

Bicester Town Council



BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Committee Meeting

Ref: POL03/2021

**Tuesday 3rd November 2020 - 19:00hrs by Zoom
(please see Agenda for login details)**

Circulation: Town Mayor - Councillor Jason Slaymaker

Members:

Cllr Richard Mould – **Chairman**, Cllr Lynn Pratt – **Vice-Chairman**
Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Dan Hallett, Cllr Nick Mawer, Cllr Dan Sames, Cllr Les Sibley,
Cllr Jason Slaymaker, Cllr Alex Thrupp, Cllr Fraser Webster

Other Circulation, Substitute Members:

Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Zoe McLernon, Cllr James Metcalf, Cllr Robert Nixon

Other Circulation:

Cllr Lawrie Stratford – OCC, Cllr Michael Waine – OCC, Cllr Tom Wallis – CDC,
Cllr Lucinda Wing – CDC



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Wednesday 28th October 2020

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Policy Committee** to be held on **Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 19:00hrs** on Zoom.

In line with the Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent regulations governing local authorities' meetings, the Council will be holding this meeting via the online video conference facility, Zoom.

[To join the Zoom meeting follow this link:](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85129158584)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85129158584>

Meeting ID: 851 2915 8584

Password: (to ensure online security it is recommended that meeting passwords are not publicised and are given directly to those intending to attend the meeting. Please therefore email enquiries@bicester.gov.uk for the password at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting date). Telephone number to join by audio only: 0203 051 2874 (you will be prompted to enter the meeting ID and password before joining the meeting).

Samantha Shippen
Chief Officer

Agenda

All Council Meetings are open to the public and press, unless otherwise stated.

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence. Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Chief Officer (samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this Agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. Minutes of the Policy Committee

To confirm the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** of the following Policy Committee meeting: **24th August 2020 – POL2/2021.**

4. Public Session

In accordance with Standing Orders 1 d-f, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

Time allocated shall not exceed 10 minutes. No member shall speak for more than 2 minutes.

5. Assets Management Update

Committee is requested to consider the attached report.

6. Major Town Initiatives

Committee is requested to note and comment as appropriate on the minutes from the following meetings:

**Bicester Vision Partnership Meeting:
8th October 2020**

**Bicester Vision Executive Board Meeting:
8th October 2020**

7. Special Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting

To confirm the minutes and recommendations of the meeting:

PCS Special/2021 – 29th September 2020

8. Flag Raising Policy (GP22)

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

9. Whitelands Sports Ground

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

10. Garth Gazette

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

11. Draft Budget 2021/22

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

12. Office Telephones

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

13. Rural/Market Towns Group Management

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

14. Forward Plan

Committee is requested to note and comment on the forward plan

15. Exclusion of Press and Public

RECOMMENDED

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

16. Leases Update

The Committee is asked to consider the attached report.

17. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 21st December 2020 – 7pm

Close of meeting:



Minutes of the Bicester Town Council Policy Meeting

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council Policy Meeting** was held on 24th August 2020 at 19:00hrs on Zoom.

Present: Cllr Richard Mould – Chairman

Cllr Dan Hallett

Cllr Nick Mawer

Cllr Lynn Pratt

Cllr Les Sibley

Cllr Jason Slaymaker

Cllr Alex Thrupp

In Attendance:

Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Julie Trinder - Administration Officer

Zara Sankey – Administration Officer - Part

1. 80/2021 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies received from Cllr Nick Cotter and Cllr Dan Sames.

2. 81/2020 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that no declarations of interest were received.

3. 82/2021 Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting

RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the following Policy Committee meeting held on 27th January 2020 - POL05/1920 to be signed at a later date.

4. 83/2020 Public Session

No members of the public were present.

5. 84/2021 Asset Management

RESOLVED that the Chief Officer to obtain quotes from three alternative letting agents regarding the rental of Garth Lodge; the Committee **NOTED** the remaining updates.

6. 85/2021 Major Town Initiatives

RESOLVED that Committee **NOTED** the minutes from:

- **Bicester Strategic Delivery Board Meeting**
16th January 2020
29th July 2020 – *Draft to be confirmed*
- **Bicester Vision Executive Board Meeting**
9th January 2020
6th February 2020
2nd April 2020
21st May 2020
23rd July 2020
- **Bicester Vision Partnership Meeting**
5th March 2020
4th June 2020

The Chairman informed the meeting that Bicester Vision held a webinar last week to discuss the local plan.

7. 86/2021 Personal Sub-Committee

RESOLVED that the Committee **CONFIRMED** the minutes and recommendations of the meeting:

PSC02/2021 – 3rd August 2020

8. 87/2021 Assets of Community Value

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. **AGREED** that the Chief Officer contact Stimpson Eve in line with Financial Regulation 11.1 a ii to establish the value of land between Greenwood Drive, Avon Crescent and Blythe Place and bring back to Committee for review;
2. **APPROVED** the continued registration of ACV027 Derwent Green;
3. **AGREED** to include both pieces of land as nominated Local Green Spaces in the Local Plan Review 2040

9. 88/2021 Allotment Inspection App

RESOLVED that the Committee agreed to purchase the allotments inspection app.

10. 89/2021 Tree Management Policy (GP24)

Councillors thanked officers for the work in bringing forward this policy.

RESOLVED that Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the Tree Management Policy for review in 2022 at the latest

11. 90/2021 Investment Policy (GP6)

RESOLVED that Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the Investment Policy (GP6) for review in 2024 at the latest.

12. 91/2021 Complaints Policy (GP11)

RESOLVED that Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the Complaints Policy (GP11) with minor changes for review in 2024 at the latest.

13. 92/2021 Vexatious Complaints Policy (GP23)

RESOLVED that Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the Vexatious Complaints Policy (GP23) with minor changes for review in 2024 at the latest.

14. 93/2021 Equalities Policy (GP15)

RESOLVED that Committee agreed to **ADOPT** the Equalities Policy (GP15) for review in 2024 at the latest.

15. 94/2021 Flag Raising Policy (GP22)

Following discussion of suggested minor amendments to the draft presented, it was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Committee and the Chief Officer -make the suggested amendments to the policy and circulate to the Committee Members prior to bringing the policy back for formal approval.

16. 95/2021 Standing Order Review

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to the Standing Orders Working Party prior to resubmission to Committee.

17. 96/2021 Website

Following comments regarding fonts, email links and some functionality issues, it was **RESOLVED** that Committee request any additional comments are sent to the Administration Officer (Events and Marketing) and once all changes are made re-circulated to Councillors for a launch date prior to 23 September 2020.

