

Witham Town Council

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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Estimates Sub-Committee**

Date: **Monday, 7th January 2019**

Present:	Councillors	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
		R.	Williams	(Vice Chairman)
		J.C.	Goodman	
		T.A.	Pleasance	

Also in attendance:	Cllr	P.R.	Barlow	
		M.	Squire	(Town Clerk)
		J.	Sheehy	(Deputy Town Clerk)
		Mrs G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs S.C. Lager who had a previous engagement.

2. INTERESTS

Councillor J.C. Goodman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minutes 5(a) and 5(b) as a Member of Braintree District Council.

3. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

4. TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY

The Town Clerk explained that there is no unilateral recommended exact level of minimum Reserves as guidance varies. The reoccurring costs across the Committees do not change greatly - it is the projects which largely affect the budget and being an ambitious Council, this requires more funding. The budget figures have changed a little

from the first draft as this is a working paper and the final conclusions will be taken to the Town Council Budget Meeting on Monday, 21st January 2019.

Members agreed the importance of the Committee's Business Plans which identify key issues to take forward and noted that generally the Town Plan does not impact on the forthcoming budget.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

5. TO RECEIVE RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Extract from the recent Braintree District Council's (BDC) Financial Strategy (2019 to 2023) Report on the 10th December 2018
- (b) Precept letter dated 11th December 2018 from BDC
- (c) E-mail from National Association of Local Councils (NALC) dated 13th December 2018

Members had read and reviewed the above extracts.

RESOLVED That the documents be received and noted.

6. ESTIMATES 2019/2020 AND FOR THE FOLLOWING 2 YEARS

(i) **Administration/Central Services**

The budget for Central Services Expenditure was received.

Members discussed the implications of staff changes and the need for a new photocopier. The Deputy Town Clerk hoped to persuade more Members to use digital formats rather than hard copies. Some postage costs would be saved by setting up bank transfers and Direct Debit rather than sending cheques. The Town Clerk said that with new Members post-election May 2019 and inevitable new staff members required, an uplift in training cost for both members and staff would be required.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That budget for Central Services for 2019/2020 be accepted, and the forecasts for the following two years be noted –

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries, tax and national insurance	£148,526	£152,982	£157,571
Pensions	£31,350	£32,290	£33,259
Town Hall	£31,000	£31,500	£32,000
Travel Expenses	£600	£600	£600
Gas	£3,395	£3,497	£3,602
Electricity	£3,607	£3,715	£3,826
Repairs and Renewals	£2,000	£2,050	£2,100
Photocopying	£4,500	£4,500	£4,500

Postage	£900	£900	£900
Stationery	£1,600	£1,650	£1,700
Office Equipment	£4,031	£4,152	£4,277
Website/data	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Telephone/fax	£3,183	£3,278	£3,376
Insurance	£8,755	£9,018	£9,289
Sundry Expenses	£1,500	£1,545	£1,591
Audit & Legal	£2,000	£2,500	£3,000
Affiliation	£3,050	£3,100	£3,150
Members – conferences/training	£2,545	£1,591	£1,639
Staff – conferences/training	£2,690	£1,740	£1,793
Payroll charges	£690	£711	£732
Petty Cash	£650	£680	£710
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>£258,572</u>	<u>£263,999</u>	<u>£271,615</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Sundry Receipts	£500	£500	£500
Car Park Licence	£8,780	£8,780	£8,780
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>£9,280</u>	<u>£9,280</u>	<u>£9,280</u>
<u>Net Total</u>	<u>£249,292</u>	<u>£254,719</u>	<u>£262,335</u>

Proportioned **Costs** across Committees –

Community Committee (40%)	£103,429	£105,600	£108,646
Environment Committee (40%)	£103,429	£105,600	£108,646
Policy & Resources Committee (20%)	£51,714	£52,800	£54,323

Proportioned **Income** across Committees –

Community Committee (40%)	£ 3,712	£ 3,712	£3,712
Environment Committee (40%)	£ 3,712	£ 3,712	£3,712
Policy & Resources Committee (20%)	£ 1,856	£ 1,856	£1,856

Proportioned across Committees – **NET**.

Community Committee (40%)	£99,717	£101,888	£104,934
Environment Committee (40%)	£99,717	£101,888	£104,934
Policy & Resources Committee (20%)	£49,858	£50,944	£52,467

(ii) **Committee Bids**

Members then considered bids made by each Committees.

