



To: All Town Councillors, Dorset Council Councillors, Members of the Public & Press

A G E N D A

FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of the for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below.
To be held at **7 pm on Tuesday, 27th September 2022** in the **Council Chamber, Shaftesbury Town Hall**.
The meeting will also be hosted online. Public, press and non-committee members, join on your computer or mobile app using [Microsoft Teams](#).

Mrs Brie Logan

Town Clerk, 21st September 2022

Public Participation: The Chairman will invite members of the public to present their questions, statements or petitions. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed twenty minutes. A member of the public shall not speak for more than three minutes.

Members are reminded of their duty under the [Code of Conduct](#), [Scheme of Delegation](#) and [Standing Orders](#).

The Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights. Disabled access is available.

All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

The 7 principles of public life

Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership

(Committee on Standards in Public Life, 1995)

1. [Apologies – To receive and consider for acceptance](#)
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3. [Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16th August 2022](#)
4. [To receive a report for information to Full Council](#)
5. [Clerks Report including correspondence and progress report on Full Council business](#)
6. [To receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations by committees](#)
7. [To approve payments and receive financial reports](#)
8. [To receive the Tree Management Risk Assessment and approve the next steps associated with the tree management at St James Park](#)
9. [To consider the Economic Development funding](#)
10. [To consider the themes for Working Groups](#)
11. [To review progress with the Gold Standard accreditation – progress report](#)
12. [To consider opting-in to the SAAA \(Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments\) – External Audit procurement](#)

Agenda Item No. 1

Apologies – To receive and consider for acceptance

The Council (including committees) should approve (or not) the reason for apologies given by absent councillors. If a council member has not attended a meeting of the council (or its committees) or has not tendered apologies which have been accepted by the council (or committee), for six consecutive months, they are disqualified.

Apologies received from Councillors Lewer and Proctor.

Agenda Item No. 2

To receive any Declarations of Interests and Requests for Dispensation

Members and Officers are reminded of their obligations to declare interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct – adopted in July 2021. The Clerk will report any dispensation requests received.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a councillor's interest, the councillor has the responsibility of declaring that interest in accordance with the adopted code of conduct. (Shaftesbury Town Council Code of Conduct, 2019)

Agenda Item No. 3

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16th August 2022

When the meeting is approving the draft minutes of a previous meeting as an accurate record, the only issue for the meeting is whether the minutes accurately record the proceedings of the meeting and the resolutions made at them. It is irrelevant if the chairman or other councillors were not present at the meeting to which the draft minutes relate.

If it is necessary for the draft minutes of the previous meeting to be corrected because of inaccuracies, then the amendments to the draft minutes must be approved by resolution. (Tharmarajah, 2013, p. 154).

Recommendation

Confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on [16th August 2022](#).

Agenda Item No. 4

To receive a report for information to Full Council

Civic Report

Councillors are invited to provide a report at this point.

Dorset Council Reports

Dorset Councillors are invited to provide a report at this point.

Other Reports

None

Local Organisation Reports

Local Organisation representatives invited to provide a report at this point.

Recommendation

That the reports are received, and any points of note are identified for future meetings of the Council or its committees or for action by officers of the Council.

Clerks Report including correspondence and progress report on Full Council business

Report Content/Detail

Reports provided within this item are to be received, they provide updates on decisions already taken by the Council and actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation (where not previously reported) that need to be resolved.

5.1 Clerks Report

External Audit – [The Audit for 2021/22 has been approved by the external Auditor \(PKF\)](#) and for the first time in eight years there are no matters of concern and therefore no recommendations.

Website updates councillor profile – These have been updated with the information provided by Councillors. Four Councillors have yet to respond and not everyone has provided all the requested information. Office staff are working towards a consistent approach with the presentation of the councillor profiles.

St James Park – Closing date for tender submissions was 16th September. Two tender submissions were received, however one of the contractors declined to quote. Cllr Tippins, due to personal reasons, has requested to step down from the panel. Therefore, due to the two factors above, it is recommended that there is no requirement for the Panel to meet and that the submission is presented at an EFC, scheduled for Tuesday 4th October, following the P&H meeting.

National Lottery Funding – An application for £9,600 towards new picnic benches in the green spaces owned by STC was successful and the funds have been transferred to STC.

