
Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: 8 June 2026

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 9am on the day of the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting.

The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the draft management accounts for the services delivered by this Committee during the financial year 2025-26.

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
103	Bars
104	Corn Exchange
105	Burwell Hall
301	Tower Hill Cemetery
302	Windrush Cemetery
303	Closed churchyards – St Mary's/ Holy Trinity
305	Allotments

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 before this date there are likely to be further adjustments made which will affect the final management accounts for the cost centres which are the responsibility of this committee. Therefore Members may notice some differences to some of the figures when they are presented to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee later in the cycle.

There is further work planned in relation to adjustments to earmarked reserve movements. Adjustments have been undertaken so the financial accounts are in accordance with AGAR requirements. In addition note that 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. In relation to the 1863 Café/bar sales were revised upwards from £182,638 to £210,900 during the budget cycle. Sales to 31 March 2026 now show at £213,433 (this being 117% of original budget and 101% of revised budget). At the same time the net cost of the facility was revised downwards from £28,556 to £24,047 but the draft final figure is now £12,552. This is reflected also in the reduction of the running costs of the halls service overall, from £234,330 (in 2024-25) to £179,961 (in 2025-26).
3. The Council has agreed a delegation to the Town Clerk/CEO to opt-to-tax the Burwell Hall (cost centre 105) if it was considered necessary in terms of input VAT recovery. However following further review this is not considered necessary at this point in relation to current capital works. The position is due for review ahead of the next meeting of this committee and will consider planned projects in relation to the Burwell Hall. Members will also recall that if an option-to-tax is made then it was agreed that the output tax would be absorbed by the Council so that the additional 20% cost would not be passed on to customers, the vast majority of which are not VAT-registered organisations.
4. Members are reminded of the change in relation to the treatment of property budgets. Previously where a property was leased out this was represented in the accounts against the site where the property was located.

For this Committee this impacts on the Cemetery Lodge rent and insurance recharge, previously shown under the Tower Hill cemetery budget (301). The rationale for the change is that the previous treatment inadvertently had the impact of distorting revenue budgets such as cc301 because in this case none of the expenditure in this cost centre related to this property. In governance terms it should also be noted that whilst clearly spending committees have an interest, property matters in relation to leases etc are primarily a matter for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee (PGF). Consequently a new cost centre – 501 was created under PGF to consolidate

all rented property income and expenditure with the exception of the Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall, which have their own cost centres which are also included under PGF.

Current year budgets were vired from the old budget lines to the new cost centre 501 which has the impact of ensuring that like for like comparisons may more readily be made between 2025-26 and 2026-27.

5. During 2025-26 recharges for the works team time were made to the Closed Churchyards in order to give a more accurate cost to this maintenance work. Previously this time was costed to cc402 (Community Infrastructure).
6. Energy costs are significant part of this Committee's expenditure. These are likely to rise as a result of the war in the Middle East. However there will be no adverse impact on the Council's energy budgets for 2026-27 insofar as this Committee's services are concerned as your officers placed a contract with the Council's current energy providers on 2 March 2026 based on contract sums offered prior to the start of the war. However the volatility of the international situation will cause significant inflationary pressures in other cost lines as the situation unfolds.
7. During 2025-26 the Committee's services were delivered within agreed budgets. The original budget was revised down from £515,765 to £449,348 during the budget cycle and draft net expenditure to 31 March 2026 was £428,124.

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

However as all services require financing and their efficient delivery relies on robust controls, strong financial management and constant monitoring, of which this report is an integral part, this report may be said to contribute to all of the strategic pillars.

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 note the report and further

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

