

Policy & Resources Committee

Date:	17 April 2018
Title:	Capital Equipment from Rolling Capital Fund
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

Purpose of Report

1. To provide background information on a number of proposed capital purchases from the Rolling Capital Fund to help define a Rolling Capital Fund spend plan for 2018-19.

Background

2. The Rolling Capital Fund is a reserve, topped up annually as part of budget setting, though with significantly reduced top-ups in recent years.
3. Spend from the reserve over the last three years has been £22,308.22 / £26,342.67 / £7,287.50
4. The balance at 1/4/17, the start of the year, with the 2017-18 top-up of £11,379 was £43,583.55.
5. £5,000 (of which £527.50 spent this year) towards the cost of an improved web-site and £2,991.26 remaining balance (of which £890 spent this year) towards the Museum Improvement project have previously been agreed as allocated, leaving a projected balance of £35,592.29.
6. The purchase of a new boiler (£2,100) and new radio system (£3,770) was recently approved, leaving a projected balance of £29,722.29.
7. The 2018-19 top-up, to be applied as of 1/4/18 is £10,000, leaving a projected balance available to spend in 2018-19 of £39,722.29

Proposed Expenditure in 2018-19

8. **Town Boundary Signs:** It has already been agreed that the main cost of installing replacement Town Boundary signs will be met from the Rolling Capital Fund – at approximately £5,000.
9. **Upper Chamber Acoustics:** It is likely that once final installation costs are known, that the total cost will be met through the Rolling Capital Fund – current ballpark estimate £8,000.
10. **Upper Chamber Chairs:** The current chairs are tired and in need of replacement. Officers are investigating local suppliers with appropriate design, robustness and storage characteristics – current ballpark estimates range from £4,000 to £7,000.
11. **IT Server:** The current server will be 5 years old in July, at which time the warranty will expire and even if available, the care pack costs will increase. Officers have investigated a variety of ways forward, including cloud provision, partial cloud provision, upgrade of software and hardware, upgrade of hardware only, or doing nothing. The current local supplier of IT services has proven to be reliable and efficient over many years. Officers' view is that the best balance in terms of risk and value is to replace the server only in July and replace software at a future date – current quote for server replacement is in the region of £7,000.

12. **Information Centre till:** The current till was purchased in 2012, is running old and vulnerable software and needs replacing. Current quote is £1,250.
13. **Mobile speed indicator / recording signs:** There have been numerous and increasing requests in the past year for speed limit changes and surveys. It came to a head at the Annual Town Meeting. Other parishes have reported successful deployment of battery powered mobile speed indicator / recording devices, which through a defined process, and with appropriate Highway Authority permission, could be moved around the town as needed. This is expected to reduce speeds wherever they are temporarily deployed, while also gathering data. Ballpark cost for two such units is £6,000.

Resource Appraisal

14. The sum of all the above proposals is £34,250, which would leave a remaining available balance in the Rolling Capital Fund of around £5,500.
15. Central Government recommended as part of this year's financial settlement that all parishes should look carefully at un-earmarked reserves. Some would argue that it is better that such public money is spent, rather than be sitting in reserves.
16. In the event of other capital projects arising, then they will need to be taken to the relevant Committee / Council either to be prioritised ahead of the above items, or to establish alternative funding from General Reserves / reallocation of earmarked reserves.
17. In each case, officers will be willing to provide a fuller report, either via Committee / Council or via e-mail, before final commitment is made, with the option to call the final decision into the relevant Committee / Council meeting.

Risk Assessment

18. There are some risks in not spending some of the above sums, but no particular risks in their actual spend.
19. There is a risk that there will be insufficient room in 2019-20 budget setting to apply an increased top-up which will then be required.

Legal Powers

There are various specific powers that could be applied, but all are also covered by the General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee consider all the above proposed capital purchases and if possible to agree a provisional Rolling Capital Spend plan for 2018-19.