

Responsible Financial Officer Reports (9 – 12)**9. RFO Report** - (for information – financial update)

Bank balances - as at 31 August 2022 are as follows:

HSBC	139,578.68
Lloyds Debit card	2,033.22
Cornwall Council deposit	447,993.28
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£589,605.18</u>

Precept

The second instalment of the precept and Council Tax Support Grant totalling £240,944.90 were received on 6 September, with surplus balances transferred to the Cornwall Council deposit to maximise returns in the short term.

Cattle Market Makers Financial Update

Variations have now been received for both the ERDF and ESF grants. The main changes include an extension of the dates, with practical completion (activity completed and all outputs achieved) now due by 31/03/23, financial completion (eligible costs paid and defrayed and financial claim submitted) by 30/04/23 and the final evaluation report required 6 months after receiving the final claim payment. In addition, the ERDF grant has been varied to remove the workspace purchase and installation, and fab lab equipment, reducing the total project cost from £870,539.09 to £88,442.53. The intervention rate has been standardised at 72% for both the small capital and revenue elements remaining giving a maximum ERDF grant of £63,678.62 with the balance match funded by Cornwall Council and £1,000 from the Town Council.

Following receipt of the variations, the ESF claim for the period 1 January – 31 March 2022 has now been paid, with the ERDF claim still outstanding. It is anticipated that we can now submit a double claim covering two quarters from 1 April to 30 September 2022. The 90% upfront match funding for the ERDF project has also been requested on the revised figures, with payment previously on hold awaiting finalisation of the maximum grant.

Notification has now been received of all final invoices related to the ineligible expenses incurred by the Town Council as a result of the workspace purchase and installation not proceeding. The total costs are:

VAT advice	3,000.00
Legal advice	1,444.80
Planning fees	281.23
Open tender & contract management	15,040.44
TOTAL	£19,766.47

The project administrator has resigned and will be leaving at the end of September. Before recruiting to fill the vacancy a review will be carried out on spend to date against available grant and delivery of target outcomes to date, and advice requested from CLLD.

Office Update

The Accounts Clerk's operation has been successful, and although initially signed off for 6 weeks is able to return on a phased basis beginning 21 September. This time will be used to focus on the accounts, with other tasks continuing to be undertaken by other members of the team.

10. Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - To receive and accept a budget report to 30 July 2022 for monitoring purposes.

Attachment: 10. Budget Monitoring to 31 July 2022

On target spend should now be at 33.3%

The following points should be noted:

- Salaries (4000) the NJC rates for 2022/23 have not yet been confirmed – agreement is expected by October. Based on the final offer made, increases are likely to be greater than the 2.75% budgeted (4.86 – 10.4% dependent upon the spinal column point), this will have a knock-on effect on employer NI and pension costs. Backpay will need to be paid once the rates are agreed.
- PAYE & NI (4010) and Pension (4020) lines include only three month's expenditure – 25% as this is paid a month behind until year end. Pensions also includes payment of the annual lump sum contribution of £6,100.
- Bank Charges (4130) have increased with HSBC, and these are being monitored and reviewed.
- Insurance (4200) the 3 year rate stability agreement expires on 1 November 2022. The RFO and Facilities Manager met with the broker on 7 September to review. Our existing provider RSA is not offering terms for renewal, having moved out of the local council and large scheme sector. The brokers are recommending Aviva, who offer robust definitions on cover, and we are awaiting a full quote, but have been advised that insurance costs in the local council sector have increased generally, after many years of small increases. The new provider may impose new conditions.
- Office Supplies (4250) paper costs have increased significantly, and photocopy/print volumes are increasing – this budget line is likely to overspend.

Recommendation: to note and approve the budget monitoring report

11. Schedule of Payments - To receive and approve the schedule of payments.

Attachment: 11. Schedule of Payments

Recommendation: to approve the schedule of payments

12. Quoracy – Planning Committee meetings – Standing Orders (3.v.i) – To extend the Planning Committee’s use of a quoracy of 4 committee members.

Committees usually require half their members plus one to be present for the meeting to be quorate. Planning committee currently has 9 members, which would require 5 present to be quorate. On 29 March 2022, Council agreed a reduction to 4 for a temporary period following cancellation of two meetings at short notice due to lack of quoracy (at the time the committee had 10 members and quoracy was 6 – reducing to 9 with effect from the 8 August meeting).

*454 / 21 **QUORACY – PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS – STANDING ORDERS (3.v.i)** – Following consideration and discussion of the issue Councillor Smith proposed, Councillor Pascoe seconded and the Council **RESOLVED** to permit the Planning Committee Quoracy figure to be 4 for a period of 6 months and to ask Councillors to undertake planning training.*

CALC have recently announced new forthcoming planning training, and Councillor Goldsworthy has enrolled for training on 2 November 2022 with a view to being a possible substitute for the committee (this would require apologies to be received in good time for the substitute to receive notice and prepare).

Since the resolution attendance levels have been: 4 April – 6; 25 April – 7; 16 May – 6; 13 June – 5; 11 July – 4; 8 August – 5; 5 September – 6, giving two occasions when the meeting would not have proceeded without the reduced quoracy. In May the committee began a trial of meeting 4 weekly rather than 3 weekly, and this has been successful. While there are now an increased number of plans on the agenda, the committee has met required timescales for responding to applications and the longest meeting duration has been one and a half hours (19 applications and an agent presentation).

Quoracy continues to be a concern, with sickness levels remaining high leading to short notice apologies. In the current civic year 3 members have attended all four meetings, two members have been unable to attend at all, and the remainder have attended one or two meetings.

Recommendation: that an extension of a further six months is approved for the reduced quoracy of four.