

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Mallon (Chairman)
Councillors: Ayers, Colegrave, Hussain, Kilsby, Mears, Phillips and Strangwood.

Alternate Members: Cllr Mears for Cllr Biegel

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Director of Environment)
Martyn Surfleet (Executive Officer)

R.47/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Biegel

R.48/23 Communications

It was agreed by Councillor Mallon and seconded by Councillor Hussain to thank Officer Martyn Surfleet for his service to the role of Executive Officer, and to wish him all the best of luck in his new role with Cherwell District Council.

R.49/23 Declarations of Interest

None

R.50/23 Minutes of the last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

R.51/23 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 12 March 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 Committee's expenditure was within forecast versus the phased YTD budget.

General Services variances are principally

- Staffing remain within projected costs, recruitment of a cleaner is underway.
- Planned cemetery works include roof repairs at Southam Road depot and tree works on poplars at Southam and driveway footpath repairs.
- Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of February invoicing across Parks, seasonality of football pitch works and Horton View. Timing of EzeeTrees software install into Q4 £10k. Electric lighting across parks (OCC £7k) and vehicle charging facilities at Southam Road timed for March (£10k).
- Play area equipment underspends are proposed to be earmarked for ongoing investment. Tree works orders have been placed and are currently being undertaken, balancing available resources with recommendations from scheduled independent arboriculture inspections over an ongoing three-year timeframe.
- Contract has been completed for a two-year lease of cricket pitch facilities at Hanwell Fields, and investment in machinery purchase will now be undertaken, and funds earmarked for release upon receipt of equipment.

- Timing of capital works at Easington link path moved to Q4, with Hillview play area refurb, walled garden and municipal compost bay works earmarked for 2024 delivery.

Underspends on Resources Committee also 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 – includes prepayment of wedding license (£3k), however overspend is principally driven by building maintenance costs.
- Other services to the Public include timing of small grants (including a Warm Welcome grant scheme), and invoicing of Christmas Lighting scheme. Woodgreen Open Air Pool operating subsidy has been provided for, subject to a review meeting between CDC officers and the Woodgreen Pool Working Party in the new year.
- Other Costs & Income are anticipated to end the year in line with projected budget.

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.

IT WAS AGREED to Earmark of the following funds:

- Play area equipment (up to £100k)
- Cricket pitch machinery purchase (£24k)
- Easington Link Path (£35k)
- Peoples Park – fencing and café canopy (£20k)
- Retain earmarked reserves for Hill View Play area refurbishment (£110k)
- Retain earmarked reserves for Walled Garden refurbishment (£100k)
- Retain earmarked reserves for Municipal compost bay creation – Spital Farm (£60k)
- Retain earmarked reserves for St Marys Churchyard refurbishment (£65k)
- Specify earmark reserve for refurbishment of Playzones at Chandos and PDP (£100k)

R.52/23 Internal Audit Interim Report

Members were invited to receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk & RFO. Several questions were asked of the Town Clerk regarding details of the report.

It was RESOLVED to receive and note the Internal Audit Interim Report.

R.53/23 Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations

Members were invited to review the report of the Town Clerk & RFO.

It was RESOLVED to receive and note the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations Update Report

R.54/23 Confidential Business Exclusion

IT WAS RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

SUMMARY of items discussed during confidential session

R.55/23 Town Hall Lease Agreement

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the hire and lease of the upstairs facilities of the Town Hall for usage by Oxfordshire County Council Registrar.

IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the long-term hire to be agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the chair of the resources committee, as outlined in the **Confidential Appendix**.

IT WAS ALSO RESOLVED to approve the Town Clerk in consultation with the chair of the resources committee to engage with staff based at the Town Hall to design appropriate service delivery models to be accompanied by appropriate building modification, subject to budget capacity.

The meeting ended at 19.04pm