**OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**NOTES TO SUPPORT THE BUDGET CALCULATIONS 2022-2023**

**ADMINISTRATION/SUPPORT COSTS (COST OF OTC) £94,812 Decrease £31,038**

Some OTC services such as statutory planning consultation responsibilities, advice and close liaison with other authorities on the delivery of local services including roads and transport issues, waste, housing, open spaces and the environment do not incur specific costs as they are absorbed within the administration budget. Also absorbed is the cost of proper governance arrangements and the enhancement of the Town Councils role. The administration budget reflects the cost of the Council Offices to support the Town Councils activities and services. Office expenses continue to be stable.

1. **AUDIT FEES:** The Town Council is required by stature to have an external audit (EA) and an Independent Internal Audit (IIA). The provision for 2021-2022 was £2,000. 2022-2023 recommendation £2,000. It is hoped that the outstanding issues which the External Auditor has about the councils’ finances will be resolved prior to 31 March 2022. **No Change**
2. **OFFICE EQUIPMENT**: During 2022-2023 equipment will need to be maintained, serviced, repaired or replaced. The 2021-2022 provision was **£1,000,** no increase has been recommended for 2022-2023. No Change
3. **POSTAGE / STATIONERY:** The amount budgeted for 2020-2021 was £1,500, expenditure as at 30 September 2021 amounted to £274. It is therefore recommended that the budget for 2022-2023 be reduced to **£575.** **£925 Decrease**
4. **TELEPHONE / INTERNET:** The costs of providing telephone and internet at the Councils Offices and remote access support are stable. I am confident that costs at 31 March 2021 will not have exceeded £850 and that the 2022-2023 budgetary provision can be reduced from £1,200 to **£875.** £**325 Decrease.**
5. **SUBSCRIPTIONS: £412. £12 Increase**
6. **EXPENSES / TRAVEL £250. No change**
7. **LEGAL EXPENSES:** The Councils legal team is currently rewiring the councils legal leases and deeds, this work had been budgeted for in 2021-2022, as this work will have been carried out and paid for prior to 31 March 2022, the specific budgetary provision will not be required. There will however be times during a council year when specific legal advice will be required over that which is provided by NALC and LRALC as part of the subscriptions paid by the Town Council. The 2021-2022 recommended budgetary provision was £7,000, the 2022-2023 recommendation is **£3,000. £4,000 decrease**
8. **IT:** It is necessary to include provisions for on-going maintenance, updates, accessibility hosting, training and backups. The 2021-2022 provision was £3,500. Costs appear stable and it is unlikely that they will exceed £2,500 at 31 March 2022. 2022-2023 Recommendation **£2,750. £750 Decrease.**
9. **PROFESSIONAL FEES:** This covers professional fees to organisations such as NALC, KRALCC and SLCC. The 2021-2022 provision was £3,500. Costs appear stable and it is unlikely that they will exceed £2,500 at 31 March 2022. 2022-2023 Recommendation **£2,750. £750 Decrease.**
10. **TRAINING:** The Town Council has a Learning and Development Policy. In accordance with the policy, funds should be available allowing members and Officers to attend conferences and seminars relevant to their role within the organisation. This is particularly important considering the affect legislative changes are likely to have on the Town Council. It is expected that training will be continuous and ongoing. The 2021-2022 provision was £1,500. I am recommending that the budgetary provision remain £1,500 for 2022-2023. No Change.
11. **INSURANCE:** Costs are affected by abnormal increases in premiums, Premiums are competitive and claims experience excellent. The 2021-2022 insurance costs were £4,709 which included the cost of insuring the Outdoor Equipment, Street Furniture, Office contents, asset protection, revenue protection, legal liabilities, and employee benefits. The Town Council needs to meet insurance costs of any new assets. I anticipate that a budgetary provision of £5,200 will be required to meet the Town Councils insurance obligations in 2022-2023. **£300 Increase.**
12. **STAFFING COSTS.** Whilst no provisions have been made for staff changes, members must be mindful of the fact that as more is expected of OTC, the office workload is increasing, and it might become necessary to either increase the Deputy Clerks hours or to employ a part time Admin Assistant. If such an appointment is made during 2022-2023 costs can be met from reserves and no budgetary provision have been made for 2022-2023. With regard to 2022-2023; the estimates allow for the full-time employment of the Town Clerk / RFO and the Part Time employment of the Deputy Town Clerk and reflect the agreed staffing level. Removal of this resource will mean OTC being unable to support the lev of service it sets itself and will impact upon proper governance arrangements. Sums have been included based on known service polices and the staffing resources required. The salaries for the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk are in accordance with the recommended salary scales of NALC and SLCC. A budgetary provision of £55,500 has been included for 2022-2023, this is an overall reduction in the staffing budget of ££22,500 as the 2021-2022 budget included the part time employment of a Maintenance Operative, this appointment did not take place however should such an appointment take place in 2022-2023 the costs could be met from reserves. No provision has been made for the employment of a Locum Clerk as it is expected that the staffing establishment will have stabilised by 31 March 2022 and the costs of employing the Locum Town Clerk will be met from the 2021-2022 staffing budget.  **£22,500 Decrease.**
13. **RENT:**  This covers the cost of renting the Councils Offices and Chambers within Rol House. Whilst the rent costs are stable at £8,000 per annum, I have recommended a provision for 2022-2023 of £8,800 to cover any unanticipated rent increase. **£800 Increase**
14. **UTITLITIES:** This covers the costs of heating and lighting within the Councils Offices and Chambers. To ensure that the council continues to receive best value for money, utility costs are reviewed annually. Despite the current uncertainty about energy costs these should not exceed £5,000 in 2022-2023. **No Change**
15. **NNDR:** The NNDR costs for 2021-2022 were £7,934 and included NNDR in respect of the Public Conveniences. Public Conveniences are now exempt from NNDR and the Locum Clerk has been successful in obtaining a refund to the council of £6,686.60 for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. A recommendation is being made for a budgetary provision in 2022-2023 of £5,200. **£3,300 Decrease**

