

Notes to accompany 2024-25 Draft Budget

Introduction

The Finance Committee and Staffing Committee met to consider its budget codes on 23.11.23 (Appendix A contains a copy of the Finance Committee meeting minutes) and the Staffing Committee met on 20.12.23 (Appendix B contains a copy of the committee minutes and confidential papers).

Outlined below are the recommendations from both committees for the Full Council to consider in relation to the budget headings accompanying the draft budget.

Finance Committee Recommendations

Item	2024-2025 Budget notes
EXPENDITURE	Amenities and Services and budget
Public Lighting Committee Recommendation	Loan Slight reduction in loan charges. Energy reduce by £2000 to reflect reduction in energy prices. Maintenance – remains the same. Column replacement budget to be increased to £35,000 to enable 15 concrete columns per year to be replaced as per minute point 553/23 28.9.23. That the Public Lighting Budget is increased by £17,900 to £57,800 .
Burial Ground Committee Recommendation	No increase to cover rates increase, bin emptying costs. Additional £1500 allocated in repairs and maintenance for a replacement noticeboard as current noticeboard is rotten. £2000 allocation for gravedigging although this is offset by £2000 in income from gravedigging. Additional funds allocated for remaining extension works including creation of cremated remain area. Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery have submitted a request for £2000 Recommendation that the Burial Ground Budget is reduced to £12,400.
Allotments Committee Recommendation	Maintain at £1200. Recommendation that the Allotments Budget is maintained at £1200.
Recreation WSSA Play Equipment Repairs and Maintenance	Committee recommendation that this is maintained at £21,000. Increase to £19000. With £15000 allocated from Neighbourhood Fund Earmarked Reserves to permit the replacement of the large black climber unit. Maintain at £5000.

Tree Works	Maintain at £2000.
Inspections	Maintain at £600.
Bin emptying	Maintain at £1000.
Skate Area	Maintain at £2000.
Climate Change Long Grass Project	£500 allocation to undertake project to leave grass long in certain areas, this will cover cost of hire of special mower if needed and removal of long grass.
Recreation Ground Toilet Block	Recommend maintain at £5,500 to cover cleaning costs and maintenance.
Lamp Post painting	New item £1000 allocation to improve condition of lamp post columns on Wem Recreation Ground.
Committee Recommendation	Budget to be reduced to £57,600.
Public Toilets	3 year toilet cleaning contract started 1.5.22. Increase budget by £1500 to £14,600 to reflect increase in maintenance costs and need to paint the inside of the building
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that Public Toilets budget is increased to £14,600.
Bus Shelters	4 bus shelters, cleaned monthly with annual deep clean.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that Bus Shelters budget is increased to £1700.
Misc Floral Planters	Increase by £500 due to the possible sale of the plant supplier's business so the 3 year sponsorship agreement may end. Therefore provision is needed to purchase plants
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that the floral planters budget is increased by £500 to £5500.
CCTV	No change maintain at £5000.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that CCTV budget is maintained at £5000.
Administration	Telephone/broadband/postage - budget maintained at £2000. Stationery – slight increase to £500. Membership and subscription - increase to £3700. Audit - increase to £1700 to cover both External Audit and Internal Audit fees. Copier – slight increase as new contract due.

