

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

01 SEPTEMBER 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs, Kirkbride, Ing, Thompson, Foote-Wood & Chatterjee

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk)

10. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

No apologies were received from Cllr Stenson.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be accepted.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Constitution (Members' Code of Conduct) (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members will be asked whether they have any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members are reminded that a declaration can be given later in the meeting if a need arises during discussion.

Resolved – None declared.

12. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 09 JUNE 2025 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting on the 09 June 2025 be approved as a true record.

13. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Received – Reports on the income and expenditure activity of the Council from 1 April to 31 July 2025.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

14. BUDGET 2026-27 TIMETABLE & ASSUMPTIONS

Received - A report setting out a preparation timetable for the 2026/27 budget and the pressures to be considered in preparing the budget, seeking members' views and direction on the principles to be adopted.

Resolved – That the detail within sections 2 to 5 of the report be agreed:

- (a) That the budget timetable is as detailed in Appendix A;
- (b) That pay inflation of 4% be modelled;
- (c) That non-pay inflation of 3% be assumed; and
- (d) That any proposals for new budget items be submitted by 03 October 2025.

15. WOODLEIGH

- Since the last Resources meeting repairs have been carried out to the Woodleigh offices all related to improving the plumbing.
- The annual emergency lighting and asbestos monitoring inspections are due shortly.
- Discussions have taken place with Cash Access but at this point there is nothing to refer to full council with.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

16. 2025/2026 PAY AWARD

Agreement has been reached on the pay award for local government services (Green Book) employees, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The award is an increase of 3.2% on all spine points.

Resolved – That the information is noted.

17. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2025/26

Received – Audit Plan (Internal)

Resolved – That the Audit Plan for 2025/26 completed by the council's internal auditor be approved.

BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 01 SEPTEMBER 2025

BUDGET 2026/27 – TIMETABLE & BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out a preparation timetable for the 2026-27 budget, the major pressures to be considered in preparing the budget and seeks Members' views and direction on the principles to be adopted.

2. BUDGET PREPARATION TIMETABLE

- 2.1 Preparation of the 2026-27 budget will follow a structured review of all current income, expenditure and investment and consider options put forward to meet current and future requirements.
- 2.2 At this meeting, Members will consider the overall outline budgetary position and identify growth factors to be considered in 2026-27. Individual budget headings will be examined in detail at the committee meeting scheduled for 03 November 2025, alongside proposals for additional expenditure and new projects from within the Resources portfolio. Growth items relevant to Partnership, and Services will be considered at the relevant meetings in December.
- 2.3 The Resources Committee meeting scheduled for 05 January 2026 will examine the whole of the proposed budget for 2026-27, including growth submissions from the other Committees, in the context of known national controls and predicted funding levels for 2026-27. The recommendations formulated will then be presented to the full Council meeting scheduled for 19 January 2026. The budget preparation timetable is summarised at **Appendix A**.

3. INFLATIONARY/OTHER FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The local council pay-scales are pegged to the NJC pay spine. Any agreement reached at a national level would inform rates of pay in local councils too. It may be prudent that an assumption of 4%, is built into the base-budget as a minimum. The 2025-26 settlement has been reached at 3.2%.

Non-pay inflation in the economy is currently running just over 3.8% with the Bank of England predicting it will remain over 2% target for the rest of 2025, with forecasters predicting it to peak around 4% later this year. It is still anticipated inflation will fall back toward the 2% target in 2026. Setting for the next financial year remains difficult as we are still in an unpredictable climate. It may be prudent that members consider applying a minimum 3% inflation factor to goods and services headings during the 2026-27 budget preparation. As in previous years, known specific inflationary demands will be identified against individual budget headings.

- 3.2 A number of smaller potential demands on the budget will be presented for consideration at a future meeting along with any projects emanating from paragraph 5.1 (below).

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has not at this point indicated that any capping applied to local councils for 2026-27. As they have never capped parish councils, it is unlikely this will happen.

4. UNREALISED COMMITMENTS AND KNOWN UNDERSPENDS

- 4.1 All known under-spends which have occurred on the 2025-26 budget (for reasons beyond our control and not known until after the budgetary cycle) will be taken into account when considering the recommended figure to be put forward for 2026-27.

5. PROJECTS AND GROWTH

- 5.1 All Members have been contacted by letter (**Appendix B**) to indicate any projects they wish to put forward for consideration within the 2026-27 budget. All items will be considered by the relevant committee, and then by Resources, as part of the normal budgetary process.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It is important that every effort is made at this committee meeting to consider all issues raised in this report. If this is not achieved, it will put pressure on the processes and issues to be considered at the Committee meeting scheduled for 03 November when careful consideration will need to be given to any new items or projects for onward transmission to Council.

Recommendation – That the detail within sections 2 to 5 (above) be agreed:

- (a) That the budget timetable is as detailed in Appendix A;
- (b) That pay inflation of 4% be modelled;
- (d) That non-pay inflation of 3% be assumed; and
- (e) That any proposals for new budget items be submitted by 03 October 2025.

Martin Clark
Town Clerk

2026-27 BUDGET PREPARATION TIMETABLE

Date	Committee/ Council	Action
01 September	Resources	Outline budgetary position considered.
03 November	Resources	Individual budget headings examined; growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
01 December	Services	Growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
15 December	Partnership	Growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
05 January 2026	Resources	Entire proposed 2024/25 budget examined, including growth items and new projects from all committees.
19 January 2026	Council	Recommended 2025-26 budget presented for approval.