

Responsible Financial Officer Reports (9-14)

9. RFO Report - (for information – bank balances, Town Accelerator Funding, Local Government Pay Award 2024/25, VAT, Internal Controls)

Bank balances - as at 31 October 2024 are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| HSBC | 38,600.10 |
| Lloyds Debit card | 1,338.63 |
| Cornwall Council deposit | 788,276.12 |
| HSBC Money Market Deposit | 0.00 |
| <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>£828,214.85</u> |

Town Accelerator Funding – The grant offer letter has now been received. The £12,500 will be paid in two instalments, with £6,250 paid at the start of the project, and the balance of £6,250 paid on provision of evidence of completion of targets and deliverables to Cornwall Council. All outputs must be delivered by 31 March 2025.

The tender for a consultant to help deliver the project was published on 8 October 2024 via Contracts Finder and the Town Council’s Tenders webpage [Tenders - Liskeard Council](#)

The contract had a maximum value of £10,000 excluding VAT. A total of five tenders were received. The Tender Panel met on Thursday 31 October 2024 to review the submissions and make a recommendation to the Communications & Engagement Committee, and the recommended contractor, Hemingway Design, were approved. An inception meeting took place on Tuesday 19 November.

Local Government Pay Award 2024/25 – Following agreement last month, this will be processed, with backpay, in the November payroll. The new salary payments will be reflected on budget report to 30 November, and NI and pension payments on the budget report to 31 December 2024.

VAT – At the end of VAT quarter 2 (April – September) draft partial exemption calculations show that the Council VAT attributable to exempt activities will exceed £7,500 (or 5% of the total VAT incurred on all purchases in the year) for the current financial year. This will require repayment of all reclaimed VAT incurred on the Guildhall, about 50% VAT reclaimed on the Public Hall, and a percentage (12.57% in 2023/24) of VAT on overheads e.g. office supplies, printing, telephones, payroll and accountancy costs, etc. This should be considered when looking at budgets for this year and next.

Internal Controls – Councillor Dorling completed bank reconciliation verification (Financial Regulation 2.6) and salary (FR 11.6) checks on Wednesday 20 November, and all was found to be in order.

10. Schedule of Payments - To receive and approve the schedule of payments.
Attachment: 10. Schedule of Payments

Recommendation: to approve the schedule of payments

11. Budget Monitoring 2024/25 – To receive and accept a draft budget report to **30 September 2024** for monitoring purposes

Attachment: 11. Budget Monitoring to 30 September 2024

On target spend should now be at 50%

The following points should be noted on the Administration (101) budget (other budgets monitored within the relevant committees):

- PAYE & NI (4010) shows only 5 months expenditure (41.67%) as this is paid a month behind until year end.
- Pension (4020) includes the annual lump sum contribution of £4,900 and paid a month behind as above.
- Training (4110) includes £998 which will be funded by a grant from DWP.
- Advertising (4180) will overspend this year due to increased costs at the Cornish Times for publishing the election notices (vacancy notice £182, election notice £390). Cornwall Council have now confirmed it is no longer a legal requirement to publish these in the local press – websites, social media, notice boards etc are sufficient.
- Equipment & IT Purchase (4230) the overspend has been funded from the earmarked reserve.
- Mayoral Allowance (4340) is paid via payroll so included in the salary line £817 paid to 30 September 2024.
- CCTV (4360) annual maintenance charges only have been paid so far this year.

Recommendation: to note and approve the budget monitoring report

12. Budget & Precept Setting 2025 – 2026 – To consider the draft budgets from the committees

Attachments: 12i. Admin Draft Budget 2025/26, 12ii. C&E Draft Budget 2025/26, 12iii. Facilities Draft Budget 2025/26, 12iv. Facilities Budget Summary 2025/26, 12v. Budget Summary, 12vi. Reserves (from balance sheet)

The draft net budgets submitted by the committees for 2025/26 are as follows:

| Committee | Net Budget |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Administration | 269,040 |
| Communications & Engagement | 102,555 |
| Facilities | 371,677 |
| | |
| Total / Precept Requirement | 743,272 |

Reserves

The general reserve currently stands at £323,490 which is below the level considered appropriate in the Reserves policy and therefore it is not recommended this is used to support proposed budget expenditure.