18. 97/2021 Freedom of Information Appeal Request

RESOLVED that Committee:

- **APPOINT** Cllr Harry Knight as the fifth member of the FOI Request Appeal Panel.
- **REQUEST** the Chief Officer to set a date to consider the appeal as soon as possible.

19. 98/2021 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be amended as follows:

- NW Bicester to be discussed in the last Committee prior to the end of the municipal year.
- New burial ground and memorial policy to be discussed in April 2021.

20. 99/2021 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 3rd November 2020 – 7pm

Meeting closed: 8.15pm.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Asset Management Update

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869 245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Garth House

1.1 The specification for the planned preventative maintenance schedule has now been prepared and will be discussed with the Assets Task & Finish Working Group on 4th November 2020.

1.2 The tender will then be placed via the Public Procurement Portal as required by Financial Regulations.

2. Garth Stables

The Assets Task & Finish Working Group will meet with Ridge & Partners on 4th November 2020 to discuss taking forward this project.

3. Burial Ground

The details of the land availability is still awaited, recent contact has been made with Cherwell District Council's Bicester Delivery Team in this regard.

4. Garth Lodge

Following the last meeting of the Committee, an offer was received for a 12 month rental before alternative letting agents were contacted. Councillors were advised by the Chief Officer at the time. The tenancy commenced on 28th September 2020.

5. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the update.

BICESTER VISION

Meeting	BICESTER VISION CIC MEETING
Date of meeting	Thursday 8 October 2020
Venue	Via Zoom
Circulation	All partners
Dates of next meetings	➤ Executive Board – Thurs 5 November 2020, 10am-12pm, via Zoom ➤ Full Partnership meeting – Thurs 3 December 2020, 12-2pm, via Zoom

MINUTES

1 OXLEP GROWTH HUB UPDATE (Presentations attached)

Ant Parsons provided an update on the work of the OxLEP Business Growth Hub, support tools available and the new BEIS-funded/developed Peer Networks programme which is being delivered by LEPs across the country.

All Growth Hub events are bookable through OxLEP's website.

1.1 Peer Networks

Further to the presentation given, it was confirmed the Peer Networks programme will seek not to duplicate the type of business within each cohort, and will implement a clear procedure around conflicts of interest. Discussions will be confidential, all participants signing up to a "Participant Charter".

The first cohort will start 20 October 2020 with funding to be spent by end March 2021 (cohorts starting into January will need to undertake a condensed programme).

It was confirmed cross-fertilisation between cohorts is intended; the programme being a BEIS pilot with the ambition of extending and widening this out.

2 ONLINE EDUCATION AND HOW ACTIVATE LEARNING CAN SUPPORT BUSINESS (Presentation attached)

Jon Childs provided an outline of the work of Activate Learning and the support available to business, EU funded training being particularly useful for SMEs without significant budgets for staff training. Activate Learning is working to support employers, employees and the unemployed back into work.

2.1 Kickstart Scheme

The Kickstart Scheme provides funding for new job placements for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. The placements are for up to 6 months with Government providing funding to pay wages up to 25 hours per week at 100% of the national minimum wage.

The Scheme requires companies to offer 30 placements. Where SMEs cannot achieve this level they are able to 'cluster' through a gateway organisation to achieve the numbers required; Activate Learning is acting as a Gateway organisation.

Partners were encouraged to contact Andy Marshall at Activate Learning for more information on the Kickstart Scheme, or Jon Childs to discuss possible work experience placements for apprentices.

2.2 Q&A

Q Can Activate Learning offer ILM and customer service based training for a voluntary/charity based organisation in Buckinghamshire?

A Yes, assuming that the majority of people receiving training are employed people (whom funding is aimed at).

Q With regards to the Kickstart Scheme, how often will the clusters form?

A This will be based on demand; the first will be as soon as 30 opportunities are registered (likely mid-November). Later cohorts will depend on how quickly clusters of 30 can be formed. Partners were encouraged to register their interest and placements as soon as possible.

3 BICESTER TOWN CENTRE

Graham Perryman, speaking as Chair of Bicester Chamber of Commerce, provided context to discussions. It was noted that views/perspectives from local businesses are being sought on what is required to continue to support the revitalisation of the town centre in the light of increasing development, a growing community and the impact of COVID-19.

In response to the questions posed, those present responded:

3.1 "What would encourage greater use of the town centre?"

- Make it a "destination" and more of an experience; we need to make sure the town centre is meeting the needs for those already visiting and encouraging more to visit.
- Social media etc is currently promoting negative impressions of the town centre and there is a need to highlight the great things that are already happening or are planned. Going forward it will be very important to ensure the town centre and the 'Bicester brand' are marketed and promoted to better effect. There is a need to find a way to engage more positively with the media.

3.2 "How can businesses/Bicester Vision/Bicester Chamber/Local Authorities help facilitate change?"

- Look to the future and what future visitors will require rather than focussing on the past.
- Consider how businesses can survive if landlords are unprepared to reduce rents, business rates remain high, and consumers continue to buy online (as increasingly seen over the last 6 months).
- In making the Town Centre a 'destination' look to returning to local, smaller independents (larger retailers being unlikely to return post-COVID) reducing rents to make this affordable to businesses.

It was reported an event will be held on 19 November to feedback to those individuals/businesses involved in the original Town Centre discussions with Bill Grimsey in June 2019, looking at how to move these plans forward in the coming months. Partners wishing to become involved in this work were encouraged to contact Graham Perryman (info@bicesterchamber.co.uk).

4 CLOSE

LR offered his thanks to all speakers/organisers of the event and all those attending.

