

TEIGNBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (TALC)

Secretary: Dudley Swain 01392 833353

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Minutes

of the meeting held on Thursday 7th February 2019 at Forde House

Present:

Bishopsteignton	Elaine Cawthraw; Kim Ford;	Ideford	Ashley Lamb; Greg Dyke;
.....	Keith Lambert	Anthony French
Broadhempston	Peter Stevens	Newton Abbot	David Howe (Chairman);
Chudleigh	Peter Jackson	Carol Bunday; Mike Hocking
Dawlish	Howard Almond	Ogwell	Richard Broome; Michael Lant
Denbury & Torbryan	Tony Brownhill	Shaldon	Chris Clarance
Dunchideock	Stephen Moor	Shillingford St George ..	John Parrott
Exminster	Derek Madge; John Goodey	Tedburn ST Mary.....	Pat Moody; Jane Clark
Hennock	Charlie Fisher	TDC	Gary Powell
		Secretary	Dudley Swain

NOTE:- This meeting takes the place of that scheduled for 31st January (postponed because of severe weather warnings)

Apologies: Ashburton (John Nutley); Ashton (John May); Bishopsteignton (Henry Merritt); Bovey Tracey (Martyn Evans, Steven Leigh); Buckfastleigh (Janet Jones); Kenn & Kennford (Andy Chislett, Bridgette Williams); TDC – Stuart Barker; Mid-Devon Advertiser (Sandra Perraton)

1 Martin Flitcroft, Chief Financial Officer, TDC - 19/20 Budget Proposals

The initial budget went to Executive and Overview Scrutiny committees and has now progressed to the present proposals that go to Full Council on 28/2/19. Funding from central government is of increasing concern with further changes and reductions (to such as New Home Bonus and business rates) anticipated in 2020/21. Other pressures include the 2 year staff pay award (2% pa), linked to national minimum pay agreements and managing the pension fund. Town/parish councils remain exempt from restrictions to their tax increases (or having to hold a referendum) although they are supposedly monitored for untoward changes.

The picture for 2019/20 is satisfactory but a £1.3m revenue gap is likely for 20/21 which may need to rely on earmarked reserves. The coming year is accommodated by the various changes that have been made to TDC structures, better use of IT and more partnership working. TDC's commercial investment strategy and making use of the Public Works Loans Board will be explored further and local fees/charges are generally proposed to increase by inflation. An overall picture of the budget forecast is in the Appendix (along with the diagram for 2018/19 for interesting comparison).

2 Donna Best, Estates & Development Manager, TDC – Devolving Assets to Town & Parish Councils

TDC introduced a draft policy which has been drafted to provide greater clarity and governance around the transferring of service delivery and/or property assets to town and parish councils. A Guidance and Application Form is also proposed. This was one of a suite of policies proposed for adoption in support of TDC's Asset Management Strategy.

Examples of the sort of instances where service devolution and/or an asset transfer might be appropriate were cited as

- Where there is potential to provide for a community facility
- A 'tidy up' - incidental pieces of land and landscaping
- Access to funding streams or grant funding not available to TDC
- Continuing a service that TDC is no longer able to provide

It was recognised that although not a new concept, with increasing pressure on local government finance, there may be services TDC are no longer available to afford to continue to provide in the near future. Where important to that local community, it may be that town and parish councils will be in a position to fund locally.

Where ‘well-being’ benefits to the local community could be derived, there was a possibility that property assets could be transferred at ‘less than best value’ (Local Government Act 1972). There could also be some transitional funding made available if needs be, facilities management services be made available and access to TDC contractors and suppliers. The key message was that TDC want to work collaboratively to continue to deliver as wide a range of services as possible to support our residents, business and visitors, and that this was going to increasingly need local support.

In discussions arising, it was commented that it is possible that the local council can run an asset more efficiently and cheaper than TDC, perhaps assisted by some element of transitional funding from TDC. However, because of many budget complexities, it seems that TDC often does not know current operating costs of assets. This led to Dawlish having to return toilets to TDC once the real costs emerged. The Chief Finance Officer did advise that costings for the assets had been provided for Dawlish and it was up to the town/parish to decide how they could alter the costings and resources going forward. It is therefore up to the local councils to get expert opinion and advice prior to taking over an asset. Small parish councils, with only the part-time Clerk as the paid staff, are most unlikely to be able to take over an asset or service that requires significant management. Their precepts vary immensely, many of which could not be increased realistically to raise sufficient funds to run a service and take on any associated property asset.

It was requested that any comments be fed back to Donna Best by 22nd March 2019 on 01626 215467 or donna.best@teignbridge.gov.uk.

