

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 28 March 2023 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Mallon (Chairman)  
Councillors: Ahmed, Cherry, Colegrave, Garrett, Hussain, Kilsby, and Strangwood.

Alternate Members: Cllr Ahmed for Cllr Reeves  
Cllr Cherry for Cllr Richards

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)  
Paul Almond (Director of Environment)

**R.40/22 Apologies for Absence**  
Cllr Reeves, Cllr Richards.

**R.41/22 Declarations of Interest**  
None

**R.42/22 Minutes of the last Meeting**  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 January 2023 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**R.43/22 Income & Expenditure Report**  
The Committee considered a report prepared by the Town Clerk & RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year. The report showed all expenditure incurred up to 14 March 2023.

Officers responded to a range of questions from Members relating to various budget codes and financial procedures. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast versus the phased YTD budget.

**General Services variances are principally**

- ◆ Staffing vacancies contributing £10k. Applicant numbers for roles has increased, and recruitment within the grounds team has been completed, however ongoing long-term sick continues to stretch team resilience.
- ◆ Planned cemetery works include arboriculture and memorial stability testing is ongoing.
- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of February invoicing across Parks, seasonality of football pitch works and Horton View, overspends offset vacancy savings, and taken together are broadly in line with full year projected expenditure.
- ◆ Expenditure is planned on computer software to support staff monitoring of play equipment and tree stock across the estate.
- ◆ Ongoing play area equipment being refurbished across the estate awaiting completion. Following an external ROSPA inspection, a programme of works has been identified, which officers are working through in the final quarter.
- ◆ Prior and current year utility charges for MUGA's from OCC £11k.
- ◆ Café build in People's Park opened, with an associated Earmarked Reserves of (£201k). The related Earmark reserve will be transferred to alternative earmarked projects to reflect increased inflationary pressures, thereby supporting delivery of planned Council objectives.

- ◆ The timing of the expenditure planned for the landscaping of the Walled Garden in Peoples Park is planned to be completed in 23/24.

#### **Underspends on Resources Committee are principally**

- ◆ Corporate, Central Administration and Civic continue to be well controlled, with cost under budget.
- ◆ Town Council Events are currently within budget parameters.
- ◆ Town Hall costs associated with plant maintenance and building repair, however are offset by savings across the committee
- ◆ Other services to the Public include timing of small grants (including a Warm Welcome grant scheme), and invoicing of Christmas Lighting scheme (£5k saving following anticipated utility and repair costs). Woodgreen Open Air Pool operating subsidy has been provided for, following a review meeting between CDC and BTC Officers an improvement of public swim availability and membership accessibility is being progressed and will be reported to elected members as schemes come forward.
- ◆ Other Costs & Income includes increased interest income (projected £19k) in line with changes to Bank of England base rate.
- ◆ Following successful receipt of three competitive quotes, planned decarbonisation of the heating systems at the Town Hall are due to be implemented ahead of year end, and are contained within the associated earmark reserve to be released.

#### **Financial Effects & Risk Assessment**

This is a monitoring report so there are no specific financial effects arising from it. Without effective budget monitoring there is a risk that budgets will not be adhered to, thereby weakening the Council's ability to demonstrate an effective use of resources. This risk is being mitigated by closer monitoring of spend using a phased budget

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

#### **R.44/22 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (As Amended)**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk & RFO, following the annual consideration given to the level of Members' Allowances by the Parish Remuneration Panel appointed by the District Council.

The Committee had previously resolved that the Town Council should not adopt a Members Allowance Scheme under the Local Authorities (Members Allowance) (England) Regulations 2003 (Minute R.7/03 refers) but it had accepted that travelling and subsistence allowances as set out in the Parish Remuneration Panel's reports should be paid for approved duties outside the town of Banbury (Minute R.53/03).

Members were advised that the Panel had recommended an increase of 2.75% in line with the agreed staff cost of living pay award, to the level of travel and subsistence allowances for 2023/24.

**It was RESOLVED** that the travelling and subsistence allowances as recommended by the Parish Remuneration Panel (Appendix 1) be adopted as recommended and introduced with effect from the beginning of the current financial year.

The meeting ended at 6.55pm

