

BSR-additional information required by the Liberal Democrat Group

RI 4870 p75 - Reduction in Toilet Admission Income

Please supply annual income targets for each set of public toilets across the city before and after this review. Why was lost income apparently not taken account of as a factor in last year's decision to close the Park Street and Arbury toilets?

Response:

Please see below table which details the budget position before and after budget proposal/revision.

Budget figures and actuals as at September 2021 (for the 2021/2022 setting). Proposed Budget as revised for 2022/2023

The budget targets for coin collection toilets have been long standing and not reviewed. Officers have noted a steady decline in usage pre pandemic which has resulted in budget targets not being met with regularity.

During the COVID 19 pandemic there was a revaluation of the toilet portfolio which resulted in approval to close toilets at Park Street, Arbury Court, Barnwell Road and Kings Hedges. This decision was made after budgets for 2021/22 had been set, hence could not account for income not being achieved in the budget year 2021/2022. The latter 3 toilets based on low usage, Park Street because of significant vandalism and funds required to repair when the project for the car park was imminent. This was therefore not deemed a good use of funds for short term use.

The proposed budget income for remaining coin box operating blocks are seen as realistic going forward and officers have considered income pre pandemic and accounted for the very low footfall in the lockdown period. In making the budget proposal figures to September 2021, point of review, have also been used to inform and account for factors such as less office workers, shoppers, tourists and less people carrying cash to access the facilities.

Toilet Location	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Original Budget *	2021/22 Actuals *	Proposed Budget 2022/23
Mill Road/Gwydir Street	(1,930)	(224)	(1,966)	(191)	1000
Park Street	(5,240)	(81)	(5,348)	(29)	0
Gonville Place/Parkers Piece	(4,640)	(2,074)	(4,734)	(1,279)	3000
Victoria Avenue	(1,010)	(721)	(1,030)	(468)	600
Arbury Court	(610)		(624)		0
Cherry Hinton Rec **	(580)		(593)		0
Chesterton Road	(2,500)	(362)	(2,549)	(247)	1400
Drummer Street	(15,250)	(4,350)	(15,554)	(2,188)	8000
Total Income Budget	(31,760)	(7,812)	(32,398)	(4,402)	14000

***figures to September 2021 only**

**** removed owing to toilet not having coin operation**

RI 4849 p75 - Lion Yard Ground Rent Income

Beyond “Covid and changing market conditions”, what feedback has been obtained from the long leaseholder on their refusal to share this investment with the council and what understanding has the council formed about the reasons?

Response:

The long lease of Lion Yard was entered into in 1976. The lease does not give the right for the Council to contribute to future capital works. However, by agreement with the long leaseholder (Barclays), the Council has previously contributed 25% of the cost of past capital investment in the centre by Barclays in exchange for maintaining its 25% net rent gearing. The Council had agreed to invest £6m in the centre as its 25% contribution to the capital cost of the proposed new development to maintain geared ground rent parity. However, Barclays subsequently advised that they wish to fund 100% themselves and the Council not contributing financially to the scheme as has happened previously as

they wish to see a higher return on their investment. The corresponding 2021/22 Lion Yard Capital budget of £6 million has therefore been released.

RI 4870 p76 - Reduction of Clay Farm Income

What was originally agreed about these developer contributions and what is the nature of the current dispute? What steps does the council now envisage to obtain the contributions? What impact is it having on the low utilisation of units in the Clay Farm Centre?

Response:

Nb: The S106 developer contributions being disputed relate the Trumpington Health Centre and not the vacant Clay Farm retail units.

Background

The Council entered into a S106 Agreement in 2010 which set out a “Health Centre Subsidy” contribution to be paid by the developer Countryside towards health service provision required, for a sum of up to £1.126m payable over 8 years. It was agreed with the Primary Care Trust that rather than the contribution being paid to the PCT the “subsidy” contribution would be retained by the Council as it was the landlord and used to subsidise the Health Centre rent for the first 8 years.