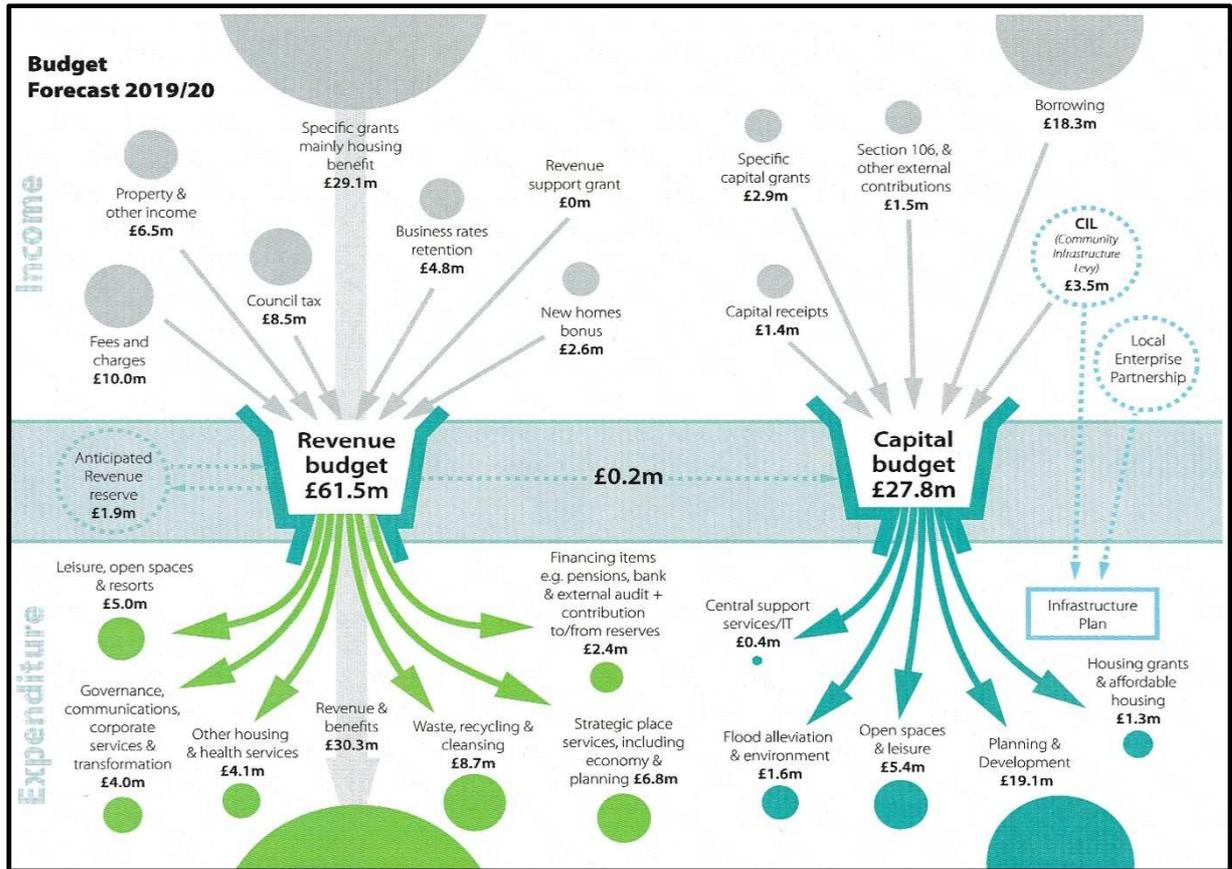
Council Owned Properties & Land – see <https://v.gd/assets> or <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/business/commercial-property/council-owned-properties-and-land/>

- 3 Minutes of the meeting 29th November 2018** – These were approved without any amendments.
- 4 Secretary’s Report** DALC has kindly contributed £100 as part of their regular support towards area meetings such as TALC. The bank balance is now £280.52 and this will assist in funding the next TALC Secretary should they need additional financial support than the present arrangement.
- 5 Topics for Meeting 28th March 2019.**
It was agreed that the topics of Community Infrastructure Levy and Rural Policing (or Heritage Assts) would be on the March agenda.
- 6 Chairman’s Business** - None
- 7 Matters brought forward from Members**
There was an extensive discussion regarding the repair of potholes, particularly those which are serious enough to be called “safety defects”. Evidently the response time to deal with these, along with the longevity of any repair, is of increasing concern. Meg Booth, the Chief Officer for Highways, came to TALC 27/9/17 and may be able to come once again to inform and discuss this topic. Also, see item 1 of those minutes – see <https://v.gd/minutes>
- 8 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 28th March 2019, 7.00pm at Forde House.**

For information, 2019 dates: 27 June (AGM); 26 September; 28 November.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.
(minutes are brief – Secretary very unwell, with a cold!)

APPENDIX Budget Forecast for 2019/20 & Government Funding



For comparison, 2018/19