**CONTRACTS / GRANTS £99,750 £50 Increase**

1. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:** It is important that funds are provided for Oakham to be the best it can be for all who live, work, and visit the Town**.** Based on the 2021-2022 service provision,£22,000 should be sufficient in order for the council to meets its grounds maintenance obligations in 2022-2023. **£3,000 Decrease**
2. **FLORAL DISPLAYS:** Floral Displays are provided year-round to ensure that Oakham is a visually attractive Town in which to visit work and reside. Based on the 2021-2022 service provided, a funding provision of £14,500 should be sufficient tor the provision of the 2022-2023 town floral displays.
3. **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:** Christmas is a magical time in Oakham, the Christmas Fayre and Markets attract a lot of visitors to the Town as does the Christmas Light Switch On. The Oakham Christmas Decorations provide pleasure to all who live, work and visit the town and for this reason I am recommending that council continues to invest in its Christmas Decorations to the sum of £30,000 per annum and any unspent monies at year ends be specifically set aside in earmarked reserves for future, maintenance, repairs and renewals. **No Change**
4. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES:** Oakham as well as being a thriving community is a visitor destination with many events being held during the year especially during the summer months in Cutts Close. It is important therefore that OTC continues to provide funding to meet the costs of providing the public conveniences such as cleaning, maintenance and energy costs including the recently installed EV Charging point. Based on the 2021-2022 service level, I am recommending a funding provision in 2022-2023 of £22,000.
5. **PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS:** OTC has an obligation to ensure that its play equipment offerings to residents and visitors is safe to sue. Regular inspections carried out by ROSPA specialists are essential in enabling OTC to meet those obligations. I am recommending a provision in 2022-2023 of ££1,250. **£50 Increase.**
6. **GRANTS:** There are two conditions which the Town Council needs to meet in order to be eligible to adopt and use the General Power of Competence, one is having a qualified Clerk and the other is to have at least two thirds (66%) of elected members. OTC meets this criterion in both respects and is able to continue to use GPC as opposed to the more restrictive provisions of S137. For reference, S137 7 is an allocation of money which may be spent on anything which in the opinion of the Town Council is in the interests of the parish or any part of it or is in the interests of all or some of its inhabitants. At the time of preparing this report, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had not confirmed the appropriate sum for the purposes of S137 (4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”). It is however noted that the sum for 2021-2022 was £8.41 per registered elector. For 2022-2023, I have recommended no change to the 2021-2022 budgetary provision which was £10,000. **No Change**

