

Full Council

Title:	Annual Town Meeting
Meeting Date:	17 January 2023
Contact Officer:	Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer

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 21 March 2023. The pre-election period (purdah) is expected to start on 23 March.

Background

2. Last year's Annual Town Meeting had the following agenda (items in italics are standard items):
 - *Previous year's minutes*
 - *Town Mayor's report of previous year*
 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan – Successes and Failures
 - Thame Green Living presentation
 - Thame Youth Projects presentation
 - *Open Forum*
3. 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.

Proposal

4. As Members are aware, the Town Council needs to develop a strategy and vision for Thame, involving residents in the process. Therefore, it is proposed that this year's Annual Town Meeting provide an opportunity to kickstart this process, so that the new administration can use feedback from the community to assist in the development of a strategy / vision for Thame. This will also provide the new administration with a focus / direction for the next 4 years.
5. There would be a short presentation to share the successes / achievement of this council over the past 4 years and to outline the process, aims and timeline for the 10-year strategy consultation.
6. A timeline will include workshops with key stakeholders including:
 - a) councillors & council staff
 - b) local businesses and farmers
 - c) sports and leisure clubs
 - d) residence associations
 - e) volunteer groups
 - f) students
 - g) Representatives from neighbouring parishes that rely on Thame including:

- Long Crendon
- Great Haysley
- Chinnor
- Haddenham
- Towersey
- Sydenham
- Tetsworth
- Tiddington

h) Representatives from larger Neighbouring Towns

7. Suggestion for workshop questions is attached (Appendix A).
8. It is recommended that the council appoint a small project team to manage this exercise. The ToR for this group would be drafted for consideration at the February FC meeting.
9. It is suggested that the Open Forum element remain, with representatives from the three tiers of council present to answer questions (or make a commitment to take them away for further investigation and provide a later response).
10. Other suggestions from Members are welcome.

Publicity

11. Turnout was around 50 attendees last year.
12. Publicity to include usual channels and information on the different areas of responsibility of the different tiers of local government (as shown in our [infographic](#)).

Resource Appraisal

13. The Town Council is sufficiently resourced to provide whatever is required to support the Annual Town Meeting.
14. Officer time to arrange a community presentation and facilitate the open forum.

Risk Assessment

15. The meeting must be held in accordance with any national Health & Safety guidance and the Town Council's Risk Assessments.
16. Review of emergency evacuation procedure in advance of meeting.
17. There may be limited attendance. Some towns see this as positive, as it suggests that things are generally progressing well, however if a focus is given for the meeting for residents to engage with, then a poor turnout should be avoided.
18. Expectations should be set out at an early stage, so residents are clear on what will / won't be achieved at this meeting.

Legal Powers

- Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12 para 7 (1)
- Localism Act 2011 s1

Recommendation:

- i) The Annual Town Meeting has a focus on involving the community in the initial stages of creating a strategy / vision for Thame.**
- ii) The Council agree to appoint a project team to manage the Thame strategy consultations and delivery, with Terms of Reference to be agreed at the next Full Council meeting.**