

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 10th January 2022
Title: **Finance & Budget Report**
Contact Officer: Town Clerk/RFO – Sharon Groth

BACKGROUND

Following the decision at the EOC on 5th January 2022 the purpose of this report is to provide the necessary information for Members to review the Committee’s revenue and capital expenditure [and income if appropriate] in order to identify areas for savings, as well as realistically prioritising projects to support the Council’s emerging medium term financial strategy.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Town Clerk has extracted information from her final budget report submitted to the EOC relevant to this Committee for ease of reference.

RECHARGE FROM THE WORKS DEPARTMENT [COST CENTRE 601] & CENTRAL SUPPORT [COST CENTRE 602]

It should be noted that the revised estimates and the estimates for next year do not include the recharges from these two cost centres; these will be calculated after the budget has been adopted.

RECHARGE FROM AGENCY SERVICES – GROUNDS CONTRACT [COST CENTRE 503]

Similarly with regard to the Grounds Maintenance Contract – [shown as 4891- Agency Services Recharge] – Members will be aware that the present contract has been extended to end on 30 September 2022 and a new specification is currently being drawn up to take account of the outcomes from the Open Spaces Strategy - so for the purposes of this report the current years actual known figures have been retained with a 5% inflationary increase applied, in order to be able to make comparison on a like for like basis across the two years. It is hoped that the Council will be able to make a decision on the future of its Grounds Maintenance Service early in the new year when the Consultant has finalised his report.

COMMITTEE: PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Committees Draft Revised Budget for 2021/22 and Estimates for 2022/23 are attached at **Appendix A** along with budget notes at **Appendix B**.

201 – SPLASHPARK

This shows the expenditure relating to the Splashpark at the Leys Recreation Ground.

An EMR (A/c 361) for the eventual replacement was set up when the Splashpark was opened in 2015 – with consideration that the facility would last approx. 10 years. £25,000 has been set aside each year and added to the precept. The current balance on the EMR is £155,000. As the EMR is slightly higher because of some surplus budgets being added to it along the way it is proposed that £10,000 is only set aside in 22-23. There are some grounds works required and these will be funded accordingly.

202 – THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND

This includes all income from sports/ground hire and expenditure relating to the management of the Leys including the adventure play area

4017 – Contract Clean/Waste this includes the contract cleaning of the toilets and changing rooms at the Leys Recreation Ground, but has been reduced due to the contract being re-negotiated and the number of cleans being reduced.

4059 – Professional Fees the Open Spaces Strategy identifies a number of actions such as SP7 a condition survey, and SP8 a Masterplan. Both these will require professional input and therefore a budget of £10,000 has been included in the estimates for 2022-23. **An EMR has been set up (A/c 367) to address the issue relating to the sewer pipe running from the Witney Town Bowls Club to the main sewer, as well as the works identified in the Open Spaces Strategy. The current balance stands at £32,900 with an additional £25,000 set aside in the estimates for 2022-23, in addition to the £10,000 for professional fees.**

4110 – Subsidised Lettings it has been assumed that the Council will offer subsidised use of the Leys Recreation Ground for third events such as the Witney Carnival, Libfest, and Witney Music Festival if they all go ahead in 2022 (and a corresponding income entry is provided under 1052/202).

203 – WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND

This includes all income from sports, and the various tenants, as well as the expenditure relating to the management of the site, including the Clubhouse

1050 – Rent Received. Additional rental income has been generated in the current financial year by allowing the Snack Shack to trade from the Council's premises. A review of this offering will be carried out early in the new year however for the time being it hasn't been assume that this will continue at this stage.

4017 – Contract Clean/Waste due to the H&S issues which closed the clubhouse building down the Council purchased portaloos to support all other site users. As part of the purchase contract cleaners were used to keep the toilets cleaned. It is understand from the Compliance Officer that the Social club now undertake the cleaning themselves therefore the contract has been terminated accordingly.

204 – BURWELL (QE2) SPORTS GROUND

This includes all income from football and the cost of maintaining the recreation ground including the play area/MUGA

4048 – Sports Equipment a sum of £3,000 has been set aside in next years budget in order to re-mark the MUGA at Burwell because it needs redoing.