**RECREATION / PLANNING / GENERAL £58,200 £6,665 Increase**

1. **CATMOSE PRIZE GIVING:** No budgetary provision, approved expenditure could be funded from other budget heads such as Chairman’s Allowance and Promotion of Oakham (Events). **£35 Decrease**
2. **PROMOTION OF OAKHAM (EVENTS):** The Summer 2021 and Christmas Events were very popular and successful with both residents and visitors to the town. To firmly establish the events in the Oakham calendar, I am recommending a moderate increase to the budgetary provision from £10,000 to £10,300. **£300 Increase.**
3. **ADVERTISING:** The success of OTC and its Events depends to a certain extent from advertising. In October 2021, members approved the use of Radio advertising for its Christmas Events, assuming that the council will want a similar advertising campaign for all of its 2022-2023 events. I am recommending no change to the advertising budget of £5,000. **No Change**
4. **PLANTING AND TREE SURGERY**: Oakham Town Council is committed towards protecting its arboricultural assets through the positive management of trees on land owned and managed by the Town Council. A provision of £10,000 should be sufficient to meet these obligations. **£2,500 increase**

The Town Council arranges regular tree surveys resulting in the identification of trees that require arboricultural work and those requiring felling; Oakham Town Council has a duty of care to manage its trees and that duty is governed primarily by factors affecting the safety of the public and property, the health of the tree and the risk of the spread of diseases.

This approach will ensure improved management through continuity and will assist the Council in providing a consistent and professional service to the community; where requests for works are not warranted under our primary duties for tree works, they will not ordinarily be entertained at public cost.

To ensure the efficient management of tree stock, I suggest that Oakham Town Council adopt a tree inspection and management policy which includes the categorisation of trees into three risk categories - high, medium and low:

**Low risk** No fixed routine independent inspection of trees.

Such trees would include *saplings*, *copse* trees, any trees below 5m in height, and/or with limbs narrower than 25mm, or trunks below 75mm in diameter. These trees would ordinarily be assessed within groups or as part of regular site inspections; they would also be viewed during independent inspections but may not be specifically recorded unless they require felling.

**Medium Risk** Inspected every three years.

Such trees would include those located close to informal paths, *medium* sized trees; street trees; trees in open areas and natural wooded areas that experience a frequent level of footfall.

**High Risk** Inspected every three years and where required annually; and also, in response to changing environment and weather.

Trees which, for example, overhang neighbours’ properties and near structures within impact zones; play areas or well-frequented paths, seating and similar public open space, any street trees exceeding 5m in height; *large* and or *mature* trees that stand alone following felling works to a neighbouring tree/s, and trees known to be susceptible to disease, defects, shedding, or failure in high winds.

Trees should also be monitored as part of regular site inspections and any advisory notes highlighted for specialist assessment. The process of regular inspection will identify any change in any natural and environmental factors local to certain trees. Any enquiries or report of concerns in relation to apparent dead, dying or dangerous trees will be followed by a site inspection first by a Town Council officer and if any faults or notes are recorded then a specialist will be requested for further inspection.

1. **ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE:** This fund can be used to supplement services provided by RCC such as additional grass cutting, clearing of vegetation and some minor highway maintenance. It can also be used to upgrade the environmental street scene in Oakham. I am recommending an increase in the budget provision from £8,500 to £10,000**. £1,500 Increase.**
2. **STREET & PARK FURNITURE:** This fund is for the maintenance, repairs and renewals of existing street and park furniture which must be maintained in a good state or repair. I am recommending an increase in the budgetary provision from £5,000 to £5,150**. Increase £150.**
3. **PLAY EQUIPMENT:** This fund is for the maintenance repairs and renewals of existing play equipment which must be maintained in a good and safe state of repair. I am recommending no change to the budgetary provision of £15,000**. £3,000 increase**
4. **GRIT BINS:** RCC provides the grit bins and one bag of salt / sand grit mix per annum. If additional replenishment of the grit bins is required, then this is at the cost of the Town Council. I am recommending that the budget could be reduced to £750. Additional resources if required could be met from the Additional Maintenance fund. **£750 Decrease.**
5. **MILITARY COMMEMORATIONS / EVENTS:** Oakham is very proud of its links with the military. Granting the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery, the Freedom of Oakham was a great honour and privilege that the council and the people of the town decided to bestow. Oakham has had a military presence since 1940 when the St George's Barracks started life as RAF Luffenham. The adoption of the Armed Forces Covenant was another way in which OTC recognised and honours those who proudly protected our nation, who did so with honour, courage and commitment. It is a pledge that OTC and Oakham acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families should be treated with fairness and respect in their community. I am recommending no change to the budgetary provision of £2,000 for military commemorations in Oakham**. No Change**