Town Hall Fire Risk Assessment - Every five years a Fire Risk Assessment is carried out by an external company. The assessment was undertaken by a local Dorset based company and the [complete Fire Risk Assessment report is available to view](#). Officers have assessed the report and action has been taken on items that could be addressed immediately, like clearing and locking cupboards. Some action points will be addressed when the Town Hall is undergoing refurbishment, like installing fire safe doors. The assessment has been annotated to show the actions being taken. Councillors are requested to note the report and actions taken.

Resident Letter regarding fire safety at the Town Hall – The office has been copied into a [letter sent to the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service](#) concerning various fire safety points. Upon request, officers have sent the fire risk assessment, mentioned above, to the Fire Safety Inspector. Their only concern is a hole in the window frame of the Georgian glazing in the office. Work is underway to fill this small gap. The Fire Safety Inspector is satisfied with the situation and has confirmed a visit to the Town Hall is not required.

Responsible Finance Officer will be a confidential agenda item for October. This will feature as a wider staffing update at that point and in line with the budget setting process for 2022/ 2023.

Lion's Mouth progress – Dorset Council has been approached regarding a potential transfer of this asset to STC. They are currently investigating the ownership of this asset, and in principle have no issue with a transfer. Research is also being undertaken to establish the likely costs associated with the renovation of this historic artefact. Once the research is complete STC will be updated accordingly.

Jubilee Steps progress - The council resolved to enlist the services of a Civil Engineer to understand more about the structural condition of the steps so as to learn more about the potential options that are available for consideration. Research has suggested that this is not the best option therefore further a further update will be provided at the October Full Council meeting.

Coppice Street Car Park 1 and 2 progress report – no further update at this stage.

Great Ground progress – The wall has been repainted, and the ground staff have scattered some grass seed to enhance the visual impact in the area and flower beds (at the request of the residents) have been removed.



Asset Register progress report – Work has been undertaken to review the deeds and documents. These have been compiled and matched with the asset register. [This quick reference table has been produced for information.](#) Gaps have been found where a First Registration with the Land Registry is required. Costs associated with First Registration are not yet understood therefore a further update will be provided in October.

Mace and Cyber security progress – Currently awaiting the insurance valuation for both Maces. A further update will be provided upon receipt at the next appropriate meeting.

Civility and Respect Pledge – The council resolved to adopt the [Civility and Respect pledge](#) in August. Four councillors are yet to undertake Code of Conduct training. The Dignity at Work Policy is now live on the website on the [Town Council website](#) and this has replaced the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Lido – The ‘shoulder’ season - lane swim only is going well. In the week from 12th September out of the potential 112 swims slots available 76 were booked during these weeks. As per the [Cold Water Swim Risk Assessment](#), swimmers are reminded of the temperature before entering and that they should keep moving in the water and are encouraged to wear wetsuits.


The temperature started off at 28.5°C on Monday 12th September and as of Tuesday 20th September this has reduced to 22.4°C. The temperature will continue to be monitored on a daily basis. The pool has been able to maintain a good temperature mainly due to the new pool cover and limited time the pool cover is off the pool. The swimmers on 22nd and 24th September will be asked for their feedback as to how the water feels to swim in.

Over the summer holidays the Lido saw a total of 7539 swimmers, with 3246 being part of the Dorset Council Under 16’s free swim initiative.

Financial Regulations – As per Minute FC53 the [Financial Regulations](#) have been updated under section 11.1e) to read *Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders can be submitted electronically to a dedicated confidential email address.*

5.2 Delegated Decisions for Information (within the Clerks delegated spend)

Delegated Decision	Comments	Cost	Budget
Change of date for January 2023 P&H Meeting (Dates originally agreed at FC May 2022)	The P&H meeting in January 2023 falls on the first day back in the office after the Christmas break. Therefore, to allow for planning applications to be received the meeting has been moved to 10 th January 2023. The calendar of meetings has been updated.	£0	£0


<p>Enmore Green War Memorial</p> 	<p>The memorial has been restored. The railings have been straightened and the memorial has been repainted to an exemplary standard. The office has received thanks and very positive feedback from members of the public.</p>	<p>£872.69</p>	<p>4250/103 Repairs & Maintenance</p>
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Recommendation

That the reports are received and noted and any actions arising identified for future meetings of the Council or its Committees.

