

The SPC Business Plan {Action Plan} - 2023/24

Introduction

The SPC Strategic Plan 2022 concerns itself with outlining the nature of the day-to-day services and support SPC aims to offer its residents. This Business plan 2023/24 will define more specifically what your Council wants to achieve in the forthcoming year, whilst also outlining some of its longer-term goals. It will state an agreed SPC Finance Plan, a list of projects and special services or other undertakings it has agreed are to be prioritised for completion this year and into the next, and finally it will define an 'Action Plan' which will provide a sense of direction and outline measurable goals to be followed by the Council to allow it to continue to maintain its focus on the task at hand.

1. SPC Finance Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this Finance Plan is to set out how the Parish Council will determine and review its level of reserves in so far as it relates to the council's agreed annual 'Action Plan'. It will also set out a guide to its Annual Budget-setting process and the management of its Reserve Funds.

Sections 32, 43 and 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to maintain adequate financial reserves in order to meet the needs of the organisation and to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget and precept requirement. The Council's policy on the maintenance and adequacy of reserves and balances will be considered annually and agreed on by approval of this Business Plan.

The SPC Annual Budget

The SPC Responsible Finance Officer prepares draft annual budget papers for councillors to deliberate upon at each of the three sub-committees that hold the delegated responsibility for their combined revenue and expenditure. Then finally and in line with a timeframe and process determined by the F&GP Committee each autumn, the budget for the following financial year (Beginning each April) is agreed the preceding January. The Budget agreement needs to be concluded by Full Council before the end of January so that the SPC Responsible Finance Officer can determine the Councils Precept and therefore make the appropriate application to Horsham District Council. The Budget quantifies expected income totals and determines the expenditure required to cover the cost of goods and services which the Council has agreed it wants to supply for the benefit of the Steyning Parish residents in line with what has been identified via this business plan and whatever additional ideas, plans and projects it wants to deliver for its residents for the forthcoming year.

SPC Reserves

The council holds funds in its three bank accounts that in total, and over and above that which is set aside for its annual budgetary commitments, amount to a figure that is termed the SPC Reserves. Reserves can be broken down into two different categories. These are the General Reserves, which are funds that do not have any restrictions as to their use and the Earmarked Reserves which are funds that can be held for several reasons and the amounts are intended to be restricted for that agreed use.

As at 2022/23 Year End, the Total SPC Reserves were £ 299,465.00.

General Reserves

These Reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement, if necessary, avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing, or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies. The level of general reserves is a matter of judgement based upon advice from its RFO and this advice is routinely based upon all available guidance from NALC, Internal Auditors and other contextual advisories. Historically, SPC has determined it will keep its General Reserves at between 40% to 60% of its budgeted Annual Expenditure, or more often a suggested 50% approx. Since 2017 SPC has also determined that one of its three Bank Accounts should hold an 'Emergency Reserve' of £80,000 as part of its General Reserves. In 2020 it determined that this account be modified to one that can accrue interest. In June 2023 it determined that the amount in this account should reflect the agreed level of General Reserves minus Earmarked Reserves – this therefore leaving this account representative of the agreed SPC Emergency Reserve {should not be used other than in absolute emergencies and then in order to cover expenses which could not be met by any other means}, and that this amount be 4 months' worth of the net revenue expenditure, which as of 2023/24 was agreed at £113K.

Earmarked Reserves

These reserves must be reviewed during the annual budget setting process and then established and agreed at F&GP Committee subject to a confirmed Budget for the year ahead, an agreed list of planned projects and an understanding of the 'Year End Reserve' figures. Earmarked Reserves will therefore be established on a 'needs' basis, in line with anticipated requirements. They are also a means of building up funds over several years to deliver a defined project, cover predicted liabilities or for known significant expenditure. The council, when establishing an Earmarked Reserve, will set out an estimate as to the likely costs of the known expenditure, project or liability and the reason or purpose of the reserve. The how and when it is to be used will be more clearly defined within the annual 'Action Plan' noted below.

Some Earmarked Reserves can be designated as 'Ring Fenced' – These are monies or grants allocated for a specific project and cannot be used for any other purpose and until there is little or none left.

Earmarked Reserves as per agreed at F&GP Committee on the 13th June 2023 as follows: -

Cemetery Committee Accounts These funds to be used by Joint Cemetery Committee only.	£58,781	{Ring Fenced}
Neighbourhood Plan These funds are to cover ongoing costs from the Neighbourhood Planning Consultant	£1,118	
HR Services These funds are to cover admin costs associated with upgrading Part Time Staff Contracts	£3,743	
LED Lighting Upgrades This is what remains from a grant from Rampion, and must be spent on increasing energy efficiency	£1,142	{Ring Fenced}
MPF / Allot Access This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget.	£2,000	{Ring Fenced}
CIL Monies These funds can only be used for projects when agreed parameters are met.	£10,201	{Ring Fenced}

Bus Shelter Notice Boards This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget.	£1,000	{Ring Fenced}
Legal Fees Funds to cover Land registry works by the SPC Solicitor	£5,000	
High St. Notice board relocation Funds to cover relocation, new posts and possibly new board.	£1,500	
Steyping Centre Audio- Visual upgrade Funds to cover the completion of this project.	£3,877	{Ring Fenced}
Clock Tower Maintenance Funds to cover completion of this project – Assist with scaffolding and renovate clock faces.	£5,000	{Ring Fenced}
Steyping Centre ‘Sinking Fund’ Funds to cover large long term essential maintenance items	£5,000	{Ring Fenced}
Tree Reports & Essential Works Funds covering works to complete the necessary maintenance highlighted by the Tree report.	£6,750	
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	£105,112.00	

As at 2022/23 Year End this leaves a General Reserve figure of £194,353.00.

