds team:

Andy tells us that his original idea for a snow plough needs amending and he wishes to purchase a rotating brush and gritting attachment to fit on the mini tractor. The cost of these taking off the trade in value of the pedestrian hoover and gritter is in the region of £4250. The CS Committee had allocated £2000 for the purchase of a snow plough and the new plan therefore leaves them £2250 short.

REFERRAL TO ROSE: That the sum of £2,500 is allocated from the Grounds Capital Equipment Fund to enable the purchase of a rotating brush and gritter dispenser for snow clearing operations

The grounds equipment we agreed for purchase for 2013/2014 is:

Trailer £1000
2x small mowers £1300
Wheeled strimmer £500
Small strimmer £600
Total to allow £3,500

The team also want to purchase the mini tractor and the price for a second hand one has been logged at £10,000.

In terms of the grass cutting - we noted the problems which had occurred last year in that the team were being pulled off routine work to focus on project work. This together with the bad weather led to a downturn in the appearance of our open spaces. We are all keen to avoid this again this year and we therefore agreed that the routine cutting work would come first during the cutting months.

Stuart identified two areas of grass cutting which are currently a problem - Wincombe rec and the cemetery. He has suggested that we purchase a cutting deck to fit to the mini tractor to cut Wincombe Rec as this would halve the amount of time required at that site. The cost obtained for that yesterday was £3,000 and the recommendation will be that we use the money coming from NDDC with the land transfer to purchase this equipment, thus protecting our own capital fund.

Stuart reported that the deck could also be used at Castle Hill. It was felt that the purchase of the wheeled strimmer would address the issues at the cemetery. The result of the purchases would mean that the grass cutting could move from a fortnightly cycle to a 7 day cycle. This would improve the appearance of all STC areas and the more frequent cuts would make the areas easier and quicker to cut. It was noted that it would be important to include Enmore Green Playing Field on that cycle but that the team should take care of the fence and be cautious with the weedkilling.

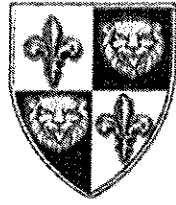
The total requirement for 2013/2014 for grounds equipment is therefore £3,000 in standard replacements, £3,500 for new equipment for wheeled strimmer and cutting deck to uplift the service and £10,000 for the mini-tractor (backfilled to capital from interest). The capital fund for grounds equipment will stand at £12,000 on 1st April 2013. Taking into consideration the request for £2000 from CS that would leave £10,000 (should it be granted of course!). I would recommend funding the £3,000 for standard replacements from our fund - thereby leaving £7,000 as our building fund; using commuted sums from NDDC for the new equipment and requesting £10,000 from the eastern development commuted sum for the tractor.

Officer Recommendations

Expenditure

Grass Cutting Regime

Summer Months focus on grounds maintenance



SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2013

AGENDA ITEM 2013/11 – LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Report author:	Nicola Duke, Town Clerk
Purpose of Report:	To provide members with the opportunity to consider the information provided by NDDC in relation to the LCTSS and consider issuing a formal response to that information
Financial Implication:	None
Statutory authority:	None required

Full Council asked some of its members to attend NDDC Cabinet in October. The meeting was cancelled due to bad weather. One of the agenda items related to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme and the NDDC paper relating to this is attached for information.

Those members attending Cabinet were provided with a briefing note in respect of the agenda item relating to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme. The main points of that briefing note are copied below.

The business due to be transacted at NDDC Cabinet on 28 October was rescheduled for the following week however, the meeting was inquorate and the discussion was held without a decision being made. We have been, at the time of writing this report, unable to obtain confirmation as to the status of the decision regarding the TRG from NDDC. This information will be passed onto you as soon as we receive it however, initial indications are that the TRG will not be passed onto towns and parishes this year.

Briefing note points

- The NDDC officer report to Cabinet is asking members to approve a recommendation that the TRG is not passed on to towns and parishes for the coming financial year.
- The report states that towns and parishes were told that the TRG would be a one off for the current financial year only. The letter sent by NDDC only stated 'may'. It was not a definite.
- The majority of district councils in Dorset and neighbouring counties are going to pass on the TRG to towns and parishes next year. NDDC is proving the exception to that.
- NDDC states that the TRG is now to be included in the overall grant received from central government and is therefore 'hidden' and impossible to work out. This does not seem to have deterred other district councils as per the point above.

