The SPC Business Plan {Action Plan} - 2025/26

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 2025/26 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 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 2024/25 Year End, the Total SPC Reserves were £ 288,179.00

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 approximately 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 '25, which includes this cumulative interest, be our new emergency reserve – **that is £118,400**

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 agreed at F&GP Committee on the 11th March 2025 as follows: -

Joint Cemetery Committee Accounts **£63,731** **{Ring Fenced}**
These funds to be used by Joint Cemetery Committee only.

Youth Services Reserves **£21,729** **{Ring Fenced}**
These funds are primarily to complete start-up equipment expenditure

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 **This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget (now part used).**	**£1,184**	**{Ring Fenced}**
CIL Monies **These funds can only be used for projects when agreed parameters from HDC/ SDNP are met.**	**£3,318**	**{Ring Fenced}**
Bus Shelter Notice Boards **This was a designated project fund from the 2019/21 Budget.**	**£1,000**	**{Ring Fenced}**
High St. Notice board relocation **Funds to cover relocation, new posts and possibly new board purchase when permissions allow.**	**£1,280**	
Town Improvement **Funds to specifically assist with MPF interpretation boards.**	**£1,280**	**{Ring Fenced}**
Steyning Centre 'Sinking Fund' **Funds to cover large long term essential maintenance items**	**£10,000**	**{Ring Fenced}**
Tree Reports & Essential Works **Funds covering works to complete the necessary maintenance highlighted by the last Tree report.**	**£9,750**	
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	**£117,957**	

As at 2024/25 Year End - With a General Reserve figure of £288,179. And an agreed Emergency Reserve of £118,400, then Earmarked Reserves of £117,957, leaves SPC with a potential 'working capital' for non-earmarked reserve projects of £51,822 for the year 2025/26, if it chooses to do so.

2. SPC List of Projects and Planned Services for 2025/26

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 8th July '25, 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.

- **MPF/Charlton Street entrance pathway renewal** – **Funding by WSCC** – Lobby and work with WSCC to resurface and make good the entire entrance including removal of kissing gate + therefore allow potential disabled play install.
- **Chandlers Way Pocket Park development** – **Full project being part paid by £5K grant funding and then topped up by existing annual budget** - To work collaboratively with the local residents to plant and maintain 'pocket' park.
- **MPF Main Access improvements / Interpretation boards** – **Paid for by a grant from SDNP + supporting grants from individuals and organisations such as SIB & Cricket Club** - To upgrade the main point of access, as appropriate and as funds allow, to ensure it is welcoming and attractive.
- **Steyning Centre energy & carbon saving** – **Funded by Special Projects budget -£10K-** To review and overhaul the energy usage within the Steyning Centre including the heating, lighting & insulation.

- **DMMO inquiry resolution** – **No funding other than perhaps travelling expenses –** Council to continue in its quest to support new PROW classification on permissive paths and especially in terms of Rifle Range pathway case.

- **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 Travel Plan** – **Paid for by General Reserves 'working capital' and potentially S106 monies –** Help support and agree Walking a & Cycling plan, then actively work towards achieving some of the plan's targets/ aims.

- **Inaugural Steyning Parish Flood Plan** – **Paid for by Community budget funds initially** - Work with EA & AORT to compile a draft plan and understand how to complete first phases of riparian responsibilities/ maintenance works .

- **Steyning PC Emergency Plan revamp** – **No Cost but great deal of Staff & Cllr time involvement** – Agree fundamentals involved with different scenarios and ensure procedures in place and understood by those responsible.

- **Railings on the Roundabout** – **Not a SPC project but vitally important that SPC ensure these works are completed correctly and in keeping – Nil of little cost** – Complete quotes for WSCC and help project manage.

- **Cricket Club Lease and development of new clubhouse** – **Paid for by Club, and involving asset transference of changing rooms** – Needs a lot of negotiating & seeking both compromise, also positive directional support.

- **CCTV purchase and installation** – **Funded by Special Projects budget / topped up by Gen Res. but limited to £10 to £18 K for first phase .-** To agree CCTV monitoring installation for agreed areas and gain public support.

- **Glebe Farm Development (positive influence/ assistance)** **– Little or no cost -** Attempt regular discussions with Vistry at every level to ensure residents' concerns, positives of the planned design and SPC views being implemented

- **Neighbourhood Plan Review completion** – **Paid for by Earmarked reserves & budgeted plus or instead of possibly by ext. funding applications –** Complete a review of the existing document, agree changes and add design code section then gain public support and take back to HDC and examination

- **Neighbourhood Plan - Phase III** – **Paid for by General reserves if needs be –** To progress towards a full N. Plan with all criteria including housing allocation being dealt with.

- **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

- **Steyning Centre front door replacement -** **Paid for by Earmarked reserves -** Complete feasibility study and install new doors and begin to remodel entrance area

- **Last Years Action Plan project completions** – **Paid for by General Res. 'working capital' + Earmarked Reserves** - To complete the unfinished SPC projects from the year 2025/26 agreed Action plan list.

- **Devolution Business Plan** – **Potentially approx. £2 to £3K in solicitors fees –** Gain appropriate information concerning potential asset transference land and buildings, then express interest with HDC and formulate Business Plan.

- **Remembrance event organisation** – **Annual budget funding –** Help the Church and engage with local groups to ensure the event is publicised and well attended and the site and participants are prepared.

3. The SPC Action Plan for 2025/26

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.