

**Policy & Resources Committee**

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 February 2016</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council - Devolution of Services</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Janine Howells, Asset Manager</b>

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide a written update on the possible devolution of services from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to Thame Town Council.

**Update:**

2. A meeting was held with the Operational Development Manager, Oxfordshire County Council, Town Clerk and Asset Manager in early November 2015 to discuss the possible devolution of services from OCC.
3. A number of possible services were identified and discussed. These are:
  - Upper High Street car park.  
OCC are establishing the terms under which transfer of tree and highway maintenance could be passed to the Council, from 1 April 2016. Once the terms are known a report will be prepared for Council to decide whether to take the service on or not.
  - Epicormic/basal tree growth management.  
The number of trees requiring this twice yearly operation is to be confirmed by OCC. Payment for the works would be made on an agreed list of trees.
  - Salt / Grit bin management.  
There are currently ten salt bins in Thame; of these ten, two are on areas of the public highway that are currently treated during the winter months (Buttermarket – located outside the Town Hall and Upper High Street – located by Market House). All of the salt bins will be filled as per normal this year by OCC. In the summer all salt bins will be reviewed and it is likely that any salt bins situated on a winter treatment route will not be filled by OCC. This could possibly mean that two well used salt bins will not be filled by OCC. Funding will be available for this service to keep the salt bins stocked.
4. Existing Agreement with OCC
  - Urban Grass Cutting.  
The Council currently undertakes this service with an existing Agreement to cut 50,098sqm of OCC urban grass to a level of service that the communities of Thame expect (currently 16 cuts per year). A report on this service was noted at Council on 19 January 2016.
5. Services with no funding
  - Other services that funding would not be available for were discussed. It was identified that the Council did undertake some of these services on an informal basis. The Council will continue to take action as at present on a task by task basis in relation to:
    - snow clearance
    - gritting
    - hedge trimming notifications to residents
    - ad hoc vegetation clearance where requested by residents

## **Resource Appraisals**

6. These will be evaluated when further details of the identified services are established by OCC.
7. OCC have agreed to arrange relevant traffic management training for the Maintenance Team with their highway service provider once the full extent of services to be devolved has been agreed.

## **Risk Assessment**

8. The Council will be under no obligation to take on a service delegation.
9. OCC will enter into an initial highway service transfer agreement for at least three years with the Council on services that are delegated.
10. Staff will be trained in relevant traffic management requirements and relevant method statements and risk assessments of any new activities would need to be undertaken.
11. The Council's insurers would need to be informed of any new services undertaken.

**Legal Powers:** Localism Act 2011

## **Recommendation:**

- i) To note the report.*