205 – KING GEORGES V /NEWLAND

This includes income from football and the cost of maintaining the recreation ground including the play area

207 – MOORLAND ROAD PLAY AREA

208 – WOOD GREEN PITCHES/PLAY AREA

209 – ETON CLOSE PLAY AREA & TINY FOREST

210 – OXLEASE PLAY AREA

211 – FIELDMERE PLAY AREA

212 – QUARRY ROAD PLAY AREA

213 – RALEIGH CRESCENT PLAY AREA

214 – PARK ROAD PLAY AREA

All the above cost centres [207 – 214] relate to the cost of maintaining the Council's play areas – there are no significant changes that require pointing out as part of this report.

EARMARKED RESERVES (EMR)

The Town Clerk has referred to the use of some EMR's in the report above to suggest how expenditure can be funded, as well as some Capital and Special Revenue Projects later in this report to make the budget affordable and limit future increases in the precept/Band D Council Tax – as well as setting clear priorities to inform an emerging medium term financial strategy.

A full list of the EMRs is provided in the attached appendices for Member's information (**Appendix C**).

However, in respect of this Committees responsibilities there is an EMRs which could be repurposed and designated for alternative use – or just added to the General Fund in order to bring it to the recommended level.

- 375 – CCTV Leys & Burwell Rec £10,000

This was set aside when there was considerable amount of ASB on the Leys and Burwell. WODC/TVP installed a mobile camera at the Leys – and nothing further has been heard about the requirement for CCTV at Burwell. However the Town wide CCTV scheme is very dated and has been under review for a considerable number of years – it is questionable whether any further addition would be supported – particularly as Burwell is slightly further out of town. Members should consider the benefits this asset would bring.

S106/DEFERRED GRANTS

The funds which are held as deferred grants unapplied from S106 receipts that have been paid over are as follows:

Deferred Unapplied Grants	(From)	31.03.22
		£
Sale of Land Allotments	WODC	191996
S106 Corn Exchange	WODC	128573
S106 West Witney Sports	WODC	310325
S106 Burwell Sports	Abbeymills Homes	25000
S106 C/Ex	Abbeymills Homes	12250
S106 Skate Park	Abbeymills Homes	12250
Bus Shelters etc	Abbeymills Homes	3295
		683688

It should be noted that further S106 funds are pledged but not yet received.

CAPITAL & SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS

As explained at the presentation on 13 December 2021 via Zoom – the first draft budget was based on all the projects identified during committee meetings in the course of the year as well as those identified via the Open Spaces Strategy. Pulling it altogether for the budget it became obvious that the list wasn't realistic/physically achievable or affordable (unless the Council wished to put up the precept by 25%).

On the 20 December 2021 the Town Clerk met with the Chairs of Committees to go through the projects to try and refine the budget and get guidance on possible % increases to the precept. The Town Clerk has done her best to interpret these instructions. To enable workload to be planned properly during the coming financial year the resultant project list is provided at **Appendix D** along with **Appendix E** which details projects in progress in the current year.

The Town Clerk would urge the Committee to scrutinise its project list and prioritise them accordingly – this may mean some are deferred to future years – but this will help inform the emerging medium term financial strategy.

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 with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

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.

Proper and sound financial management is necessary as all Councillors are collectively responsible for the budget, particularly expenditure and ensuring it is expended lawfully and in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

As Town Clerk, the Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer it is her job to advise accordingly, in line with Financial Regulations and Statute. She has carried out extensive scrutiny of the Council's income and expenditure but in line with the resolution at the EOC the figures are presented for scrutiny by the Committee in order to identify savings.

Members should note that given the uncertainty around the pandemic it would not be prudent to increase income because of the limited customer base and demand for things such as football pitches. Unless Members want to increase its fees and charges beyond the already agreed inflationary increases then the Town Clerk would advise no change to budgeted income.

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 appendices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report and consider how it can reduce its revenue expenditure as well as prioritising projects to inform a medium-term financial strategy for the Council.