

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

30 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Blissett (in the Chair); Councillors Harrison, Mrs Moorhouse, Kirkbride, Mrs Thompson and Sutherland.

In attendance: Cllr Miss Blissett; one member of the press.

Officers: Mr King (Town Clerk) and Mrs Woodward (Deputy Clerk).

27. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

None.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 12/May/17 refers), Members were asked whether they had 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 were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion.

29. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 4 SEPTEMBER 2017 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

30. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Submitted – a report outlining budget activity for the 2017/18 financial year. Budget monitoring information was presented relating to payments and receipts for the period 1 July to 30 September 2017 and income & expenditure relating to the same period (Month 4-6, 2017/18). It was reported that reconciliation of the 2017//18 second quarter was carried out by the Chair of Resources Committee on 24 October 2017.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

31. BUDGET 2018/19 – COST CENTRE REPORT

Submitted – a report considering individual budget headings and proposing additional expenditure for 2018/19 budget. There were no Resources Committee budgetary bids submitted for consideration. Members were reminded that growth items relevant to Partnership, Planning and Services Committees would be considered at the relevant meetings in November and December. A budget statement was circulated comparing the agreed 2017/18 cost centre expenditure, half year actual expenditure and projected budget figures across all centres.

Resolved – That the detailed recommendations, as detailed below, be approved.

Cost Centre	Resolved
Mayoral Allowance (101)	£1200 – no change (Mayoral Allowance £1,000 & Deputy Mayoral Allowance £200)
Training (101)	£500 - decrease of £250
Audit Fees (101)	£1,460 – no change

Cost Centre	Resolved
Bank Charges (101)	£800 – no change
Insurance (101)	£2,200 – increase of £200
Society of Local Council Clerks (101)	£233 – increase of £8
Co. Durham Association of Local Councils (101)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018 when the correct figure is known.
Accounts Software Package (101)	£240 – no change
Travel Allowance (101)	£300 – no change
Salaries and Wages (102)	£95,952 – increase of £4,950
Local Government Pension (102)	£18,327 – increase of £946
Employer On-Costs (102)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018 when the correct figure is known.
Elections (104)	£5,000 – no change
Chains of Office (105)	£50 – no change
Woodleigh Operational Expenditure (106)	£16,000 – increase of £708
Office Rental (106)	£8,000 – no change
Business/Water Rates (106)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018 when the correct figure is known.
Civic Fund (107)	£500 – no change
Allotments (201)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Mini Golf (211)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Christmas Lights (221)	£6,500 – increase of £1,000.
Play Areas (231)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Dog Fouling (281)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Wednesday Market (291)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Floral and Open Spaces (311)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Castle & Market Cross Floodlighting (321)	£700 – no change
War Memorials (331)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.

Cost Centre	Resolved
Public Seats (341)	No budgetary allocation required.
Bede Road Bus Shelter (342)	£50 – no change
Community Events (354)	That the item be deferred until meeting scheduled until 15 January 2018.
Contingencies (401)	Nil – no change – (with General Reserves to be used during the year if necessary).
Blue Plaque (402)	Nil – no change
Wayfinding Units (404)	£100 – no change
Market Place Public Toilets (501)	£4,924 – no change

32. TRAINING

Pursuant to Minute 19/Sept/17 and notification of data protection law changes to be enforced from 25 May 2018, General Data Protection Regulation training would take place on 1 November to be attended by the Clerk and nominated member of this Committee. Members present were unable to attend the training.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That all Council members be contacted regarding availability to attend GDPR training on 1 November.

33. SCAR TOP BANNER FRAME

Pursuant to Minute 23/Sept/17, an application for advertising consent for various event banners advertising community events in the town was made to Durham County Council on 6 October at a cost of £192.50, out of general reserves. The determination date was 4 December. To date, Design and Conservation had commented that "*...On balance the benefits of this proposal outweigh any minor visual intrusion. There is no heritage or design objection.*"

Resolved – That the information be noted.

34. WOODLEIGH

(i) Exterior Decoration

Pursuant to Minute 24(i)/Sept/17, the appointed contractor was confident that works would commence in Spring 2018.

