

Notes to accompany 2023-24 Draft Budget

Introduction

The Amenities and Services Committee met to consider its budget codes on 13.12.22 (Appendix A contains a copy of the Amenities and Services Committee meeting minutes) and the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee met on 10.1.23 (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.

Amenities and Services Committee Recommendations

Item	2023-2024 Budget notes
EXPENDITURE	Amenities and Services and budget
Public Lighting	<p>Loan Slight reduction in loan charges</p> <p>Energy £6500 increase in electricity budget to £14,000 to reflect increasing energy prices. Unit rate has increased from 17.83 to an estimated rate of. 37.10 from 1.4.23</p> <p>Maintenance – remains the same</p> <p>Column replacement budget to be increased by £6000 to £15000 reflect cost of steel and need to replace all concrete lighting columns over the next 4 years.</p>
Committee Recommendation	That the Public Lighting Budget is increased by £12,400 to £39,900
Burial Ground	<p>Minimal increase to cover rates increase, bin emptying costs and general maintenance. £2000 allocation for gravedigging although this is offset by £2000 in income from gravedigging.</p> <p>Earmarked reserves to be used to fund extension costs</p> <p>Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery submitted request for indicative purposes this has been set at £2000</p>
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that the Burial Ground Budget is increased to £15,340 with £6440 being allocated from earmarked reserves.
Allotments	Slight increase in provision to allow increases in water and maintenance.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that the Allotments Budget is increased by £100 to £1200.
Recreation WSSA	Funding request received from WSSA is that funding is increased to £21,000.

Play Equipment	Maintain at same level as 2022/23 Total Budget £3600.
Repairs and Maintenance	Maintain at same level as 2022/23 Total Budget £5000.
Tree Works	Maintain at same level as 2022/23 Total Budget £2000.
Inspections	Maintain at same level as 2022/23 Total Budget £600.
Bin emptying	Increase by £100 to £1000
Skate Area	Maintain at same level as 2022/23 and that this is earmarked for replacement ramps Total Budget £2000.
Climate change Long Grass Project	Maintain at £500 to cover cost of hire of special mower if needed and removal of long grass.
Recreation Ground Toilet Block	Recommend an allocation of £5,500 to cover increases in cleaning costs and maintenance.
Railings	Recommend an allocation of £20,000 to cover cost of restoration of railings or replacement. This includes an allocation of £10,000 from reserves
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that the Recreation Budget is increased to £61,200 – (this includes £21,000 for WSSA but this is subject to decision made under agenda item 6) with an allocation of £10,000 from earmarked reserves.
Toilets	3 year toilet cleaning contract started 1.5.22. Increase budget by £500 to £1800 to reflect increases in utility costs.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that Public Toilets budget is increased to £13,100.
Bus Shelters	4 bus shelters, cleaned monthly with annual deep clean.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that Bus Shelters budget is increased to £1600.
Misc Floral Planters	Maintain
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that the floral planters budget is maintained at £5000.
CCTV	No change on 2022/23 budget. Total budget £5000.
Committee Recommendation	Recommendation that CCTV budget is maintained at £5000.

Finance and Corporate Governance Committee Recommendations

Item	2023-2024 Budget notes
EXPENDITURE	
Administration	<p>Postage and telephone. Current costs include Broadband £50/month £600/year Office telephone approx. £40/month £480/year 2 x mobile phones approx. £45/month £540/year Postage £200/year Budget increased to cover cost of implementing new phone system for the office, however some savings may be made from changes to the mobile phone contracts.</p> <p>Total telephone and broadband budget increased to £2000</p> <p>Memberships / Subs Current membership/subscriptions Institute of Cemetery Management £95 SALC £1992 (2023-24 subs) Smart Water £165 Society of Local Council Clerks £236 Parish Online £261 Health and Safety Services £620 Community resource £35 Rural Market Towns £85 Zoom £119</p> <p>Total Membership and subscription budget increased to £3600 however consideration must be given to the benefit of membership at time of renewal.</p> <p>Audit maintain at £1600 as External Audit will be £840, and the balance will cover the internal audit fee.</p> <p>Copier – costs are maintained as staff are attempting to reduce printing costs</p> <p>Chain of office - increased to £1000 as per agreement in November 2022 to allocate funds in the budget towards cost of replacement chains. Quotes for Chain/ribbon only and new boxes was in the region of £2500. This will increase if a new badge of office is required.</p> <p>Mayors Allowance – due to the significant reduction in Civic events this is reduced to £1000</p> <p>Bank charges – Increased to £700 to cover BACS charges and increased costs associated with contactless charges on toilets.</p>