5.3 Other Matters to resolve

No	Subject	Description	Cost
5.3.1	DAPTC – AGM submission	<p>Officer report 0816FC11 was received and it was RESOLVED to submit all potential options to the Assistant Town Clerk by 6th September for resolution at the September meeting. One Motion has been received, viewable here.</p>	£0
<p>Recommendation: Councillors need to consider if they would like to submit this proposal to DAPTC.</p>			
5.3.2	<p>Town Hall – Architect B</p> <p>Brian Watts of PWCR</p>	<p>Officer report 0816FC12 was received and it was RESOLVED to appoint architect B to move the Town Hall refurbishment project forward and agree a fee for initial overview and recommendations based on initial scope of works. Additionally, set up a monthly working group to report back on progress to the Council. The fee to be proposed and agreed by Full Council at the September meeting.</p> <p><u>The appointed architect has proposed the following:</u> To inspect the Town Hall and update the 2009 inspection report. <i>We estimate a fee of £750 plus VAT based on hourly rates. As a goodwill gesture we would undertake not to exceed this figure if this work stage takes longer than expected.</i></p> <p><i>We would include within this a simple layout plan to assist the understanding of the inspection report. However, whilst we hold a large physical drawing file it is something of an historical archive, we would advise the need for a digital drawing of the building as it exists now. We would suggest a third-party survey to undertake a measurement survey of plans and elevations for which we can obtain three quotes for your consideration. This will be a</i></p>	£750

		<p><i>necessary document when moving forward with any works.</i></p> <p>The architect has pencilled the inspection in for the beginning of October with the view of meeting the WG at the end of October.</p>	
	<p>Recommendation: Councillors are requested to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the initial cost of £750 + VAT taking funds from 327 EMR Town Hall Building Fund or 4341 Legal & Professional Fees (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8). • Form a Working Group and set the first meeting date • Approve for the architect to obtain three quotes to prepare the digital drawings to include a measurement survey of plans and elevations. 		
5.3.3	Town Silver Band Hall Lease – Request for letter of intent	The group are applying for funding for the New Band Hall Project and require a letter of intent from STC, to confirm the intent to renew the lease for the Band Hall after 2025. Without this letter and the current lease expiring in 2025 it is proving difficult for them to obtain funding.	£0
	<p>Recommendation: Councillors need to advise if a letter of intent should be provided to the Town Silver Band, stating that STC will extend the lease into the future.</p>		
5.3.4	Replacement Urinals at the Lido 	<p>New urinals were installed at the Lido, as it was not cost effective to repair the old system. The pipework was badly corroded and the sanitaryware was very old and dated.</p> <p>STC agreed this expenditure in September 2019 (£1,983) however since then costs have risen hence the higher value of replacement.</p>	£2,695 Budget line: 4931 Swimming Pool cap-ex
	<p>Recommendation: Councillors approve retrospective expenditure of £2,695 for the Urinals at the Lido, using budget line 4931.</p>		

To receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations by committees

Reports provided within this item are to be received, they provide updates on decisions already taken by the Committee(s) and actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation (where not previously reported) that need to be resolved.

Receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations by committees.

When a council delegates its responsibilities to a committee, sub-committee, officer or another local authority, they are acting for and on behalf of the council. The statutory authority for a delegation is found in Local government Act, 1972 s.101. (NALC, 2018)

Minutes for the Planning and Highways committee are provided for information using the hyperlinks below and any recommendations for Full Council to consider are noted.

[Draft minutes from the Planning and Highways committee meeting on 6th September 2022.](#)

[Summary from the Informal Shaftesbury Swimming Advisory Committee meeting on 30th August 2022.](#)

Ref	Recommendation	The Council resolves to:
P&H	No recommendations arising from the September meeting that need a Full Council resolution.	
MAC	No meeting this month.	
SSAC	No recommendations this month as this was an informal meeting however note that the next formal meeting is scheduled for 3 rd October. Recommendations from this meeting will be presented to Full Council on 18 th October.	

Recommendation

That the minutes are received and noted.

To approve payments and receive financial reports

Summary

The Council should have a clear understanding of the Council's financial position throughout the year. Every local council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions.

