

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 26 July 2021

Title: Financial Report & Associated Matters

Contact Officer: RFO – Tina Jardine
Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

Background

Detailed income and expenditure statements for whole of the Councils approved budgets are attached for information. The period to which this report relates is from 1 April to 30 June 2021, being the 3-month position and the latest period for which accounts are available.

Members should note these reports do not show the current salary overheads, which are being processed by the external bookkeeper.

Financial Implications of Recommendations made by Spending Committees

As Advisory Committees in this cycle of meetings, recommendations falling outside of the Council's previously agreed policies, budgets and delegations in statute will require ratification at the Full Council meeting on 2nd August 2021.

It is, however, 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 committee is responsible for the overall financial management of the Council.

Parks & Recreation Committee – 5th July

Witney Town Bowls Club Gates – The recommendation of the Committee was to support the replacement of gates at the club, at a cost not exceeding £2,000.

Three quotes for the work, as delegated to officers are attached for consideration.

West Witney dog/litter bins/signage – The recommendation of the Committee was to install 2 x recycling litter bins (£758 installation & £330.40 annual emptying) and changes to signage (approx. £300) at West Witney Sports Ground.

Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee- 12th July

Tower Hill Cemetery Pedestrian Access – The recommendation of the Committee was to support new pedestrian access at Tower Hill Cemetery. Officers will be obtaining quotes for this work – a budget is already agreed up to £15,000.

Stronger Communities Committee

Christmas Lights – The recommendation of the committee was to agree alterations to the displays at Church Green and the Buttercross. The cost being an additional £2,264.93 per annum to the agreed contract and £754.72 above the agreed annual Christmas Lights budget of £35,000.

Bus Stop – Tower Hill – The recommendation of the committee was to agree to the purchase of a sedum-roofed shelter at a cost of £9,123.66 (From County Council S106 developer funds) and the installation of a litter/dog waste bin. There would be ongoing emptying costs per annum - £7.25 per collection, payable to West Oxfordshire District Council.

Communications & Community Engagement Update report- The recommendation of the committee was to agree to the purchase of additional, professional communications equipment as listed at a cost of £286.44. This coming from the newsletter/communications budget.

Youth Funding Grant – The recommendation of the committee was to launch the Council's Youth Funding Grant 2021 for applications on 1st August 2021 based on the previous years' criteria. The total for the fund is £30,000.

Windrush Cemetery Mapping

The Committee resolved to support the digitisation of the Council's burial and cemetery records and cemetery mapping at a meeting held on 13 July 2020 (minute no. F200 refers).

The first part of this project is underway, with plotting of current graves at both cemeteries underway.

As grave spaces at Windrush Cemetery are not plotted, Officers have sought a quote to undertake this work from a company previously used by the Council which works in conjunction with the mapping provider – the plots would be easily integrated with the current programmes and available digitally. Remaining grave spaces would be plotted on the appropriate land and would take into consideration potential new access roads, paths and entrance from the south of the site (Quote attached).

St Mary's Pillars Insurance Claim

The pillars at St Mary's Church were damaged in an accident in January 2020 but due to delays caused by Covid, the repairs were not completed until 2021. As this was the result of an insurance claim is still unresolved.

All invoices and papers have been sent for submission to the insurance agent, but they have disputed several contractor costs and requested further documentation. The Council's agent has advised that '... a dispute can happen if the pricing is incorrect or consistent' but are unable to offer any further advice on a third-party claim. Officers are currently requesting further information in reply to the queries raised. The outlay from the Council for the repairs totals £6,268.02 (exc. VAT) and the current offer stands at £3,758.78 (exc. VAT). A difference of £2,509.24.

Officers will continue to raise the final offer, but it is unlikely the full outlay will be met by the insurers.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider 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 carry out its checks and balances, and consideration is generally given to budgets and funding availability when agreeing expenditure.

Financial implications

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.

- There is no budget for the plotting of the cemetery graves so a supplementary one would be required.
- There is no additional budget to cover any shortfall in the settlement for the work at St Mary's pillars.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Agree the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above;
2. In addition, consider the quotes for gates at Witney Town Bowls Club
3. Consider the quote for the plotting of grave spaces at Windrush Cemetery
4. Consider acceptance of the insurance offer relating to St Mary's Pillars at its lowest, subject to further negotiation.