



Policy and Finance Committee

Date: 25 July 2022

Title: Facilities Improvements

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update of work carried out thus far in terms of on-going improvements to the White House Building and Town Council owned building assets.

Contact Officer:

Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	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.	
Implications:		
Financial	Yes	Within available earmarked reserve funds as set out in the report.
Human Resources	No	
Operational/Service delivery	Yes	To ensure the council can operate effectively.
Procedural/Legal	No	
Risk/Health and Safety	Yes	To ensure town council assets are maintained at an acceptable standard that is fit for purpose.
Environmental Aims	Yes	That town council environmental objectives are met when undertaking facility improvements.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Committee be minded, the proposals are:

1.1 To approve expenditure of £8,000 from the Facilities Improvements earmarked reserve (£86,952 available) for the purposes of creating a planned maintenance schedule.

1.2 To note the report.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting held 21 June 2021, the Policy & Finance Committee received a report on the year end accounts for 2020-21 and endorsed the recommendation to create a Facilities Improvement earmarked reserve with the outturn from that financial year (£137,754).

2.2 The purpose of the funds was to make a meaningful contribution towards improving working and operational conditions at the Council's main offices and owned assets, as well as improving environmental efficiency.

2.3 At its meeting held 28 June 2021, the recommendations made by Committee were endorsed by Council.

3 EXPENDITURES TO DATE

3.1 Expenditures to date include the purchase of equipment to help facilitate hybrid meetings. The investment in this technology has proven successful allowing those unable to attend in person to do so remotely. Current legislation does not however allow Members attending remotely to vote other than in person.

3.2 At its meeting held 26 July 2021, the Committee received and endorsed a report in respect of increasing White House accommodation and for the costs of £8,250 per annum to be met from the Facilities Improvements earmarked reserve in the first instance. Thereafter, for the costs to be embedded within the revenue budget.

Central Services Office

3.3 Wholesale changes have been made to the office furniture within the central services office. The individual desks have been replaced with less bulky furniture which has allowed the office to be used more intensively and increased storage provision.

Council Chamber

3.4 The traditional furniture found in the Council Chamber has been replaced on the grounds that it did not allow the room to be reconfigured for alternative uses.

New Meeting Room

- 3.5 The existing meeting room furniture has been moved to a larger upstairs room in the White House. This new space is now used for meetings but also gatherings of staff and of Members (e.g. political group meetings). The wider space can accommodate additional furniture in the room and therefore increase room capacity.

White House storage

- 3.6 The creation of the first-floor meeting room has allowed the former ground floor meeting room to be reconfigured for storage purposes. Its location means that equipment that would otherwise have been stored either in the basement or first floor can now be located on the ground floor adjacent to the rear access.

White House entrance door

- 3.7 To date, maintenance of the automated front door has proven problematic given the inability to source spare parts. However, it is understood that the contractor responsible for the installation and maintenance of the system is scheduled to return shortly.

Access Audit

- 3.8 In accordance with the resolution made by the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held 20th 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 including improved signage, introduction of induction loops, adjusting door closers, the widening of footpaths and tactile paving.
- 3.9 The Grounds and Environmental Services Team has taken ownership of the report and its recommendations. The recommendations have been divided into those tasks that can be undertaken in-house and those requiring greater expertise given their complexity. It is anticipated that an update report will be presented to this committee in the autumn.

4 PROPOSED EXPENDITURE

Planned Maintenance Programme

- 4.1 As set out at recommendation 1.1, to instruct a surveyor to create a planned maintenance schedule of town council owned assets. Contextually, the town council has invested circa £800,000 in carrying out improvements and enhancement to its building portfolio. In order to actively manage and maintain buildings at an acceptable standard, the planned maintenance schedule will

provide the framework for doing this. It is anticipated that the schedule will inform the town council's 5-year financial plan as funding will be ringfenced for specific purposes be it window replacement or roofing for example. In addition, the schedule will inform a decorating regime where all buildings will be decorated at the same time offering up economies of scale savings.

- 4.2 All procurement will be subject to the Town Council's Financial Regulations and unless within delegated authorisation limits, will be brought back to the Committee for approval.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1 It is anticipated that in the first instance, expenditure for the above projects will be met from the Facilities Improvements EMR (initial funds of £137,754) – currently standing at £86,952. Recommendations from the accessibility audit will largely be met from here also.

End.