The following summaries are for the committee to receive and note:

[Balance Sheet](#)

[Summary Income and Expenditure by budget heading](#)

[List of payments](#)

[Invoices to accompany the payments list](#)

If any councillor would like to see any additional information, please let the office team know and this will be arranged.

Legal Implications

Every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. *Local Government Act 1972 s.151*

Recommendation

That the Council receives and notes the income and expenditure records, general reserves balance and payments list for this month and raises any queries it may have.

Reason for Recommendation

Members should be kept up to date with the council's accounts to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet commitments.

To receive the Tree Management Risk Assessment and approve the next steps associated with tree management at St James Park

Background

The [Tree Risk Assessment 2022](#) has been produced by the Arboricultural Consultant. This report details the adopted tree management strategy, the assessments, recommendations and project management. The [Tree Works Specification 2022](#) highlights the priority and advisory works.

Further Information

The areas of land managed by STC have been divided into two risk zones in order to concentrate attention where it is most required. Trees in Zone 1 are to be surveyed every year and trees in zone 2 are to be surveyed every two years. During this survey only trees in Zone 1 were included.

However, officers were made aware of issues with [13 trees in Zone 2, shown on this map](#). These were also inspected, and it was found that works will need to be carried out to all 13 trees, along with the works specified in the Specification report.

In addition to the required works identified in the report, the following trees, albeit not in a critical condition, would benefit from the following maintenance.

To remove the lower limbs of three Lime trees - T197, 198 and 199

To high pollard the Poplars - T220, T226, T227, T229 and T230

To remove the dead Elm – T243 (no significant harm, but it can be removed)

Financial information

Three contractors have been approached to quote for the advisory works. However, only one had responded by the time the agenda was published. See the quote attached as [Appendix A](#).

Recommendation

Councillors are requested to note the content of the Tree Risk Assessment and Works Specification for 2022. Councillors are asked to agree the maximum costs for the works to be carried out, with delegated authority to the Town Clerk to select the best value contractor. Funds to be taken from budget line 4908 (COMF funding) for the St James Park tree works and 4256 (Tree Works) for other zones. (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Appendix A

Tree Number	Location	Contractor A	Contractor B	Contractor C
T4007,T4008,T13, T388	Tout Hill	£ 2,485.00		
T35	Tout Hill	£ 225.00		
T33	Tout Hill	£ 665.00		
T34	Tout Hill	£ 665.00		
T26	Tout Hill	£ 665.00		
T389 T4022	Tout Hill	£ 24.00		
T20	Tout Hill	£ 195.00		
T4019 T4020	Tout Hill	£ 1,590.00		
T396	St James/Park Walk	£ 395.00		
T245	St James/Park Walk	£ 195.00		
T401	St James/Park Walk	£ 55.00		
T272 T273	St James/Park Walk	£ 95.00		
T400 T240	St James/Park Walk	£ 95.00		
T193	St James/Park Walk	£ 12.00		
T203 T204	St James/Park Walk	£ 195.00		
T212	St James/Park Walk	£ 595.00		
T219 T232 T246 T247	St James/Park Walk	£ 195.00		
T233	St James/Park Walk	£ 595.00		
T262 T263 T264 T265 T267	St James/Park Walk	£ 195.00		
T394 T398 T399	St James/Park Walk	£ 95.00		
T397	St James/Park Walk	£ 395.00		
G30 G31	St James/Park Walk	£ 95.00		
T101	St Johns Churchyard	£ 395.00		
T119 T121	Pine Walk	£ 12.00		
T140	Pine Walk	£ 395.00		
T163 T167	Pine Walk	£ 24.00		
T124 T126 T128 T130 T131	Pine Walk	£ 195.00		
T170 T171 T172 T179 T180 T186 T187	Pine Walk	£ 395.00		
G8 G9	Pine Walk	£ 195.00		
T412 T413	Christys Lane	£ 295.00		
T402 T403	Christys Lane	£ 895.00		
T404 T405 T406	Christys Lane	£ 195.00		
Works identified in Risk Risk Assessment	Total	£ 12,717.00		
Remove Ash Tree(die back)	Barton Hill	£ 395.00		
Remove Ash Trees (dieback)	Rear Jeaneau Close	£ 895.00		
Carry our full climbing survey Beech T20 following failing of large limb	Tout Hill	£ 395.00		
Additonal work as above		£ 1,685.00		
Total to carry our all works		£ 14,402.00		

To consider the Economic Development funding

Background

In February 2022 enquiries were made with Dorset Council relating to the NDDC funding held in the STC EMR ringfenced for Economic Development.

