

## **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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**Date:** Monday, 21 November 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 are available at agenda item 11 – within the Revenue Budget report.

At this particular time of the year the Town Clerk reviews the current years budget to make an assessment of what the projected outturn will be as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

**If necessary the Town Clerk will give a verbal report at the meeting to cover off any key budget line changes.**

### **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 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

There were no direct financial implications arising from this committee meeting.

**All 2023/24 budgetary considerations from this committee are included/will be discussed at agenda item 11.**

#### **Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee- 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

It should be noted, several budgetary implications and a potential change to fees and charges were deferred to the Corn Exchange Working Party for its opinion.

**H560 Arts Subsidised Hire Request** – That, a subsidised letting request for the Phoenix Rising Exhibition (The Phoenix Project is a collaboration between The Branch Trust, Community Albums and WODC) be agreed in the Corn Exchange for the sum of £58.50

**H562 Children’s Memorial Garden** – That, a metal archway be purchased at the cost of £511.12 from the budget of £1,500 for this project. This budget will also be used for the planting in the scheme.

**All 2023/24 budgetary considerations from this committee are included/will be discussed at agenda item 11.**

### **Stronger Communities Committee- 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**SC571 Jo Cox Great Winter Get Togethers** – That, the underspend in the events budget, currently approximately £2,000 is utilised for these community events in January and February.

**SC571 King Charles III Coronation** – That, the Council includes a budget of £3,000 for this event in 2023, and rolls over any underspend in the events budget.

**SC573 In Bloom** – That, the underspend on the current years In Bloom budget is allocated towards improving the Welcome to Witney signage areas.

**SC575 – Happy to Chat Bench** – That, a plaque is purchased to highlight the bench to the cost of approximately £50

**SC576 – Covid 19 Memorial** – That, Heather Slate stones are purchased for this memorial at The Leys at the cost of £1,666.67 (+VAT). A sign/plaque and bench were also agreed as part of this memorial increasing the cost of the scheme over the £1,500 allocated. It was agreed the additional funds could be taken from the Community Infrastructure earmarked reserve if there were sufficient funds (to be confirmed by the Town Clerk/C.E.O).

**All 2023/24 budgetary considerations from this committee are included/will be discussed at agenda item 11.**

## **ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **Corn Exchange Refurbishment**

After the retractable seating has been installed during December, a new Fire Risk Strategy will need to be completed as an obligation of building regulations. The strategy will have to be completed in a very small time-window as a health and safety priority.

Members are asked to note this cost, which can be completed under urgent delegations to the Town Clerk.

### **Rotary Club of Witney – Christmas Lights Switch-on Grant**

Through the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee on 11 July, the Council agreed to invite the Rotary Club of Witney to run the Christmas Lights Switch-on event under previous terms, including the release of a grant (minute SC359 refers).

The amount budgeted for the Switch-on event in the current year is £2,000 which has been released to the Club following the above resolution. The request received from the Club this year is for a slightly higher amount of £2,100.

Members are asked to consider the request for £100, which would need to be funded from the general grants budget.

### **Annual Grant – Citizen’s Advice**

The Town Council budgets for an annual grant for West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice (Witney) for the service they provide to the community. In the current year, £2,000 is allocated on budget line 4101/407.

Members are asked to consider releasing the above amount as the 2022 annual grant.

### **Burwell Hall – Toilet Refurbishment**

At the meeting of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee on 7 November, as part of budget-setting, the committee agreed to defer the refurbishment based on quoted costs of £30-35,000 against a budget of £12,000 in the current year. It was agreed that the refurbishment could be deferred until 2024/25 to allow the shortfall to be budgeted during the budget setting cycle. Officers have since re-assessed the toilets in terms of urgency and the Operations Manager has provided the following update,

*‘The toilets at Burwell are in a poor condition and troublesome for basic maintenance and cleaning. The best plan would be for an entire renovation of the toilets however, the budget is understood not to stretch to this extreme. Due to the age of the hall and its overall appearance, a basic refit on the sanitaryware and some hygiene panelling would go a long way and help to extend the life of the toilets. The Disabled toilet would have a new grab rail kit installed to bring it up to a better standard. The women’s and men’s would then have all cisterns replaced along with the basins and taps. The basin set would probably have to have new hygiene panelling installed but the toilet cubicles will be left alone. The urinals will all be replaced with waterless units to make installation easier and help our eco credentials.*

Close Coupled Toilet	£188.00	4	£752.00
Waterless urinals	£393.60	3	£1,180.80
Mixer tap	£149.00	6	£894.00
Basin	£184.00	6	£1,104.00
1.05m - 1.5m vanity unit	£487.20	2	£974.40
			£4,905.20

*I'm not sure about the costs of the plumbing works the team won't be able to do but calculate in another 3k.'*

**Total approximate cost £8,000**

## 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.

## 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.

Reported here or in the report above.

- The Project Officer is still seeking quotes for the Fire Safety Strategy; it is likely to be up to £2,750, which will need to be funded from the Public Halls EMR
- The budget for the Christmas Lights Switch-on grant is £2,000. An additional £100 could be paid for from the discretionary grants fund (4100/407)
- The CAB Annual grant for £2,000 is within budget (4101/407)
- The budget for Burwell Hall toilet refurbishment is £12,000

## 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 a Fire Risk Strategy for the Corn Exchange Main Hall and,
3. Consider an additional £100.00 towards the Christmas Lights Switch-on event and,
4. Consider releasing the annual grant of £2,000 to West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice (Witney).
5. Consider the sanitary ware works at Burwell Hall toilets from the existing budget with a view to refurbishing flooring and panel ware at a later date.