

## POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 3 October 2022

**Title:** Financial Report & Associated Matters

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/C.E.O, Sharon Groth  
Deputy Town Clerk, Adam Clapton

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### BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on the financial position of the Council as part of the internal controls and due diligence.

### CURRENT SITUATION

Detailed income and expenditure statements for the whole of the Council's approved budgets for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2022, being the latest period for which accounts are available for are attached.

Due to time constraints, it is not possible to provide a full written report, however at this stage in the financial year budgets are not expected to be overspent – but members are reminded that expenditure isn't necessarily incurred evenly over the course of the year. As mentioned in another agenda item the Town Clerk will shortly begin the review of the budget lines and a full report will be brought to the meeting in November. **In the meantime if Members have any specific questions please email the Town Clerk before the meeting so that she will be able to respond and provide an answer at the meeting.**

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY SPENDING COMMITTEES

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 committee is responsible for the overall fiscal management of the Council.

Additional financial matters and updates are also included in this report for transparency.

### Parks & Recreation Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**PR446** West Witney Tennis Courts Slip Testing – That, following a 6-week review, the tennis courts should be re-coated at a cost of £1,250.00 if requested by the Club.

**PR451** Play Area Review – That once a timeline is set then an allocation of £50,000 per play area is spread over the entire length of the timeline.

**P453** Defibrillator at King George V Field - That, irrespective of the decision of the football teams the purchase of the Defibrillator should be made and cost met by the council in full. The cost being approximately £1,700.00

### **Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee- 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

There were no financial implications arising from this committee meeting.

### **Stronger Communities Committee- 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**SC468** Blue Plaque – Alice Batt. That, the town council agreed additional spending to host a reception in the Corn Exchange after the unveiling ceremony on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**SC468** Community Engagement (In Bloom). That, the underspend on the 2022 in bloom budget be rolled forward towards a specific project. This potentially being the re-planting of roundabouts maintained by the town council under its ground's maintenance contract.

**SC474** Cycle Repair Stands. That, the cycle repair stand at the Leys be repaired at an approximate cost of £498.00. This to be funded from budget line 4036/402.

**SC475** Defibrillator at King George V Field. That, a sum of £1,700.00 be budgeted for in 2023/24 budget towards this infrastructure.

**SC476** Winter Preparations. That, a grit bin be installed at Rissington Drive, Witney at the cost of £250.00. This to be funded from budget line 4036/402

**SC479** Witney Music Festival. That subsidised use of the Leys Recreation Ground and a grant of up to £10,000 be included in the Council's budget considerations for 2023/24.

## **ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **Corn Exchange Pavement Licence**

The annual licence to allow the use of tables and chairs on Market Square is due for renewal at a cost of £100.00.

### **Corn Exchange Refurbishment**

A cost of £1,700 for an additional core drill sample agreed under delegations to not delay the project has taken place. This confirmed the flooring was structurally sound to take the weight of the seating which will now be installed in December 2022.

## **IT Licences & Future Cost considerations**

### Server

The Council's IT provider has advised the current server is coming to the end of its life and will no longer be supported by Microsoft (and parts will no longer be available). There has been discussion on cloud-based technology but for budgetary purposes a quote for a like for like server has been provided.

### The Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) Switch off

The Town Hall, Corn Exchange, Leys Depot are all set up with ADSL internet connections and this service will be switched off in 2025 . The Council facilities therefore need to be moved on to SoGEA (Single Order Generic Ethernet Access) lines.

### Office 365 Licences

As a second part to the Office 365 migration and expansion of staff, the Council's IT provider has reviewed the current licences for users as part of the Microsoft NCE (New Commerce Experience) launched earlier this year . Previously, these have been added piecemeal but now most positions are filled, they have suggested upgrading officers from Business Basic to Business Standard licences. Microsoft offer rolling month, 12-month and 36-month licences, with the latter offering best value for money.

### Graphus – anti-phishing Software

Members will be aware the Council is undertaking a trial in this software on the recommendation of its IT provider. Several Council's are reporting phishing attacks and it is one of the most popular forms of cyber-attacks. At the end of the trial period a breakdown showing what the software has stopped will be provided.

## **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 conduct its checks and balances, and consideration is given to budgets and funding availability when agreeing expenditure.

Currently one of the common risks the Council is faced with is the rise in cost of materials, and labour when projects have been tendered/quoted for and then on placing orders quotes

and estimates have been increased because of these factors. Officers will need to be mindful when requesting budgets that a contingency is put in for any potential prices increases.

Members are reminded that collectively they are custodians of the public purse with most of the funding coming from the taxpayers of Witney. Therefore, Officers ensure they get best value, value for money, and comply with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Procurement Policy.

## 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.

The financial implications arising from this report are as follows:

- A like-for like server is quoted at £7,500.00.
- One- off ISDN switchover costs to an SoGEA line (x3) are quoted at approx. £1,000. The monthly cost is marginally different £55 to £52.
- To upgrade the M365 licences will increase the monthly cost by less than £5 per month over a 36-month period. There would also be a change to the Council's support contract.
- The Graphus anti-phishing software would be charged £5 per mailbox, per month if taken agreed in conjunction with the upgraded licences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Agree the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above and,
2. Note the cost of £100 towards the Corn Exchange payment licence and,
3. Note the additional sum of £1,700 towards the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange and,
4. Consider the upgrade to M365 licences and,
5. Consider adding funds for IT infrastructure into the 2023/24 budget.