The Dorset Council Legal and Democratic Services team looked into the potential uses, as per an enquiry by the Interim Town Clerk, and subsequently handed the query over to the Economic Development team.

The response from the Economic Development team was presented to Full Council on 26th April 2022 as follows:

'Further to our telephone conversation in relation to the remaining 20K. I now have clarity about the initial funding that was awarded to Shaftesbury Town Council by NDDC back in 2019. As stated, STC ringfenced this funding for Economic Development projects and as the representative of Dorset Council I would advise that this is the only purpose that the remaining money is used for.

I recall a lot of work had been put into the "Town Market" looking at initiatives to increase footfall prior to COVID19. After internal discussions, we agree that the remaining funding should be allocated to revisit this project as the benefits will have a large impact and compliment the economy of Shaftesbury Town.

Options:

1. Dorset Council has confirmed that the £20,000 of funding should be allocated to develop a monthly market – this is in line with the current STC Strategic Plan and as referenced in the [Full Council agenda](#) April 2022 – item 5.1.1
2. Review the Strategic Plan and re-evaluate priorities linked to supporting the High Street
3. Consider the proposal linked to E-Commerce as submitted below by Cllr Tippins

Note; if the direction is different to that as referenced in option 1 then Dorset Council will need to verify the proposal as the funding terms and conditions need to be compliant.

Further Information

The following proposal was sent in by Cllr Tippins:

E-Commerce: *Give an agreement to 'Cobble Box' Swans Yard - that any business that is registered in Shaftesbury Parish can have a budget of £600 - £1000 to develop and promote a start-up website for their business.*

This means a minimum of 25 businesses within Shaftesbury will benefit from this money immediately.

Any business, it could be someone who has moved to washing windows or running children's parties or doing cleaning/tenancy cleaning or elderly care.

There are many businesses who are not registered with Chamber of Commerce because they cannot afford the fees, who would directly benefit from this type of offer, which can be easily promoted for 'free'.

This will get the money out there immediately and I am convinced that so many businesses suffer from not having an internet presence!

Working Party to assess applicants and put proposals to Council?

Recommendation

The council considers the options outlined above and sets the direction accordingly.

To consider the themes for Working Groups

Background

In May 2022 it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Calendar of meetings schedule for 2022/ 2023 [View calendar of meetings here](#). Note the change in date for January 2023 P&H meeting, as per Clerk’s report agenda item 5.2 above.

The revised meeting schedule has resulted in a 50% reduction in meetings. This reduction has had a positive impact on staff productivity, with less time spent preparing for meetings, enabling more council work to be delivered.

The next step of the change journey is to encourage more effective collaboration between our residents, our community groups and the business community. Following best practice that has been gleaned from research and observations there is an opportunity to extend the principle of Working Groups. This approach will enable more community buy-in and recommendations from ‘subject-matter experts’ will be presented to STC for consideration.

Currently there are two formal Advisory Committees with Lead Councillors:

Mampitts Advisory Committee	CLlr Brown
Shaftesbury Swimming Advisory Committee	CLlr Proctor

Other Lead Councillors for specific projects, as resolved by STC, are as follows:

St James Park	CLlr Edwyn-Jones
High Street (temporary managed traffic)	CLlr Brown (Economic Development)

Advisory Roles, not resolved however these Councillors are subject matter experts:

Town Hall renovation	CLlr Proctor
Shaftesbury Wellness	CLlr Langley

Other:

M4 to South Coast Connectivity Study	CLlr Edwyn-Jones (as Chair of Planning & Highways)
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Further Information

Step 1 is to assign a Lead Councillor to the Working Groups as identified on the next page.