A General Reserve covering 6 months revenue expenditure (approx. £330,000 in 2023/2024) is considered appropriate for Liskeard Town Council.

It is anticipated unallocated earmarked reserves will remain on the Facilities large property reserve £29,515 and Parks & Open Spaces reserve £42,000 which could be used towards some of the projects proposed (see option 2 below). It is already assumed the remaining balance of the Castle Park reserve (forecast £6,950) will be used.

The tax base has increased this year by 2.99% (including the second homes premium) which generates an additional £18,075 of precept income without increasing the charge to householders.

In February 2023 Council considered a new proposal for budget options which suggested:

- Option 1 – total budgets as proposed by the committees
- Option 2 – maximum use of unallocated reserves
- Option 3 – current budget plus 5% (this will require reductions in the proposed budgets by reducing services or delaying projects)

This would result in the following:

| Option | Precept Required | Band D amount | Band D % increase | Band D £ increase pa | Band D £ increase pm |
|--------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 743,272 | £203.19 | 19.25% | £32.80 | £2.73 |
| 2 | 683,757 | £186.92 | 9.70% | £16.54 | £1.26 |
| 3 | 654,449 | £178.91 | 5.00% | £8.52 | £0.71 |

While band D is the required comparison, almost 80% of Liskeard households are in bands A to C.

Liskeard Council Tax band breakdown for 2024/25 with figures in brackets to show the number of second homes

| Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Band E | Band F | Band G | Band H | Band Total |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| 1,069 | 1895 | 1336 | 725 | 291 | 74 | 16 | 0 | 5406 |
| (12) | (7) | (12) | (6) | (0) | (1) | (0) | (0) | (38) |

Liskeard continues to have one of the lowest band D rates of the larger towns in Cornwall.

Large Town Council Tax and Precept levels 2024/25

| Town / Parish Council | 2024/25 Precept (£) | 2024/25 Taxbase | 2024/25 Band D Council Tax (£) | Band D Council Tax Change (£) 23/24 | Band D Council Tax Change |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Falmouth | £ 3,352,214.39 | 7,773.43 | £ 431.24 | £ 8.18 | 1.93% |
| Truro | £ 3,005,618.00 | 7,477.14 | £ 401.97 | £ 81.59 | 25.40% |
| Bodmin | £ 1,747,638.00 | 4,961.38 | £ 352.25 | £ 24.44 | 7.46% |
| Launceston | £ 1,049,424.00 | 3,235.30 | £ 324.37 | £ 50.28 | 18.34% |
| Penzance | £ 2,306,332.00 | 7,180.31 | £ 321.20 | £ 21.34 | 7.12% |
| Camelford | £ 344,099.00 | 1,100.33 | £ 312.72 | £ 24.77 | 8.60% |
| Newquay | £ 2,613,754.00 | 8,684.09 | £ 300.98 | £ 63.91 | 26.96% |
| Bude | £ 1,223,416.00 | 4,089.10 | £ 299.19 | £ 50.91 | 20.51% |
| Hayle | £ 944,758.00 | 3,227.32 | £ 292.74 | £ 52.50 | 21.85% |
| Wadebridge | £ 685,245.00 | 2,528.37 | £ 271.02 | £ 19.81 | 7.89% |
| Callington | £ 565,466.00 | 2,105.98 | £ 268.51 | £ 22.81 | 9.28% |
| Redruth | £ 1,176,015.00 | 4,529.63 | £ 259.63 | £ 26.63 | 11.43% |
| St Ives | £ 1,316,246.00 | 5,099.55 | £ 258.11 | £ 48.17 | 22.94% |
| Saltash | £ 1,388,217.00 | 5,584.67 | £ 248.58 | £ 11.42 | 4.82% |
| Camborne | £ 1,528,934.00 | 6,495.95 | £ 235.37 | £ 24.96 | 11.86% |
| Lostwithiel | £ 262,700.00 | 1,135.29 | £ 231.39 | £ 14.62 | 6.74% |
| Helston | £ 841,520.00 | 3,704.73 | £ 227.15 | £ 24.19 | 11.92% |
| Looe | £ 481,675.00 | 2,230.97 | £ 215.90 | £ 8.30 | 4.00% |
| Torpoint | £ 462,799.00 | 2,368.00 | £ 195.44 | £ 18.95 | 10.74% |
| St Austell | £ 1,177,920.00 | 6,522.42 | £ 180.60 | £ 16.24 | 9.88% |
| Liskeard | £ 605,197.00 | 3,551.91 | £ 170.39 | £ 23.67 | 16.13% |
| St Agnes | £ 498,000.00 | 3,316.29 | £ 150.17 | £ 10.54 | 7.55% |
| Penryn | £ 326,444.00 | 2,313.32 | £ 141.11 | £ 6.15 | 4.56% |

