

Full Council

Date:	22 January 2019
Title:	Annual Town Meeting
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

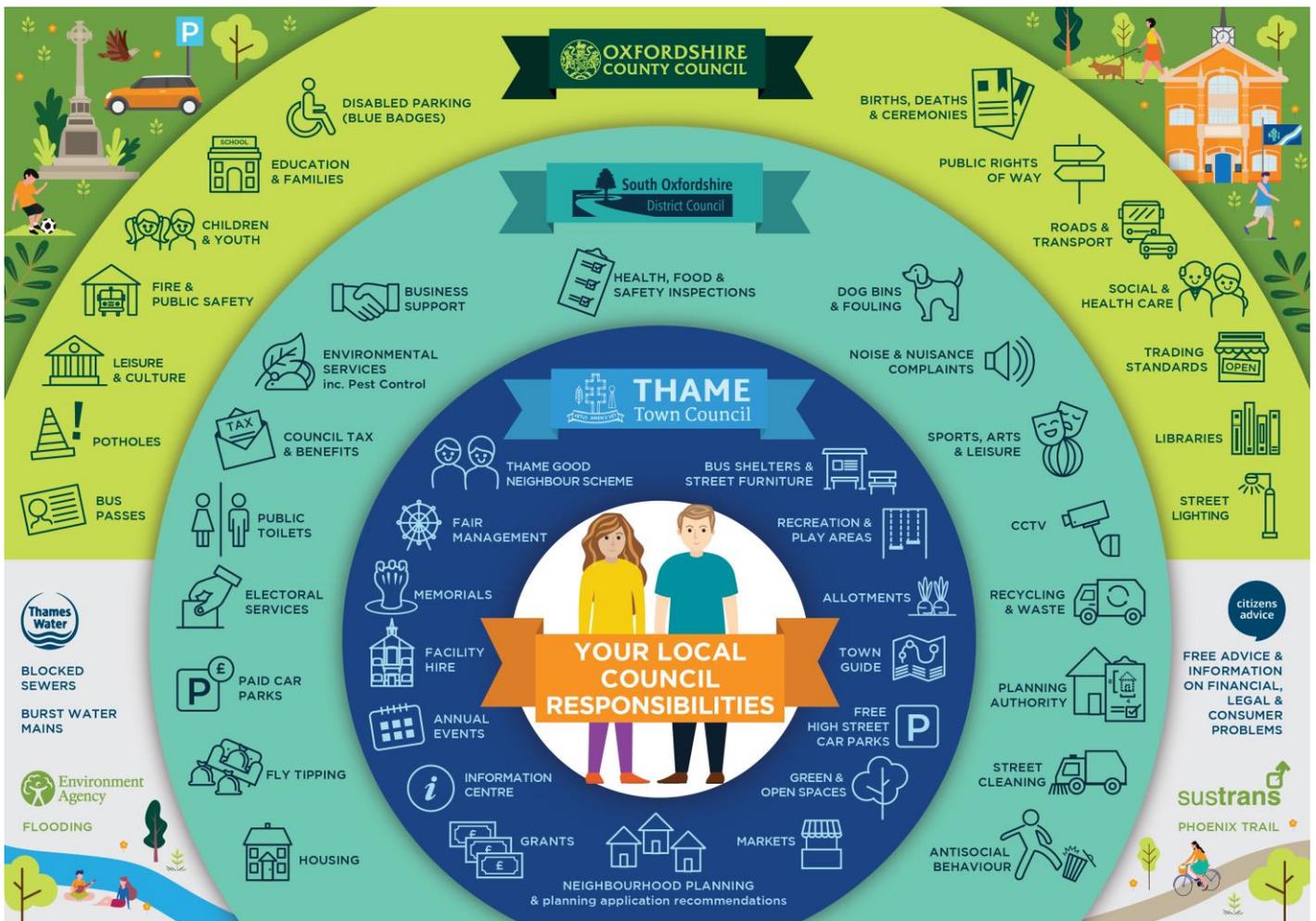
Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide background for the discussion on the structure and content of the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2019.

Background

2. The Town Clerk circulated the usual planning mail on 3 January 2019.
3. Various suggestions for topics were made, as well as an appeal to better control meeting timings and potentially restrict discussion to topics that the Town Council have control over.
4. The meeting is a meeting of the electorate, not the Town Council, and at the meeting, the electorate are entitled to raise any question on any public matter, although normally only on topics relating to the parish.
5. The agenda is normally:
 - a) Minutes from previous year (mandatory)
 - b) Community presentation of some sort (often to help increase attendance)
 - c) Town Mayor's report (as it provides a convenient opportunity)
 - d) Open Forum – Questions from Electors (the main purpose of the meeting)
6. Last year's meeting was also used to launch the Thame Neighbourhood Plan revision, and in particular to check the validity of the Neighbourhood Plan's Vision / Principles and Objectives. Because of the length of time taken to discuss Highway Maintenance (the Community Presentation section and an item then of great concern to the electorate), the Neighbourhood Plan section of the meeting was not as effective as it could have been, due to a late start and lack of time.
7. Given the variety of current local and broader issues potentially affecting the civic parish, the Town Clerk has suggested that no specific topic/theme be used this time, to maximise the time for open forum / public questions.
8. If this approach is adopted it would also require:
 - a) Effective advanced publicity on potential areas of discussion, and encouragement to attend.
 - b) Some kind of formal panel – perhaps the Mayor (who has to Chair if present), the Chairman of each Town Council Committee, a District Councillor, a County Councillor and the Town Clerk – to provide answers to each question raised, or a commitment to take them away for further investigation and later response.

- c) Any publicity to include continued information on the different areas of responsibility of the different tiers of local government (as shown in our [web-site infographic](#)):



Proposal

9. As defined in the planning e-mail and the agenda item, the Council is free to make any suggestions for topics / themes / format with regard to the Annual Town Meeting so no particular proposal is made in this report.

Resource Appraisal

10. The Town Council is sufficiently resourced to provide whatever is required to support the Annual Town Meeting.
11. The removal of a specific community presentation and / or a specific workshop would reduce officer time spent in advance.

Risk Assessment

12. Without any particular community presentation, and as with the widely publicised Budget Drop-In session, there may be limited attendance. Some towns see this as positive, as it suggests that things are generally progressing well.

Legal Powers

13. Local Government Act 1972 – various sections.