

9 January 2023

Budget Report 2023-24 FINAL APPROVED

Contents

1. GTC Priorities and Action Plan
2. Reserves/Working Capital
3. SLDC Figures and Charges
4. Staff and Pensions (*Dept. 1 – Council and Dept. 2 Victoria Hall*)
5. Projects (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
6. Christmas Lights (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
7. Accountancy Service (*Dept. 1 – Council*)
8. Victoria Hall (*Dept. 2*)
9. Public Conveniences (*Dept. 4,5,6*)
10. Recreation Ground (*Dept. 7*)
11. Public Domain Maintenance (*Dept. 10*)
12. Public Works Loan Board
13. Surplus

1. Town Council Priorities and Action Plan

- a. The budget is set to fulfil the Town Council's Action Plan and Priorities.
- b. These were last resolved in December 2022.
- c. They are published at: www.grangeoversandstowncouncil.gov.uk

2. Reserves/Working Capital

- a. The Reserves Policy was approved April 2021 and last reviewed in June 2022.
- b. It is published on the Town Council's website.
- c. At the Council meeting in June 2022, the reserves allocation at the opening of the new financial year was considered, noting that the following payments were already resolved:
 - i) *Chimney removal Jan 2022 (C21/160) £4,150*
 - ii) *Street Workout Equipment Mar 2022 (C21/191) £27,088*

The reserves allocation at the opening of the new financial year 2022-23 was approved as below:

Opening Reserves 2022-23 resolved June 2022	£
General Reserve	
Council	100,223
Earmarked Reserve	
Works resolved - Chimney removal Jan 2022 (C21/160)	4,150
Works resolved - Street Workout Equipment Mar 2022 (C21/191)	27,088
Photocopier replacement	3,969
Victoria Hall (includes £50k for boilers as quoted)	90,000
Public Conveniences	15,000
Recreation, Play and Culture	35,000
Allotments (to maintain existing and set up new)	12,000
Public Domain	10,000
Professional Fees	1,000
Public Works Loan Board	6,039
Reserves per AGAR Box 7 March 2022	304,469

Reserves excluding resolved works and PWLB 263,223

3. SLDC Figures and Charges

a. Council Tax Base

This changes each year. It increases as houses are built and decreases when more residents claim discount or homes are empty.

The Council Tax base for 2022/23 was 2,170.88, an increase of 30.75.

The Council Tax base for 2023/24 is 2,171.08, an increase of 0.2.

Last year, the cost to the average (Band D) household went down 34 pence from £93.91 to £93.57.

b. Council Tax Grant

SLDC used to give this to each parish to supplement the Precept.

In 2022/23 Grange Town Council received £8,238.80.

This year, we have been advised that we should assume that there will be no Council Tax Grant:

As notified last year, please note that as of 1st April 2023, South Lakeland District Council will no longer exist and your relationship will transfer to Westmorland and Furness Council. We are aware that SLDC have had a different policy when it comes to the parish grant than the other councils and, while no decision has yet been made by Westmorland and Furness Council on whether parish grants will continue, I recommend that you prepare your budgets without any grant. Westmorland and Furness Council are expected to make a decision on the grant and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme at their Shadow Cabinet meeting on 13th January 2023.

c. Street Lighting Charge

This is a charge from SLDC to Grange residents.

In 2022/23 it was £11,606.47. In 2023/24 it will be £18,811.87 (62% increase).

In previous year, the difference between this figure and the Council Tax Grant is the amount that is charged to Grange residents and retained by SLDC.

Bills show that it goes to the Town Council but in fact, it goes to SLDC.

In 22/23 this amount was £3,367.67.

However, assuming that SLDC does not continue with the Council Tax Grant, this would mean that the entire charge - £18,811.87 – would be levied on top of the demand from Grange Town Council. This means that residents would pay an extra £8.66 for the year (Charge of £18,811.87 divided by 2,171.08 properties).

4. Staff and Pensions (*Dept. 1 – Council and Dept. 2 Victoria Hall*)

- a. Budget shows salaries with NALC pay rise backdated to 1 April 2022, approved at Full Council in November.
- b. 2% increase shown for new financial year.
- c. For the first time, salaries are shown for Front-of-House in Dept.2, Victoria Hall.
- d. Employers NI is included in salaries.
- e. Pension auto-enrolment commenced February 2017. The budget amount represents the costs as defined by the Local Government Pension Scheme.

5. Projects (*Department 1 – Council*)

- a. There is no Projects budget, as there are no planned projects. Costs must be planned and budgeted for – holding a contingency fund is not good practice.
- b. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from SLDC and/or grant fundraising and/or donations could provide the funding for projects.
- c. CIL payments to date total £617.25. This was spent on the purchase and installation of cycle racks outside the Library. Total cost of project was £1,405.

6. Christmas Lights (*Department 1 – Council*)

- a. This is the first year of a new 5-year contract with LITE Ltd. which ends after Christmas 2026.
- b. £4,751 (5-year term) per annum plus carriage and electricity charges.

7. Accountancy Service Fees (*Department 1 – Council*)

- a. Includes PAYE, payroll, pensions and VAT.

8. Victoria Hall (Department 2)

- a. Budget shows £12,000 for Maintenance, Repairs and Renewals (not including LOLER inspections). This is reduced from £18,000 in the current year.
- b. LOLER (The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998) inspections are done every other year. This is for the stage scenery hoists and cost just over £1,200 in June 2022.
- c. Costs anticipated this year include Fire Risk Assessment actions (Ardent Safety due to inspect in January 2023), contract for waste removal (SLDC withdrawn service November 2022).
- d. Maintenance Plan 2018-2022 was reviewed by Full Council in October 2021.
- e. Maintenance Plan 2022-2026 is being drafted.

9. Public Conveniences (Departments 4,5,6)

- a. This service is provided at a loss.
- b. SLDC devolved providing Public Conveniences to the Town Council in 2011 and an annual grant was given. This has now been phased out.
- c. Healthmatic clean and maintain them on an annual rolling contract.
- d. The facilities are deteriorating and will need refurbishing in due course.
- e. Increasing the entrance fee is an option.

10. Recreation Ground (Department 7)

- a. The Recreation Ground is leased by GTC from SLDC who gave up running the facility as it was not viable.
- b. In March 2016, a 2-year contract was agreed with Horton Landscapes to operate it. A further 5-year contract was agreed on 31 October 2017.
- c. This ended on 31 October 2022 and a further 2-year contract was agreed.
- d. Costs to GTC under this contract are infrastructure maintenance, SLDC annual inspections and GTC monthly inspections.

11. Public Domain Maintenance (Department 10)

- a. Includes Ornamental Gardens wall-top planting (resolved October 2016).
- b. Includes Lengthsman services and a skip for the Lengthsman.

12. Public Works Loan Board

- a. From the beginning of 2023-24 financial year, this will no longer be included in the budget as the final loan payment will be made in January 2023.

13. Surplus

- a. Any budget surplus mitigates against the loss of SLDC grant towards running of Ornamental Garden public conveniences and/or capital replacement costs. The Town Council Finance Risk Assessment (approved annually in October) states that funds should be set aside annually towards capital replacement costs of assets.