

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE COMMITTEE BUDGET 2022/23



Report Reference	A-21-12
Meeting Date	27 th September 2021
Agenda Item	11
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

The committee is required to set its draft budget for the financial year 2022/23. This draft budget will then be referred to the Finance Committee which will recommend a full budget to Full Council.

The draft budget is split into three sections covering the previous (2020/21) financial year, current financial year and the next financial year, which starts on 1st April 2022. The 2020 column shows actual spend against budget. The 2020 column shows the current budget (total), actual spend year to date, projected spend by year end and commitments. The 2022 column shows agreed (i.e. draft) budget; the ERM and carried forward columns are not used.

This report provides a summary of the changes within the cost centres.

2.0 COST CENTRE COMMENTARY

201 COUNCIL OFFICES

The projected figures for the Council Offices cost centre presumes a transfer with effect 1st January. The External Contractors budget in the current financial year is a carry forward budget from 2020 for the installation of lighting to the Centennial War Memorial and is not repeated in the 2022 budget.

The budget for 2022 is largely the same as existing; a professional fees budget is included for a tree survey and an external contracts budget for arising work. The water budget has been increased following the latest cost data from Cheshire East Council. The repairs budget has been reduced to reduce the overall budget.

205 60 KING STREET

The committee had previously not allocated a budget for this on the basis the building would be tenanted. The projected/next budget makes allowance for the provision of temporary heating over winter and resultant increased utilities costs. I also makes allowances for ad hoc repairs including a planned replacement of the fire alarm panel in the current financial year.

207 LILY LODGE / JUSTICE VIEW

The projected budget is based an assumption of when the tenancy for Lily Lodge will commence. The forecast income for next year factors in the RPI rent increase at the lease anniversary.

External contractor costs represent the building works and are drawn from reserves.

232 TRANSFER FEES/COSTS

Small projected budget for the legal fees involved in the transfer of the council offices.

250 CEMETERY

The projected income is forecast to be above budget and this is reflected in the draft budgets for 2022. No income is budgeted for memorials, however this is a cost neutral income line (income received is recharge of expenditure).

The expenditure is largely similar to current/projected budgets reflected as data on operation costs is improving over time. There is a projected spend and budget for memorial works in the current and next year to cover costs in making safe failed memorials where the grave owner has not responded to notices. The professional fees budget provides for the triennial full tree survey.

255 CEMETERY CHAPEL

The Cemetery Chapel budget income has been increased to set a higher target for income for the asset. The expenditure lines are broadly similar to current year costs and excluding the higher expenditure in some lines which represent the set-up costs of the chapel. A marketing budget is included for the promotion of the asset.

At the Assets Working Group meeting in August, it was agreed to consider the funding of the reinstatement of the bell and weathervane at the chapel as part of the budget process. The associated costs are not included in the draft budget but are:

- Bat survey - £2,500
- Repair and reinstallation of bell – £6,140
- Repair of weathervane – £3,340

501 PUBLIC TOILETS

The projected and next year budgets provide for an RPI/CPI increase in the contract costs as per the agreement with Danfo. RPI/CPI for the 2022 review is assumed.

510 MARKETS

The projected budget forecasts a reduced income reflecting the stall vacancy which has proved challenging to fill. The next year budget assumes it will be filled. The 2022 income also presumes a 2.5% increase to rents.

The expenditure is broadly similar to the current/previous years. The marketing budget has been increased to enable greater promotion in the next year. The surplus committed to reserves has been decreased slightly to provide a larger release of surplus to the council's general fund which contributes to staffing costs associated with the market.

530 ALLOTMENTS

The allotments cost centre is a cost neutral budget with any surplus being committed to an earmarked reserve and any overspend drawn from that reserve. Current year forecast represents a draw of £1,287 from the EM reserve. Professional fees budget for the triennial tree survey at Sparrow Lane allotments.

545 TOWN RANGER

Minor reduction/adjustment to budget lines.

550 GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES

Professional Fees budget to cover the full triennial survey of trees at Higher Town Green and Wallwood and increased external contractors budget to factor in works.

560 GENERAL OPERATIONS

Computer Equipment budget was increased for current financial year for replacement of laptops but lower cost upgrades have delayed the necessity resulting in a projected underspend. Broadband/phone budgets assume that with the transfer of the Council Offices the Virgin broadband package can be provided.

3.0 SUMMARY

The draft budget as presented results in a net expenditure of £34,193 representing a minor decrease when factoring in the current year expenditure from reserves; it should be noted that this decrease is primarily due to the increase cemetery net surplus which has been utilised by the Personnel Committee for an increase in the hours for the Cemetery Groundskeeper.