- At the Town Clerks meeting with Liz Goodall in October the TRG issue was raised and the Town Clerks expressed grave concern at the negative impact this would have on the town council budgets/precepts. Liz undertook to take this point back to members to see if anything could be done to 'cushion' things for the towns.
- A letter from the town councils in North Dorset has already been sent to NDDC listing the impact the removal of the TRG will have on each town - for STC that is £18,000.
- Liz undertook to provide town councils with their adjusted council tax base figures as soon as possible, together with details as to how that base is calculated.
- There was some concern that the current system of using Band D equivalent properties for the council tax base may no longer be as appropriate as it once was - for example, a calculation based on Band C properties may be fairer - and it may be that we will need to consider lobbying central government on this point when we have had the chance to consider it fully.
- Liz also commented that she feels it prudent for towns to put the council tax up as much as they can in the coming years as there is a feeling that capping for towns and parishes could be considered in 2015 - i.e the election year. I pass this comment on for members to consider and bear in mind as we start our budget setting process next week.
- It is worth noting that in preparing its budget/precept for this year STC worked on the principle that the TRG would be a one off payment hence, our financial situation is resilient for next year. As we have reported in recent workshops we are able to maintain services, grants and assets on a precept that would not see an increase of more than the rate of inflation for 2014/15. Members are, of course, able to decrease or increase this as they see fit and the budget preparations over the coming weeks will give us a good steer as to the way forward. It is normal practice for STC to take the maximum council tax it can within the rate of inflation so an early notice of the council tax base will be extremely useful.
- A reminder on that point - we use the revised council tax base to work out how much council tax we can charge without individual households seeing an increase of more than the rate of inflation. In previous years, due to the eastern development, this has meant that we are able to significantly increase our precept without individual householders seeing a large increase and, in some years, the individual rate has been maintained. This is no longer as workable due to the revisions to the council tax base. The localisation of council tax (where council tax benefit reductions are handled locally) will continue to affect NDDC's calculation of our council tax base.

Members are asked to consider the information provided and whether they wish to make any formal approach to NDDC.

NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Date of Meeting: 28 October 2013

REPORT TITLE: LOCALISATION OF COUCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME
2014/15 AND TRANSITIONAL GRANT

Portfolio Holder: Leader/Health Welfare and Safety

Report Author: Stour Valley Partnership Manager and General Manager,
Commissioning

Purpose of Report:	To consider options for the Council Tax Reduction Support Scheme for 2014/15
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Statutory Authority: Local Government Act 1972

Financial Implications: The cost to this Council would increase by £11,500 in 2014/15.

**Consultations required/
undertaken:** Stour Valley Partnership

Recommendations:

- 1.The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 remain the same as is in place for 2013/14 - restricting working age claims to a maximum eligible council tax of 91.5% of liability, as the local scheme for Council Tax Support in the North Dorset billing area.**
- 2. The reduction in grant funding, as an additional cost of the Scheme for 2014/15 together with the likely reduction in general revenue support grant to the District (by around 24%) and the removal of the separately identified grant to the parishes be noted.**
- 3. That no funds be allocated to the Parishes in 2014/15**

Reason For Decision: To approve the continuation of the existing council tax reduction scheme in 2014/15 and to advise the parishes that no additional funding will be available.

BACKGROUND AND REASON DECISION NEEDED

BACKGROUND

1. The Council set a Localised Council Tax Reduction (Support) Scheme for as from 1st April 2013, 2013/14 being:
 - The restricting working age claims to a maximum eligible council tax of 91.5% of liability, as a local scheme of Council Tax Support
 - That all claimants considered Vulnerable or of Pensionable Age as identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment for the consultation will be protected in the Scheme.
2. Prior to April 2013 the cost of council tax benefit was met by the Government in full.
3. From the 1st April 2013 the 'payment' of Council Tax Support (CTS) has been through a local scheme via a discount. This process has reduced the tax base and affected the amount raised through council tax by major preceptors, billing authorities and parishes.
4. For 2013/14 the Government gave a grant to billing authorities and major preceptors of 90% of the original cost of the benefit to partially compensate for the loss in income. Where the billing authority collected for Parishes an additional allocation was given directly to the billing authority to administer on their behalf.
5. For 2013/14 transitional grant was available as an "additional grant" to Authorities and preceptors where the CTS Scheme was at 8.5% or less.
6. All Councils are now considering the CTS Scheme to adopt for 2014/15.

DORSET SCHEME REVIEWS

7. Whilst each Council must decide their own schemes, early indications from officers on scheme options are:
8. East Dorset, Christchurch and Poole are operating the 8.5% "liability" reduction scheme for 2013/14 and the proposals at this time are that they will continue with these schemes in 2014/15. The proposals are to review the Schemes at year end and then consider a consultation exercise early in 2014/15 for the 2015/16 Scheme.
9. Purbeck District Council is maintaining the 8% "benefit" reduction scheme for 2014/15.
10. West Dorset and Weymouth are consulting on a 20% Scheme. Whilst they are at consultation there are no clear details that it is their intention to move from 8.5% to 20% at this time.
11. Bournemouth is operating a 20% "liability" reduction scheme and there are no details on their scheme changing for 2014/15.

