

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

10 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

In attendance: Councillors Raw and Miss Blissett (from item 26); one member of the press.

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

15. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

None

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/18 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.

17. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 4 JUNE 2018 – MINUTES

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

18. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Submitted – a report outlining budget activity for the 2018/19 financial year. Budget monitoring information was presented relating to payments and receipts for the period 1 April to 30 June 2018 and income & expenditure relating to the same period (Months 1 to 3 2018/19).

It was reported that reconciliation of the 2018/19 first quarter was carried out by the Chair on 27 July 2018.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

19. BUDGET 2019/20 – TIMETABLE & BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Submitted – a report setting out a preparation timetable for the 2019/20 budget, the major pressures to be considered in preparing the budget and seeking Members' views and direction on the principles to be adopted for 2019/20.

A budget preparation timetable was summarised as follows:

Date	Committee/ Council	Action
10 September	Resources	Overall budgetary position considered and growth factors identified.
5 November	Resources	Individual budget headings examined; growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.

Date	Committee/ Council	Action
3 December	Planning	Growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
3 December	Partnership	Growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
17 December	Services	Growth items and new projects considered within Committee portfolio.
14 January	Resources	Entire proposed 2019/20 budget examined, including growth items and new projects.
21 January	Council	Recommended 2019/20 budget presented for approval.

Information was received in July 2018 from Durham County Council stating that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant (LCTRS) would continue, in its present form, for 2019/20. The analysis forecast a net decrease in income to the town council of approximately £283 in 2019/20, at 0% growth in Band D equivalent precept. The decrease was a combination of a reduction of £608 in LCTRS and a net increase in Council Tax Yield of £325.18.

A two-year pay award was agreed between the national employers and unions and took effect from April 2018. Current indications were that an assumption of 2% should be built into the base-budget, together with incremental progression for those staff not on the top of their scale.

The rates of the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage changed every April.

Non-pay inflation in the economy was currently running at between 2 and 3%.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had indicated that capping would not be applied to local councils for 2019/20.

- Resolved** – (a) That the budget timetable be approved;
(b) That the indicative net tax base and LCTRS grant change of -£283 be noted;
(c) That pay inflation of 2% be assumed;
(d) That non-pay inflation of 2% be assumed; and
(e) That any proposal for new budget items be submitted by 19 October 2018.

20. TRAINING

It was reported that Councillor Raw had attended new Councillor training, provided by County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership on 21 August at a cost of £30.

The Deputy Clerk had registered for the CiLCA course, in advance of the registration fee increasing from 1 October 2018.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

21. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

(i) NALC changes

It was reported that NALC's GDPR toolkit had been updated to reflect the new Data Protection Act 2018 and data protection regime. The changes included the appointment of a Data Protection Officer, which was not mandatory for all local (parish and town) councils, and information about paying the Information Commissioner's data protection fee.

It was noted that, although not mandatory, any parish or town council which voluntarily appointed a 'DPO' would bring that role into the scope of the legislation. NALC therefore recommended that this was avoided. The toolkit was available in the Development Tools section of the member's area of the NALC website. The password was available to members from the town council office.

Resolved – (a) That the position be noted; and
(b) That any reference to 'Data Protection Officer', implying a post, within the council's constitution be amended to read 'Proper Officer'.

22. CONSTITUTION

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.

For 2019/20, no wholesale revisions were proposed. It was suggested that, if members requested a review of any document, or part of a document, within the constitution, the scope of that review could be reported at this committee's meeting on 5 November. If the scope of the review warranted it, the Governance Documents Task & Finish Group would be reconvened to undertake a review prior to the meeting of this committee scheduled for 4 March 2019.

The Clerk would undertake a functional review, based on any updates and guidance from NALC and elsewhere and would report these for consideration in March 2019.

Draft terms of reference of the Governance Documents Task & Finish Group were submitted for approval, as follows:

- a) The Task & Finish Group shall operate for a limited time, sufficient to review, revise and recommend changes to the town council's existing policies, its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and to recommend a Constitution to the Resources Committee and the approval of full council.
- b) Any review shall take as its starting point the approved versions of Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and shall consider those amendments, additions or deletions which would assist their application to the town council.
- c) Any review shall consider the overarching statement of the council's constitution which defines the protocols and practices of the town council's operations and provides a statement of the governing principles within which the Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations sit.

- d) A review will not alter those clauses identified in the NALC model documents as statutory, other than where discretion is allowed over (for example) amounts or delegation levels.
- e) Any review shall be completed prior to the meeting of the Resources Committee scheduled for 4 March 2019.
- f) If convened, the T&F Group shall appoint its own chair and meet as and when required to fulfil its brief, with the intention of submitting a final report on the outcome of that review to the Resources Committee on 4 March 2019. It shall be an advisory sub-committee and shall, therefore, not be a public meeting under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Resolved – (a) That the terms of reference, as set out, 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 15 October 2018.

23. WOODLEIGH

(i) Compliance Service Level Agreement

It was reported that the town council had a service level agreement (SLA) with Durham County Council to undertake compliance services, which covered legionella testing, asbestos management, the fire alarm, emergency lighting and intruder alarm. To enable comparative pricing to be obtained, notice had been given on the current agreement, with a view to new arrangements being in place from April 2019. DCC had indicated pricing for 2019, which was broadly static on the 2018/19 schedule of rates. There was no single supplier capable of providing a matched, overarching quotation. It was proposed that comparative, benchmark prices were obtained with regard to the component parts of the SLA, from sector specialists, using the provisions of sections 11a and 11j of Financial Regulations.

Comparative quotations would be brought to the meeting of Resources Committee on 5 November 2018.

(ii) Windows, Guttering and External Paintwork

Subsequent to the work to repair the windows undertaken by Durham County Council and its contractor, which was completed in the spring, a repair to a cracked pane on the ground floor was carried out on 24 July. Consequent work to replace the window vinyl was undertaken by the town council at a cost of £85, under the provisions of Financial Regulations 4a and 11a.

The condition of the gutters and downpipes remained the outstanding maintenance issue to the exterior of the building. The gutters were metal, built into the wall and required specialist attention. It was proposed to seek quotations from suitably qualified contractors to undertake a thorough overhaul of these, including repairs, replacements and decoration to make the rainwater goods watertight. It was also hoped that these quotations would be available for the November meeting.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

24. ASSET TRANSFERS

Submitted – a report setting out the reasons for delay with regards to lease arrangements between Durham County Council and the town council, summarising the relevant legislation and seeking a resolution to finalise the lease on Woodleigh Grounds.

A revised version of the Woodleigh Grounds lease was expected to be brought to Council on 24 September for review.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; and
(b) That the proposed clause covenanting the county council to undertake its duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 be required to finalise the lease.

25. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF ITEM 26, 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 item 26, below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

26. RESERVES

Resolved – That delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Town Mayor and Chair of Partnership Committee to identify options for potential spend and report to Council on 24 September.