

Responsible Financial Officer Reports (9-13)**9. RFO Report** - (for information – bank balances, local government pay award, internal audit, VAT advice)

Bank balances - as at 31 October 2023 are as follows:

HSBC	114,319.91
Lloyds Debit card	705.63
Cornwall Council deposit	346,112.52
HSBC Money Market Deposit	375,000.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£836,138.06</u>

Local Government Pay Award

We received notification on 6 November 2023 that the local government pay award had finally been approved at a flat rate of £1,925 (as per 2022/23) which equates to an extra £1 per hour. All back pay will be processed in November payroll totalling approx. £15,400 including oncosts and the new rates implemented. Dependant on pay scale point the increases range between 4.6% and 9.4% and will therefore impact more on those budgets with more staff on the lower pay points.

Internal Audit

The internal auditor will be carrying out an in person interim visit on Thursday 23 November. His report will be presented at the next Council meeting.

VAT Advice

The Parkinson Partnership have been instructed and are aware of the timetable for our budget setting process.

Grant payments received

We have received a remittance advice for payment of the Guildhall grant of £24,999 from the Community Capacity Fund on 23/11/23. Under the terms of the grant offer letter there is six months to spend the money from date of receipt, unless otherwise agreed (condition 6). A full audit trail of expenditure must be provided.

10. Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – To receive and accept a budget report to **31 October 2023** for monitoring purposes (*please note date has been updated from the agenda*)
Attachment: 10. Budget Monitoring to 31 October 2023

On target spend should now be at 58.33%

The following points should be noted on the Administration (101) budget (other budgets monitored within the relevant committees):

- Staff Salary (4000) the 2023/24 pay award not yet reflected
- PAYE & NI (4010) and Pension (4020) lines show only six month's expenditure (50%) as this is paid a month behind until year end. The annual lump sum (secondary) pension contribution of £4,900 was paid in May. Pay award not yet reflected. NB – within the Facilities budget reclaim of statutory maternity pay has been made against employer NI payments which has put this budget line into credit.
- Professional Fees (4160) will be fully committed at year end with the costs of VAT advice and updated building reinstatement values
- Sports Pitch Working Party (4380) all expenditure is to be reclaimed from s106 monies held by Cornwall Council and the income is shown in the Grants and Donations Received (1100)

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. Budget Setting 2024 – 2025 – To consider the draft budgets from the committees

Attachments: 12i. Admin Draft Budget 2024/25, 12ii. C&E Draft Budget 2024/25, 12iii. Facilities Draft Budget 2024/25, 12iv. Budget Summary, 12v. General Reserve Commitments

The net budgets submitted by the committees are as follows:

Committee	Net Budget
Administration	243,303
Communications & Engagement	101,170
Facilities	360,706
Total / Precept Requirement	705,179

Reserves

The general reserve currently stands at £337,415 with commitments of £49,858 which would reduce the balance to £287,557 which is below the level considered appropriate in the Reserves policy and therefore it is not recommended this is used to support proposed budget expenditure.

A General Reserve covering 6 months revenue expenditure (approx. £330,000 in 2023/2024) is considered appropriate for Liskeard Town Council.

Unallocated earmarked reserves remain on the Facilities large property reserve £34,359 and Parks & Open Spaces reserve £42,000 which could be used towards some of the projects proposed.

In February 2023 Council considered a new proposal for budget options which suggested:

- Option 1 – total budgets as proposed by the committees
- Option 2 – maximum use of unallocated reserves
- Option 3 – current budget plus 5% (this will require reductions in the proposed budgets by reducing services or delaying projects)

This would result in the following:

Option	Precept Required	Band D amount	Band D % increase	Band D £ increase pa	Band D £ increase pm
1	705,179	£198.54	35.32%	£51.82	£4.32
2	650,820	£183.23	24.88%	£36.51	£3.04
3	562,515	£158.37	7.94%	£11.65	£0.97
2023/24	509,853	£146.72			

The tax base has increased this year by 2.21% generating an additional £11,283 of precept income without increasing the charge to householders. In addition, following consultation earlier in the year the Council gained support for a £15,000 increase (2.88%) in precept to fund Christmas lights.

