



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 19th February 2019

To: All Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:
Councillors Marsh (Chair), Sutcliffe (Vice-Chair), Bartlett, Mr P Davies,
Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Rumsey, Thomas and Williams. (One vacancy)
(Copies to other Councillors for information)

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** to be held on **Monday 25th February 2019** commencing at **19:00 hours** in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

Paul Russell
TOWN CLERK

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk as it is usual for the grounds upon which apologies are tendered also to be recorded. Under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
- 3. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**
To consider requests for dispensations (must be notified in writing).
- 4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)**
To receive questions and statements from members of the public as provided for in Standing Orders.
- 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17th December 2018.



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

6. CLERK'S REPORT

To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.

7. FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) **Financial Report** – To receive the financial report.

(b) **Outstanding Accounts for Payment** – A list of accounts paid relating to the month of February 2019 will be presented at the meeting.

(c) **Committee Report** – Please see the attached Committee update report.

8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance Committee is, therefore, recommended to resolve "That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

(a) **Grants Report** – To consider the attached report.

(b) **Personnel Apprenticeship Report** – To consider the attached report.

(c) **CAB Report** – Please see attached report.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on Monday 29th April 2019 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 17th December 2018 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Marsh (Chair), Sutcliffe (Vice-Chair), Bartlett, Mr P Davies, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Thomas and Williams.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Stone.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk.

FG30/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Rumsey (personal).

FG31/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

FG32/18 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensation.

FG33/18 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was one members of the public present. No matters were raised.

FG34/18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 29th October 2018 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

FG35/18 CLERK'S REPORT

The following Clerk's Report was noted:

- (a) **Assets of Community Value (ACV)** – Herefordshire Council was currently reviewing its legacy casework for ACVs prior to year-end and it was suggested that the Town Council withdrew its application related to the Barons Cross Inn and resubmit it again with a plan and tighter drafting of the application using the new application form.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED:**

- To withdraw the Baron's Cross submission and revise it accordingly;
- To appoint an ACV Task & Finish Group to review all existing and future ACV applications;
- To appoint Cllrs Marshall, Murdoch and Thomas to sit on the Task & Finish Group;

- To include an article in the next Leominster News asking residents to suggest potential community assets that should be considered for nomination.

(b) Council Tax Base – Committee noted that the Council Tax base for 2019/20 was 3660.05, an increase of 1.47% on the previous Tax base of 3606.38. It was further noted that if a precept of £512,222 was agreed by Council in January 2019, then the Leominster Town Council tax increase would reduce to 4.14% resulting in a D Band of £139.95.

FG36/18 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) Financial Report – Committee considered the interim Financial Report to for Quarter 3 and, following discussion, **RESOLVED:**

- That the report be noted;
- That the payments for October 2018 amounting to £93,332, exclusive of VAT, and November 2018 to date, amounting to £34,723, exclusive of VAT be ratified;
- That balances held as at 30th November 2018 amounted to £446,293 be noted;
- That consideration regarding the replacement of the Financial Assistant position would be considered by the Personnel Committee in January 2019.

Committee noted that the current projected overspend was due to funding the holiday flat renovation from current balances and a reduction of income from services.

(b) Outstanding Accounts for Payment – Committee ratified the payments relating to December 2018 to date amounting to 49,008.35, inclusive of VAT.

(c) Committee Report – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED:**

- To note the report;
- To adopt the revised vision statement “Leominster is an attractive place to live, work and visit with a high level of social, environmental and economic well-being”;
- To note that a response had been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the queries raised relating to the PWLB application;
- To accept the quotation from DCS Group Kidderminster to upgrade the photocopier subject to confirming if there was a break clause included. There was concern expressed regarding the length of lease (60 months) but it was confirmed that there was an option after 24 months to review and upgrade;
- To accept the recommendations contained within the Holiday Flat report regarding costs, booking agent and website promotion.

Thanks were extended to the Office Manager and the Events Officer for all their hard work on the photocopier and holiday flat reports.

(Cllr Williams left the meeting at 7.46pm)

Concern was expressed regarding a recent report regarding the reduction of ambulance cover in the area by the West Midlands Ambulance Service. It was agreed to write a letter expressing Council's disappointment subject to confirming what reductions were to be implemented.

FG37/18 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance & General Purposes Committee **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- (a) **Projects Update Report** – Committee noted the Projects update report. Thanks were extended to the Grants and Projects Officer for her hard work developing these initiatives

FG38/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 25th February 2019 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7:56pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:



Finance & General Purposes Committee

Date: 19th February 2019

Title: Quarter Three Financial Report

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with a Quarter Three Financial Report.

Contact Officers: Paul Russell

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the report be noted;

1.2 To ratify the payments for October 2018 amounting to £93,332, exclusive of VAT, November 2018 amounting to £34,723, exclusive of VAT, and December 2018 amounting to £34,723, exclusive of VAT.

1.3 To note income received and current balances for the 2018/19 financial year as outlined in the report.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 This Financial Report provides interim details of Leominster Town Council's financial activities to date for the 2018/19 financial year.

2.2 An internal audit took place on and a Healthcheck has been booked in for xx. A final audit conclusion is still awaited but the legal notices have been displayed

2.3 This report includes details of current balances held at the bank as at 30th September 2018 along with initial end of year income and expenditure projections.

2.5 All account transactions detailed in the report exclude VAT. VAT is claimed back every quarter by the Town Council. The Town Council is VAT registered.

3. INCOME & EXPENDITURE OVERVIEW

3.1 The table below outlines the Quarter Three expenditure and income as at 31st December 2018.

CODE	COST CENTRE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
101	Administration Expenditure	£19,946	£7,610	£433	£27,989

AGENDA ITEM 7(a)

105	Corporate Management	£31,787	£30,537	£47,421	£109,745
110	Democratic Services	£1,441	£2,261	£2,574	£6,276
115	Grants	£31,558	£651	£2,768	£34,977
125	Corn Square Expenditure	£5,802	£20,145	£5,241	£31,188
130	Tourist Information Centre	£15,845	£11,081	£24,007	£50,933
201	Open Spaces Expenditure	£31,250	£30,077	£41,278	£102,605
203	Allotments Expenditure	£899	£996	£868	£2,763
205	Markets/Events Expenditure	£1,484	£649	£1,697	£3,830
220	Central Toilets	£1,517	£1,873	£564	£3,954
225	Grange Toilets	£1,190	£1,906	£243	£3,339
230	Westbury Street Toilets	£0	£0	£0	£0
235	Toilet Investments	£0	£0	£0	£0
250	Economic Development	£5,194	£3,471	£18,281	£26,946
260	Capital Projects	£5,263	£27,188	£32,168	£64,619
300	Transport Fund	£246	£579	£2,322	£3,147
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£153,422	£139,024	£179,865	£472,311

CODE	COST CENTRE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
101	Administration Income	£242,316	£250,166	£6,400	£498,882
115	Grant Income	£6,295	£0	£0	£6,295
125	Corn Square Income	£180	£200	£735	£1,115
126	Rent Office Income	£3,528	£3,528	£3,528	£10,584
130	TIC Income	£7,626	£7,662	£9,703	£24,991
201	Open Spaces Income	£7,010	£0	£594	£7,604
203	Allotments Income	£2,985	£1,344	£-151	£4,178
205	Markets/Events Income	£2,033	£3,351	£3,392	£8,776
260	Capital Projects Income	£0	£30,229	£0	£30,229
	TOTAL INCOME	£271,973	£296,480	£24,201	£592,654

3.2 The table below outlines the income and expenditure to date as at 31st January 2019.

Income	Actual to Date	Projected	Budget
Precept	£484,632	£484,632	£484,632
Interest	£0	£0	£200
Event Income (lights)	£1,400	£1,400	£0
Events Income	£1,474	£1,500	£8,000
Income - Misc	£386	£390	£0
Grants Received	£17,285	£17,285	£0
Corn Square Room Rental	£1,115	£1,200	£7,000
Office rental	£10,584	£14,000	£14,000
Holiday Flat	£0	£0	£12,000
TIC	£26,375	£28,000	£40,550

AGENDA ITEM 7(a)

Open Spaces	£7,604	£7,600	£7,785
Allotments	£4,178	£5,000	£5,000
Markets	£8,776	£12,000	£27,000
Public Conveniences	£0	£0	£3,000
Capital Grants	£30,229	£30,229	£0
PWLB	£0	£0	£0
PWLB	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL	£594,038	£603,236	£609,167

Expenditure	Actual to Date	Projected	Budget
Administration	£28,191	£35,000	£30,000
Corporate Management	£122,048	£150,000	£129,148
Democratic	£6,323	£8,000	£10,000
Grants	£34,977	£50,000	£51,000
Corn Square	£31,234	£43,000	£52,572
TIC	£56,319	£62,000	£86,753
Open Spaces	£110,019	£130,000	£144,832
Allotments	£2,763	£3,000	£3,500
Markets/Events	£4,080	£5,000	£9,390
Central Toilets	£3,999	£6,000	£8,300
Grange Toilets	£3,384	£6,000	£8,100
Westbury St Toilets	£0	£0	£11,950
Economic Development	£27,046	£31,000	£31,150
Capital Projects Equipment	£150	£5,000	£10,000
Capital Projects Play Area	£46,897	£47,000	£5,000
Capital Projects PWLB	£0	£0	£13,472
Capital Projects Flat	£21,126	£27,000	£0
Planning & Highways	£3,262	£3,600	£4,000
TOTAL	£501,818	£611,600	£609,167

EXPENDITURE	£501,818	£611,600	£609,167
INCOME	£594,038	£603,236	£609,167
SURPLUS/DEFECIT	£92,220	-£8,364	£0

3.3 Listed below are the balances at the bank as at 31st January 2019:

Bank Balances	
As at 31/01/2019	
Current Account	£396,902
Petty Cash	£64
Cash/Credit Card Control	£1,710
Debtors	£988
TIC Stock	£11,155

Creditors	-£42,173
Events Control	-£5,489
Outstanding VAT Claim	£13,484
Total Balances	£376,641
Represented by:	
Current Year Fund	£92,220
General Reserves	£95,358
Earmarked Reserves	£110,575
Capital Receipts Reserve	£78,488
Total Balances	£376,641

- 3.4 Currently an overspend of £8,364 is being projected. This is mainly due to a projected shortfall in income against the budget. The shortfall of income includes the holiday flat (£12,000 income), the Secret Garden (£3,500), and the loss of traders on the Friday Market (£10,000).
- 3.5 Income appears to have remained buoyant due to the number of grants received over the year to help fund projects. The holiday flat costs are being funded from the capital receipts reserves.
- 3.6 If further cost savings can be achieved by the year end the Council may find itself in achieving a smaller overspend than currently projected.



Finance Committee

Date: 19th February 2019

Title: Committee Report

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with a full report relating to all current Committee matters.

Contact Officers: Paul Russell

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the report be noted;
- 1.2 To consider requesting Polling Cards for the election on 2nd May 2019 if a contested election is called;
- 1.3 To ratify the proposed expenditure in 3.11, 3.13, 3.15, 3.22 and 3.23.
- 1.4 To consider setting up a Leominster Town Centre Steering Group to develop a range of investment proposals. The make-up of the suggested Steering Group is briefly outlined in 3.25.
- 1.5 To consider the HALC/NALC subscription request.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates members on progress relating to Committee projects and outlines matters requiring a decision.
- 2.2 The responsibilities of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are contained within the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation. These include monitoring the Council's finances, recommending budgets and overseeing project development.
- 2.3 The Committee is also responsible for Staff Matters and has appointed a Personnel Sub-Committee to oversee the management of this responsibility.

3. COMMITTEE REPORT

Janice & Peter McCaull Trust

- 3.1 To note that probate had now been completed. Trustees are currently finalising paperwork for the property left to the Trust, and have both insured it and taken out Public Liability insurance. The Town Clerk has also been appointed as a seventh Trustee.

3.2 A new bank account is being set up with Lloyds Bank and will be in place in the next few weeks.

3.3 A fund raising event was held on Friday 15th February 2019 at the Forbury with the Shanty Singers. Due to the low cost of the event a sum of £487.50 was raised

Elections

3.4 Committee is requested to consider whether to request polling cards for the election on 2nd May 2019 if a contested election is called. There will be a cost implication.

3.5 Herefordshire Council has organised some briefing sessions for those interested in becoming a councillor. The prospective candidates briefing session will be held in the Assembly Hall, Hereford Town Hall between 6pm and 8pm on Thursday 7th March 2019.

3.6 The following key dates for candidates are listed below:

- 12th March – Notice of Election
- 3rd April at 4pm – Deadline for the delivery of nomination papers to Electoral Services, Herefordshire Council
- 2nd May – Polling/Election day
- 3rd May – The Count.

3.7 Further information can be obtained by contacting Electoral Services in the following ways:

- www.herefordshire.gov.uk/beacouncillor
- Tel: 01432 260107
- Email: elections@herefordshire.gov.uk

PWLB Loan Reply

3.8 To note that a request to draw down the loan of £200,000 to commence the identified projects has been submitted to the Ministry. Subject to submitting the correct paperwork the loan will be drawn down in the next two weeks.

Herefordshire Cabinet

3.9 To note the following Cabinet decisions reached by the Herefordshire Council on 17th and 31st January 2019:

- Cabinet agreed the executive response to the recommendations from the spotlight review into dental health and childhood obesity for children families in Herefordshire
- Cabinet approved the proposed expenditure of capital grants for schools building, maintenance and accessibility improvement works
- Cabinet approved the continuation of the council tax reduction scheme in 2019/20
- Cabinet recommended the capital programme and capital strategy to Council for approval

- Cabinet agreed the draft 2019/20 budget and associated medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy for recommendation to Council on 15 February

Photocopier

- 3.10 To note that the new photocopier has now been installed and is operational. The old copier is still awaiting collection and is currently being stored in the second office.

The Holiday Flat

- 3.11 Scaffolding will be erected in the next two weeks to complete the renovations of the external part of 11 Corn Square, specifically around the flat. Works will include the repair of the fascia, repointing the brickwork damaged by the ivy, decoration of the windows and blocking up holes used by birds to nest in the eaves. The cost of the scaffolding is £1,296 + VAT to erect plus a £38 per week hire charge. The scaffolding will be in situ for four weeks.
- 3.12 The central heating will be commissioned in the next week or so and the electrical fittings have almost been completed. Furniture is currently being procured and the kitchen will be decorated in the next week. Once the electrical works and central heating has been completed all the floorboards will be properly secured and floor coverings will be put in place. Prior to the opening of the flat the Building Inspector will visit the premises to sign the flat off. It will then be ready for letting.

Secret Garden

- 3.13 Initial groundwork preparations to enable the development of the Secret Garden and its infrastructure is being organised. An initial quotation has been received to remove the soil in the raised flower bed from site at a cost of £1,050 plus VAT. The quotation also includes the digging up of an additional area of ground to extend the car park. A further quotation is currently being obtained.
- 3.14 The initial plan will be to erect the basic infrastructure (toilets, wash area, showers etc) along the wall where the current flower bed is. The car park will be extended to improve pedestrian access and meet health & safety requirements.
- 3.15 The car park extension will be constructed of grasscrete/grassguard. This will help deal with rainfall run off in a sustainable way and retain the environmental benefits of a natural grassed area. Initial costs obtain suggest that materials will cost in the region of £3,000 plus VAT plus the labour to fit the grasscrete/grassguard.
- 3.16 The final plan for the secret garden will require planning permission. Once a final plan has been developed for the site, which will be presented to Council and its committees as soon as it has been completed, planning permission will be sought to enable the development to proceed.

Public Conveniences

- 3.17 Once the PWLB loan has been received work will commence on the refurbishment of the Central Car Park public conveniences. A schedule of works is currently being developed and a project plan will be completed.

Herefordshire Market Contract

- 3.18 A new Fun Fair contract has been agreed by Herefordshire Council. The main recommendations adopted were as follows:
- (a) That a new seven year concession contract be awarded to 'The Showmans Guild of Great Britain (South Wales and Northern Ireland Section)' for the continued provision of the May Fair in the streets of Hereford from May 2020 to May 2026 at an annual value of £51,000; and
 - (b) That a new seven year concession contract be awarded to 'Joanne Morris, David William Henry Morris and Allison Jane Appleton' for the continued provision of the May Fair in the streets of Leominster from May 2020 to May 2026 at an annual value of £11,000; and that
 - (c) That in the event Corn Square, High Street, Broad Street and Broad Street car park Leominster undergoes refurbishment within the duration of the Leominster May Fair concession contract, a clause be written into the contract to provide that, following appropriate consultation, the council may consider whether all/part of the May fair should be moved to an alternative location during and/or after completion of such works.
 - (d) That the Acting Assistant Director for Technical Services be authorised to take all operation decisions necessary to complete the contraction negotiations.

Grass/Verge Cutting

- 3.19 The grant of up to £10,000.00 or 52.275% of total project costs has been awarded from Herefordshire Council's Public Green Spaces Grant Scheme to Leominster Town Council to help support the maintenance of the open spaces and verges in Leominster. Eligible costs are as follows:
- Deck Mower
 - Chipper
 - Zero Turn Mower
 - Staff Member and Training
 - PPE Boots, Hardhat, Clothing
 - Litter Picking Equipment

- 3.20 There is a condition on the offer, however, which must be met. The condition is as follows. Committee is requested to recommend acceptance of this condition:
"Leominster Town Council continue to hold a licence to maintain all the Public Open Space and Highway Verge in Leominster with a view to arranging a long term agreement which would see Leominster Town Council acquiring the Public Open Space via Freehold Transfer."

- 3.21 The Environmental and Grounds Team will be undergoing a significant change over the next two months. The current Environmental Supervisor will

be leaving the Town Council to take up a new post. A full report on the proposed apprenticeship scheme is attached under Confidential Items.

3.22 Three Environmental Team posts are currently being advertised alongside a Democratic and Financial Services Officer post. The posts have been advertised in the Leominster News, on local notice boards, the Town Council website and in the Hereford Times and surrounding newspapers. The cost of recruitment will be in the region of £1,000, which will be funded from the staffing budget, which should show a small surplus at year end.

3.23 Following the recruitment process the purchase of mowing equipment and grounds machinery must be undertaken as a matter of urgency to enable the Town Council to be prepared for the start of the season. It is requested that Committee recommend the release of funding from the PWLB to enable the purchase of equipment to commence.

High Street Investment

3.24 There was a possibility recently to apply to a funding pot via Herefordshire Council to help draw down funding to invest in Leominster town centre. This opportunity highlighted the need for Leominster to consider what type of investment would benefit the town, especially from an economic viewpoint.

3.25 It is suggested that a Leominster Town Centre Steering Group be set up to discuss what future investment should be made in the town centre to revitalise it. The Steering Group will be made up of Town Council representation, business representation, retail representation and local organisation representation. It would be set up following the election of the new Council and begin developing proposals.

3.26 Appendix One begins to outline some of the challenges and opportunities for the town centre.

HALC Subscription

3.27 The request for the HALC subscription has now been received. It is broken down as follows:

- HALC Affiliation Fee - £180
- HALC Subscription Fee - £1,200
- HALC Subscription Fee (over 3,000 population) - £240
- NALC Subscription Fee - £653.98
- Total: £2,273.99 + VAT

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

THE CHALLENGES FACING LEOMINSTER TOWN CENTRE

Leominster Town Centre faces a number of challenges including:

- A decline in footfall within the town centre;
- A lack of investment in the basic infrastructure including the highway, the street scene in general and both residential and retail properties;
- A lack of access to cultural and leisure activities;
- A gradual increase in empty retail units;
- An increase in charity shops;
- The threat of turning retail units into residential units due to new fire and other regulations;
- A declining market offer;
- A lack of investment in the green spaces connected to the town centre;
- Poor signage;
- A general lack of visitor accommodation;
- A lack of good quality hotel and B&B accommodation;
- Car parking charges;
- Poor quality and unreliable public conveniences;
- A lack of confidence in the town centre;
- Significant increase in residential development planned for the next 12 years, which will result in an increase in size of Leominster of over 40%;
- Insufficient infrastructure and a retail offer to meet the ever increasing demands;
- Poor air quality within the town especially at Bargates and encouraged by free on-street parking, especially in Corn Square and Broad Street;
- Traffic, congestion and car parking.

In order to address these issues Leominster needs to develop a vision for its town centre and embrace an ambition for change. However, to enable that change to take place external investment is required.

