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**Agenda Item:** Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 2 February 2026

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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### Background

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.

Following a resolution of Full Council on 6 October (Minute No. 581 refers), this report provides a summary of all spending committee decisions, both approved and declined, to ensure comprehensive and transparent scrutiny by this Committee which holds overall responsibility for the Council's financial management and oversight of budgetary decisions.

### Current Situation

#### **Parks & Recreation Committee – 12 January 2026**

There were no new financial recommendations from the items considered at the meeting.

#### **Climate & Biodiversity Committee – 13 January 2026**

**Seasonal Planting Schemes** - The Committee recommended the Council should consider mixed planting schemes from Autumn onwards. The cost was unknown but would come in a future report.

#### **Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee – 19 January 2026**

**Raised Planter Request – Lakeside Allotments.** The Committee welcomed a request from the Witney Allotment Association for raised allotment beds. A breakdown of costs was requested as it was proposed these should be allocated from the Council's allotments fund. It is hoped a further update will be provided ahead of the meeting.

#### **Stronger Communities Committee – 26 January 2026**

**Spring Newsletter** – The Committee recommended that the annual newsletter should be issued to every household in the post as usual within the allowed budget. It was agreed further quotes should be sought from a local delivery company for the whole of Witney.

**Witney Carnival** – The Committee recommended that additional staffing resource may be required for facilitating the event on the day. Further work was required on this issue.

**Heritage Open Days 2026** – The Committee recommended that the Council should mark this occasion in September 2026 (contrary to budget-setting), with any incurred costs coming from existing events budgets.

**Request to fly the Europe Flag** – The Committee recommended that the Council should fly the Europe flag on Europe Day, 5<sup>th</sup> May annually. In line with the Council's flag flying policy, it was agreed that the cost of the flag should be borne by the group requesting it.

**In Bloom** – The Committee recommended a new way in dealing with vouchers to community gardening groups in 2026/27 which provided stricter checks on spending as well as agreeing that £50 should be awarded to the Queen Emma's Group as they were still establishing the garden.

**Request for a bollard at Farmers Close** – The Committee recommended that a bollard should be purchased and installed at the agreed location for up to £600 from existing grounds maintenance budgets.

**High Street Seating** – The Committee recommended that the Council would take on the ongoing repair and maintenance of Eastgate benches in the area proposed in the details from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Bike Racks & Bins** - The Committee recommended that the Council should not take on ongoing maintenance for bin covers being installed by West Oxfordshire District Council, and that they should be responsible for the cost of redistributing bike racks across the town centre and remedial pavement works.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Covered in specific project reports.
- b) Biodiversity – Covered in specific project reports.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Covered in specific project reports.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Covered in specific project reports.

## **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 conduct its checks and balances, and consideration is given to budgets and funding availability when agreeing expenditure.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

The benefits of these items should be considered at the time of recommendation.

## **Financial implications**

The report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control. Specific financial implications are detailed.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider agreeing the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above.
2. Consider additional information provided by the WAA concerning the cost of raised beds at Lakeside Allotments and a level of funding by the Council, if appropriate.