

Policy and Resources Committee

Title:	Thame Town Council Guide production 2023
Date:	1 November 2022
Contact Officer:	Ben Bennett, Communications and Events Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To review the production and budgetary implications of the creation of Thame's Official Town Guide for 2023.

Background

2. In February 2019 a proposal was put to CLR to bring the production of our annual Official Town Guide in-house. This was approved and since then this has been the case.

Implementation

3. This is considered a success, with an expanded booklet now including 80 pages. The information provided is far reaching, from the work of the Town Council and other organisations serving our community, to leisure and retail. Feedback appears extremely positive from residents and visitors alike. The budget to deliver the project was initially seen as a risk when we took on the new approach (in 2020). However, post-COVID saw an excellent uptake of sponsorship support.

Risks

4. **Support of Local Businesses:** This year's sponsorship take up has been slow with the economic landscape changing significantly. Notably we have only recently just secured some sponsorship from local business for our Christmas booklet, so we are in effect requesting support twice in a matter of weeks.
5. **Cost neutral:** Printing and delivery costs have increased substantially. Whilst still confirming quotes, current estimates have increased even when taking account of fewer copies. Costs were circa £4,000 in 2021 for 7,000 copies, and we are estimating circa £5,500 in 2022 for 6,000 copies (both quotes are combined print + delivery). Coupled with the slow take up of businesses to sponsor and advertise, there is significant risk that the guide will not achieve cost neutral status this year. At time of writing, we have a provisional commitment of approximately £3,300 in sponsorship (compared to last year's end total of circa £5,300). This leaves a current shortfall of an estimated £2,200.

Proposal for 2023 Official Town Guide

6. To continue with this project in house with the following aims:
 - 6.1. **Publication:** Continue with publication and delivery of the guide, seeking further sponsorship opportunities to help offset the increased publication costs.
 - 6.2. **Budget implications:** To complete the publication this year, it is highly likely to require further investment. There is opportunity to underwrite any shortfall from the Economic Development Ear Marked Reserve budget of up to £2,200.

Action Required:

- i) To note the report
- ii) To consider providing a budget of up to £2,200 from Economic Development Ear Marked Reserves to support the continuation of the Town Guide this year.