

The SPC Business Plan {Action Plan} - 2024/25

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 2024/25 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 Council's 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 four 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 2023/24 Year End, the Total SPC Reserves were £ 261,829.00

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, now four, 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. **This money is held in a separate bank account which is gaining interest – we propose that the year-end figure for this account for March '24, which includes this interest, be our new emergency reserve– that is £115,259**

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 14th May 2024 as follows: -

Joint Cemetery Committee Accounts	£63,731	{Ring Fenced}
These funds to be used by Joint Cemetery Committee only.		
Neighbourhood Plan	£2,674	
These funds are primarily to cover ongoing costs from the Neighbourhood Planning Consultant		
HR Services	£3,743	
These funds are to cover admin costs associated with upgrading Staff Contracts		
LED Lighting Upgrades	£942	{Ring Fenced}
This is what remains from a grant from Rampion, and must be spent on increasing energy efficiency		
MPF / Allot Access	£1,184	{Ring Fenced}
This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget (now part used).		

CIL Monies These funds can only be used for projects when agreed parameters from HDC are met.	£10,468	{Ring Fenced}
Bus Shelter Notice Boards This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget.	£1,000	{Ring Fenced}
Marley Shed Roof renovation For complete renewal of this Cricket Club managed SPC asset.	£500	{Ring Fenced}
High St. Notice board relocation Funds to cover relocation, new posts and possibly new board purchase when permissions allow.	£1,500	
Steyning Centre Audio- Visual upgrade Funds to cover the completion of this project.	£1,462	{Ring Fenced}
Clock Tower Maintenance Funds to cover completion of this project – Assist with scaffolding and renovate clock faces.	£4,660	{Ring Fenced}
Steyning 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 last Tree report.	£6,750	
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	£103,614	

As at 2023/24 Year End this leaves a General Reserve figure of £158,215.00.

With an agreed Emergency Reserve of £115,259 this leaves the SPC with a potential ‘working capital’ for non-earmarked reserve projects of £42,956 for the year 2024/25.

2. SPC List of Projects and Planned Services for 2024/25

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 9th July ‘24, 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 ‘Start Up’** – Funding source Budget & Income from Joint Parishes + Youth members – Complete set up of fully functioning and internally staffed Joint Parishes Youth Service.
- **Chandlers Way Pocket Park and Play Area renewal** – Part paid by Cil Funds - £13,130 then topped up by General Reserves ‘working capital’ - To work collaboratively with the local residents to install a new play area, then plan a ‘pocket’ park for the benefit of the local community and begin planting.
- **MPF Main Access** – Paid for by General Reserves ‘working capital’ plus possible joint funding with the Steyning in Bloom group - To upgrade the main point of access, as appropriate and as funds allow, to ensure it is welcoming and attractive.

- **Steyping Centre energy & carbon saving** – **Funded by Special Projects budget** - To review and overhaul the energy usage within the Steyping Centre including the heating, lighting & insulation.
- **High Street Christmas Light Display** – **Funded by Annual Budget** - 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.
- **Climate Action Plan** – **Paid for by General Reserves 'working capital'** - Develop and agree a climate action plan
- **MPF/Charlton St ent. improvements** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Earmarked Reserves** - Work with WSCC to understand what can be done to make this access point work better as an access point for the community.
- **High Street Tower Clock Maintenance** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Earmarked Reserves** - Agree scope of works with the Clock Tower owner, demarcation for scaffolding, timetabling & clock face renewal continuity.
- **MPF Play Area renewal** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Externally sourced funding if possible** - Establish what the preferred option is, and where the funding is likely to come from for a Full MPF Play area renewal.
- **Bus Shelter improvements** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Earmarked Reserves** -
- Work with Schools /Local Art groups to find an artistic installation for the shelter interior
- Find solution for physically challenged users of shelter
- **Steyping car parks and signage** – **HDC & WSCC funded** - Continue quest for all three Car Parks to be properly signed on roads and that all three are upgraded and with maintenance programme in place
- **CCTV purchase and installation** – **Funded by Special Projects budget / topped up by Gen Res.-** To agree CCTV monitoring installation for the Steyping High Street, and progress arrangements for MPF and Fletchers Croft.
- **SPC Social media & App roll out** – **Little or no cost** - Attempt regular postings on a number of platforms - to promote work of council, as well as ensure positive and correct information drowns out unhelpful 'noise'.
- **Neighbourhood Plan - Phase II** – **Paid for by Earmarked reserves + possibly ext. funding applications** - Following SCP agreement to return to our N. Plan to consider missing elements from first plan, within 6 months of HDC Local plan being made - To do so.
- **Mouse Lane – Op watershed app.** – **Paid for by ext. funding applications** - Work with Wiston Estate, WSCC Cllr & engineers, local residents and any other key stakeholders to work out a scheme which could alleviate current issue
- **Steyping Traffic Regulation Orders** – **Paid by WSCC + possibly topped up by SPC S106 Highways funds** - Complete a TRO or small selection of TROs for the benefit of Steyping Residents {Certainly Vicarage Lane as a top priority}
- **Steyping Centre projector install** - **Paid for by Earmarked reserves** - Complete feasibility study and business plan which sets out need for projector replacement and if agreed purchase and install
- **Last Years project completions** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Earmarked Reserves** - To complete the unfinished SPC projects from the year 2024/25 agreed list

3. The SPC Action Plan for 2024/25

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.