With an agreed Emergency Reserve of £113K, this leaves the SPC with a potential working capital for non-earmarked reserve projects of £81,353 for the year 2023/24.

2. SPC List of Projects and Planned Services for 2023/24

This list includes all significant projects and planned additional services for the year ahead. It is a list determined by agreements at SPC Committee’s or Council and as per funds set aside within the Budget and the associate list of projects being agreed at F&GP Committee on the 11th July ‘23, as well as the aforementioned projects and services agreed to be financed through the Earmarked Reserves. This list has also been determined under five principles of goal setting. These being that the projects are **Specific** in that they are well defined; they are **Achievable** given there are no unreasonable or very unusual situations arise to stop this from happening, and because funds are available and already earmarked to allow completion; they are **Measurable** in that each stage of the ‘Action Plan’ can be followed and ‘ticked off’ on completion; they are **Realistic** in that there should be enough time and appropriate resources available to complete them; and they are **Time-Bound** as per detailed within the ‘Action Plan’ table below.

- **Joint Parishes Youth Service** — Complete a new Business Plan which enables the Youth Service provision to continue, after the loss of the previous provider in June ‘23.
- **Hedgerow Developments** — Complete repairs and infill to Rublees hedge {West} and install a supplementary new hedgerow along the MPF / Rublees boundary.
- **Update Part-Time Staff Contracts** — To redefine these contracts based upon guidance on the latest legislation and to work collaboratively with HR Services and the staff in question to ensure the final documents are reasonable and agreed.
- **Tree Report and Essential Works** — To ensure the Tree report essential works are completed.

- **High Street Christmas Light Display** – To complete compliance documents with WSCC, Electric supply and distribution companies, Display installation company and Lamp testing company and then install Christmas Display as agreed by F&GP and in time for the Christmas ‘late night shopping’ event.
- **MPF / Allot Access** – To upgrade the access points as appropriate.
- **Land Registry Works Undertaken** – To ensure that these ongoing works being undertaken by the SPC Solicitor are progressed, given they are dependent upon the Land Registry Office, and that the SPC Land Register can be brought up to date.
- **Clock Tower Maintenance** – To undertake an assessment of the High St. Clock Tower to enable a scope of works to be agreed with the owner, then agree a contractor for Clock faces and attempt to complete the works before years end, by working with the owner to share scaffolding costs. If there is no movement on completing this project this year, then look at **Solar panel installation** at the Steyning Centre instead.
- **Memorial Bench installations** – This project is to complete a number of installations from last year and into 23/24 – probably three in total, to enhance provision on the MPF.
- **Bus Shelter Notice Boards** – To work with local schools and or local art groups to come up with a possible art installation for the Bus Shelter
- **Steyning Centre Projector installation** – To find the appropriate replacement for the defunct system currently in place in Coombe Court.
- **Nursery Investment Project** – To agree in collaboration with the previous manager a project whereby funding that has already been allocated to their now defunct organisation can possibly be used to the benefit of the Steyning Centre and the wider community.
- **CCTV** – To upgrade {install} the CCTV monitoring arrangements for the Steyning High Street, and to progress as much as possible the other two CCTV installation dispositions for Fletchers Croft and the MPF.
- **Complete Implementation Plan** – To work through the recommendations as per Hoey Ainscough review and complete to the satisfaction of the HDC monitoring department the actions noted within the implementation plan.
- **Finger Post Installation and Notice Board moved on the High Street** – Two finger posts installed identifying location and promoting visits to the MPF Memorial Gardens and to move SPC Notice Board.
- **Chandlers Way Pocket Park and Play Area renewal** – To work collaboratively with the local residents to plan a park for the benefit of the local community. Part of the project is to work out in what way the scheme is to be funded and to determine therefore the details of the scheme.
- **Upgrade Bins on the Steyning High Street** – To work with HDC to ensure the Bins on the High Street are restored, painted and fit for purpose. And replace existing conventional bin with recycling bin install.
- **Traffic Regulation Orders** – Complete a TRO or small selection of TROs for the benefit of Steyning Residents {Certainly Vicarage Lane as a top priority}

3. The SPC Action Plan for 2023/24

Having established the main project and service objectives for this coming year and the priority that the Council is placing upon their completion this ‘Action Plan’ will give, as per the following table, an indication of the method and timescale by which they will be achieved.