

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 23 January 2023

Title: Finance Report

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) – Nigel Warner

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 5pm on the Friday before the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting.

BACKGROUND

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed. The period to which this report relates is 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022.

CURRENT SITUATION

The RFO commenced his duties in Witney earlier this month. On this occasion the RFO is not producing a detailed commentary on the management accounts during the year to date. This is because being relatively new in post he needs to spend some time familiarising himself with the council's operations and accounts before I can provide informed comment. However with the Town Clerk having just carried out a full review as part of the budget setting cycle most areas of concern were raised at the last meeting of this committee and at the extra-ordinary meeting of the council. The RFO would refer members to the finance/ budget reports of the Town Clerk which were approved at those meetings for further details.

Members are reminded that expenditure is not necessarily incurred evenly over the course of the year. For example the vast majority of expenditure in relation to nominal ledger code 4025 (insurance) is incurred in April each year when the annual premium is paid. There will also be similar patterns on the income side such as grants received.

Since the previous report the recharges of staff time and overheads for both the office and the works team have been input to 31 December 2022. The report of the Town Clerk to the Extraordinary Council meeting of 4 January 2023 stated that "it should be noted that the revised estimates and the estimates for next year do not include the recharges from these (*works/ central support*) cost centres; these will be calculated after the budget has been adopted." This is standard practice and following agreement of the budget the recharges have been processed.

In terms of the report presented at this meeting, the current year (2022/23) budget is that which was projected when the estimates were revised and agreed by the Council at its

meeting on 3 January 2023. Members will also see on the right hand side of the report the agreed estimates for the next financial year (2023/24).

It should be noted that the revised estimates were produced by your officers in the autumn of 2022. This means that, with the year end (31 March) rapidly approaching, there will be some cases where the actual spend to date exceeds the revised estimates. By way of compensation there will be other lines where actuals will be year end not reach the revised estimate figure and overall the impact on budget should be broadly when the year end accounts are produced.

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.

Officers are continually assessing the environmental impact of services and assets to ensure where possible measures are taken to support the Council's climate declaration of carbon neutrality by 2028.

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.

Members are reminded that collectively they are custodians of the public purse with most of the funding coming from the taxpayers of Witney. Therefore, Officers ensure they get best value, value for money, and comply with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Procurement Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report forms part of the Council's due diligence and a process in line with its Financial Regulations. The financial implications are detailed above and also in the attached appendices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report.