

Full Council

Report Title:	Strategy Project Working Group Members
Meeting Date:	13 June 2023
Contact Officer:	Mandy Sturdy

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide background to the Council to enable a decision to be made on **the initial membership** of the Strategy Project Working Group and to agree suitable delegations to officers.

Action Required

2. To consider the initial (kick start) membership of the working group.
3. To approve the initial membership of the working group
4. To approve the level of financial delegation to the Town Clerk

Background

5. Terms of Reference (attached) for the Strategy Project Working Group were approved at a meeting of the Full Council on 28th February 2023¹.
6. This group's main aim will be to agree the method (scope) for collecting data needed from all key stakeholders to then deliver a strategy that fits the needs of Thame and the surrounding areas.
7. Where possible, meetings of this working group will be held within office hours.
8. Community engagement events outside of these hours will also be required within the process.
9. The council has a long-standing aspiration to achieve the Quality Gold Award – along with many other requirements we are required to have a business plan for at least three years linked to a revenue and capital plan for the council and its community. This will be a key part of the brief for the Strategy Project Working Group.
10. NALC statement: *The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for*

¹ 16-28/02/23

money as well as constantly seek new innovations and opportunities to improve. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.

11. The process of developing the strategy will include input from ALL Councillors, staff, and the wider community.
12. The proposal is for the Project Team to ‘kick off’ the first meeting with a small, core group of members and officers. This group will then call-in members with specific knowledge / expertise as well as specialists from the community. This could require the creation of further small working groups.
13. Councillors who have expressed an interest in being members of this Strategy Project Working Group:
 1. Cllr Dite*
 2. Cllr Gilbert*
 3. Cllr Cowell*
 4. Cllr Bretherton
 5. Cllr Dyer*
 6. Cllr Champken-Woods
 7. Cllr Jones*
 8. Cllr Dollman
 9. Cllr Dawson*
 10. Cllr Baines
14. The Council is asked to consider that, subject to relevant skills and confirmation from the co-opted member, that they be considered for membership of the Strategy Project Working Group.
15. The Council is asked to consider that the first meeting is made up of just six or seven members and two or three officers to draft a Plan of Action which will be shared by email for comments to the wider group and Full Council.
16. Subject to Council’s agreement and availability, it is recommended that **Just for the initial meeting** those Councillors would be those identified with ‘*’ above.
17. Legislation does not allow financial delegations to working groups but finance delegation to officers is permitted. As such the Council are asked to authorise the Town Clerk to spend up to £4,000 to facilitate the delivery of the Council’s strategy. Any such expense will be recorded and reported back to Full Council.

Risk Assessment

18. It is important that the Council has an agreed strategy to ensure clarity regarding its direction to ensure effective use of the Precept.
18. Without clear consultation with Thame’s community and the surrounding villages it will not be possible to understand their needs and aspirations.

Resource Appraisal

- Officers' time, including possible overtime (Time off in lieu) for weekend community consultations.
- Use of council facilities
- Use of council consumables, stationery, printing.
- Budget:
 - Initially up to £4,000 from general reserves for advertising and possible professional fees should a facilitator be required.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) The Council approve the initial members of the Strategic Project Working Group.**
- ii) An initial Budget of £4,000 be set from General Reserves for this project.**
- iii) The authority to spend within the agreed budget is delegated to the Town Clerk**

Legal Powers:

- LGA 1972 s101 (1)(a) and (2)
- LGA 1972 s102(3)
- Localism Act 2011 ss1-8