

Agenda Item: RF 42/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Resources and Finance Committee

Monday 29th November 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the Committee on V4 of the 2022/23 budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee notes the potential to use some of our reserves. to assist with erection/set up of the new Landscape depot site.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

I have submitted V.4 of our projected 2022/23 budget for next year. Some minor amendments have been made to V.3 submitted at the last Full Council meeting.

Our professional services have been uplifted from £3000 to £5600 to ensure we have incorporated our annual invoice for accounts and bookings package.

A 2% uplift has been added to our Cllr allowances, increasing from £15,500 to £15,763 (2% was increased on the amount of allowances and not expenses expected) therefore the amount of £13,114 increased £262 to £13,376. The same amount of additional budget has been left for any expenses incurred throughout the year (£2387).

A small uplift of £639 has been drafted onto our staffing budget to equate for any changes that have been forecasted for next year (regarding scale points) a piece of work that was carried out regarding job evaluations to ensure we had reflective pay points for officers' work/roles. Which will be shared at Full council at a later date.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This version of the budget does provide us with a smaller surplus than suggested on V3, reducing from £4,745 to £1,243.

Further work will be taking place before V5 is taken to committee for ratification in January some work is being done to internally start breaking down the Service plan budgets and overall service delivery budgets to ensure officers are aware of what their budgets look like specific to operational and service initiatives.

There is significant money that needs to be found to equip the new landscape depot, whilst the suggestion has been that we "capitalise" this over a period over maybe 5 years, this assists with cost assessment and not our budget. I have tasked the Landscape manager with providing a total cost breakdown for this work, which I

would prefer to see in the budget (because the money has to be deducted from somewhere.) this will potentially/probably impact on our reserves and we could now see a deficit budget forecasted for next financial year.

Once I have received the full cost breakdown, I will start assessing against this version of the budget to see where the landscape budget can be used, and to what extent and how much we will need to request from our reserves pot.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

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RFO

Agenda item: RF 43/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Resources and Finance Committee

Monday 29th November 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the meeting on responses received so far from the priorities survey.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees for full feedback from all areas to be reported to full council in our December meeting.**
- 3. and that the responses are considered in line with our budget setting process.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

We went live with our priorities survey on 09th November. Through new measures of engagement such as pushing the priorities survey through some of our projects such as community fridge and café, we have seen 19 responses so far.

We have seen 29 responses through the online survey. A current total of 48 responses so far in regard to priorities and precept.

We are still outstanding responses from Netherfield community fridge, although I have been in discussions with Cllr Maggie Ferguson on their efforts to collect responses on our behalf, I am expecting to receive their first set of responses later this week to include in December's piece of work regarding revising the budget for final ratification. I would like to thank Cllr Maggie Ferguson and Cllr Elina Apse who has also agreed to have copies of the priorities survey in her local business the Breadline on Beanhill, I look forward to collating responses from around the Parish in time for more in-depth review.

We will be formulating all responses prior to first draft of the service plan, for Full council in December so there can be full consideration and discussion based on what we would like to prioritise using the Service plan delivery allocated budget for, and ensure we are prioritising areas of high value as much as possible.

In a bid not to inundate people via the paper copies, we had suggested 3 key questions to ensure these were quick and easy for people to input into. I will be referring to the same three questions from the online survey to ensure feedback is relevant to this committee.

Firstly, we asked residents which of our services do you think are important? (this was a select 3 option, however some responses did tick 'all' and suggested that all listed were equally important).

Around about 50% of residents suggested that Events, Community Centres, Youth service and the Wellbeing and advice were important. Our highest response for importance of service was the community fridge with 77% of respondents selecting it. Landscaping, Environment and community support came in at circa 70%. The least selected service was Grant Aid with 43% however, these all rated quite high given the suggestion by 15% of our respondents that these were all equally important.

Q1. which of our services do you find important	Paper	Online	Total
Youth service	10	14	24
Wellbeing and advice	9	15	24
Grant Aid	9	12	21
Environment	11	23	34
Community Fridge	17	20	37
Events	13	15	28
Community support	13	20	33
community centres	8	15	23
Landscaping	11	21	32
other	1	2	3

Secondly, we asked, what would you like to see us provide more of in 2022/23?

CCTV currently is sitting at the top of the list with 75% of our residents suggesting they would like to see us provide more CCTV around the Parish. 41%-47% of people have voted for Events, youth, dog bins, waste bins, a market and more activities for older people. 29% of respondents suggested Christmas lights, and grit bins scored the lowest of the published options at 23%. We will review the thoughts and ideas of residents who selected and provided a response to the 'other' option during our review of all feedback ready for discussion in December's full council however this was the lowest ranked response (14%)

Q2. What would you like to see us provide?			
Waste bins	9	12	21
Dog bins	8	14	22
Events	11	9	20
Grit bins	6	5	11
CCTV	15	21	36
Support youth	11	9	20
Support Elder	11	12	23
Christmas lights	5	9	14
Market	7	14	21
Defibs	6	12	18
something else		7	7

Our final question was in response to our precept levels.

We had 94% of responses that answered the question regarding our 3% suggested precept rise, 73.6 % of respondents suggested this was 'about right' 21% stated it was 'too little' and we had no responses for 'too much' this is a positive response rate and the trend from responses would suggest that the projection we have recommended, is a fair one.

We will continue to review this and look at collating more responses moving into December whereby the full responses will be considered for comprehensive and considered discussion at Full Council to ensure that Service plan delivery and service budgets are accurate, fair and in line with guidance from our residents where possible.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Will help to formulate V5 of the budget which will be taken to Operations (no resources and finance in time) in January for formal ratification from Full Council at our January meeting.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

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Agenda item: RF 44/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Resources and Finance Committee

Monday 29th November 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on the Q2 VAT return.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Our Q2 VAT claim has been successfully submitted:

**Your claim has been
submitted**

Your submission reference is
1KUL-V8GY-715A

We have claimed a total of £8,917.94 this is more reminiscent of a typical VAT return for us, so we can estimate our spend is picking up again after the restrictive spend that occurred due to the limitations the Covid-19 pandemic put onto our delivery of some services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Awaiting receipt of £8,917.94.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

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Agenda item: RF 45/21

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Resources and Finance Committee

Monday 29th November 2021

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on proposed methods of payment.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the Committee notes the report**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to stop the acceptance of cheque payments from next financial year.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As the officer responsible for our overall process and procedure, especially in regard to Finance (specific to this committee) and after discussion with my team we would suggest we adopt a cash, transfer or card only payment policy.

Many organisations no longer accept cheque payments, this also becomes difficult to uphold our deposit policy, usually if someone pays a deposit via cheque it is not banked and held as a 'security' however if deductions need to take place because our Terms and conditions have been neglected this becomes more difficult as we usually try to return payment via the same method for auditing purposes. Refunding methods have become much easier through our new accounting system and it would seem as we are modernising our approaches that this is reflected in our payment options too.

We rarely receive cheques but when we do they need banking as soon as possible and while we try to keep to best practise for banking money, the more we are seeing an uplift and increase in bank transfer and card payments (which equates for a huge bulk of the payments we receive) it becomes less necessary to go as frequently as we are no longer holding high-volumes of cash.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

I don't believe we will see any implications to stopping cheque payments we receive them in a very small proportion compared to other means of spend, and if you have a cheque book it means you have a bank account so you will be able to provide cash, transfer or card payment in most if not all instances.

I would like to adopt this policy by 1st April 2022 to ensure we advertise this change and to request cash, card or transfer for deposits for any booking set to take place on or after, 1st April 2022.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None Perceived.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

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