Community Committee

It was explained that the staffing costs for the Community Manager and Community Officer would now come under the heading of Community Centre. The Christmas Decorations budget had been increased to allow for a larger Christmas tree. It was considered that the Christmas lights might need to be changed in the near future so this had been allowed for in the 2020/2021 forecast. There was money in the budget to expand the CCTV system with an increase for the Citizens Advice and the Grant Aid budget to recognise the Witham Carnival's 90th year. Projects for the youth and the elderly would come under 'Other community support and youth engagement'. The Community Day budget had been reduced as the Town Council may use its own sound system.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the budget for the Community Committee for 2019/2020 and the forecast for the following two years be noted as –

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Town Clock	£800	0	£800
Bus shelters/seats	£500	£500	£500
Litters bins	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Christmas Decorations	£8,426	£14,650	£7,880
Christmas Dickensian Event	£320	£320	£320
Information Sales Expense	£66,150	£69,458	£72,930
<u>Community Centre</u>			
Community Information Centre	£2,000	£2,100	£2,205
Community salaries/pensions/tax/NI	£66,160	£68,806	£72,247
Community safety/CCTV	£17,474	£17,998	£18,538
Community Police Specials	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000
Community Grant Aid	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Citizens Advice	£9,000	£9,000	£9,000
Other Support and Youth Engagement	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Puppet Festival	£17,000	£17,000	£17,000
Community Day	£1,050	£1,050	£1,050
Administration/Central Services	£99,717	£101,888	£104,934
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>£306,697</u>	<u>£321,770</u>	<u>£327,404</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Christmas Dickensian Event	£320	£320	£320
Information Sales Income	£78,750	£82,688	£88,200
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>£79,070</u>	<u>£83,008</u>	<u>£88,520</u>
<u>Net Total Community Committee</u>	<u>£227,527</u>	<u>£238,762</u>	<u>£238,884</u>

Environment Committee

Members agreed that once the transfer of street lighting to LED was complete the costs of lighting would decrease. They were also conscious of the major work to trees on the River Walk still to be completed.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the budget for the Environment Committee for 2019/2020 and the forecast for the following two years be noted as –

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Equipment, supplies & maintenance	£8,500	£8,500	£8,500
Lighting maintenance and power	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800
Tree Planting	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Tree Maintenance	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Trees Commemorative/Memorial	£800	£800	£800
Open Spaces Salaries/Pensions/Tax/NI	£96,820	£99,724	£102,716
Open Spaces General	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Open Spaces River Walk specific	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Open Spaces Whetmead specific	£600	£600	£600
Open Spaces James Cooke Wood specific	£200	£200	£200
Open Spaces Closed Churchyard specific	£200	£200	£200
River Walk – extension	£1,000		
River Walk – improvements	£3,000	£3,000	
Toilet Block – Town Park	£9,000	£9,270	£9,548
Witham in Bloom displays	£11,845	£12,200	£12,566
Dog bin maintenance and servicing	£2,500	£2,575	£2,652
Devolved services ECC/BDC	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Administration/Central Services	£99,717	£101,888	£104,934
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>£257,982</u>	<u>£262,757</u>	<u>£266,516</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Trees/Commemorative/Memorial	£800	£800	£800
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>£800</u>	<u>£800</u>	<u>£800</u>
<u>Net Total Environment Committee</u>	<u>£257,182</u>	<u>£261,957</u>	<u>£265,716</u>

Policy and Resources Committee

The biggest part of the Policy and Resources budget is the Newsletter which is delivered to every household as part of the Quality Council scheme.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the budget for the Policy and Resources Committee for 2019/2020 and the forecast for the following two years be noted as –

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Mayor's Gift Fund Allowance	£100	£100	£100
Civic Receptions	£500	£500	£500
Christmas Expenses	£2,185	£2,251	£2,319
Mayor's Allowance	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
Newsletter and Publications	£9,200	£9,000	£9,000
Joint Working and BDC/ECC/Parishes	£500	£500	£500
Neighbourhood/Town/Local Administration/Centre Services	£500	£500	£500
	£49,858	£50,944	£52,467
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>£64,343</u>	<u>£65,295</u>	<u>£66,886</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Hall Hire	£8,500	£9,000	£9,500
Bank Investment Income	£2,800	£2,800	£2,800
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>£11,300</u>	<u>£11,800</u>	<u>£12,300</u>
<u>Net Total Policy & Resources Committee</u>	<u>£53,043</u>	<u>£53,495</u>	<u>£54,586</u>

