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## Policy and Finance Committee

**Date:** 23 January 2023

**Title:** Facilities Improvements

### Purpose of the Report:

To seek Member endorsement to draw down from the facilities improvements earmarked reserve for the purposes of carrying out two recommendations as identified within the disability access audit report the town council commissioned namely hearing loops and tactile signage at Astral Park.

### Contact Officers:

Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk

Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

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<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	LLTC Five Year Plan – To ensure value for money and operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin current and future service delivery by the Town Council. This work will be primarily within the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee.	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Financial</b>	Yes	Within available earmarked reserve funds as set out in the report.
<b>Human Resources</b>	No	
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	Yes	To ensure the council can operate effectively.
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	No	
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	Yes	To ensure town council assets are maintained at an acceptable standard that is fit for purpose.
<b>Environmental Aims</b>	Yes	That town council environmental objectives are met when undertaking facility improvements.

## **1 RECOMMENDATION**

Should the Committee be minded, the proposal is:

- 1.1 To approve expenditure up to a maximum of £20,000 from the Facilities Improvements earmarked reserve (£82,646 available) for the purposes of delivering recommended improvement works as identified within the disability access audit report.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In accordance with the resolution made by the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, a disability access audit was commissioned and thereafter undertaken in December 2021. Its purpose to offer up reasonable adjustments that could be made to town council run and occupied buildings. The report identified a considerable number of recommendations across all buildings, including for example improved signage, introduction of induction loops, adjusting door closers, the widening of footpaths and tactile paving.
- 2.2 The Grounds and Environmental Services Team has taken ownership of the report and its recommendations. The recommendations have been identified as those tasks that can be undertaken in-house and those requiring greater expertise given their complexity (see appendix A).
- 2.3 As part of the on-going management of town council assets, the town council has commissioned a ten-year planned maintenance programme. It is anticipated that those tasks identified within the accessibility audit as requiring greater expertise given their complexity will form part of the future planned maintenance programme. For most of the tasks, it is likely that a specification will be required and estimates sought in accordance with financial regulations.

## **3 PROPOSED EXPENDITURE**

- 3.1 As set out at recommendation 1.1, it is proposed that up to a maximum of £20,000 be drawn down from the Facilities Improvements earmarked reserve. In accordance with the accessibility audit report, two actions are being presently pursued:
  - Hearing Loops: The introduction of hearing loops within pavilion buildings, council chamber and reception at the White House as well as within the TACTIC building. A specialist firm undertook a facility survey on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and anticipated costs are awaited.
  - Internal Signage: Tactile signage to be provided in the Astral Park facility first. The objective is for the council to have at least one asset that is fully accessible to the community. The Astral Park facility offers

the least constraints given the age of construction (2013) and therefore in the short term at least is the priority project. Once complete, attention will focus on other town council assets. **End.**