



# Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

Minutes of the Town Council Budget and Administration Committee  
Meeting held on Monday, 26 February 2024 at 6.00pm in The Meeting  
Room, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Office, Unit 1, 82 – 88  
Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

**PRESENT:**

Councillors: R Mackenzie (Chair)  
R Driver  
M Greener  
L Hawken  
T Stewart (up to and including the Action Plan)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Gareth Davies, Town Clerk  
Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk  
Justine Walker, Administration Assistant  
Cllr G Smith  
2 members of the public

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM</b>	<b>Mover</b>	<b>Seconder</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>BA070/23</b>	<b>OPEN SESSION</b>			
	<p>Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.</p> <p>This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>An editor of a local publication enquired why the Town Council was paying for private healthcare for the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk responded that private healthcare has not been provided for any member of staff including themselves and that the arrangement referred to was for coaching. The Chair and Vice-Chair also provided a response.</p> <p>The Town Clerk updated the meeting that a press enquiry had been received as to why there were no payment or procurement reports on the agenda, the reason being that this is an Extraordinary meeting.</p>
<b>BA071/23</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Robertson.
<b>BA072/23</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>			
	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Budget and Administration Committee meeting held on Monday, 15 January 2024.	MG	LH	The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15 January 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

<b>BA073/23</b>	<b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS</b>			
	<p>(i) Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 9 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.</p> <p>(ii) To receive and consider requests from members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any items on the agenda an application for dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable members to participate in discussions and voting.</p>	N/A	N/A	i. There were no disclosures of interests.
		N/A	N/A	ii. There were no requests for dispensation.
<b>BA074/23</b>	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>			
	To discuss the strategic objectives of the Budget and Administration Committee to include a focus on how best to use the meetings during the Municipal Year.	Nem con		The Chair introduced the item and during the discussion Cllr L Hawken also contributed. The Committees were updated that the Terms of Reference (ToR) would link in with the strategic objectives and that

				<p>this Committee would look at the ToR's for Council and all Committees. Each Committee would be responsible for a consultation of their own ToR. There would be 5 meetings of this Committee each year with 4 having an emphasis on finance and 1 with an emphasis on administration.</p> <p>The Committee then <b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cllr L Hawken produce Draft ToR for circulation to Members of this Committee, and</li> <li>2. The Draft ToR be considered at the April meeting of full Council.</li> </ol>
<b>BA075/23</b>	<b>REVIEW BANKING ARRANGEMENTS</b>			
	To consider the correspondence.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members that all providers had been reviewed and that Officers recommendation would be to open a current account with Unity Trust Bank with a further investigation of savings accounts. After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to recommend to Council that the Town Council's main current account be transferred to Unity Trust Bank with further options to follow regarding savings accounts.</p>

<b>BA076/23</b>	<b>IT SAVING AND EXPENDITURE</b>			
	To consider the correspondence.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk provided an update on the background paper circulated to Members. There were a number of questions including on were figures net or gross, items without figures, training and support, security of data, backup, long-term archiving, timescales and preferences of devices used by Councillors.</p> <p>After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the direction of work undertaken by Officers.</p>
<b>BA077/23</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION STRATEGY</b>			
	To receive a verbal update.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the item and during the discussion it was noted there will be an action plan for the April meeting of Council.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding a twice-yearly newsletter posted to residents, one in March and one in September, with the potential for the monthly newsletter to become 6 weekly, to which Officers would report back to a future meeting.</p> <p>After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the update.</p>

<b>BA078/23</b>	<b>SCHEDULE OF POLICIES</b>			
	To consider whether a full review or light touch approach is needed to update the Equalities and Diversity Policy.	Nem Con		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the two documents available to Members, the current Equalities and Diversity Policy plus the Schedule of Policies and Procedures. Points raised during the discussion included clarity of the date of review of each policy, the staggering of review dates for all policies over a 3-year period and that any additional policies should be brought to this Committee in the first instance before being recommended to Council.</p> <p>After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A light touch approach is needed to update the Equalities and Diversity Policy,</li> <li>2. Cllrs R Driver and L Hawken produce an updated Policy, and</li> <li>3. Staff and Councillors are consulted on the draft proposal in time for the Policy to be brought to the AGM.</li> </ol>
<b>BA079/23</b>	<b>CIVIC REGALIA</b>			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk provided a verbal explanation of the report and Members

				asked a number of questions including on the location and formal agreements for storage. After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That in future years, the insurance for Civic Regalia be separate from other assets, and</li> <li>2. To accept the quote provided.</li> </ol>
<b>BA080/23</b>	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the item and points raised during the discussion included Corporate Actions and the removal of the word 'strategic'. After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the update.
	Cllr T Stewart left the meeting at this point.			
<b>BA081/23</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE VS BUDGET YEAR TO DATE</b>			
	To note the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk informed Councillors that more than 80% of the budget has been spent and provided updates including on the journal entries required for Pensions, Office Costs, Operational Costs, Statutory Costs, Miscellaneous Costs, Public Space Management, Local Service Offices, the

				Splash Park, Autumn Festivals, Festive Lighting, Civic Costs and Civic Events. Members raised points and asked questions on formatting of financial reports, Civic Costs / Civic Events and Riding of the Bounds. The Balance Sheet and Ear Marked Reserves were also included. After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the reports and the explanations of the Town Clerk.
<b>BA082/23</b>	<b>VIREMENT</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To consider making a virement of £7,229 from budget code 4002 (Pensions) to budget code 4611 (LS Staff Pensions).</li> <li>ii. To consider making a virement of £1,263 from budget code 4002 (Pensions) to budget code 4908 (People and Comms Pensions).</li> </ul>	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk provided an explanation that Journal Entries are required, and not Virements. After which, the Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A Journal Entry of £7,229 from budget code 4002 (Pensions) be made to budget code 4611 (LS Staff Pensions).</li> <li>ii. A Journal Entry of £1,263 from budget code 4002 (Pensions) be made to budget code 4908 (People and Comms Pensions).</li> </ul>
<b>BA083/23</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>			
	The next meeting of the committee will be held on Monday, 18 March 2024 at 6:00 pm.	N/A	N/A	Noted.



<p>The Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was appropriate to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following items of business on the grounds that public discussion may prejudice the Council's position and/or staffing issues may be discussed.</p>				
<b>BA084/23</b>	<b>PAYROLL</b>			
	To consider the documents distributed as background papers.			During discussion Members asked a number of questions.
<p>At this point it was unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> to suspend standing orders sufficiently to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 8pm.</p>				
				After which, the Committee unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> to recommend to Council approval of the costings circulated as a background paper for PAYE services.
<b>BA085/23</b>	<b>HR &amp; GOVERNANCE SUPPORT</b>			
	Future provision of HR advice.			The Committee unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> to provide guidance to Officers as to their preferred option subject to further information.