5 3 OUTPUTS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Business support** – OxLEP Business Growth Hub are providing a wide variety of business support, triaging businesses to the best possible support for them.
- **Activate Learning** – Are able to support businesses with access to a wide variety of training, including EU funded opportunities, and are acting as a gateway organisation to Government's Kickstart Scheme, clustering SME work placement opportunities.
- **Bicester Town Centre** – Perspectives from local businesses are being sought on what is needed to support revitalisation of the town centre; businesses to contact Graham Perryman with their views at info@bicesterchamber.co.uk

6 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- **Executive Board** – Thurs 5 November 2020, 10am-12pm, via Zoom
- **Full Partnership meeting** – Thurs 3 December 2020, 12-2pm, via Zoom

BICESTER VISION

Meeting	BICESTER VISION CIC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	
Directors/Members Present	Graeme Laws (Partnership Manager) (Director only) Cllr Richard Mould (Bicester Town Council) Cllr Lynn Pratt (Cherwell District Council) Graham Perryman (Bicester Chamber) Shaun Jardine (Brethertons)	(GL) (RM) (LP) (GP) (SJ)
Observers Present	Lt Col Lyndon Robinson RLC (Chair) Peter Cox (Bicester Chamber) Tiggy Atkinson (Bicester Motion/Bicester Heritage)	(LR) (PC) (TA)
Apologies	James Hill (Adalta Real), Richard Byard (OxLEP), Miranda Markham (Value Retail/Bicester Village), John Liggins (Ziran Land Limited), Phil Shadbolt (Zeta), Sarah-Jane Curtis (Bicester Motion/Bicester Heritage), Robert Jolley (Cherwell District Council), William Knighton (Chiltern Railway), Sam Shippen (Bicester Town Council), Jacqui Cox (Oxfordshire County Council), Cllr Lawrie Stratford (Oxfordshire County Council), Cllr Michael Waine (Oxfordshire County Council)	
In attendance	Sarah Fraser	(SF)
Date of meeting	Thursday 8 October 2020	
Venue	Via Zoom	
Circulation	All Supporters	
Dates of next meetings	Executive Board – Thurs 5 November 2020, 10am-12pm, possibly via Zoom Full Partnership meeting/AGM – Thurs 3 December 2020, 12-2pm, via Zoom	

MINUTES

ACTION

1 OXFORDSHIRE LEP GRANT

Board members considered the paper previously circulated outlining issues experienced in the process of applying to Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership for an Escalate grant, including the onerous procurement procedures attached to this particular grant (not applying to other grant funding), the restrictive 'covenants' on use of funding granted, the inability of the Partnership Manager to take part in the procurement process (due to a conflict of interest), and Bicester Vision's ability to provide appropriate match funding in light of the financial impact of COVID-19 on Bicester Vision Supporters and any subsequent reduction in fee income.

The Board agreed:

- That, at such a difficult time, Bicester Vision CIC should not be incurring additional risk and should, instead, be focussed on securing its income stream, working with Supporters, and perhaps revisit the opportunity to source grant funding in the future as new opportunities emerged from Government.
- To ensure any future tendering process clearly excluded anyone wishing to bid to provide services from taking part in establishment of the tendering process or the evaluation of any bids received.

LR/GL

- That LR would write to OxLEP confirming that Bicester Vision CIC does not wish to pursue its application to the Escalate grant funding scheme but may apply to future grant funding opportunities.

LR

2 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board noted the delays in receiving membership fees from a number of Supporters, including Cherwell District Council, as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

3 2020 MEETINGS

- **Executive Board** – Thurs 5 November 2020, 10am-12pm, Bicester Town Council
- **Full Partnership meeting/AGM** – Thurs 3 December 2020, 12-2pm, venue tbc

Board
P/Ship

The meeting closed at 1.25pm

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting

A Special meeting of the **Bicester Town Council Personnel Sub-Committee** was held on Tuesday 29th September 2020 at 19:00hrs on Teams

Present:

Cllr Zoe McLernon – Chairman
Cllr Richard Mould – Vice Chairman
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Alex Thrupp

In Attendance:

Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

RECOMMENDED that apologies be received from Cllr Jason Slaymaker.

2. Staffing Review

The Chief Officer updated the Committee on the current agreed structure, individual staff roles within the structure, performance and pressures.

The Committee discussed staff training, pay rates, the engagement of casuals, recruitment and support required by staff.

The Vice-Chairman advised on analysis and comparisons with other local councils including staff numbers, structures and staff costs in comparison to overall expenditure.

Councillors highlighted the need for the completion of the outdoors management plan.

RECOMMENDED that options for review of the team would be scoped for consideration at a future meeting.

Close of Meeting: 21:05

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Flag Flying Policy (GP22)

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Background

- 1.1 The Committee on 24th August 2020 considered a revised draft Flag Flying Policy (GP22).
- 1.2 Following the debate at the meeting, the Chairman of the Policy Committee and Chief Officer were tasked with taking the comments of the Committee and bringing back a further draft for approval.
- 1.3 The amended draft is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and adoption.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **ADOPT** the Flag Flying Policy (GP22) for further review not later than 2024.



FLAG FLYING POLICY - GP22

GENERAL

1. The flying of flags is a national tradition in the UK. The Government made changes to regulations in 2012 to ease controls over flag flying which are reflected in this policy.
2. All flags flown will be maintained in good condition and shall be replaced when they become worn and begin to fray.
3. The Council has three flag poles all located to the front Garth House.

FLAGPOLES IN GARTH PARK

Flagpole 1

4. The Union Flag shall fly continuously from flagpole 1.

Flagpole 2

5. The flag of The Town Council flag shall fly from flagpole 2 on dates not utilised for other purposes.
6. Flagpole 2 will be used to fly other flags as determined by the Council to be flown on special dates.

Flagpole 3.

7. The English flag of St George shall fly continuously on flagpole 3, other than at times determined in this policy.

FLAGS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Flags of the countries within the UK

8. The flags of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland shall be flown on their respective Saint's days (1st March, 17th March and 30th November) from flagpole 2.

Flags of other countries with which there is an established connection

9. The flags of those countries with which Bicester has twinning connections shall be flown on the national day of each country. France – Bastille Day (14th July), and Germany - German Unity Day (3rd October) on flagpole 2; Poland – Poland National Independence Day (11th November) on flagpole 3.

10. In recognition of the connection to the USA via RAF Croughton, the national flag shall be flown on USA Independence Day (4th July) on flagpole 2.

OTHER FLAGS

Commonwealth Flag

11. The Commonwealth Flag shall be flown on Commonwealth Day second Monday in March from flagpole 2.

Armed Forces Day Flag

12. The Armed Forces Day flag shall be flown from flagpole 2 for one week commencing on the Friday before Armed Forces Day (last Saturday in June).

Remembrance Flag

13. The Royal British Legion Remembrance Flag shall be flown from flagpole 2 from 1st November to 12th November or until the day after Remembrance Sunday (whichever is later).

Pride Flag

14. The Pride Flag shall be flown from flagpole 2 in June until the Friday before Armed Forces Day to celebrate pride month.

Flags not covered by this policy

15. Ad hoc requests from Bicester based constituted groups to fly flags that are not covered by this policy should be made to the Town Council by request in writing to the Chief Officer. They will be determined by the Chief Officer in consultation with the Chairman of Policy Committee if there is insufficient time to be presented to the policy committee for approval. In cases where a particular flag will need to be purchased the requestor will need to purchase an appropriate flag.