The S106 agreement set out certain lease terms to be adhered to by the Council when letting the Health Centre with a minimum 15 year lease term on commercial terms, i.e., rent. It also included provision that in the event that the health centre’s investment/commercial capital value exceeded a certain level, this would reduce the amount of subsidy that the developer should pay.

Upon completion of the Health Centre lease (March 2020) the S106 agreement required a “Health Centre Investment Surplus” to be calculated using a supplied formula in the S106 agreement to calculate if the “Health Centre Subsidy” of £1.126m was required to be paid in full.

The level of this subsidy is being disputed by Countryside, who are arguing that the basis of the Investment Surplus calculation (as applied

by the Council) is wrong and they should pay a lesser subsidy than calculated by the Council, due to the increased investment value of the health centre.

The rent and lease term agreed between the Council and the health centre tenant departed from those specified in the S106 agreement for the following reasons :-

- Property market has changed over the intervening period between the S106 agreement being agreed in 2010 and the lease being entered into in 2020 with Trumpington Medical Practice with lease terms shortened as a consequence.
- Reorganisation of UK Public Health Agencies led the lease being taken in the Partners names of the GP Practice, rather than NHS England, and they required a break provision in year 8.
- The market rent for the purposes of the Investment Surplus calculation is c. £135,000 p.a.
- The PCT agreed for the Council to retain the S106 Subsidy to subsidise the Health Centre rent, which in the lease was reserved at £40,000 p.a. with annual RPI increases until 2028

Countryside dispute these lease terms which negatively impacts on the investment value and in turn the potential “Health Centre Investment Surplus” which would be deducted from S106 contribution payable. They consider that the market rent of £135,000 p.a. should be used to calculate the Surplus as opposed to the actual rent of £40,000 p.a.

Legal advice from Counsel is supportive of the Councils position. Market conditions have changed, especially where changes in subsequent years of property management by the NHS now means the lease had to be entered into by the GP Practice Partners, and not NHS England as a corporate body.

Discussions are ongoing with Countryside to try and resolve without going through the formal dispute resolution mechanism.

Budget Bid Position

The £160,000 is a bid initiated by Community Services accountant as a financial adjustment to the Clay Farm Cost Centre to zero the budget line for the annual income expected from the “Subsidy” until such time as the legal position has been formally concluded with Countryside and

a final value agreed. The £160,000 is the difference between a legacy budget contribution of £200,000 p.a. (funded by the subsidy) and the rent actually received of £40,000 p.a. from the health centre.

X 4925 p92 - Arboricultural Planning Lead Post

The description provided does not adequately explain the item nor the rationale for it. Could these be provided?

Response:

The Council currently takes a strategic, 'urban forest' approach to managing the city's tree stock. The primary goal of this approach is to protect and enhance the multiple benefits to people and nature, that are derived from the urban forest. These benefits depend upon managing its health, distribution, composition, and structure.

The Arboricultural Planning service is currently delivered by an external arboricultural consultant – who primarily manages the City Council's Planning Authority obligations and responsibilities under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. The post's focus is on a small proportion of the urban forest that is either the subject of a development proposal, or in designated areas of special architectural or historic merit (conservation areas), or of high amenity value and protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

The proposal is to create a permanent Arboricultural Officer (Planning Lead) post to support and for the arboricultural planning service function to be retained within Streets and Open Spaces. The business case for this is that it enables the service to retain a powerful tool for influencing the urban forest, alongside management of the Council's own tree stock assets. By retaining this service within a single team, the Council is more likely to achieve its strategic objectives, and less likely to experience any adverse impacts from segregating an important function within a different service.

Whilst the arboricultural planning service would principally be a key responsibility of a dedicated team member, it would be supported by other existing members of the team (x3 officers) adding resilience to service provision.

X 4926 p92 - Asset Development Officer (Public Realm) Post

The description provided does not adequately explain the item nor the rationale for it. Could these be provided?

Response

The strategic development sites and associated assets to be transferred to the City Council have been monitored by the existing Open Space Officer (Growth), managed by the Major Projects & Performance Manager, to ensure that they are delivered (by the developer) as per the agreed planning drawings. As these new sites are adopted by the Council for daily public use and management, this inevitably leads to a range of operational management/ maintenance issues and risks, which the S&OS service needs to respond to.

