

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: 1 June 2026

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on the day of 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 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Current Situation

The draft management accounts being presented are those for 2025-26. The cost centres for which this committee has responsibility are:

| Cost centre | Service |
|-------------|---|
| 201 | Splash Park at the Leys Recreation Ground |
| 202 | The Leys Recreation Ground |
| 203 | West Witney Sports Ground |
| 204 | Burwell (Queen Elizabeth 2) Sports Ground |
| 205 | King George V/ Newland Recreation Ground |
| 207 | Moorland Road Play Area |
| 208 | Woodgreen/ Play Area |
| 209 | Eton Close Play Area |
| 210 | Oxlease Play Area |
| 211 | Fieldmere Play Area |
| 212 | Quarry Road Play Area |
| 213 | Raleigh Crescent Play Area/ Deer Park pitches |
| 214 | Park Road Play Area |
| 215 | Cedar Drive Play Area |
| 216 | Unterhaching Play Area |
| 217 | Waterford Lane Play Area |
| 218 | Windrush Place |
| 230 | Play Areas (holding budget) |

The draft management accounts being presented are those for 2025-26. Steady progress is being made on closing down the 2025-26 accounts ahead of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return being drafted for approval at the Council meeting on 22 June. However,

there are likely to be further adjustments to be made which will affect the final management accounts for the cost centres which are the responsibility of this committee.

In particular there is further work planned in relation to accruals and adjustments to earmarked reserve movements. With regard to earmarked reserve movements there are some yearend adjustments to undertake so the financial accounts are in accordance with AGAR requirements. In addition, where there are budget sums in the 2025-26 year which are to be transferred to an earmarked reserve (ERM) to meet future commitments/liabilities this will not show as an expenditure against the Committee but instead a transfer between the general fund and the EMR.

A full commentary on the budget lines was undertaken as part of the budget process. Members may wish to note the following:

1. There will be some codes where the year-to-date figure in 2025-26 now exceeds the projected figure for the year. This is to be expected as the projections were the best estimates made in September/ October and clearly matters move on. Equally there will be other codes where not all the projected budgets will be required. Virements (transfers) between budgets are made where they can be justified but overall, there are no budget lines which cause concern.
2. All codes 4047 – play equipment maintenance. As previously advised a budget used to be allocated to each of the play areas on an annual basis. This was not always required and so at the year-end any underspend was transferred to the appropriate earmarked reserve. However, when spending was required, it sometimes exceeded the annual budget amount allocated to the relevant site for that year and so the difference was funded either through the earmarked reserve or from a virement from underspent budgets on other sites.
To simplify matters, during the budget cycle a new cost centre, 230, “Play Areas Holding Budget” was created by transferring all 4047 budgets from the individual play areas. Allocations are then made from the holding budget to individual play areas during the year when expenditure is incurred by way of virement.
3. There is a change to the accounting treatment of “Subsidised lettings” in relation to the Leys Recreation Ground (code 202). These subsidised lettings take place when the Council allows groups to use the Leys Recreation Ground at no charge for community-based events. The value of these lettings is shown against code 4110 – redesignated as “Lettings – no charge/subsidised.” Previously the corresponding credit was shown at code 1051 – Ground Hire. However, the free lettings are now shown under code 1055 – Ground Hire – Not charged/grant. This shows more clearly the value of these hires and it is helpful in terms of accounting that they are separated out from the paid for lettings, where a payment is being made for a supply of goods/services in contrast to the free lettings which are a non-business activity, essentially an extension of the Council’s grants programme.
4. A sum of £59,250 in the current year budget, in relation to Windrush Place, has been transferred to earmarked reserves at 31st March 2026. As noted above this is a transfer from the general fund to the EMR and will not show as an expenditure to this

Committee, as it is a reserve movement. However, in order to provide for this in the Council's estimates it was necessary to represent it in the projected expenditure in the management accounts (code 4491/218).

5. The Committee's services are operating within agreed budgets – the original budget was revised down from £497,926 to £456,848 during the budget cycle (note this included the projected reserve movement of £59,250 per point 4 above, without which the projected figure would have been £397,598) and draft net expenditure to 31 March 2026 was £322,277.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

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 – no implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting from this report

Risk

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

The provision of regular financial reports is part of the Council's risk management system.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Social value is not quantified in the financial reports but clearly the creation of social value is dependent on setting adequate budgets to meet the Council's objectives.

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 income and expenditure statements.

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 approve the report and the draft management accounts of the Committee's services to for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.