

Update on allotment Invitation to Tenders ['ITTs]

Summary

The purpose of this update is to appraise Councillors on the ITT responses, enabling Councillors to agree any 'next steps', agenda item 3 (c) 4 March 2024.

Councillors will recall we are trying to develop three full sized allotments, which can be used in a half size configuration. Following 'expression of interest' exercises within the village there is currently¹ an interest for one full and two half plots. There have been no expressions of interest for the other full plot (two half plots).

Responses to ITTs and likely costs

Councillors will recall that there was one response to the legal work ITT, which was £4,000 plus VAT.

One response to the ground works ITT has been received in the sum of £38,417 plus VAT. Having discussed the breakdown with the author of the ground works specifications, we believe there are further possible savings², but a current working assumption is that a budget of c£35,000 plus VAT is required.

On the basis of the ITT responses, Councillors need to consider this project against a likely cost of c£40,000 plus VAT, without any potential planning costs.

The Council is potentially able to reclaim the VAT and the calculations below are made on that assumption. However, there will be a cash flow impact as the Council will be required to pay the full inclusive of VAT amount and the VAT reclaim can take up to 3 months. The VAT on the two ITTs is in the region of c£8,500. Clearly, if the Council was unable to reclaim the VAT on this project the costs would increase accordingly.

¹ Last updated October 2023

² Amended specifications in respect of troughs, sheds etc.

Funding

The Council currently holds, in its reserve account, c£19,000, which is made up of c£10,000 balance of CIL monies and £9,000 reserves. Good practice guidance recommends that parish councils retain 50% of the annual precept in reserve funds. As our Precept is £8,259³, we need to keep c£4,100 in our reserve account. **Accordingly, the Council has funds, potentially available of c£15,000.**

I have made initial contact with the Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity ['SMPC'] and the local Buckinghamshire North West Chilterns Community Board ['NWCCB']. SMPC say, "I should warn you that Great & Little Hampden do have a very small share of the Charity pot". NWCCB typically match fund on a 50/50 basis. **Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the Council will have to fund at least c£20,000 if we are supported by SMPC and NWCCB.**

³ Minute reference 24/0003 (d)