Recommendation: to broadly agree the option to take forward and direct committees to review their budgets accordingly

13. Internal Audit Interim Report - To consider and accept the report

Attachment: 13. Internal Audit Interim Report

Recommendation - To accept the internal auditor's interim report

14. Defibrillators – To consider adding an additional maintenance service of £40 per unit from Bleed Control UK to maintain new donated bleed control kits within defibrillator units.

Front Line Emergency Equipment Trust (FLEET) has recently acquired 270 public access bleed control kits from Bleed Control (UK) Ltd, which will be installed in the 270 public access defibrillator cabinets that Duchy Defibrillators Ltd manage, including the four supported by the Town Council (Public Hall Barras Place, Hillfort School, Geoffrey Harris Tyres and Addington Shop).

The kits retail at £100 plus VAT and include:

- 3 packs of four gloves
- 2 foil blankets
- 2 trauma shears
- 2 dressings (10x18)
- 1 dressing (15x18)
- 1 packing gauze
- 1 pen
- 2 tourniquets
- 1 vented chest seal
- 1 aide memoire

Duchy Defibrillators will be installing these kits in the cabinets and updating the signage to indicate their presence over the coming weeks and months and they will be checked by their service engineers every 5-6 weeks when doing defibrillator checks.

To provide even more robust support, Bleed Control (UK) Ltd are offering a subscription service that goes beyond supplying the initial kit. For those receiving the free bleed control kit from the charity FLEET, their subscription is designed to make sure that the kit remains in top condition, fully stocked, and up to date, giving peace of mind that it will be ready to perform when needed.

The subscription costs £40 per unit per annum, and includes:

- Comprehensive reporting - The team provides detailed reports showing the date and results of every kit check, whether performed by Duchy's service engineers or members of the Bleed Control Cornwall team. These reports ensure complete transparency and documentation, so you're always up-to-date on your kit's condition.
- Full Governance and Compliance - We handle all aspects of kit governance, from maintaining its registration with emergency services to keeping you informed of any compliance updates. Additionally, we maintain a thorough database, tracking each kit item's expiry date, bag ID number, and location. This means we manage all logistics and tracking, giving you full assurance that your kit meets regulatory standards and is fully compliant.

- Free Replacement of Expired Items - With our subscription, any items in the kit that reach their expiry date are automatically replaced at no additional cost. We'll update the database with this information, ensuring that your kit is consistently equipped with safe, up-to-date materials.
- Replacement Kit Discount - In the unfortunate event that your kit is used and cannot be reused due to incident-related damage, we offer a 10% discount on a replacement kit. This ensures you can quickly and affordably replace a used kit, keeping your location fully prepared for future emergencies.
- Discount on Additional Kits - Need more than one bleed control kit? Subscription members enjoy a 10% discount on any additional kits purchased. Each bag retails at £100 + VAT, so this discount adds up to significant savings for larger orders.

Non-subscription options handled on an ad-hoc basis:

- Should the service team notice an issue with your kit, we'll inform you of the required actions and provide a quote to resolve it.
- When kit items reach their expiry date, you will receive a notification email with a list of the required replacements and their associated costs.

Recommendation - To agree whether to proceed with the additional subscription service with Bleed Control (UK) Ltd at £40 per unit per annum (total cost to Liskeard Town Council £160 per annum)