



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 17 AUGUST 2022
Report Number	Agenda Item 9
Subject	NEW COUNCIL INITIATIVES FUNDING ALLOCATIONS
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To approve some initial allocations of funding towards the initiatives that support the emerging Council priorities as set out at the Cabinet meeting in July 2022 and agree appropriate delegations to implement new initiatives.
Annexes	
Recommendation/s	It is recommended that Cabinet: <i>a) Confirms its approach to allocating funds from the new reserve approved by Council in July 2022 and any delegated arrangements;</i> <i>b) Approves an allocation of £75,000 from the reserve for the purchase of the two electric sweepers in 2022/23;</i> <i>c) Asks officers to investigate a longer term plan to decarbonise the vehicle fleet used by the Council and its partners and report back later in the year;</i>
Corporate priorities	Taking urgent action to address the climate and ecological crisis by working in partnership with others
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** At the Cabinet meeting of 13 July 22 Cabinet recommended to Council the establishment of a New Initiatives Funding Reserve financed from underspends and unutilised earmarked reserves. This funding allocation was approved by Full Council on 20 July 2022 and consequently this funding is now available for Cabinet to consider and approve allocations from.
- 1.2.** At the same Cabinet meeting a report was approved setting out the emerging priorities of the new administration and confirming a process to undertake a programme of public engagement on these priorities leading up to a formal adoption of a revised plan in the autumn.
- 1.3.** The emerging priorities are set out below and should guide the allocation of resources from the New Initiatives Fund pending a formal adoption of a new Council Plan.
 - Leading efforts and working with others to protect, restore and enhance the quality of West Oxfordshire's natural and built environment.
 - Taking urgent action to address the climate and ecological crisis by working in partnership with others.
 - We will tackle inequalities by providing opportunities to everyone in West Oxfordshire to achieve their full potential.
 - Supporting businesses to ensure great opportunities for residents through a vibrant local economy and its services.
 - We will enable everyone to lead healthy and fulfilling lives in thriving communities.
 - We will help everyone live in a house that meets their needs.
 - Operate with a culture of openness, giving you a voice, choice, priority and access.
 - Securing your Council's financial future to deliver on priorities and continuously improve your services.
 - We will work in partnership to influence and deliver more effective results for your communities.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.** Pending the adoption of the formal Council Plan the emerging priorities should steer any decisions made to allocate new initiatives funding in the short term. Understandably there is a desire from the new administration to ensure decisions made in the short term do not conflict with these priorities and therefore this report sets out a framework for decisions to be made and puts forward an initial funding request for consideration.

- 2.2. It is a decision for Cabinet to determine its approach to decision making in respect of this new reserve. Cabinet could retain full decision making control over the reserve or they could allocate funds by priority area and delegate decisions making to officers in consultation with cabinet members or indeed to cabinet members via formal decision making meetings.
- 2.3. At this stage officers propose that any funding decisions are retained by Cabinet although Cabinet may wish to consider a limited delegation to officers in consultation with cabinet members to a limited budget amount.

3. INITIAL FUNDING REQUEST – ELECTRIC STREET SWEEPERS

- 3.1. The Council published its Carbon Action Plan in October 2020 as a pathway to achieving its 2030 carbon-neutral commitment. Included within this “Priorities for Action” under “Vehicle fleet, machinery and transport” include:

“Work in partnership with UBICO to produce and present a Green Vehicle Fleet Transition Plan for the electrification of vehicle fleet over the course of a carbon-neutral trajectory. A transition plan would need to include details of the current lifetime of vehicles within the Council’s fleet and also reflect need as determined by decisions taken following an options appraisal.

- 3.2. Whilst work continues on a full transition plan which can be considered later in the year there is a more urgent decision to be made in respect of two end of life sweepers which need a procurement decision imminently.
- 3.3. It is proposed that the two current diesel combustion sweepers which are used for cleansing in Chipping Norton and Woodstock and which are at the end of their life and needing replacement, should be replaced with two electric sweepers and an additional capital budget of up to £75,000 should be provided to enable this purchase.
- 3.4. The £75,000 would be on top of the £150,000 (£75,000 each) already budgeted for within the fleet replacement plan. Replacing them with electric equivalents would not only benefit in a reduction in carbon emissions, but would also help to improve air quality in Chipping Norton and Woodstock.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council approved the allocation of £750,000 of funding for new initiatives that meet the emerging Council Priorities. If Cabinet approve the request within this report a balance of £675,000 will remain for future allocation.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

The risks associated with not replacing the current sweepers are higher repair costs and increased downtime leading to a poorer service being provided.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

None associated with this report.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The Council is committed to reducing the carbon produced associated with the services it provides and so this acquisition will contribute towards supporting that pledge.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As alternative options, the Council could choose to:

- Continue using the current sweepers, accepting that they are at end of life and so use older engine technology with higher emissions and are prone to increased breakdowns and higher repair costs.
- Replace the current sweepers with diesel combustion versions (like for like), which whilst having the latest engine technology, being more efficient and fitting within the capital budget provision for 2022-23, will still generate carbon emissions.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None