LOWERING OF FLAGS TO HALF-MAST

16. On receiving a formal announcement or, in the case of a local situation, upon becoming aware, the Chief Officer will authorise the Union Flag outside Garth House to be lowered to half-mast**. The Union flag will fly in line with the agreed action plan within the marking of the Death of a Senior National Figure.
17. ** Half-mast – the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the mast. When flag is flown at half-mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half-mast position. When the flag is lowered from the half-mast position, it should be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.
18. Such occasions may include but are not limited to:
 - i) Upon the announcement of the death of the Sovereign;
 - ii) The funeral of a member of the Royal Family;
 - iii) The funeral of a foreign ruler;

- iv) The funeral of a Prime Minister or former Prime minister of the UK;
- v) The death of prominent individuals who have influenced the social, economic or cultural life of Bicester;
- vi) Times of national or international tragedy as notified by the Government (usually via Oxfordshire County Council);
- vii) Times of national mourning.

POLICY REVIEW

19. This policy shall be reviewed at least every four years to ensure fitness for purpose.

Policy originally adopted: Monday 18th September 2017

Policy Reviewed: 3 November 2020

Review: Not later than September 2024

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Whitelands Sports Ground

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: South Ward

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Policy Committee on 25th November 2019, the Committee considered a proposal from Cherwell District Council regarding the transfer of Whitelands Sports Ground at no cost to Bicester Town Council but in accordance with appropriate financial regulations regarding the disposal of an asset at less than market value.
- 1.2 It was proposed that an independent site / facility condition survey is undertaken to ensure any outstanding issues are addressed before transfer to BTC; the remaining commuted sum is calculated and transferred to BTC upon successful legal transfer; and the transfer of the asset is accompanied by a binding agreement to ensure the land is not further developed other than for recreational and sporting purposes.
- 1.3 The Committee requested details of the anticipated responsibilities and potential associated costs be obtained from Cherwell District Council before making a decision regarding transfer.
- 1.4 Details as attached at Appendix 1 were obtained from Cherwell District Council earlier in 2020, but because of a break in meetings, were not previously presented to the Committee. The appendix highlights the maintenance responsibilities of the operator (contractor) and the owner (authority) and has indicative costs based on a centre elsewhere in the District.
- 1.5 Given the age of Whitelands, it is not expected that significant costs will be incurred in the near future.
- 1.6 A sinking fund (currently £10k pa but recommended for increase to £15-20k) has been established since 2018 within the Town Council's Earmarked Reserve Schedule ringfenced for the facility. It is expected that if BTC does not take ownership, this EMR will be transferred to Cherwell DC.
- 1.7 Cherwell District Council Officers have enquired regarding the progress of consideration by the Town Council.
- 1.8 Although no legal agreements have been signed, the town council has, since the opening of the facility in September 2017, met the management cost shortfall. This has been £54,082.03 between September 2019 and August 2020. The amount of fee applicable from September 2020 is awaited, the Chief officer is expecting a 0.6% increase as this is linked to CPI.

- 1.9 The operating agreement finishes in September 2022, the Town Council will be required to consider the future operational arrangements with Cherwell District Council in 2021 so the existing contract can be either extended, re-tendered or the Town Council could take on the running of the facility. This matter will be subject to further reports in 2021.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** the transfer of Whitelands Farm Sports Ground from Cherwell District Council to Bicester Town Council.

Item 9 Appendix 1

Item	Contractor	Authority
All water or air heating plant and systems	✓	
All pipe work systems, valves and fittings within the Leisure Facility	✓	
All heating/ cooling and domestic water services treatment plant and chemicals (including chemical supply)	✓	
All fans, air moving equipment inclusive of but not limited to filters, dampers, fan motors and control gear	✓	
All alarm systems inclusive of but not limited to intruder alarms, fire alarms, emergency assistance alarms	✓	
All lighting fittings, internal and external	✓	
All electrical accessories associated with the lighting and power distribution systems, inclusive of but not limited to fuse-boards and fuses, switchgear, switches and socket outlets, contactors, transformers and any automatic control sensors	✓	
Fixed wiring systems of less than mains voltage alarms, telephones etc	✓	
All portable appliances and the obligatory annual testing required under the Public Entertainments Licence including Fire Alarm Inspections, gas equipment safety inspections and Fire Appliance testing	✓	
All telephone systems and equipment, whether leased, rented or owned	✓	
All public address systems and equipment	✓	
Water Safety Policy Management Plan and Monitoring Schedule	✓	
All portable fire fighting appliances, inclusive of any discharge or replacement. The Contractor shall ensure that suitable fire fighting appliance cover is maintained at all times	✓	
All sanitary ware inclusive of but not limited to WC's, wash hand basins, sinks, water closets, showers, and waste water preventers.	✓	
Any internal rainwater systems	✓	
All cleaning, sterilisation and certification of domestic water systems inclusive of all water storage vessels in accordance with BS 6700 with copies of the certification forwarded to the Authority's Representative	✓	
The Contractor shall repair and maintain all glass, fixtures, fittings and appliances.	✓	
Internal joinery, locks, floor fittings, spring and panic bolts	✓	
Internal and exterior window cleaning.	✓	
Light bulbs, light fittings, electrical fittings, sockets etc. and high level cleaning roof lights.	✓	
Emergency lighting systems.	✓	
All other furniture, fittings and contents	✓	
All glazing through the Leisure Facility except for glazed walls.	✓	✓ (Glazed walls)
Repair / replacement of any wall finishes damaged by the Contractor, their employees, agents or licensees in the performance of its obligations.	✓	

Item	Contractor	Authority
Floor finishes	✓	
Waste drains, rainwater pipes, soil pipes and fittings and the free flow of all the waste water systems.	✓	
Internal damage to building caused by misuse or vandalism.	✓	
External damage to building caused by misuse or vandalism except doors and windows.	✓	
External damage to the Sites caused by misuse or vandalism.	✓	
Damage to doors and windows caused by misuse or vandalism	✓	
Water waste preventers, cistern ball valves, taps, stop valves etc.	✓	
Health and safety fittings and appliances	✓	
Fire Risk Assessments	✓	
Statutory work regulations including but not limited to internal control of asbestos, legionella, gas safety	✓	
Internal and external signs and notices.	✓	
Internal painting. An annual redecoration plan shall be provided by the Contractor.	✓	
External Landscaping as stipulated within Clause 1.20	✓	
Internal and external CCTV	✓	
Internal decoration and the protection of the fabric of the structure (as may be necessary for the proper performance of the Service), including all tiled, boarded or otherwise covered surfaces.	✓	
External decoration and the protection of the fabric of the structure (as may be necessary for the proper performance of the Service), including all tiled, boarded or otherwise covered surfaces.		Based on condition survey items including 6-10 years as survey completed 2013. External Redecoration incl. Boarding and Steelwork £18,000 Vertical Cladding £3,500. Re-fix twisted boards on South Elevation £2,500

