

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees

Meeting Date: Monday, 28 September 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

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.

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 – 7 September

There were no recommendations for the current fiscal year but the following for 2027/28 budget-setting:

Splash Park – That, a budget for Splash Park maintenance and future replacement be maintained.

Raleigh Crescent – That, the provision of picnic benches at Raleigh Crescent be included in the budget.

Climate & Biodiversity Committee – 8 September

Tree Budget – That, an increase to the arboriculture budget be considered as trees had been lost during the hot summer.

Climate– That, an initial £50,000 for climate initiatives be included in the budget as the current budget is likely to be utilised during the next six months.

It was agreed both items should be refined in time for November.

Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee – 14 September 2026

Hearing Loops – That, assistive listening be installed in the Main Hall and Gallery Room for the sum of £11,378.33 (£6,000 agreed budget and £6,000 from General Reserve). *Burwell Hall*

will be a separate project. Hearing loops for the Administration office and Corn Exchange Café had been purchased for the sum of £431.98.

Male Sanitary Bins – That, Members noted the inclusion of male sanitary bins in the Corn Exchange toilets, within agreed operational budgets.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year but the following for 2027/28 budget-setting.

Property Maintenance – That, a £50,000 property maintenance budget is retained to ensure carbon reduction programme continues.

Property Maintenance – That, funds should be set aside (no amount set) for kitchen improvements at the Corn Exchange and also Burwell Hall improvements – it was acknowledged there was no capacity to do now but funds should be earmarked for the future.

Stronger Communities Committee – 21 September 2026

Podcasting – That, no expenditure be incurred in progressing podcasting for the Council at this time.

Website Accessibility – That, no expenditure be incurred in employing an external contractor to advise on accessibility and that this should remain an in-house function.

Litter & Dog Waste Bins – That, no expenditure be incurred in relation to requests for new bins on town council-owned land.

Youth Council (A Slice of Politics) – That, Business 1 be agreed as the supplier for refreshments for the event, being the best value to the Council for the sum of £75.

Winter Preparations – That, the installation of two salt bins be recommended for approval at South Lawn and Burwell Meadow for the sum of £600 for both.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year but the following for 2027/28 budget-setting

Noticeboards at Play Areas – That, £1,500 be included in the budget for the purchase of three noticeboards as indicated in the final option presented in the report.

Big Lunch 2027 – That, a budget of £1,000 be included in the budget for an additional Play Day to mark this occasion in June.

RAF Freedom Parade 2027 – That, a budget of £750 be included in the budget for facilitating and providing refreshments for the occasion (50th Anniversary of the Freedom of Witney and 90th Anniversary of the base).

Youth Services Grant – That, a budget of £20,000 be retained for this scheme in the budget.

Home Start Oxford – That, a budget of £12,000 be retained for early years support in the budget.

The Station Detached Youth – That, a budget of £29,250 (dependent on inflation) be recommended for inclusion in the budget.

In Bloom – That, a budget of £4,200 be recommended for approval (£2,200 of this being allocated to work in Unterhaching Park). Also, that 2027 vouchers be agreed for the following amounts: Schools In Bloom - £40, Community Gardening - £75.

Third Party Events – That, subsidised use of The Leys for Witney Carnival and Witney Pride be recommended for approval and that £1,000 for the existing annual Play Day be retained for the budget.

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 the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above.