WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**EXECUTIVE - 15 JULY 2026**
Subject	**ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR LIFT REPLACEMENT AT MARRIOTTS WALK**
Wards affected	Witney Central
Accountable member	Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Jasmine McWilliams, Head of Assets Email: jasmine.mcwilliams@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To request approval of the allocation of part of the building maintenance earmarked reserves for the replacement of the lifts at Marriotts Walk, Witney
Annexes	Exempt Annex A
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Recommend to Council to allocate funding from earmarked reserves to replace the lifts at Marriotts Walk 2. Delegate authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to approve the final cost of works and use of contingency up to the full amount detailed at Annex A.
Corporate priorities	Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	EXEMPT ANNEX A

Consultees/ Consultation	Director of Finance, Executive Member for Finance, Head of Finance, Managing Director, Publica, Site Asset Management Consultants, Site Managing Agents.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The lifts at Marriotts Walk are approaching end of life as they were installed in 2009 on the construction of the centre. This report recommends that the lifts are all replaced as part of the same contract and that the Council allocates funding from existing building maintenance earmarked reserves to cover the cost in the sum detailed at Annex A with a 10% contingency.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council acquired the headlease of Marriotts Walk shopping centre in January 2023 and with it the rental income from the retail and other tenants. As the landlord the Council is responsible for the structural and external maintenance together with the health & safety compliance of the centre.

2.2 Marriotts Walk was purchased by the Council to regenerate it after years of neglect from an absentee landlord. The focus since purchase has been to revitalise the centre, to let void units and to use the scheme to support a vibrant High Street in Witney and serve the whole District. It has taken over 3 years, but the centre is now almost fully let with the last available unit in advanced lease negotiations. Many of the existing tenants have renewed their leases due to the positive impact they have seen from having a supportive landlord committed to the scheme's success. The lift replacement work would further the regeneration of the centre along with the markets, events and public realm improvements planned.

3. LIFTS AT MARRIOTTS WALK

3.1 The centre was constructed in 2009, and the lifts were installed to standards and regulations BSEN81-1 which were applicable at that time. There have been no upgrades for the equipment or significant improvement since the original installation over and above maintenance and repair and annual safety assessment by the Council's insurers.

3.2 The Council's lift consultant advises that the lifts are approaching end of life and has carried out a condition survey. It is advised that the standards under which the lifts had been installed have been superseded, resulting in a number of recommended improvements should the lifts not be replaced in the short to medium term.

3.3 The lift consultant does not recommend attendance to short term improvements in isolation as they consider the lifts to have reached the end of their useful economic life due to age, current condition and major obsolescence.

3.4 Any investment in part replacement or major overhaul items now would be redundant and not cost effective as the recommendation is to replace all 3 lifts.

4. SERVICE CHARGE

4.1 The Council as Landlord of Marriotts Walk is responsible for maintenance, repair, servicing and compliance of common and public areas at Marriotts Walk. This work is carried out by the Council's Managing Agent on a service charge basis under the RICS Professional Standard: Service Charges in Commercial Property.

4.2 Some costs of the centre are Landlord's costs only, but the main service charge cost is paid by the retail and other tenants on a calculated shared basis as part of the lease terms.

4.3 The service charge burden on the tenants at Marriotts Walk is high compared to other retail schemes as the tenants are responsible for the costs of the multi-storey decked car park maintenance and compliance, being a cost that is usually funded from car parking fees in almost all other areas of the country.

4.4 Under the RICS Professional Standard: Service Charges in Commercial Property the Landlord must recharge works to the tenants in the year in which they are undertaken. The significant cost of replacing the lifts would put an untenable financial burden on most of the retailers in the scheme as the lift work would increase their already high service charge by 40% in year. Burdening the retailers with an excessive service charge for the lift replacement would set back the progress already achieved, pushing some tenants into financial unsustainability.

4.5 The centre contributes to the Council's income which funds services for residents. In 2025/2026 Marriotts made a net contribution to the Council's finances of £454,890.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 The option of planning lift replacements on a one per year basis was discounted as this would take the last lift past end of life and increase the cost of the scheme overall and ongoing maintenance and part replacement costs.

5.2 The cost of the lift replacement could be recharged to the tenants in one year (the year the project commences) and the balancing charge sit as arrears on the tenants account and be paid on an agreed payment plan. Ordinarily the payment plan would be 3-5 years however this would be subject to the value of the project, the lease term and the tenants' financial ability to meet the payments due under the proposed payment plan. This option would put a high financial burden on the tenants, may increase vacation of the units in the case of small and medium enterprise tenants and is unlikely to recover the full cost of the lift replacement.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The capital cost of the lift works, as detailed in Annex A, would be funded from the building maintenance earmarked reserves identified by the Head of Finance and would result in an annual charge to the revenue account of £29,411 based on an estimated 17-year useful life.

6.2 The Council's contractual liability as Landlord for the lift replacement is £150,000. If the lift replacement is funded through earmarked reserves, it will have no impact on the revenue account.

6.3 For information the condition survey and previous maintenance of the lifts since construction have been payable by the tenants under the service charge.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no legal implications because of the decision to allocate the funding. Legal input would be required decision in respect of contractor terms and conditions after tendering of the works.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 The main risk is failure of one or all the lifts which would restrict public and resident access and have potential health & safety implications. The recommended option mitigates this risk through the replacement of all lifts in 2026.

8.2 The specification of the lift replacement is currently being progressed to facilitate the tendering process.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 No equalities impacts are envisaged because of this decision

10. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The report has met the SIA exemption criteria and therefore a SIA has not been included.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.