<p>Committee Recommendation</p>	<p>Chain of Office – maintain at £1000 to allow for new chain to be made (2023-24 underspend to be allocated in ear marked reserves). Mayors Allowance – maintain at £1000. Mayors Hospitality – maintain £750. Insurance – increase by £600 as overbudget 2023-24. Honours Boards – slight increase as current company has ceased trading. Legal Fees, Elections – maintain. Bank charges – Increased to £1000 to cover extra charges. Computer – Increase to £2000. Office – Maintain allocation of £20,000. Pat test – increase as includes Groundsman’s equipment. Finance Package - support fee for 2 users and £868 for closedown at year end £1400. Website - maintain at £600. General Events - maintain at £500.</p> <p>That the Administration budget is increased by £1565 to £42,000.</p>
<p>Cllrs Expenses and training</p> <p>Committee Recommendation</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Recommendation that the councillor expenses budget is maintained at £1075.</p>
<p>Salaries</p> <p>Committee Recommendation</p>	<p>The budget also includes provision for additional national insurance payments and increase in pension contributions. The training budget has been maintained at £1500 as a new member of staff is expected in 2024. Allocation of £500 to cover recruitment costs.</p> <p>Recommendation of the Staffing Committee that Staffing Budget is increased to £153,554 which includes an allocation to create a new position following the retirement of the PA to the Mayor and Clerk along with a recommended increase in hours for the Project and Finance Assistant to 15 hours per week. In addition to this, allocation has been included for performance related incremental increases for the Project and Finance Assistant and Groundsman and any Nationally agreed salary increases.</p>
<p>Contributions</p> <p>Christmas Switch on Event</p> <p>Christmas Lights</p>	<p>Larger Contribution Requests to be considered under agenda item 5. For indicative purposes these contributions have been maintained at 2023-24 levels. Millennium Green - £1700 Wem Youth Club - £2500 Whitchurch Road Cemetery - £2000</p> <p>Maintain at £3000.</p> <p>Reduce allocation to £10,000 with £5000 from earmarked reserves. This will cover cost of year 2 line replacement works £4000 + £4000 for annual installation and inspection costs leaving £2000 to upgrade plug points and brackets as required.</p>

Remembrance	Allocation maintained at £400.
Small Grants	Allocation maintained at £3500.
Town Promotion	Allocation maintained at £500.
Wem Economic Forum	Allocation reduced to £500 as earmarked reserves for WEF projects can be used.
Climate Change	Allocation reduced to £500 as more grants available for works.
Clerks notes	Reduce contributions budget to £22,6000.
Swimming Pool	Contribution request of £55,000 received and all other allocations remain the same. Allocation of £3000 in budget to build up sufficient funds to replace liner in 15 years time.
Clerks notes	Contribution Request to be considered under agenda item 5. For indicative purposes the Swimming Pool budget has been set at £67,300.
Msc Wem Town Hall	Year 3 of new service level agreement agreed November 2021 started 1.4.22. Allocation year 3 £16,000.
Market	Maintain at £1000 for the management of the outdoor market and development of markets generally.
Town Regeneration	New budget code for allocation towards town centre regeneration works including match funding for Heritage Action Zone projects Allocation £5341
Expenditure Budget	Proposed 2024-25 Expenditure budget £464,670
Income	
Clerks recommendation	The Finance Committee's recommendation in its minutes of 23.11.23 was that £24670 be allocated in the income budget for Cemetery, Allotments, Toilets, Administration codes as detailed in the minutes. However, on closer consideration it is the Clerk's recommendation that some of these figures are increased.
Bank Interest	Amount increased from £6000 recommended by committee to £11,000 to reflect increased interest rates.
Clerks recommendation	<i>Please note this is an increase of £5000 on the amount recommended by the finance committee on 23.11.23.</i>

Allotments	Maintained at £1800. Potential rent from tenants £1468, annual admin fee £285 allocation of £50 for waiting list fee.
Committee Recommendation	Allotment rents are maintained at £1800.
Burials	Increase to £15,000 to reflect increasing number of burials and increase in charges.
Clerks Recommendation	Cemetery income is increased to £15,000. <i>Please note this is an increase of £2000 on the amount recommended by the Finance Committee on 23.11.23.</i>
Toilet income	Maintain at £1,750.
Committee Recommendation	Budget maintained at £1750.
Gravedigging	Maintain at £2000 to balance gravedigging expenditure budget.
Story of Wem	£120 allocation maintained.
Markets	Market income is maintained at £3000.
Income Budget not including precept	£64,670.
Contribution from reserves	Column replacement £10,000 Christmas Lights year 2 £5000 New Climber Recreation Ground £15,000 (from neighbourhood fund) Total £30,000