

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: 30 January 2024
Title: Finance Report
Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

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 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Current Situation

A full review of the budgetary position was undertaken during the budget cycle. Most areas of interest 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 which were approved at those meetings for further details.

The Committee's services are divided into two base revenue cost centres, responsibilities as follows:

Cost centre	Service
206	Witney Country Park
403	Planning

Current year budget: In terms of the report presented at this meeting, the current year (2023/24) budget is now those figures which were projected when the estimates were revised and agreed by the Council at its meeting on 8 January 2024. It should be noted that these revised estimates were calculated by your officers in the autumn of 2023.

Note that in relation to recharges from the office and works teams (nominal ledger codes 4892 to 4899 inclusive), these have been processed to 30 November 2023.

Estimates for 2024/25: These are shown in the report in the three columns on the right-hand side of the page.

SUMMARY FOR 2023/24

Overall, the management accounts show the following in relation to the current year:

	2023/24 Original budget- Agreed Jan. 23	2023/24 Year to date (Month 9)	2023/24 Projected estimate for year (to month 12) Calculated Nov.23
Expenditure	£126,550	£73,189	£128,033
Less income	(£1,500)	(£2,217)	(£217)
Net expenditure	£125,050	£70,972	£127,816

The projected estimate (net expenditure) for the current financial year is £2,766 or 2.2% above original net expenditure. On a relatively small budget one of the main reasons for the projected net overspend is that income from fishing rights was projected at £217 compared with original budget of £1,500. This due to an accrual's adjustment and separately one of the clubs relinquishing their rights; in this regard a further adjustment against past invoices is due to be made. However, since the projected budget was set, a grant of £2,000 has been made from the County Councillors priority fund for work at the Lake and Country Park.

Note that the projected budget also provides for full expenditure in a number of non-salary/overhead nominal ledger codes. Ahead of the year end your officers will be thoroughly examining the various budget lines and proposals will come forward following the financial year end (31 March 2024) for underspends in these lines to be transferred into the earmarked reserves to allow projects to continue and to provide for prudential reserves where expenditure has not been required this year but will in future years.

There have also been reductions in the recharges in relation to the works team across most cost centres, compared with original budget. This is due to staffing costs being lower than originally budgeted for and this has impacted the bottom-line.

Environmental impact

The Council declared a Climate Change Emergency at its 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. This extends to the procurement of goods and services.

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 approve the report and the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 December 2023.