<p>Clerks note</p> <p>Committee Recommendation</p>	<p>Computer – Maintain</p> <p>Townsmen Certificates – remove item as this is now carried out inhouse.</p> <p>Office – an allocation of £12,000 has been placed in the budget. However the lease on the office will now finish on 31.3.23 t, (confirmed 11.1.23) therefore this figure may now need to increase significantly.</p> <p>Pat test – increase as includes Groundsman’s equipment.</p> <p>Finance package £500 annual support fee for 2 users and £755 for closedown at year end.</p> <p>That the Administration budget is increased to £32,435</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>A national agreement on local government pay scales has not been agreed for 2023/24 therefore the Council is advised to budget for a 4% increase in salaries of staff on NJC contracts in 2023/24. In addition to this, 3 staff have incremental salary awards due.</p> <p>The budget also includes provision for additional national insurance payments and increase in pension contributions following the 3 year actuarial valuation.</p> <p>The training budget has been increased by £500 as a new member of staff is expected in early 2024.</p> <p>Recommendation that Staffing budget is increased by £14,527 to £135,754.</p>
<p>Contributions</p>	<p>Millennium Green £1700 request same as 2021/22.</p> <p>Wem Youth Club Current allocation £2000, Wem Youth Club has requested £2500</p> <p>Youth Services – An allocation of £6000 was made in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 budgets to provide support for youth projects following the withdrawal of funding to the Youth Club by Shropshire Council. Over the past 2 years these funds have not been required. The Clerk was also able to secure grant funding and use earmarked reserves for the Heads Up Project. Grant funding to support this Heads Up project was for one year however it is possible the use of earmarked reserves along with the underspend in the youth services grant will enable the project to continue on a term by term basis. Therefore subject to Town Council</p>

<p>Christmas Festival and Lights</p> <p>Christmas Lights</p> <p>Remembrance</p> <p>Small Grants</p> <p>Town Promotion</p> <p>Wem Economic Forum</p> <p>Climate Change</p> <p><i>Clerks notes</i></p>	<p>approval £6000 has been removed from the budget owing to more pressing financial concerns.</p> <p>Christmas Lights and Festival Group have submitted a request for £3000. This figure will be dependent on the decision made under agenda item 4 however for indicative purposes a figure of £1000 has been used in the budget.</p> <p>Subject to the decision made under agenda item 4, an allocation of £29000 is estimated and this figure is explained in the Christmas Lighting report.</p> <p>Allocation of £400 is maintained</p> <p>Allocation reduced to £3500 due to other pressures on the budget</p> <p>Allocation of £500 retained in current budget.</p> <p>Allocation reduced to £500 as earmarked reserves for WEF projects can be used.</p> <p>allocation reduced to £500 as more grants available for works</p> <p>No recommendation has been made on the contributions budget. However, for indicative purposes the draft budget figure has been increased by £14,527 Indicative amount £39,100</p> <p>Please note requests from groups applying for larger contributions is considered under agenda item 6 and subject to the decisions made under this agenda item this figure will change.</p>
<p>Swimming Pool</p> <p><i>Clerks notes</i></p>	<p>Contribution request of £55,000 received and all other allocations remain the same.</p> <p>An allocation of £36,000 has been made for the replacement liner works and this is to be funded from Bulmer Cottage Fund</p> <p>Contribution Request to be considered under agenda item 6. For indicative purposes the swimming pool budget has been increased to £100,300.</p>
<p>Msc Wem Town Hall</p> <p>Market</p> <p><i>Clerks notes</i></p>	<p>Year 2 of new service level agreement agreed November 2021 started 1.4.22. Allocation year 2 £18,000.</p> <p>New budget code to allocate expenditure of £1000 for the management of the outdoor market and development of markets generally.</p> <p>Recommend £1000 is allocated for management, development and promotion of the outdoor market</p>
<p>Expenditure Budget</p>	<p>Expenditure budget £470,504</p>

Income	
Interest	Amount increased £2450 to reflect increased interest rates.
Allotments Committee Recommendation	Maintained at £1800. Potential rent from tenants £1468, annual admin fee £285 allocation of £50 for waiting list fee Allotment rents are maintained at £1800.
Burials Committee Recommendation	Increase to £13,000 to reflect increasing number of burial and increase in charges. Cemetery income is increased to £13,000.
Toilet income Committee Recommendation	Maintain at £1,750. Budget maintained at £1750.
Gravedigging	Addition of £2000 to balance gravedigging expenditure budget.
Story of Wem	£120 allocation
Markets	Allocation of £3000 to cover rent from stall holders and fees for holding markets in and around Wem
Income Budget not including precept	£24,670 an increase of £7320 on 2022/23.
Contribution from reserves	Recreation Ground railings £10,000 Christmas lights £21,000 Pool Liner £36,000 Cemetery Extension £6440 Total £73,440