**OTHER RECURRING EXPENDITURE £23,258 £4,600 Decrease**

1. **PUBLIC WORKS LOAN:** These amounts are fixed and set by the PWLB and paid by the Town Council in two half yearly instalments. Budgetary provision £5,508. **No Change**
2. **CHAIRMANS ALLOWANCE:** S15 of LGA 1972 provides for a Chairman’s Allowance which allows the Chairman / Mayor to defray expenses of office. In calculating the allowance, the Town Council should consider the duties arising from the Town Councils ordinary business and the Chairman’s enhanced role in discharging these, i.e. the costs arising from regular communication with other councils, working relationship with the Clerk, attendance at conferences and ceremonies, public relations and travel costs. I am not recommending any change to the budgetary provision of £3,000. **No Change.**
3. **BANK CHARGES:** These are set and fixed by the Town Councils banking providers as part of the terms and conditions of operating the bank account. It is however unlikely that bank charges will exceed £100 in 2022-2023. **£50 Decrease.**
4. **COMMUNITY STREET LIGHTING:** OTC is responsible for some street lighting. The budgetary provision covers the costs of maintenance, repairs, renewals and energy provision. I am confident that the streetlighting costs will not exceed fo14,650. **£450 Increase.**
5. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**: No funding provision as funds have been included in previous financial years and expenditure costs can be met from reserves. No Change
6. **ELECTIONS:** No provision as 2022 is not an election year. The next election is due to be held in 2023. Should an election occur, costs can be met from reserves**. £5,000 Decrease**

**37.OTHER EXPENSES / CONTINGENCIES:** Within the budgetary estimates, I have

included a provision of £25,000 to cover any unforeseen budgetary pressures which might

occur during 2022-2023. It is generally recommended that local councils maintain a

contingency of between 10–15% of the Net Budget to protect against unforeseen Budget

pressures and possible funding cuts.

**38. Relocation:** No funding required

**39. Cutts Close Capital Project:** No funding required as the project fruition costs can be met from earmarked reserves**.** The Council agreed in November 2021 to proceed with a modified project subject to approval from English Heritage. It is unlikely however that the project will be completed prior to 31 March 2022. £60,000 Decrease

**40. Major Capital Projects:** No funding provision

**41. Minor Capital Projects:** No funding required, project fruition costs during 2022-2023 can be met from earmarked reserves. **£30,000 Decrease**

**42. Public Emergency Funding**. In the event of an emergency OTC will work in very close cooperation with RCC Emergency Planning Coordinators by providing local knowledge and support. This budgetary provision can be used to purchase items such as radio licences, road closure signs, Hi Vis, torches, first aid kits etc. In the event of an emergency OTC members and officers can act without waiting for any form of council approval in cooperation with and under the broad guidance of RCC and other emergency services.

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE £306,020 £96,423 Decrease**

**FINANCED BY**

**INCOME £17,200 £101 decrease**

**42. Interest:** Interest received by the council is unlikely to exceed £500

**43. Bowls Club Rent:** Anticipated income will be £850

**44. Tennis Club Rent:** Anticipated income will be £1,000

**45. Oakham community centre:**  Anticipated income will be £9.000

**46. Rutland House Community Trust:** Anticipated income will be £1,900

**47. Cutts Close Lettings:** Anticipated income £1,500

**48. Allotment Rents:** Anticipated income £450

**49. CIL Disbursement:** Anticipated receipts £2,000

**50. Donations / Grants:** Nil expected

**EXPENDITURE LESS INCOME £288,820**

**FINANCED BY**

**Contribution From Reserves £48,820**

**Net to Raise via Precept £240,000**