The transition of adopted park and open space sites from developer to the City Council has been, up to this point, managed by the Open Space Officer (Growth). This post is fixed term in nature and previously funded from the New Homes Bonus. The funding for the Open Space Officer (Growth) is no longer achievable, using the New Homes Bonus; and the post is currently scheduled to finish as a fixed term position on the 31st March 2022.

Elements of the Open Space Officer (Growth) role will remain within the service beyond 31st March 2022 in relation to working with developers to achieve the design, development and adoption of high-quality open space infrastructure assets, including parks, recreation grounds, play areas and allotments. Many of the strategic development sites are advanced in their build schedules and the associated open spaces assets to be transferred are now either built or planned. Therefore, the number and frequency of design, development and adoption management needs is greatly reduced.

It is therefore proposed that a new Asset Development Officer – Public Realm (1 FTE) is added to the S&OS Assets team, to include the management of sites that remain subject to the adoption process, and to lead the integration and move to business as usual with the operational management/ maintenance of all S106 adopted sites.

The new Asset Development Officer – Public Realm post will be 100% funded using S106 contributions collected from developers with the

purpose of paying for long term care and maintenance of sites adopted by the Council. The new post will also have an element of giving professional advice to both planning and developers and it is expected that this advice will be recovered using Pre-Planning Application Service Level Agreements.

X 4927 p92 - Skilled Operative (Public Realm) Post

The description provided does not adequately explain the item nor the rationale for it. Could these be provided?

Response

The S&OS Skilled Operative (Public Realm) post (x2 FTE) was created in the service restructure of 2015. The two posts are line managed by the Asset Management and Projects Officer post within the Assets Team. Their current service tasks include:

- Play area inspections
- Public convenience repairs
- Sluice gate operation (river height control)
- Litter bin installation
- Bench installation
- Bin and bench base construction
- Bus shelter inspections and repairs
- Street Name Plate repairs and installation
- Fence repairs
- Play area equipment and surface repairs (including bark top up)
- Footway inspections and repairs
- Allotment clearance and cultivation
- Signage installation
- Emergency Call Out (24 hours)
- Welding (resource used by other in-house service areas)
- General repairs to public realm assets

The number of open spaces sites managed by S&OS (from 88 to 126 sites) has put additional resource demands and requirements upon the current Skilled Operative service team. As an example, the newly adopted sites include 47 additional play areas, which require a monthly inspection which typically takes 0.75 hours per site inspection. This

additional service demand alone, equates to an additional 35.25 hours per calendar month.

The introduction of play inspections using the Alloy software is intended to allow efficient route inspections, record them electronically and raise subsequent jobs whilst on site. This is a business transformation change to the service's current working practice and it is estimated to reduce the inspection times, however, the technology is yet to be fully rolled out in a live state, and therefore an accurate estimation has not been able to be calculated. Instead, it is estimated that routing and online report will save 6 hours per month from play inspections.

The Skilled Operative team is also currently having to spend a significant amount of time (up to 30 hours per week on occasions) dealing with public toilet repairs. The service reviews in 2015/16 and 2017/18 did not forecast this level of service requirement. The often urgent and emergency nature of this service has therefore impacted on the Skilled Operatives' ability to fulfil the full range of service tasks, including undertaking planned and cyclical maintenance and associated public liability risk mitigation.

Although all the above duties will remain in some form with the Skilled Operative team, it is anticipated that an additional 1 FTE is required to enable the team to respond to the service demands from the increased number of open space asset to be managed. Given the direct link between the additional park and open space assets the Skilled Operative team is responsible for, arising from the strategic development site adoptions, the proposal is to create an additional Skilled Operative (1 FTE) to be 100% funded from S106 contributions previously collected from developers with the purpose of paying for long term care and maintenance.

