

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

PURCHASE OF WATER BOWSER



Report Reference C-22-25
Meeting Date 9th January 2023
Agenda Item 9
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. The costs have varied over the last five years from £3,692 (2020, 26 waterings at £142 per instance) to £7,017 (2022, 41 waterings at £171.14 per instance).

The budget for 2021/22 was £5,000, the Environment and General Purposes 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 would be £196.82 per instance which on a cool year (approx. once per week) would be a service cost of around £5,120 whilst on a warm year (approx. twice per week in summer) around £8,265.

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 was 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.

This was considered by the Environment and General Purposes Committee in November and it was resolved to move to inhouse delivery of the watering service. This would enable annual operational costs to be reduced to £3,800 through an increase in the contracted hours for the Town Ranger with the upfront bowser cost being funded through the capital receipts reserve¹. Factoring in the cost of the bowser over a five-year period the comparable cost would be £4,650 pa.

2.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The Environment and General Purposes Committee recommends that Council approves the use of the capital receipts reserve to fund the purchase of a water bowser. It has also recommended to the Personnel Committee that it make the necessary staffing arrangements for the inhouse provision of the service.

Council should therefore consider the authorisation of expenditure from the capital receipts reserve of up to £4,260 for the purchase of a water bowser.

¹ Currently £163,072