RESPONSE TO SCHEME IN 2013/14

12. The CTS Scheme appears to have been widely accepted by Claimants and the application process mirrors that which was in place for Council Tax Benefit.

13. Non-payment of the shortfall remains a concern, but officers at SVP and in the NDDC Contact Centre continue to promote the instalment payment option. The SVP have yet to issue summonses within the impacted group and this week will be sending "final warning payment notices" urging customer to get in touch with the Contact Centre.
14. At this time our collection rate for the half-year is down approximately 1%, but officers believe this is a result of the delayed issue of summonses this year and that our collection rate will be similar to previous years once this process has commenced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The Grant given for 2013/14 to administer the CTS Scheme is from 2014/15 contained within the overall Grant given to the Council by Government and is not specified. This Councils revenue support grant is likely to be reduced by around 24%.
16. It is entirely for local councils to decide how much they are prepared to spend on council tax support; the Government has not identified separate funding.
17. The Government are recommending that billing authorities and parishes continue to work together to mitigate impacts on local tax payers. It was made clear by Members that passporting the grant to parishes would be for one year only.
18. The cost of the CTS Scheme for 2013/14, based on 2013/14 data council tax decision was estimated at:

Cost of scheme B		Restricting all working age claims to 91.5% Liability & protect vulnerable					Additional Grant		
2012/13									
Taxbase									
27586									
	Band D	Tax raised	% of tax raised	Share of scheme cost	Indicative Grant	Gap	Grant	Gap	
	£s	£s		£s	£s	£s	£s	£s	
North Dorset District Council	104.78	2,890,461	6.60%	273,952	248,000	25,952	11,452	14,500	
DCC	1168.29	32,228,448	73.59%	3,054,543	2,765,183	289,360	74,675	214,685	
Police	180	4,965,480	11.34%	470,618	426,036	44,582	11,505	33,077	
Fire	60.39	1,665,919	3.80%	157,892	142,935	14,957	3,860	11,097	
Towns & Parishes (average)	74	2,041,364	4.66%	193,476	176,000	17,476	-	-	
Total	1587.46	43,791,672	100.00%	4,150,481	3,758,154	392,327	101,492	290,835	
Cost of scheme B		4,150,481							
Future Council Tax Raised (no increase in Council Tax)		39,641,191							
Revised Taxbase		24971							

19. This Scheme has a direct cost to the Council of approximately £14,500 for 2013/14, when taking account of the "additional grant" for the initial year of £11,500.
20. At this time overall spending remains in line with the estimated costs for 2013/14 and is expected to remain similar for budgeting purposes for 2014/15.
21. If the Scheme was to remain the same in 2014/15 then the cost to the Council would increase by £11,500 (the additional grant for 2013/14 only) not taking account of any other Grant Reductions.
22. Details of the costs of the 8.5% Scheme and 20% Scheme are contained within Appendix 1 Update on Council Tax Support Scheme.
23. The Parish contributions towards the Scheme costs will need to be reviewed based upon the Councils Grant allocation.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

24. The present 8.5% Scheme makes the average contribution by each Claimant of £105.00.
25. A 20% Liability Scheme would create an average payment of £226.00
26. Collecting the Council Tax due is still in its early days and arrears within the group is yet to be defined by all Councils.
27. There will be an impact to the "major preceptors" if the Council stay at the 8.5% Scheme.

OPTIONS

28. To consider other schemes but these may have a detrimental effect on collection rates.

COSTS

29. The cost to this Council would increase by £11,500 in 2014/15.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

30. The reduction in benefit entitlement will impact on recipients but it is hoped the universal credit pilot and the work being undertaken on welfare reform will mitigate against the change.

DIVERSITY AND CUSTOMER FOCUS

31. DCLG and Dorset County Council with all Districts undertook a full EQIA on the principle of localising council tax support scheme when establishing the 2013/14 CTS Scheme.
32. If the Council were to consider a change to the CTS Scheme then a consultation exercise and EQIA would be required to ensure the needs of all residents are acknowledged and considered.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

33. There are no human rights implications

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

34. There are no climate change implications

RISK MANAGEMENT

35. The financial implications are set out in the report. Other risks are; collection cost and collection rates: Impact of Grant reduction for Parishes in setting their precepts.

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON

36. The 8.5% Liability Scheme has been delivered for 2013/14 and remains a "new scheme". Changing the Scheme at this time would involve risks to collection and administration.
37. The partner Councils in the SVPP are considering consultation in 2014/15 for a 2015/16 Scheme, this would give time to fully evaluate the impact of the CTS on our residents.
38. The cost of maintaining the Scheme will need budget consideration.

Author: Joyce Guest, General Manager - Commissioning

Date: 16 October 2013

Background papers: