

# Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Tuesday, 15th November, 2022 at 6.00 pm**

To members of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - R Smith, A Prosser, T Ashby, J Aitman, L Duncan, V Gwatkin and P Hiles (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

## **Admission to Meetings**

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committees Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

## **Recording of Meetings**

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings, please let the Town Clerk or Democratic Services Officer know before the start of the meeting.

## **Agenda**

9. **Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2022/23 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2023/24**  
(Pages 3 - 12)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/CEO and the Draft Revised Revenue Budget for 2022/23 and Draft Budget for 2023/24.

10. **Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects and Capital Projects** (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/CEO with an update on the current year's work programme relating to Capital and Special Revenue Projects; as well as projects identified during the course of the year for inclusion as Revenue Growth Items or Special Revenue Projects in the Council's Revenue Budget or Capital Projects for 2023/24 and beyond.

Town Clerk



## CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday 15th November 2022

**Title:** Financial Report: Revised Budget 2022/23 and Proposed Budget 2023/24

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/RFO – Sharon Groth

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### Background

Financial Regulation 3.2 requires *each committee through the actions of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, to review its three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Council not later than the end of November each year including any proposal for revising the forecast.*

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the revised budget for 2022/23 and the first draft revenue budget for 2023/24 – in the attached document.

However, the Town Clerk, at this stage has only been able to pull together some limited information regarding the revenue budget. Later in the budget cycle, the Town Clerk will do a full presentation to make sure Members are fully abreast of the financial situation of the Council when she has had the opportunity to scrutinise the spending to date and account for new aspirations. She has therefore just covered a few key points below for information and a reminder.

### Recharge from Works Department and Central Support

In order to get a true cost of its services, the Council recharges the total cost of its Works Department (Cost Centre 601) and Central Support (Cost Centre 602) across it. For the Works Department this is done based on the weekly time sheets, and for the Central Support is based on the apportionment of responsibilities of the Officers.

As Members are aware the Council has brought its grounds maintenance in house with effect from 1st October 2022 – and the accounts are in the process of being re-profiled in order to ensure the service is accounted for correctly. There may be some change to the format of the accounts in due course.

It should be noted when reviewing the accounts that the recharge from the Works Department and Central Support are yet to be made in this financial year and as the Town Clerk is using system generated reports it has not been possible to exclude these accounts

from this summary. Only when the budget for both these departments have been agreed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee will the Town Clerk be in the position to calculate the revised recharges and the estimates for 2023/24.

Members should also remember that with regard to patterns of income and expenditure, there will always be some variations over the course of the year and for that reason the Council works to annual budgets rather than monthly or quarterly.

### **Format of the Council's Base Revenue Budget**

With regard to the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning budget, the Committee's services are divided into 2 base revenue cost centres, responsibilities [but with other interests overlapping into other Committee's Cost Centres], as follows:

<b><u>Cost Centre</u></b>	<b><u>Area</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
206	Witney Country Park	This cost centre relates to the maintenance of the lake and country park.
403	Planning	This relates to the recharge form Central Support for administering the planning function of the Council.

### **Budget Parameters – Draft Estimates 2022-23**

The format of this report is quite straightforward; the first two columns relate to the original budget from 2021/2 against the actual figures for last year. The middle section of three columns relate to the current years original budget, actual expenditure year to date, the projected budget to 31st March 2023. The remaining section of the report relates to the draft budget for 2023/24.

Draft budgets are prepared on current activities and patterns of income and expenditure. The Council is still experiencing some impact from the aftermath of COVID, which is reflected in the revised budgets. At this stage most of the budget lines have been kept as previously agreed unless there are known variations.

The Committee's revenue budget growth items for 2023/24, and its capital/special revenue projects programme for 2023/24 and beyond will be dealt with via a separate agenda item.

## **Cost Centre 206 – Witney Country Park**

4036 Property Maint, 4040 Arboriculture, 4042 Equipment – The general idea for these budget lines is to support the improvements and ongoing maintenance of the lake and country park. Now with a Park Ranger in post the Council can plan its improvements accordingly. The Council therefore needs to make sure there is a sufficient budget to undertake the necessary works. The Committee will have already seen the Park Rangers report at the earlier agenda item along with a list of projects for improvements so that these can be prioritised and consequently budgeted for.

In respect of budget line 4042 Equipment part of this budget line relates to the continual maintenance of the paths around the lake which almost annually require attention due to flooding and paths being naturally eroded. The other more substantial part of the budget is for bank erosion works as well managing/increasing the biodiversity of the lake and country park. It also ensures funding is available for replacement life buoys which often are damaged or vandalised.

It should also be noted that within Earmarked Reserve 366 – Climate/Biodiversity there is a sum of £23,050 set aside for biodiversity and bank stabilisation works around the lake.

## **Other Budget Lines Under Indirect Control – for information**

### 4205/402 – Climate Emergency Fund

Nothing was budgeted in the current financial year on this budget line because £25,000 was held in the Earmarked Reserve 366 – Climate/Biodiversity in respect of Climate initiatives. This had been made up of funds set aside in 20/21 £10,000 and 21/22 £15,000.

4066/402 – Replacement Trees is as follows:

<b>B/fwd 21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>Expenditure to date</b>	<b>Proposed 23/24</b>
£2,000	£4,000	£4,450	£8,000

It is Council policy that any trees which must be removed are replaced and therefore the necessary funding needs to be in place to fulfil its objective. Officers have requested additional funds be set aside in 23/24.

4067/402 – Tree Survey is as follows:

<b>B/fwd 21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>Expenditure to date</b>	<b>Proposed 23/24</b>
£0	£8,000	£0	£8,000

The Council has a rolling programme of surveying its tree stock – which is a requirement for insurance purposes. Within the budget for 22/23 there is also provision for OSS-PO3 Draw up and adopt a comprehensive arboriculture plan. The same level of budget has been retained for the next financial year as recently we have had to carry out pull tests and other surveys on trees – therefore a contingency has been made.

#### 4918/800 – Buildings Energy Efficiency

In the current financial year £20,000 was set aside to start to make the Council owned building more energy efficient. The Operations Manager has recently commissioned EPC ratings for the Town Hall, Langdale Hall and Burwell Hall.

There is also an Earmarked Reserve 372 – Burwell Hall Heating System set aside £30,000 to replace the gas boiler however the Project Officer has received conflicting advice on what is proposed.

The Council also has an Earmarked Reserve 370 – Electric Vehicles which currently stands at £29,200 but there is an electric van on order.

### **Revenue Budget Summary**

The Base Revenue Budget for this Committee is summarised on page one of the attached schedules.

At this stage it is pointless summarising the end result due to the above as we are not comparing like for like, as well as several unknowns. The reports give the detail and Members will be able to ask questions either ahead or at the meeting.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

As mentioned above the Council has now successfully brought its grounds maintenance contract in house. By doing this the Council will be able to take into consideration greener

measurers to work towards its objective for carbon neutrality by 2028. This, along with the budget allocated to Climate Emergency and Biodiversity should help to facilitate projects yet to be identified by the Council.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

All the Council's Committees receive financial reports to carry out its checks and balances. The Town Clerk has approached the budget with prudence so as accurate budget as possible can be set at this early stage, although there may be some opportunities to make savings if required to balance the budget.

### **Financial implications**

This report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control, as it enables income and expenditure incurred to be reviewed and to be compared with the Council's budgets.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the revised base revenue budget for 2022/23 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2023/24, as detailed in the draft estimates.

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## Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 7)

Note: Draft Budget, Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning Committee 15th November 2022

		<u>Last Year 2021-22</u>		<u>Current Year 2022-23</u>				<u>Next Year 2023-24</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
<b><u>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planni</u></b>										
<b><u>206</u></b>	<b><u>WITNEY COUNTRY PARK</u></b>									
1030	FISHING RIGHTS	1,400	1,200	1,450	0	1,450	0	1,500	0	0
1054	EASEMENTS/WAYLEAVES	0	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>		1,400	2,700	1,450	0	1,450	0	1,500	0	0
4001	SALARIES	17,217	0	27,852	0	21,429	0	32,410	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	1,185	0	2,861	0	1,332	0	2,986	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	3,736	0	6,044	0	4,650	0	7,033	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	0	0	0	271	400	0	400	0	0
4026	BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS	20	0	20	0	100	0	100	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	100	34	100	280	500	0	500	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	2,400	800	2,400	0	2,400	0	1,000	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT	12,700	620	15,000	8,050	15,000	0	13,000	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	0	750	1,000	0	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	0	558	1,500	333	1,500	0	1,000	0	0
4491	TFR TO EARMARKED RES	0	20,120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4495	TFR FROM EARMARKED R	-1,600	-1,600	-4,100	-4,100	-4,100	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RCHG	19,481	14,799	18,707	8,051	0	0	0	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RCHG	3,517	3,206	3,817	2,402	0	0	0	0	0
4891	AGENCY SERVICES RECHARGE	6,151	6,617	6,264	3,161	0	0	0	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	1,448	1,763	2,068	679	0	0	0	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	0	509	574	174	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Overhead Expenditure</b>		66,355	48,177	84,107	19,300	44,211	0	59,429	0	0

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## Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 7)

Note: Draft Budget, Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planning Committee 15th November 2022

		<u>Last Year 2021-22</u>		<u>Current Year 2022-23</u>				<u>Next Year 2023-24</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>		<u>(64,955)</u>	<u>(45,477)</u>	<u>(82,657)</u>	<u>(19,300)</u>	<u>(42,761)</u>		<u>(57,929)</u>		
<b>403</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>									
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	19,948	19,392	22,747	7,465	0	0	0	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	0	5,600	6,312	1,917	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Overhead Expenditure</b>		<u>19,948</u>	<u>24,992</u>	<u>29,059</u>	<u>9,382</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>		<u>(19,948)</u>	<u>(24,992)</u>	<u>(29,059)</u>	<u>(9,382)</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>		
<b>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planni - Income</b>		1,400	2,700	1,450	0	1,450	0	1,500	0	0
<b>Expenditure</b>		86,303	73,169	113,166	28,682	44,211	0	59,429	0	0
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>		<u>(84,903)</u>	<u>(70,469)</u>	<u>(111,716)</u>	<u>(28,682)</u>	<u>(42,761)</u>		<u>(57,929)</u>		
<b>Total Budget Income</b>		1,400	2,700	1,450	0	1,450	0	1,500	0	0
<b>Expenditure</b>		86,303	73,169	113,166	28,682	44,211	0	59,429	0	0
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>		<u>(84,903)</u>	<u>(70,469)</u>	<u>(111,716)</u>	<u>(28,682)</u>	<u>(42,761)</u>		<u>(57,929)</u>		

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<u>Climate, Biodiversity &amp; Planni</u>										
<b>206</b>	<b><u>WITNEY COUNTRY PARK</u></b>									
	<b>Total Income</b>	1,400	2,700	1,450	0	1,450	0	1,500	0	0
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	<b>Overhead Expenditure</b>	19,948	24,992	29,059	9,382	0	0	0	0	0
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## CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

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<b>Date:</b>	Monday 15th November 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects and Capital Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Town Clerk/RFO – Sharon Groth

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### Background

The purpose of this report is to update Members on any revenue growth items, special revenue or capital projects in the current year or the forward plan.

### For consideration 2023/24

With regard to this Committees budget responsibilities, the Park Ranger has suggested some projects in the earlier agenda item.

The expenditure will in turn be scrutinised by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee later in the cycle, taking into account the Council's overall financial position.

### Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

If sufficient funding isn't available, then projects cannot proceed. Given the increased costs and competing demands on the Council's finances Members will need to decide if these projects should proceed fully funded, remembering that they are charged with the responsibility of the public purse.

### Financial implications

This report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control, as it enables income and expenditure incurred to be reviewed and to be compared with the Council's budgets.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the projects listed in the Park Rangers report or other projects they wish to put forward for the 2023/24 financial year.