(ii) Windows

Following the failure and replacement of a ground floor window in March this year, a surveyor visited on 27 October and was likely to recommend remedial repairs to the windows and exterior painting to be carried out by the same contractor to be appointed by Durham County Council.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

35. GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS REVIEW

Received – a report setting out a process to identify and consider any amendments necessary to the town council's overall constitution, including its policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Council had already acknowledged that revisions would be required to its Data Protection Policy, based on the requirements of the GDPR. The Clerk would recommend revisions to a meeting in January 2018. No other wholesale revisions were proposed.

Terms of Reference were submitted for Governance Documents Task & Finish Group, with membership to be confirmed, if required, at the Resources Committee on 15 January 2018.

Resolved – (a) That the terms of reference for Governance Documents Task & Finish Group be approved in principle; and
(b) That all members be invited to highlight for review specific areas within the council's Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to the Clerk by 8 December 2017.

36. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2018 TO 2019: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

Submitted – a report considering the town council's policy position in response to a central government technical consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2018 to 2019. A consultation paper was circulated. The Clerk had made a technical response as an individual. It was, however, helpful to establish a policy position on behalf of the town council to inform any future, detailed consultation or specific proposal.

Resolved – (a) That Barnard Castle Town Council objects to the possible extension of the referendum principle to parish councils;
(b) That the sector, which is not in receipt of central government funding, requires clear guidance in good time to set budgets, which is usually in advance of (and not dependent upon) the publication of the provisional local government finance settlement;
(c) That if the government is minded to cap precept increases for local councils, that should be set against the global expenditure of the sector, with clear criteria for what might constitute 'a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities' and with consideration for the disproportionate restriction of limiting growth to a percentage in local councils with very small precepts, equivalent to the criterion applied to shire district councils (2% or £5 per Band D equivalent, whichever is greater); and
(d) That supporting revenue expenditure through the use of reserves, where there is no evidence that excessive reserves are held or clear criteria for prudent reserve levels to be held, is inappropriate and represents poor financial management.

37. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEMS 38, 39 & 40, BELOW)

Resolved – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to at items 38, 39 & 40, below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

38. PHOTOCOPIER CONTRACT - QUOTATIONS

Received – a report seeking to determine a resolution from Resources Committee as to which company should be awarded the town council's photocopier contract for the next five years from 2018 to 2023.

It was noted that the town council's current lease agreement expired on 6 February 2018. Four companies had submitted quotations.

Resolved – That the photocopier contract be awarded to Document Solutions (Samsung X4250LX) for a period of five years 2018 to 2023 at an approximate monthly cost of £97.40.

39. STAFFING

Submitted – a report requesting a variation in the contracted hours of the Services Officer (Finance) and consequent adjustment in the staffing budget and seeking approval to undertake a review of the job descriptions of all staff.

The hours of the Services Officer (Finance) post were last reviewed by Council in June 2016, at the time of the retirement of the previous post holder. Since then, there had been significant changes in the workload. An increase in hours from 25 to 30 hours per week would be consistent with the hours worked by Services Officer (Civic). The increase had been factored into the budget headings considered under item 31.

In addition, annual appraisals had been carried out by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. In line with Standing Orders, the Clerk's annual appraisal would be carried out by the end of January 2018 by the Town Mayor and Chair of Resources Committee. Given the potential changes in roles and responsibilities associated with the operation of Woodleigh and the extension of the council's responsibilities for, among other services, the Wednesday Market and community events, it was proposed that, recommendations on revisions to update all four job descriptions be brought to Resources Committee in March 2018.

Resolved – (a) That approval be given to increase the hours of the Services Officer (Finance) to 30 hours, from 1 April 2018, at a gross increase in salary cost of £2,997.52 within the cost centre total resolved at item 31; and
(b) That a review of all staff job descriptions be brought for approval at the Resources Committee to be held on 5 March 2018.

40. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SLA 2018-2021

Received – a report proposing a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the town council and Barnard Castle Christmas Lights (BCCL) for the provision of Christmas Lighting from the 2018/19 season. The draft SLA and Indemnity Agreement were circulated for consideration.

Resolved – That it be delegated to the Clerk in conjunction with Chair and Vice Chair of Resources Committee to meet with BCCL to further discuss specific terms of the SLA, to be presented for approval at Council on 13 November.