

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at **6.30pm on Tuesday, 7th January 2025** in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Hussain (Chair).
Councillors: Biegel, Eaton, Mallon, Mears and Vaitkus.

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Director of Environment)
Chris Green (Events Manager)
Helen Durkin (Executive Officer)
James Smith (Media and Communications)

R.1/25 Apologies for Absence
None

R.2/25 Declarations of Interest
None.

R.3/25 Minutes of the last Meeting
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

R.4/25 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 05 December 2024.

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 Committees' expenditure was within forecast versus the projected budget.

General Services variances and points to note were principally:

- ◆ Cleansing charges to Cherwell District Council (CDC) are paid annually in full in March.
- ◆ Staffing costs remain within budget, in line with annual salary increases agreed with trade unions.
- ◆ Planned roof repairs at Southam Road depot completed and fibreglass burial chambers purchased. Offset by timing of headstone beam installation, annual BACS software license and tree works.
- ◆ Replacement light columns have been installed in People Park, the beginning of a wider replacement programme across the estate, particularly PDP. Retaining wall works at Longelandes Way planned.
- ◆ Hanwell View MUGA and Public Open Space (POS) has been transferred, along with S106 contribution, to be recognised over the next 15 years of maintenance. Reflooring of Horton View Sports pavilion has been undertaken in showers and main hall.
- ◆ Inspection of eleven MUGA hardstanding and six tennis courts at Horton View is currently being undertaken in order to inform a report by officers to members early in 2025.
- ◆ Assessment and purchase of mowers and fleet vehicles is currently underway.
- ◆ Eight new green roofed bus shelters will be installed by Clear Channel during January 2025 across a number of arterial entry roads into Banbury.

Points of interest on Resources Committee related principally to:

- ◆ Corporate, Central Administration and Civic continue to be well controlled, with vacancies in central administration contributing £17k underspend, alongside timing of NALC subscription costs, offset by elevated legal costs.
- ◆ Town Council Events are currently broadly within acceptable budget parameters.
- ◆ Town Hall works to the Town Hall to host OCC Registrar service is nearing completion, including access control, with redecoration to the reception area completed.
- ◆ Other services to the Public include timing of small grants (including Warm Welcome grant scheme). The projections for Christmas onto the north elevation of the Town Hall, alongside the Christmas Lights across the town are paid retrospectively. The contribution to Woodgreen Open Air Pool costs are paid in March.
- ◆ Other Costs & Income are in line with treasury management of reserve funds to achieve projected annual budgeted income.

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

R.5/25 Revised & Draft Revenue Estimates

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk & RFO seeking approval of the revised estimates for 2024/25 and consideration of the draft estimates for 2025/26. The estimates included income from fees and charges, which for 2025/26 currently remained unchanged from the current year, subject to receipt of guidance from Members. The estimates for 2025/26 had been set based on a 2% rise in precept, and a rise of 1.1% in households in the town due to general housing growth. A 4.0% inflation rise in salaries and contract costs had been assumed, or greater where specified.

The following comments on the estimates were materially relevant:

GENERAL SERVICES

COST CENTRE 101 Litter Control & Cleansing

Contractual costs with Cherwell District Council linked to forecast inflation in 25/26.

Cost Centre 103 Southam & Hardwick Cemetery

Increased capital costs associated with purchase of new grounds maintenance machinery in 25/26. Memorial beams installed in prior year, and remedial fire protection measures undertaken.

Cost Centre 110 Parks and Open Spaces

Ongoing investment in wildflower meadow creation across Spiceball, PDP, Saffron Close and Hanwell View. Investment across the play estate maintenance, as well as bridge, fence and bench repairs. Lighting column upgrade across Princess Diana Park in 25/26, following investment in People's Park during 24/25.

Increased weed management and chemical application on streets in 25/26.

Cost Centre 114 Park Rangers

Salary increases, accompanied by £150k investment in zero emission electric vehicle replacement programme, funded by earmarked reserves.

Cost Centre 120 Football Pitches & Horton View

Refurbishment of Horton View flooring and showers undertaken in 24/25. Investment in grounds maintenance equipment undertaken in 24/25. Second of two-year cricket lease at Hanwell Fields being completed in 25/26.

Cost Centre 160 Capital costs

Planned delivery of earmarked landscaping projects in St Marys Churchyard landscaping, creation of Municipal Compost Bays at Spital Farm. Earmarked reserves to progress refurbishment of MUGAs and tennis courts subject to condition assessment undertaken early in 2025.

RESOURCES

Cost Centre 305 Central Administration

Salary costs reduced in 24/25 due to vacancies, expansion of marketing function in 25/26, accompanied by CRM marketing provision.

Cost Centre 305 Central Administration

Salary costs reflect the expansion of marketing function in 23/24, accompanied by CRM marketing provision and consolidation of communications budgets in 25/26.

Cost Centre 310 Town Council Events

Planning town event in 24/25 to replace the Coronation event of 23/24. Specific resources reduced to match an anticipated fall in sponsorship income.

Cost Centre 311 & 315 Town Hall & Other Services to the Public

Ongoing support by Banbury Town Council, following the removal of Christmas lights funding by Cherwell District Council, to revive and renew the Christmas lights scheme across the town in 24/25, followed by ongoing maintenance and operation in 25/26. Ongoing subsidy of operation costs for Woodgreen Outdoor Pool, alongside reduced election costs following 2024 full election.

Cost Centre 320 Other Costs and Income

Increased interest income in 24/25 projected to marginally reduce in 25/26, reflecting wider inflationary trends, supported by increased precept income.

It Was RESOLVED

That the revised estimates for 2025/26, as now submitted, be sent to council to be approved.

R.6/25 Minutes of Grants & Budgets Committee

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

R.7/25 Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26

IT WAS RESOLVED that the calendar of meetings be noted and approved.

R.8/25 Events Update

The Committee considered the reports of the Events Manager and the Media and Communications Officer, updating members on the events that had taken place from April 2024 to now, as well as providing updates on the dates and information on the future events up to December 2025.

IT WAS RESOLVED to:

Receive and note the Events update.

The meeting ended at 7.20pm