Liskeard continues to have one of the lowest band D rates of the larger towns in Cornwall.

Large Town Council Tax and Precept levels 2022/23

Town	% increase	Amount of increase £	Band D rate	Total Council Tax	Total Precept	% of Council Tax
Falmouth	11.93	45.09	423.06	2,487.41	3,276,355	17.01
Bodmin	3.73	11.79	327.81	2,392.16	1,622,158	13.70
Truro	16.33	44.98	320.38	2,384.73	2,382,665	13.43
Penzance	21.74	53.55	299.86	2,364.21	2,150,252	12.68
Camelford	8.92	23.57	287.95	2,352.30	316,759	12.24
Launceston	0.02	0.05	274.09	2,338.44	879,251	11.72
Wadebridge	8.31	19.28	251.21	2,315.56	631,562	10.85
Bude-Stratton	0.00	0.00	248.28	2,312.63	992,356	10.74
Callington	2.30	5.52	245.70	2,310.05	504,666	10.64
Hayle	8.47	18.77	240.24	2,304.59	756,339	10.42
Saltash	3.66	8.38	237.16	2,301.51	1,307,753	10.30
Newquay	5.00	11.29	237.07	2,301.42	2,038,810	10.30
Redruth	0.00	0.00	233.00	2,297.35	1,045,261	10.14

Town	% increase	Amount of increase £	Band D rate	Total Council Tax	Total Precept	% of Council Tax
Lostwithiel	3.00	6.32	216.77	2,281.12	247,175	9.50
Camborne	-1.44	-3.08	210.41	2,274.76	1,349,956	9.25
St Ives	23.69	40.20	209.94	2,274.29	1,067,182	9.23
Looe	5.00	9.89	207.60	2,271.95	461,590	9.14
Helston	22.98	37.92	202.96	2,267.31	746,350	8.95
Torpoint	9.61	15.47	176.49	2,240.84	417,739	7.88
St Austell Town	15.90	22.55	164.36	2,228.71	1,067,220	7.37
<i>Cornwall average</i>	<i>8.14</i>	<i>11.82</i>	<i>157.04</i>	<i>2,221.39</i>		<i>7.07</i>
Liskeard	4.00	5.64	146.72	2,211.07	509,853	6.64
St Agnes	8.81	11.31	139.63	2,203.98	458,500	6.34
Penryn	-0.91	-1.24	134.96	2,199.31	313,450	6.14

Cornwall currently has the highest average band D rate nationally.

While band D is the required comparison, almost 80% of Liskeard households are in bands A to C.

Liskeard Council Tax band breakdown

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Band Total
1,055	1,839	1,296	698	290	74	16	0	5,268

Recommendation: to broadly agree the option to take forward and direct committees to review their budgets accordingly

13. Broadband at Forester Hall – To approve a new contract for supply of the service at Foresters Hall

The existing contract has expired. Quotes have been obtained for the service as follows:

Contractor	Monthly Cost	Set up costs	Term of contract	Speed
Contractor A Cornwall	£36.50 (inc fixed IP)	Nil	2 years	Full Fibre Broadband 160mbps
Contractor B Cornwall	£48.45 (inc fixed IP)	£420	1 year	FTTP 330/50 – 330Mbps Down and 50Mbps Up “Best Speed” 330/50 “Worst Speed” 165/25
Contractor C Rochdale	£35 Fixed IP?	£25	18 months	Full Fibre 100 mbps typical download (minimum gtd 50 mbps) 18 mbps typical upload

	£40	£25	18 months	300 mbps typical download (minimum gtd 150 mbps) 47 mbps typical upload
Existing Provider	£65.21	Have not responded to request for new pricing		

Current speed tests on the TIC computer show downloads at 75 mbps and uploads at 21 mpbs. For comparisom, speed tests in the office show downloads speeds at 110 – 124 mbps and uploads at 112 – 133 mbps.

Recommendation: to approve Contractor A as the new broadband provider at Foresters Hall