The additional 1 FTE will also allow for greater planned and cyclical maintenance (including inspections) of S&OS service assets, with the beneficial impact of potentially reducing costs of maintenance of areas including public conveniences, bus shelters, footways, fencing, litter bins and benches; and ensuring assets are maintained in good order and associated public liability risks are minimised.

CAP 4903 p96 - Office Accommodation

What specific changes are envisaged under this item to enable it to be costed? Savings of what category of spending? Capital receipts from the

release and sale of which buildings? Freeing up space in which buildings for commercial use? What is the emerging vision in relation to specific current buildings and uses?

Response

Schemes have not been finalised or all identified but changes envisaged could for example be building alterations, new equipment or furniture, and additional audio visual equipment to enable and support hybrid meetings and ongoing flexible working. The hybrid working model reduces the amount of office space required. The Our Cambridge transformation programme may reduce space requirements but also changes to how the Council works requiring some of the changes set out above.

Reducing space may reduce operational costs (for eg, utilities/facilities management/cleaning) as well as possibly creating income generation opportunities in short and longer term. Some of these may be achievable in the short term but require expenditure for building works for example to create separate lettable areas or refurbishment of part. The Council will be sharing some space with partners at Mandela House and there may be opportunity for commercial letting of part of the Guildhall.

Moving out of Covid and the Our Cambridge programme will identify and inform how we will work in future and property requirements. Given the significantly reduced office demand due to new ways of working, it is likely that this will identify surplus property that can generate capital and/or revenue receipts. As we move through the our Cambridge Programme and identify future needs, the longer term property strategy will be developed and reported to members. Officers will look to identify short term meanwhile uses for beneficial use of underutilised buildings as we come out of Covid restrictions.

CAP 4988 and CAP 4989 p97 - Sustainable Warm Home Upgrade Grants

What are the terms and conditions of receipt of these funds by the council and for their allocation onwards to households? What steps are envisaged to promote the opportunity to potential recipients and support them in making choices and getting work undertaken to enable full use of the funding before it expires?

Cambridge City Council has been allocated the Sustainable Warmth funding upfront and we are managing that pot of funding on behalf of all the authorities involved, with admin costs from the fund paying for that resource. Each district authority has put forward proposals as part of the bid in terms of what work they feel could be delivered in their area. It is then up to the district authority to work, with the framework contractors, to jointly identify, market, and engage with households who could benefit from the funding. As a district authority we would utilise local knowledge, data and referral routes to get the awareness of the funding to residents, while also conducting targeted and more blanket promotional activity to identify potential beneficiaries.

The local authority resource that would be used to manage this fund, and undertake the engagement work, is off set through an administration budget from the grant award, and this also includes funding to cover the costs of producing material, posters, and other items. The local authority role also extends to supporting the resident at every stage, where required, to the extent of “hand holding” through the scheme if necessary. Post installation the scheme would ensure residents are fully aware of how to best utilise any improvements installed, and we would ensure we maximise our intervention by cross referring into other schemes or areas of support where possible. Including things like water efficiency, wider support etc.

In respects to question 2, around promotion, in the bid we said:

“All households targeted will be under £30,000 household income. To verify household eligibility, we will adopt the same principles used in our ECO LA flex process where we will target residents on means tested benefits and require evidence of qualifying benefits as eligibility for this scheme. Where a household is not in receipt of benefits, we will verify household income to ensure all households are under the £30,000 income threshold.

Targeting households is key to ensuring successful delivery therefore working with partners we will utilise any tools they can provide, for example ThermCert, and cross reference this with our own deprivation data and any information through our benefits teams. We have already carried out analysis of registered EPC data and have utilised this to identify 1 % of E, F and G rated properties to target across Cambridgeshire. This has also identified target areas to commence our engagement activity. We will support our activity with a marketing and promotional activity to areas of higher deprivation and undertake door to

door approaches to reinforce engagement to secure uptake. This work would be carried out in partnership between the local authorities and the appointed contractors.”

Attached separately is a copy of the bid that outlines in detail what we are delivering and how. It also forms part of the contract with BEIS, and is what we have been evaluated against to be awarded the funding.

Ends