

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE BUDGET 2024/25



Report Reference A-23-08
Meeting Date 18th September 2023
Agenda Item 11
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Each committee is required to set a draft budget for the financial year commencing 1st April 2024. All draft budgets will then be amalgamated and presented to a special meeting of the Finance Committee in December where the committee will agree a recommendation to Full Council for a budget and precept.

The draft budget is split into three sections covering the previous (2022/23) financial year, current financial year and the next financial year. The 2022 column shows actual spend against budget. The 2023 column shows the current budget (total), actual spend year to date, projected spend by year end and commitments. The 2024 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. Inflationary increases have been applied to various budget lines.

2.0 COST CENTRE COMMENTARY

201 COUNCIL OFFICES

The current year budget is broadly on track for the current financial year, with a small underspend projected, principally due to the electricity contract not increasing and due to the receipt of rate relief phasing the increase in business rates.

The 2024 budget is modelled on the current financial year, there will be some increase in utility costs and reduced rate relief, additionally, a previously vacant room in the offices will be subject to business rates.

205 60 KING STREET

The projected expenditure is based on limited expenditure in the first half of the financial year and actual expenditure in 2022. The 2024 budget is modelled on the current costs and will be updated as necessary following receipt of the detailed proposal from Bruntwood in October.

207 LILY LODGE / JUSTICE VIEW

This centre generates a surplus of the total rent received, with recharges for any costs incurred. The projected/next year figures are based on the anticipated rent increases as outlined in report A-23-09.

210 OTHER BUILDINGS

A budget of £350 has been provided in the 2024/25 financial year to undertake a structural survey of the Freeholders Hut.

232 TRANSFER FEES/COSTS

The current year to date spend is the registration fees for the Council Offices, the project spend includes costs associated with the transfer of the Freeholders Hut.

250 CEMETERY

The projections are based on activity within the cemetery year to date and forecasting based on previous years. A minor increase in income is forecast in the current year and next. The Equipment Purchase line in the current year utilised part of the prior year budget as an order was placed in the previous financial year, but goods not received until current.

The Cemetery Improvements budget was removed by the Finance Committee in setting the 2023 budget and a budget is provided in the 2024 budget to enable the council to implement actions in accordance with its agreed Cemetery Strategy.

255 CEMETERY CHAPEL

The electricity contract is due for renewal in January 2024, initial pricing suggests a 58% increase in unit costs. The increase in business rates was mitigated by relief, which will apply for 2024 at a lower rate. Projected income is lower than budget, work is pending to increase promotion.

The committee has previously twice deferred undertaking the quinquennial building survey for the chapel (quoted cost in 2021 was £2,500). The committee should consider if this should be included in the budget for 2023.

501 PUBLIC TOILETS

The contract costs are adjusted in line with CPI annually (June), the projected budget is based on the revised cost from June 2023 and an assumption of a 7% increase has been made for the 2024 budget. The increase in usage fees appears not to be reducing demand and therefore the increased costs are partly offset by an increase in income.

The payments recovered lines reflect tenant recharges (to Danfo for insurance and a building survey) but predominantly a recharging agreement with Cheshire East for costs of electricity usage for the bus station and car park.

The current fixed price electricity contract is up for renewal at the start of the financial year. Current rates suggest a 70-80% increase in unit costs.

530 ALLOTMENTS

This cost centre is operated on a break-even basis with any underspend being committed to the allotments reserve. The current year includes professional fees costs in connection with the transfer of the Devis Way allotments (Redrow) and the 2024/25 income reflects receiving rents from this site.

545 TOWN RANGER

No significant changes, but a minor increase in the equipment purchase budget to allow for purchase of additional tools as will be needed for the apprentice.

550 GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES

The current year professional fees includes an estimate for the valuation of land assets without valuations (as requested by Full Council), the quotes are currently being obtained.

No significant changes.

550 GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Computer Software budget has been increased to reflect price increases and additional licences (change in staffing numbers). Additional mobile phones have been obtained as necessary for the staffing changes, and the council has moved suppliers for five accounts (with further accounts due for renewal next year), this results in a minor overspend in the current year but a reduced budget for 2024.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should agree a draft budget.