LEOMINSTER TOWN CENTRE VISION & AMBITION FOR CHANGE

A number of initial objectives for Leominster Town Centre have been developed:

- To create opportunities for new mixed use development to create an attractive, user friendly and fit for purpose retail centre that serves the surrounding population and meets the needs as a service centre for a rural population;
- To enhance the civic provision within the town centre including the Town Council offices and the Library;
- To invest in the Community Centre to create a Community Arts Centre;
- To provide a new town square to create an events space and focal point for residents and visitors, as well as providing relevant infrastructure to develop and support both a twilight and evening economy;

- To improve access and connectivity to existing facilities within the town centre, including The Priory Church, Grange Court, The Forbury Centre and Leominster Museum;
- To invest in and improve the green and urban environment;
- To create the opportunity for more leisure based activities within the town.

Investment is required to improve the High Street's aesthetic appeal. Options to improve the highway and street scene may include:

- Resurfacing the highway using sensitive materials that can be easily repaired without detracting from the aesthetic appeal of the town centre;
- The use of locally sourced natural stone paving in areas such as Corn Square to create a town square and events space;
- Planters to add greenery to the town centre to help connect and create habitat, as well as linking green spaces;
- Additional seating and bins;
- Additional signage;
- Creation of a sense of place;
- Enhance shop facades;
- Undertake marketing to promote the town centre through leaflets and social media;
- Provision of free WIFI in the town centre and especially in Corn Square;
- Consider developing the town centre into a community hub by encouraging a further diversification of business activity including a gym, cafes that open in the evenings, restaurants and small conference venues;
- Invest in new and existing properties within the main retail zone;
- Encouraging office and residential use of existing retail buildings

There are a number of options to improve the shopping offer which may include:

- Accessible food stores – Leominster has two food stores at present (Co-op and Aldi) with a Morrisons sited a mile out of town;
- Friendly individual shops – A high proportion of the retail offer within the town centre are individual retailers. Investment in the town centre should aim at encouraging additional individual retailers to create an increased shopping offer and improved diversity;
- A lively market – The current infrastructure in Corn Square (currently a free car park six days a week) does not lend itself to creating a flexible space to hold the weekly market, the monthly farmers market and various specialist markets. Investment in this space would create a flexible space with a range of potential uses;
- New uses for empty shops – Consider attracting a further diversification in retail outlets through investment;
- Value for Money – Quality retail as well as value for money is key to underpinning the future vitality and viability of Leominster Town Centre;
- Support for retailers through marketing, training and provision of free WIFI within the town centre;
- Regular Window display competitions to encourage innovative and attractive window displays;
- Investment in events such as Christmas Lights, specialist markets and local events;

- Creation of a shopping directory;
- Development of a loyalty scheme to encourage regular customers to the town centre;
- Use of empty shop units for displays to promote Leominster and its local retailers;
- Support for the local Chamber of Trade;
- Development of a “niche” such as antique shops, collectables and vintage;
- Development of the café and restaurant offer;
- Development of the tourism offer (through the local TIC);
- Development of promotions, events, arts and community activities.

Leominster town centre is predominantly flat and very accessible from the four main car parks serving the town centre. Investment would help:

- Improve the accessibility of the town centre to residents and visitors;
- Welcome signage;
- Promotion of convenient and accessible car parking (with investment in the main car parks to create attractive spaces);
- Safe car parking (CCTV, regular inspections);
- Appropriate charging policy to help encourage a higher footfall;
- Responsive and improved public transport with investment in the bus station and railway station, especially with regard to linkages to the town centre;
- Easy and safe cycling and walking both into and within the town centre;
- Promotion of Leominster’s historic context;
- Improved pedestrian environment, safety and accessibility;
- Consideration of developing controlled parking zones;
- Improved identification of short and long term car parks;
- Improved maps and signage within the car parks;
- Clear directions and signage to attractions and public facilities, especially the TIC;
- Traffic calming measures/shared space in the town centre;
- Improved safety within the town through investment in CCTV, Street Ambassadors and street cleaning;
- Pedestrian/cycle priority areas;
- Investment in the Shop Mobility scheme;
- Children’s trails, retail trails;
- Improved lighting within the town centre;
- Higher quality streetscape and street furniture;
- Involvement of the community such as Leominster in Bloom and the local schools.