Item	Contractor	Authority
Static components such as but not limited to boiler shells, air handling units, air ducting, cold water storage cisterns, major repairs and replacements only if in the opinion of the Authority's Representative, the equipment/system is beyond economic repair.	✓ Component replacement, repair and maintenance	Extract Grill Replacement £6,200 Replace Grundfos Pumps £2,000 Replace all thermostatic mixer valves £17,000 Boiler replacement £20,000 Flue Replacement £5,000 Hot Water Cylinder Replacement £8,000
Underground services external to the Leisure Facility		✓
Repair and maintenance of fixed mains electrical wiring systems within the buildings, including accessories and other items.	✓	
Testing and certification of fixed mains electrical wiring systems	✓	
Testing and certification of gas distribution pipework systems.	✓	
Utilities cable and pipework external to the building. Including gas, electric, water and telephone mains, lightening conductors or rods.	✓	
Major replacements of any complete system.		✓
All below ground drainage inclusive of inspection chambers, interceptors and access points excluding access covers, seals and gulleys.	✓	
Foundations.		Not costed but no suggestions any issues currently – allow £2,000
External walls excluding the internal finish of such walls, except when disturbed by the Contractor undertaking repairs (in which case it is a Contractor responsibility).		See external decoration
The structural frame of the Leisure Facility including chimneys, where they exist, excluding any internal finishes, except when disturbed by the Contractor undertaking repairs (in which case it is a Contractor responsibility).		Not costed but no suggestions any issues currently – allow £2,000
Roof coverings and structures, excluding the replacement to all suspended ceilings.		Allow for minor repairs £2,000
Structural floors, including any screed finish, but excluding any coverings that are loose laid or form a finish on the surface of the screed, except where disturbed by the Contractor undertaking repairs (in which case it is a Contractor responsibility).		Not costed - but no suggestion any issues currently – allow £2,000
Rainwater pipes and gutters, external soil and waste pipes, service entry connections, flues, light fittings and signs fitted to the external roof or wall.	✓	
External door and window structures including decoration but excluding glazed walls	✓	

Item	Contractor	Authority
External decoration	✓	
Lifts (Including maintenance, testing and inspections in accordance with Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998).	✓	

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Garth Gazette

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Background

- 1.1 The Town Council's newsletter the Garth Gazette is normally produced for delivery to all households in three editions per year, usually May/June, September and January.
- 1.2 Production was halted for the May/June issue due to concerns regarding the perception of "non-essential" postal delivery during lockdown. The Chief Officer made a 50% payment of one issue to the publisher as an advance payment to be offset against future issues and to ensure the contract was held (£2,500).
- 1.3 As the September issue would normally include coverage of the summer events and promotion of Christmas activities, this was delayed as no events had taken place.
- 1.4 The Committee is now requested to consider the Council's position in respect of production of the newsletter for the 2020/21 financial year to enable officers to work with the publisher.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **REVIEW** the Garth Gazette production for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Draft Policy & Finance Budget 2021/22

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Background

- 1.1 The draft Policy & Finance Budget for 2021/22 is attached at Appendix 1 of this report for consideration and review by the Committee.
- 1.2 All budget lines have been reviewed with the historical data taken into account in alongside known additional requirements. A line by line review should be undertaken.
- 1.3 The Environment Committee will review its budget on 30th November 2020. The Finance Committee will review the combined budget at its meeting on 9th December 2020.
- 1.4 A combined budget for the with implications on council tax will then be presented to this Committee on 21st December to make a recommendation to Council on 18 January 2021.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** the budget draft for Policy & Finance for 2021/22.

Item 11
Appendix 1

difference

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Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
4028 Meetings/Hospitality	68	137	78	53	200	70	100	200	
4031 ModernGov	0	0	0	0	9,000	9,000	9,000	7,250	
4150 Mayor's Expenses	1,500	1,500	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	
4159 Election Expenses	5,918	3,876	2,638	0	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	tfr to EMR at year end
4160 Civic Expenses	8,954	8,458	14,905	8,491	11,000	62	4,000	11,000	
4209 Members Allowances	12,769	12,600	11,760	12,264	13,000	11,388	12,228	13,800	£840 tfr at YE for underpayment 20/21
Civic & Democratic :- Expenditure	29,209	26,571	31,131	22,558	37,950	22,270	30,078	37,000	-950
1010 Inc-Garth Rooms Lettings	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Civic & Democratic :- Income	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Expenditure over Income	29,149	26,571	31,131	22,558	37,950	22,270	30,078	37,000	-950



difference

Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
105 Central Services									
4000 Salaries	110,732	123,010	130,778	112,400	158,775	64,336	138,654	152,808	
4001 Er's NI	7,548	10,975	11,108	11,051	14,767	6,353	13,632	15,024	
4002 Er's Pension	26,753	38,111	37,526	24,170	34,454	13,961	30,088	33,159	
4003 Temporary Staff	0	0	0	16,283	0	0	0	0	
4009 Staff Travel	307	520	24	466	1,000	1	200	1,000	
4015 Health & Safety	392	81	1,607	595	2,000	106	2,000	2,000	
4020 Mobile Phones	1,226	996	908	623	750	294	600	900	ZS currently sim only
4021 Office Phones	2,348	2,554	2,581	2,738	2,600	940	2,500	2,700	
4022 Post	2,556	2,588	2,202	2,619	2,600	764	2,000	1,600	Franking machine contract end 2021
4023 Stationery	882	935	1,193	1,460	1,500	534	1,500	1,550	
4024 Subscriptions	3,950	4,607	4,061	4,357	4,750	4,424	4,750	5,000	incl RMTG
4025 Insurance	16,952	17,415	18,562	19,241	20,000	17,714	17,714	18,250	
4026 Printing	866	529	220	0	500	0	0	500	
4027 Ref Books/Publications	195	0	109	60	100	0	130	200	LCA due Jan
4030 Advertising & Promotions	841	319	680	35	500	0	500	500	
4032 Recruitment Advertising	4,470	0	565	0	1,000	62	150	300	online
4033 Office Expenses	1,150	876	1,124	1,042	1,300	109	700	1,300	
4034 Computer Support	6,851	8,131	16,536	18,887	18,000	10,926	18,000	20,000	
4035 Maintenance - Office Equipment	159	298	18	20	200	216	300	200	
4040 Website	385	425	2,755	471	1,000	215	1000	1,000	
4041 Lease of Photocopier	2,746	3,554	3,510	3,509	3,800	1,227	3,800	3,800	
4055 Press & PR	0	0	1,800	2,025	2,750	1,313	2,750	2,750	
4056 Legal & Professional Fees	950	3,569	7,489	10,511	10,000	625	5,000	10,000	
4057 Audit Fees	4,070	2,901	3,460	2,613	4,000	150	3,000	4,000	
4058 Accountancy	5,363	6,154	6,274	5,345	6,500	2,543	5,200	6,500	
4070 Training & Conferences	555	2,477	1,605	2,040	7,500	165	5,000	10,000	new staff
4097 HR	840	397	1,485	9,904	5,400	229	1,000	5,400	
4169 Newsletter	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,666	14,500	2,500	15,000	15,000	
Central Services :- Expenditure	217,087	245,422	272,180	267,131	320,246	129,707	275,169	315,441	-4,805
1014 Inc-Miscellaneous	0	0	0	24154	0	0	0	0	
Central Services :- Income	0	0	0	24154	0	0	0	0	0



Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
Net Expenditure over Income	217,087	245,422	272,180	242,977	320,246	129,707	275,169	315,441	
									-4,805

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Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
106 Garth House									
4004 Cleaning Contract	3,448	3,437	3,525	3,539	3,600	1,781	3,600	3,600	
4011 Rates	8,946	7,153	7,080	7,242	24,000	7,360	7,360	24,000	do we need this provision?
4012 Water Charges	0	0	96	302	500	12	500	500	
4013 Gas	0	0	1,585	528	2,500	-100	1,000	2,500	
4014 Electric *was utilities to 2017/18	6,377	3,117	1,486	2,171	2,500	575	1,500	2,500	
4017 Cleaning Materials	105	21	12	88	100	17	100	200	
4036 Grounds & Buildings Maintenance	2,120	2,235	2,532	6,792	3,000	160	3,000	3,000	
4039 Waste Removal	0	0	0	0	0	994	994	1,000	
4102 R&M Outreach Building	177	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4103 Maintenance CAB Building	1,373	303	310	0	0	0	0	0	
4130 Building Security	1,610	535	895	2,500	1,500	940	1,500	1,500	
4203 Window Cleaning	498	664	498	332	600	0	600	1,500	new contractor
Garth House :- Expenditure	24,654	17,484	18,019	23,494	38,300	11,739	20,154	40,300	
1001 Inc-OCC Rent	10,000	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1002 Inc-CAB Rent	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,250	0	4,250	4,250	
1007 Inc-Registrars	2,500	16,817	4,185	2627	5500	0	5,500	0	
1010 Inc-Garth Rooms Lettings	7,825	6,765	6,069	3,307	4,000	0	0	3,000	
1014 Inc-Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	2,200	2,200	0	insurance reclaim
1019 Inc-Grants received	514	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Garth House :- Income	25,089	32,832	14,504	10,184	13,750	2,200	11,950	7,250	
Net Expenditure over Income	-435	-15,348	3,515	13,310	24,550	9,539	8,204	33,050	
									-6,500
									8,500



difference

Bicester Town Council

DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
4011 Rates	0	0	1,485	0	0	573	244	0	
4012 Water Charges	0	0	-5	0	0	0	0	0	
4013 Gas	0	0	264	115	0	83	90	0	
4014 Electricity	0	0	77	33	0	62	70	0	
4052 Garth Lodge Costs	1,744	1,389	7,013	3,908	4,000	90	4,000	4,000	
Garth Lodge :- Expenditure	1,744	1,389	8,834	4,056	4,000	808	4,404	4,000	0
1006 Inc-Garth Lodge	9,949	3,756	3,900	8,387	15,000	368	6,600	13,200	
Garth Lodge :- Income	9,949	3,756	3,900	8,387	15,000	368	6,600	13,200	-1,800
Net Expenditure over Income	-8,205	-2,367	4,934	-4,331	-11,000	440	-2,196	-9,200	1,800



difference

Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
108 Corporate Finance									
Corporate Finance :- Expenditure	28,188	27,977	27,833	13,302	13,700	6,434	13,475	13,400	-300
4059 Bank Charges	2,086	2,063	2,107	2,076	2,400	892	2,400	2,400	
4306 loan repayments	26,102	25,914	25,726	11,226	11,300	5,542	11,075	11,000	
1014 Inc-Miscellaneous	110	526	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1019 Grants Received	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1076 Inc-Precept	1,262,320	1,339,590	1,399,420	1,468,070	1,566,506	1,566,506	1,566,506	-	TBC
1077 Inc-Precept support Grant	61,716	61,716	61,716	61,716	15,429	30,858	30,858	0	
1078 Maturity of 2 Year Investment	0	525,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1096 Inc-Interest Received	14,341	8,272	16,271	15,896	8,000	2,580	4,000	4,000	
1225 Inc - New Homes Bonus	0	0	4,003	0	0	0	0	0	
Corporate Finance :- Income	1,338,487	1,935,104	1,481,410	1,545,682	1,589,935	1,599,944	1,601,364	4,000	-1,585,935
Net Expenditure over Income	-47,979	-567,537	-54,157	-64,310	-9,729	-27,004	-21,383	9,400	19,129
							EXCL Precept		

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Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
109 Community Support									
4060 CAB	8,250	8,250	8,250	8,250	8,250	0	8,250	8,250	
4061 Grants To Voluntary Org.	16,339	16,209	18,273	18,069	22,000	0	22,000	22,000	
4062 Shopmobility/Dial A Ride	0	0	0	0	4,750	0	4,750	4,750	keep?
4063 COVID 19 Grants	0	0	0	0	0	8140	20,000	0	
4064 OYAP	0	0	3000	12000	12,000	-12000	12000	12,000	review?
4065 TVP Crime Partnership	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	0	3,600	3,600	
4066 SEE Bags	0	0	-218	0	0	0	0	0	
4131 Bicester Vision Manager	5,000	5,000	5,004	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	
4133 Partnerships	0	366	4,767	496	6,000	0	6000	6,000	EMR at Year end
4170 CCTV	5,150	5,150	5,150	5,150	5,150	-5,150	5,150	5,150	
4171 In Bloom Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4191 Community Woodland	0	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	EMR at YE
4192 Youth Initiatives	0	0	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	10,000	EMR at YE
Community Support :- Expenditure	38,339	38,575	47,826	52,565	81,750	-4,010	101,750	81,750	0
Net Expenditure over Income	38,339	38,575	47,826	52,565	81,750	-4,010	101,750	81,750	0



difference

Bicester Town Council
DRAFT Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 2021/22