(iii) **Earmarked Reserves**

Members were asked to approve transfer of reserves to and from the General Reserves.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the Earmarked Reserves for 2019/2020 and the forecast for the following two years be agreed as -

EARMARKED FUNDS SPENT DURING THE YEAR

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<u>Environment Committee</u>			
Vehicle replacement fund			£12,000
Equipment replacement	£11,000		
LED street lighting	£24,000		
River Walk – pathways, cycleways, bridges	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£45,000</u>	<u>£10,000</u>	<u>£22,000</u>
<u>Community Committee</u>			
Community safety/CCTV	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Puppet Festival	£440		
Information centre/community hub	£15,000		
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£25,440</u>	<u>£10,000</u>	<u>£10,000</u>
<u>Policy & Resources Committee</u>			
Election Expenses	£13,000		
Town Hall Development	£25,000		
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£38,000</u>		

<u>Total</u>	<u>£108,440</u>	<u>£20,000</u>	<u>£32,000</u>
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EARMARKED FUNDS TRANSFERRED FROM GENERAL RESERVE**Environment Committee**

Vehicle replacement fund	£4,300	£4,300	£4,300
Equipment replacement fund	£2,000	£4,000	£4,000
River Walk – pathways, cycleways. bridges	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000

<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£16,300</u>	<u>£18,300</u>	<u>£18,300</u>
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Community Committee

Community Safety	£16,000	£16,000	£16,000
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<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£16,000</u>	<u>£16,000</u>	<u>£16,000</u>
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Policy & Resources Committee

Election Expenses	£3,300	£3,300	£3,300
Town Hall Development	£10,000		

<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£13,300</u>	<u>£3,300</u>	<u>£3,300</u>
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<u>Total</u>	<u>£45,600</u>	<u>£37,600</u>	<u>£37,600</u>
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EARMARKED FUNDS – END OF YEAR**Environment Committee**

Vehicle replacement fund	£20,200	£24,500	£16,800
Equipment replacement fund	£6,000	£10,000	£2,000

<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£26,200</u>	<u>£34,500</u>	<u>£18,800</u>
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Community Committee

Community Safety/CCTV	£28,000	£34,000	£40,000
Community Day	£678	£678	£678

<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£28,678</u>	<u>£34,678</u>	<u>£40,678</u>
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Policy & Resources Committee

Major repairs and renewals	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Members' allowances	£3,200	£3,200	£3,200
Election expenses	£3,350	£6,650	£9,950

<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>£21,550</u>	<u>£24,850</u>	<u>£28,150</u>
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<u>Total</u>	<u>£76,428</u>	<u>£94,028</u>	<u>£99,628</u>
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(iv) **Puppet Festival**

The updated schedule was received and approved.

The Town Clerk explained that there would likely be a c£2,500 deficit after the 2019 Puppet Festival unless sponsorship is increased and /or the number of performance acts are reduced and/or the time span of the event is reduced.

RESOLVED That the updated schedule be received and approved.

7. **PRECEPT 2018/2019**

The Precept Calculations, Financial Forecasts and How Your Tax is Spent Projections were received for review.

Members said that just a 1.42% increase in the Band D tax base had been notified by Braintree District Council for the following year. The Localism Fund has now ceased but there will be a sum of £5,115 paid as part of the Council Tax Collection Surplus. To keep the precept at the same level would result in an increasing deficit in general reserves over the next 3years.

Members recognised that to achieve their ambitions to improve the River Walk, to change the Town Council street lamps to LED, to continue the extensive work to trees on the River Walk, improve CCTV coverage, to increase visitor car parking at the Town Hall and to refurbish the Information Centre into a Community Hub, the precept for 2019 would need to be increased by £6.00 at Band D.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the Precept for 2019/2020 be increased by the equivalent of £6.00, an increase to £67.70 at Band D and at an amount of £557,278 be approved.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.57 p.m.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager
Chairman

MS/GK/16.1.2019