

FULL COUNCIL

Date: 20 February 2024

Title: Library Grant

Purpose of Report

For Members to consider a request from Somerset Council for a £5,000 contribution towards the cost of Ilminster library for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Recommendation:

Members resolve to agree to a grant of **£5,000** contribution towards the Ilminster Library for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Report:

1. Officers have received a request from Somerset Council for a **£5,000** donation towards the running of Ilminster library **Appendix 18A**.

2. Ilminster Town Council's Financial Regulation Section 3.1 states:

Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- *the Council for all items over £5,000;*
- *a duly delegated committee of the Council for items over £1,000; or*
- *the Clerk for any items below £1,000.*

3. It is good practice for local authorities to agree payment of invoices within two weeks of receipt. However, on this occasion, Somerset Council has been informed that there will be a delay with a response to their request as it would need to be brought before Full Council for a resolution.

4. At a meeting of the Resources Committee held on Tuesday 12th February 2019, Minute R225 Financial Contribution for Ilminster Library:

*Consideration was given to the contribution level to be made to Somerset County Council towards the costs of running Ilminster library, as provided for in the Town Council's 2019/20 budget. Issues discussed during consideration of this Agenda Item included: the County Council are looking for a 3 year funding commitment. **RESOLVED** To make a £5,000 contribution towards the running costs of Ilminster library for 2019/20 and to commit to making a similar contribution to the amount given in (i) above for the next 2 years that a letter be sent to Friends of Ilminster Library giving details of the Town Council's grants policy*

5. At the Town Council meeting held on 15th November 2022 Minute 2022-0162-TC Library Grant

*Members **RESOLVED** by 14 votes for and 1 abstention to agree to the request for a £5,000 contribution towards the Ilminster Library for 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.*

6. At the Town Council meeting held on 23rd January 2024 Minute 2023-0201-TC Library Grant:

Members discussed the request to give a £5000 donation to Ilminster Library. Discussions included should it be a grant, a subsidy or a Service Level Agreement, previous invoices have indicated the funds will be used for staff salaries, have we received confirmation that the funds will be used only for Ilminster Library, the grants policy needs to be reviewed, it is unusual to receive an unsolicited invoice, the original agreement in 2019 was only for 3 years, under the terms of our grant policy, grants can not be used for running costs.

Officers will contact Somerset Council to obtain further information.

*Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to defer this Agenda item until the February Town Council meeting when further information is available.*

Proposer Cllr Osborne Seconded Cllr MacKillop

7. Officers contacted the Operations Manager of the libraries in Somerset Council and were provided the following information for Members to consider:

Following our telephone conversation last week, I am writing to confirm that the annual contribution of £5000 from Ilminster Town Council to Somerset Council (formally Somerset County Council) is used as a contribution towards 9 extra staff hours which are deployed at Ilminster Library. This allows the library to operate at its current level of opening hours and allows staff time to run regular events and activities such as Baby Boogie on a Tuesday and Toddler Time on a Friday as well as a range of one-off events including digital, craft, and Lego acuties or author talks.

I hope you find this brief explanation helpful, however if you require any further information or wish to discuss this further, please do get in touch.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for Ilminster Town Council for their consideration and for their support over the past few years.

8. Members have a grant budget of **£10,000** of which **£2,010** has been allocated so far this financial year in grants to Ilminster Carnival Committee, Ilminster Youth Football Club, Ilminster Ukulele Club, Horton Cross Nursing Home, and the Quakers.
9. There is **£7,990** remaining in the budget. Any unallocated funds will be returned at the end of the financial year to General Reserves. This figure does not take into account any grants that have been awarded at this meeting.
10. Members may wish to agree to the request for **£5,000** contribution towards the Ilminster Library for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 or they may consider a longer term funding commitment.

Julie Earp
Deputy Town Clerk
February 2024