

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 30 January 2023

Title: Financial Report & Associated Matters

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk - Adam Clapton
Responsible Financial Officer (RFO – Nigel Warner)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on the financial position of the Council as part of the internal controls and due diligence.

CURRENT SITUATION

Detailed income and expenditure statements for the whole of the Council's approved budgets for the period up to 31 December 2022.

It should be noted that income and expenditure is not necessarily spread equally over the 12-month period.

For information, the current salary and overhead allocations position is:

- Salaries – have been added to 31.12.22
- Dept 503 and 601 agency and works – closed at end of month 6. No estimates for 23/24
- Dept 602 – office allocations have been added to 30.11.22
- Dept 604. This started 1.10.22. Budgets have been allocated but no actuals for month 7, 8 and 9 have been added.
- Dept 605 – general maintenance has been added to 30.11.22
- Dept 606 – grounds (ex. Agency) This started 1.10.22. Budgets have been allocated but no actuals have been added for month 7, 8 and 9.

If Members have any specific questions please email the RFO before the meeting so that he will be able to respond and provide an answer at the meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY SPENDING COMMITTEES

It is the Council's usual practice that all matters discussed, and recommendations made by spending committees which have financial implications, are reported to this committee. This committee is responsible for the overall fiscal management of the Council.

Additional financial matters and updates are also included in this report for transparency.

Parks & Recreation Committee – 9th January 2023

PR19 – Leys Area Play Surfacing. The committee agreed that the entrance and swing area in the park should be repaired from the existing Leys Maintenance budget.

Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee- 16th January 2023

H33 – Holy Trinity Churchyard Tree Works. The committee agreed to remove three trees in the churchyard from the existing arboriculture budget.

H34 - Allotment Gates. The committee agreed to a request from Witney Allotment Association to install gates at each of the allotment sites from the existing allotments EMR. A three-year-old wooden gate at Hailey Road will be retained for future use on the Council's estate.

Stronger Communities Committee- 23rd January 2023

SC41 – Communications Report. The Committee agreed the annual newsletter should be created and distributed by Contractor 2, which would be within or near to the scheduled budget of £3,000.

ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL MATTERS

Asset Disposal

Corn Exchange Tiered Seating Platform (Picture attached)

Prior to the installation of the new retractable seating, performance seating could be accommodated by using a tiered seating platform which was purchased by the Council on the urgent closure of the Corn Exchange in 2011 for approximately £15,000.

Officers would like to dispose of this asset, with the agreement of this committee in line with the Council's financial regulations,

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Policy and Finance Committee, together with any other consents required by law.

Due to the lack of storage space, it is not practical for the Council to retain the platform and Burwell Hall is never used as a performance space. The platform has the wear and tear associated with items of this age but is structurally sound when erected. The Council has the following options:

- Dispose of the seating platform by selling for the best offer
- Dispose of the tiered seating platform for scrap metal value
- Dispose of the seating platform by offering to another community group/hall

Children's Christmas Lights

The Council holds an annual competition amongst schoolchildren to design a Christmas Light which is then created and added to the town's display. The year's winning entry is attached to the Town Hall, and each year the previous six winning entries are attached to the restaurant opposite. Each year, the oldest light (seventh oldest) is stored by the current lights' contractor. At the end of any contract, these lights are returned to the Council.

There is currently no policy on the disposal of these assets and previously they have been stripped and the metal sold for scrap to re-coup costs.

Officers have been approached by the parent of a child whose winning entry is no longer part of the display regarding the possibility of buying it.

If the committee is agreeable, a policy could be formulated that all lights are offered to winning entrant families at the end of their seven displayed years and for what price they are sold for disposal.

Corn Exchange Refurbishment – Projector Equipment

At the meeting of the Corn Exchange Working Party on 24th November, it was agreed that as an extension to the audio and lighting tender and within existing budgets, that the Council should go ahead and procure projection equipment for the Corn Exchange.

For the purposes of financial transparency, this item had been added as an optional extra in the original tender so fell within financial regulations of the Council.

LGA Associate Membership Offer Through NALC

Please see the attached email relating to the Super Council's Network offer of Associate Membership to the Local Government Association for 2023-24.

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 regarding its facilities and services it operates.

RISK

In decision making Councillors should consider 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 conduct its checks and balances, and consideration is given to budgets and funding availability when agreeing expenditure.

With regards to the tiered seating platform, the Council should be looking to recoup costs to 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.

Reported here or in the report above.

- In the current contract, the cost for producing the child's Christmas light is £600 per year
- The reduced cost of the associate LGA membership for 2023-24 is £530+VAT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Agree the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above and,
2. Consider the disposal method of the redundant tiered seating platform at the Corn Exchange and;
3. Consider the disposal of Children's Christmas lights at the end of their display life and the price for which they are sold (if agreed) and;
4. Note the purchase of Projection Equipment in the Corn Exchange as an addition to the audio and lighting and;
5. Consider membership of the LGA, at a reduced cost through NALC.