	Actual 2016/17	Actual 2017/18	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Actual to 30/09/2020	Expected Outturn 20/21	Budget 2021/22	Notes
110 Projects									
4100 Purchase New Machinery	0	0	3584	1,751	25,000	0	25,000		
4300 New Computer Equipment	0	0	0	5,904	7,000	0	7,000		
4301 Garth House Redevelopment	0	0	1250	5,000	40,000	2000	40,000		
4305 New cemetery	0	0	1725	400	61,968	0	61,968		
4312 Asset maintenance	0	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000		
4313 Playarea/openspace investment	7,998	0	0	1,514	50,000	0	50,000		
4314 Town Centre				4,014	25,000	0	25,000		
Projects :- Expenditure	7,998	0	6,559	18,583	268,968	2,000	268,968	270,000	to be allocated
1019 Inc- Grants Received			64,150	30,000	0	0	0	0	
Projects :- Income			64,150	30,000	0	0	0	0	
Net Expenditure over Income	7,998	0	-57,591	-11,417	268,968	2,000	268,968	270,000	1,032
TOTAL POLICY & FINANCE									
EXPENDITURE	347,219	357,418	412,382	401,689	764,914	168,948	713,998	761,891	-3,023
INCOME	111,265	632,102	164,544	150,337	52,179	36,006	53,408	24,450	-27,729
NET EXPENDITURE POLICY & FINANCE	235,954	-274,684	247,838	251,352	712,735	132,942	660,590	737,441	24,706

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Office Telephones

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Background

- 1.1 The Town Council's current telephone system is thought to be over 10 years old and whilst still operational it has fixed points in the building.
- 1.2 When the current pandemic forced closure of the Council Office in March, it was only possible to transfer calls to one number. As we had a vacancy in the outdoor team there was an unallocated contract mobile phone which has been utilised for this purpose. This phone has been passed around the administration team, but does not allow for transfer of calls and is less than ideal.
- 1.3 Additionally, as the Chief Officer has investigated options for an eventual return to the office in a COVID secure way, one of the challenges is around telephone capacity within the rooms of the building.
- 1.4 One solution for the Council could be a move to VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) telephones which work like a phone service using the internet rather than the traditional telephone lines. A good quality internet connection would be a required for this service. The phones are able to be used remotely so long as there is an internet connection which would be an advantage.
- 1.5 VOIP systems are being used increasingly in many organisations and can be a better value solution for telephone services, they are certainly more flexible in use.
- 1.6 The Council's IT provider CMR has provided some initial advice on estimated costs and functionality. While they are not a direct provider, they could assist in the procurement of a suitable service, should the council wish to pursue this route. Detailed costings have not at this stage been secured.
- 1.7 In terms of capital costs, reasonable quality handsets are around £150 - £230 per item. We currently have eight fixed telephones – cost around £1,200 - £1,840. Although there are only seven staff who use telephones, one could be a conference based telephone to replace the phone in the Members Room. Capital costs could be met from the projects budgets for new machinery or new computer equipment in the current year budget.
- 1.8 The current maintenance cost for the existing system is £355pa which would be saved.
- 1.9 In terms of monthly costs, it is estimated up to £15 per phone per month = £120. The current costs vary depending upon useage with bills ranging from £120 to £175 per

month in 2019/20. Although bills include analogue lines at least two analogue lines linked to alarms which would require retailing. These are currently £14 per month.

- 1.10 Although the proposal may therefore not result in an overall monthly cost saving, it should be deliverable within existing budgets.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** in principle the purchase of a VOIP telephone provision subject to a detailed report on costs being presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Rural/Market Towns Group Membership

Chairman: Councillor Richard Mould

Telephone: 01869245917 richard.mould@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer

Telephone: 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

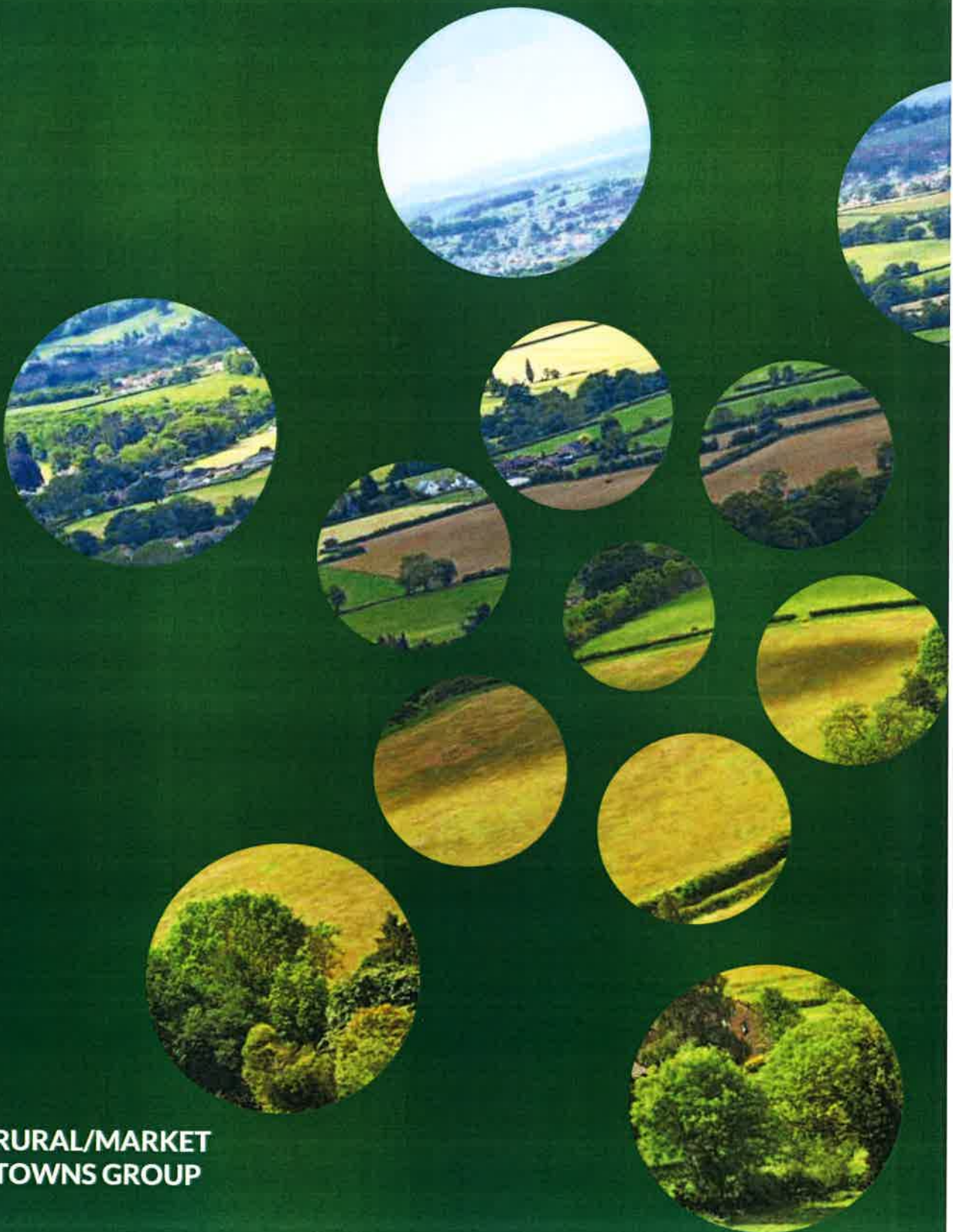
1. Background

- 1.1 The Town Council has been approached by the Rural Services Network, part of the Local Government Association with a formal invitation to join their Rural/Market Towns Group Membership free of charge until 31st March 2021.
- 1.2 Another 50 or so towns across England have also been approached to join an existing membership base of 123 principal authority members. A supporting document is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 If the Committee is minded to agree to join, a representative should also be nominated. The first full meeting of representatives is timetabled by Zoom on the 9th of November.
- 1.4 The membership fee for 2021/22 is £150 per year. A decision on membership would be required before March 2021.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** to accept free membership of the Rural/Market Towns Group for 2020/21; appoint a representative to the group and review membership benefits in March 2021.

The Rural/Market Towns Group



RURAL/MARKET
TOWNS GROUP

A RURAL/MARKET TOWNS GROUP- A FORMAL INVITE

We are a Special Interest Group of The Local Government Association representing Rural Areas across England. Our mission is to be the national champion for rural services, ensuring that people in rural areas have a strong voice. We have 123 Principle Authority members from across England. We also have a grouping of 200 plus non- local authority service providers (the RSP) and we issue a Rural Bulletin weekly to around 23,000 rural contacts across England. We also issue a monthly Funding Digest of rural grant opportunities and Government consultations.

Our website is www.rsnonline.org.uk

What we do:

We aim to ensure rural issues are given a high profile, unfortunately we now find ourselves as the only organisation in England currently undertaking this vital work. Our network is the countries' largest rural network. We ourselves deliberately don't work from a grant or government funding base but from member subscription. We provide value for money to our members. This has allowed growth and continuity of operation together with the ability to make the rural case honestly and from within ourselves without fear of upsetting any external funding stream on which we may be dependent.

What we have achieved to date:



The first general rural parliamentary groups in history



Better finance settlements for rural authorities



Continual Pressure on Government in relation to issues ranging from broadband to rural housing and vulnerability



The creation of Rural Crime, Rural Health and Rural Research organisations and now a Rural/Market Town Grouping that will hopefully span across England

The facts:

There are many rural areas in England spun across 200 different local authorities. Only by working together can we present a cohesive approach to an urban facing government. It is easy for urban areas to gather support but more difficult for dispersed rural areas. We have to get rural messages across and backed if they are to properly be heard and acted upon.

What we want from you:

The wider our membership the stronger the rural voice- it's a simple fact. We want to establish a Rural/Market Towns Group to allow towns a conduit into our services and policies and operation. We wish to see Rural Towns given the opportunity to establish the commonalities of their case and to be able to argue for it. We charge an annual subscription which is low and affordable but it's what it can give back that we wish to be judged upon.

What we can give you back:



Formation of a dedicated Rural/Market Towns Group, offering some peer-to-peer networking and discussion opportunities (either face-to-face or online) and input into the national rural agenda. (Representation on this Group can be by Council Clerk or Member)



Development of a representational role, for example responding to selected public policy consultations or meeting with interested Parliamentarians. There is no rural or market or small towns APPG



Development of good practice and learning material related to the key policy areas and delivery challenges and opportunities for rural/market towns



Provision of a dedicated quarterly newsletter highlighting relevant latest policy developments, showcasing interesting member practice and flagging relevant initiatives or funding opportunities (perhaps drawn from the Rural Funding Digest)



Where made possible by published material - provision of some benchmark statistics about rural/market towns



Management of occasional online surveys of the member rural/market towns, to gather comparative information about topics of particular interest to this grouping and to the RSN as a whole



Free RSN community membership for your local organisations



Entry onto a bulletin calendar of the major local rural/market town events



The ability to establish and present the collective voice of rural/market towns



The ability to say what your council think about English rural issues which affect their area as and when they arise



An expectation that those views will be taken forward



Full entitlement to attend, free of charge, any of the seven annual seminars each based around a specialist topic



Involvement in the English Rural Sounding Board system



Discounted rates at the National Rural Conference every September



An annual Rural Town networking meeting held online

If you don't receive these currently you will also get:



The weekly Rural Bulletin



The monthly RSN Funding Digest

Summary:

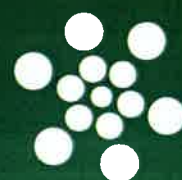
Our target is to form a Rural Market Towns Group of approximately 200 towns by the end of 2020 and harness the argument of these rural areas. Both the town councils, people in the towns, and their surrounding hinterlands will be better placed to put their arguments across and contribute to the rural voice. We hope you can help us grow from the start!

As we exit the EU we are currently calling on government to produce a 'Rural Strategy' giving both direction and promise to rural areas. Our wish is that Rural and Market Towns should be given clear opportunities in such a Strategy. To date government has received this call somewhat negatively. It is only by working together and by establishing and pursuing common goals that your town can input into the national picture. Please back us to back your town and your area.

LET'S BRING & ARGUE THE RURAL CASE TOGETHER

If you would like further information about the Rural/Market Towns Group please contact us:

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**RURAL/MARKET
TOWNS GROUP**

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

Date/ Item/ Comment

1. Pending: Closure policy for cemetery
2. November: London Road level crossing – watching brief
3. Pending: Retention of assets policy
4. Last meeting before financial year: NW Bicester under path on tunnel
5. Future management of open space play areas
6. April 2021: New burial ground and memorial policy
7. On-going: Working on town centre group