

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
TOWN CENTRE PLANTING WATERING

Report Reference EN-22-14
Meeting Date 14th November 2022
Agenda Item 7
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Council delivers a floriculture service as part of the *In Bloom* efforts, which comprises a number of hanging baskets and barrier planters. During the summer season, these require regular watering, naturally the number of times watering is required is dependent on the weather and how warm summer is. Watering starts in April/May (weather dependent) and continues to September.

Year	Instances	Total Cost
2022	41	7,017
2021	26	3,722
2020	26	3,692
2019	35	4,817
2018	38	5,605

The budget for 2021/22 was £5,000, the committee reduced the budget for the 2022/23 financial year to £4,000. The committee is £3,017 over budget for this line in the current financial year.

The watering service cost for 2023 will be £196.82 per instance. On a cool year (approx. once per week) this would be a service cost of around £5,120 whilst on a warm year (approx. twice per week in summer) around £8,265.

2.0 IN HOUSE DELIVERY

Responding to the significant increase in costs, and the likelihood for an increased number of warm summers due to climate change, the option of inhouse delivery has been explored. This would necessitate the purchase of a water bowser with a 50' hose and fitted to a trailer and pump. This would cost £4,260.

The council would hire a standpipe from United Utilities to enable it to utilise designated hydrants within the town. This provides access to fast flowing water to fill the bowser quickly. The cost of the standpipe is £384 per year with a usage charge of £1.674 per cubic meter of water. A full tank of water would therefore cost £1.88.

It is estimated it would take approximately 4.5 hours per instance to provide the watering service and this would be undertaken by the Town Ranger.

Based on these costs, the revenue costs of inhouse delivery would be approximately £2,500 - £3,800 per year (26/42 waterings). Factoring in the cost of the bowser over a five-year period the comparable cost would be £3,350 - £4,650.

The purchase of a bowser would be a capital purchase and could be funded from the council's capital receipts reserve. This would mean the purchase would not affect the precept.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee

- a) Approves moving to an inhouse service provision for the town centre watering
- b) Recommends to Full Council that approves the use of the capital receipts reserve to fund the purchase of a water bowser
- c) Recommends to the Personnel Committee to make the necessary staffing arrangements for the inhouse provision of the service