Summary of Working Groups to date

Title		Detail	Lead Councillor
Town Hall Renovation	Part 1	Repairs and maintenance Update the 2009 inspection Prepare a schedule of maintenance and repair works Obtain tenders - oversee the building work Check the final accounts and administer the building contract	Cllr Proctor
	Part 2	Building Improvements Proposals for improvements to the building to: Facilitate maintenance access Improve the disabled access to the first floor Staff working conditions Facilities to aid use of screen/projector during meetings	
St James Park	Part 1	Play	Cllr Edwyn-Jones
	Part 2	Jubilee Steps	
	Part 3	Landscape and management plan	
Play Masterplan	Wincombe Elephant Park Ash Close Barton Hill Cockrams	TBC	
Public Spaces/Environment	Verges/Roadsides Green Spaces Management Plans for all Open Spaces inc Gold Hill Welcome gateways to the town/roundabout management Service focused grounds team Scheduled Monuments	TBC	
Highways and Footpath	Street Furniture Signage management and maintenance Bin management - general standards and presentation	TBC	
Finance	Internal Controls Budget 2023/2024 - panel needed to manage detail	TBC	
Visitor Experience	Digital Marketing and joined up PR/Comms Trails – Garden/tree/stone	TBC	
Climate Change	Wildflower verge management - enhancements to policy Communal solar panel scheme Energy Hub - Coppice Street Car Park Sustainable Shaftesbury	Cllr Chase	

M4 to South Coast connectivity study	Linking into the National Highways team	Cllr Edwyn-Jones
Health and Wellbeing	Shaftesbury Wellness 2023 Lido Feasibility Study Park Run?	Cllr Langley (SSAC) Cllr Proctor (SSAC) Cllr Langley?
High Street Managed Traffic	Feasibility study into permanent managed traffic experience	Cllr Brown
Dementia Friendly Town	Working towards Dementia Friendly town status	Cllr Lewer
Neighbourhood Plan	Review needed in 2023 to take into account NPPF changes	Cllr Lewer
Shaftesbury Town Memorials	Present cleaning and inscription options to council for consideration	TBC
Youth Council	Working with Shaftesbury School and the members who are elected to represent the students.	Cllr Chase

Recommendation

The Council approves the Working Groups as presented and appoints a lead Councillor to those currently showing as TBC. The Council can add or disband Working Groups at any time and therefore those featured above is the start point.

To review progress with the Gold Standard accreditation – progress report

Background

In June 2022 Officer report 0622FC9 was received and it was RESOLVED to review progress on the Quality Gold Standard accreditation in March 2023 ahead of submitting a proposal in May 2023 to achieve re-accreditation.

Further Information

In order to receive Quality Gold status both the Foundation and Quality level criteria also need to be fulfilled. [The Local Council Award Scheme Checklist](#) highlights areas where STC is missing the requirements to receive accreditation. Following a recent review, it is expected the required standard will be achieved by the end of this calendar year.

Recommendation

Councillors receive and note this report to acknowledge the progress made and future actions required to reach the Quality Gold standard by the end of March 2023.

To consider opting-in to the SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments) - External Audit procurement

Background

The next 5-year appointing period runs from 2022-23 until 2026-27 and SAAA has undertaken a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each County area from 1 April 2022. Now that the submission deadline for the 2021-22 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns has passed, this is to advise you of the option to optout of the next round of 5-year audit appointments.

The SAAA has sent the following communication relating to this exercise

https://saaa.co.uk/comms/2022Opt-out_communication_.pdf along with this supporting information [https://saaa.co.uk/comms/Opted Out Authorities Key Messages.pdf](https://saaa.co.uk/comms/Opted_Out_Authorities_Key_Messages.pdf)

Every council needs to make a decision as to whether to opt in to the SAAA External Audit procurement even though the scale of fees is as yet unknown and the new external auditors are not known.

The advice from the Internal Auditor, as well as the DAPTC, is to definitely opt in. DAPTC have written to say that they would like to ask councils to take no action to ensure that parish or town council/parish meeting remains in the central scheme.

The legislative framework is here <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/184/contents/made>

If a council does not opt in it has to appoint an external auditor in compliance with the legislation.

During the last round, the few District Councils that opted out spent over £10,000 each on the process of appointing their auditor. It is not feasible or sensible for any Parish or Town Council to do that therefore the advice is to opt in.

The SAAA system has its faults, but the Internal Auditor is with the new Internal Audit that is actively engaging with SAAA and JPAG and the EAs to make things work as well as they can for the next five years.

Recommendation

Councillors are requested to take the advice from the Internal Auditor and DAPTC and opt-in to the SAAA External Audit procurement.