

#### Draft Budget

1. Council is invited to note that it waived its own Financial Regulations to enable it to delay the receipt of a draft budget until this meeting.
2. Council is also invited to note that the receipt of this report is preceded in the order of business by growth items brought forward by the Interim Clerk, in the interests of efficiency, and by elected members wishing to promote schemes of benefit to the whole of Berwick.
3. Members are invited to note that no formal indication has been given to your clerk as to the basis on which a budget should be prepared, save that members indicated assent, but did not formally resolve, to accept the Interim Clerk's proposal that the budget should be broadly neutral.
4. Members are invited to note that the council will face cost pressures in 2017-18, which may include increased energy prices due to changing exchange rates, incremental drift on some salaries, and the continued lack of an agreed Investment Policy or any significant contribution to income from bank interest. This means that any proposal to deliver a broadly neutral budget would require savings which have not currently been identified.

#### Reserves Policy

5. Council is invited to note the spreadsheets circulated separately. This budget has been prepared, on the advice of the External Auditor, on the basis that the budget should include all the council's income, including monies received from the Freemen of Berwick, and that the council's Medium Term Financial Plan should include an estimate for the income from the Freemen calculated on the basis of the recent trend for receipts.
6. Members have to decide the level at which they wish to fix their reserves. The level of reserves indicated in the MTFP attached includes the anticipated receipts from the Freemen of Berwick for financial year 2016-17.
7. The level of operating reserves is a matter for elected members to decide, after receiving appropriate advice.
8. There are currently undocumented risks concerning staffing matters and the poor state of the council's records and accounts that mean it is inadvisable to set the council's reserves at the lower level normally anticipated by a council of this size (20% of budget).
9. There is also the issue of the variable nature of the surplus received as income from the Freemen of Berwick; while it is probable that there has only been one year in the last 16 where no surplus has been paid, (suggested by an email from 2008 stored in the councils files) it is by no means guaranteed that the amount will remain the same each year.
10. For those reasons it is advisable to set the level of operating reserve at the very highest that can be justified, 50% of budget, subject to an agreement that the level of reserves will be decreased year on year as the result of continued work to quantify risks and clarify the basis on which the council makes provision for reserves. In the first instance this should include, in quarter 1 2017, a review of all projects that may or may not have had money set aside for their future delivery.

## Growth Items

11. Growth items not identified elsewhere include play area maintenance and inspection, which is a health and safety requirement, and future provision of play area refurbishment and maintenance. It is your officers' view that these costs should be separated from the cost of providing Local Services Officers under the existing agreement with NCC so that the cost of providing play parks is clearly reported.
12. The draft budget has been drawn up, after consultation, with a specification for Local Services Officers under a revised arrangement which sees NCC bear the risks of staff sickness and absenteeism. The cost increases under substantially to £53,155 but addresses elected members concerns about absenteeism and the degree to which risks will be distributed.
13. A further growth area is communications and engagement. Council has no budget for engagement or communications. Council has no data on how its services are perceived by the public, and no mechanism for gathering it. This is particularly relevant to environmental services and play areas. It is therefore proposed to create a budget line for communications and engagement to allow £300 for the purchase of a licence for Survey Monkey software, and £1200 for the cost of hiring photographers to document council activities and events for press releases – which will also help create a photo library that can be used to promote tourism. A further report on this process, if approved, will follow.
14. Council does not know what the Hoey report will recommend with regards to staffing levels. Council has proposals for growth in staffing from Cllr Goodyer. It is recommended that £30K be included in the budget to allow for any recommendations from the Hoey report to be considered.

## Budget

15. The draft budget spreadsheet separately circulated with these papers indicates a budget broadly likely to break even; bearing in mind that council should not set a deficit budget due to recurring costs without identifying how the deficit will be addressed in subsequent years, council is recommended to accept a draft budget indicating an increase in precept of no more than 2%.
16. The difficulties of providing a draft budget without clarity as to proposed savings and growth items, and costs / savings quantified, makes clear that council should consider resolving to receive, no later than September each year, a growth and savings report intended to inform the subsequent budget process.

## Recommendations

1. That council resolve either
  - a. To accept a draft budget indicating an increase in precept of 2%
  - b. To require the final budget to have no requirement for an increase in precept, or
  - c. To resolve what other level of increase or decrease in budget is acceptable to council.
2. To resolve to set the level of operating reserve at 50% of budget, subject to an agreement that the level of reserves will be reviewed year on year with an intention to decrease them.
3. To receive by 30<sup>th</sup> September each year a growth and savings report intended to inform the budget process.

**Estimated costs for 2017/18****217450 Partnership Agreement - Berwick Town Council**

Full time operative with seasonal operative for summer (30 weeks / 7 months)  
to provide enhancement for Berwick Town Council area

Subjective	Subjective Description	Estimate
		£
<b>STAFFING COSTS</b>		
100000	Salaries	33,121
100200	National Insurance	2,485
100300	Pension	8,909
TOTAL STAFFING COSTS		44,515
<b>NON STAFFING COSTS</b>		
130004	Vehicle Fuel	2,640
132000	Vehicle hire	4,200
140000	Equipment	500
142001	Protective Clothing	300
151000	Other Supplies and Services Expenditure	1,000
TOTAL NON STAFFING COSTS		8,640
<b>TOTAL GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>53,155</b>

**Play Park maintenance (if carried out seperately):**

Play park grass cutting (excluding westfields) - 12 cuts Apr-Sep	3120
Play park cleansing twice weekly (excluding westfields)	5700
Play park inspections (excluding westfields)	4800
Total NCC Charges for Play Park maintenance	<u>13620</u>



Council  
Item 13  
Appendix G  
Monday, 28 November 2016

Date	What decision is requested	Why does this decision need to be made	Who requested it?	When does it need to be made?	Outcome
24/10/16	Whether to consider proposals to fund a music event in Berwick in 2017	Inquiry from Berwick residents and others	TC / NCC / Berwick residents	7/11/2016	Council to receive a presentation
2/11/2016	Whether to support the provision of yacht mooring facilities on the quayside – to fund scoping reports and to further fund construction	To support economic regeneration and tourism	Request from Cllr D Blackburn	21/11/2016	
30/10/2016	Approve MTFP	Financial regs	TC	November 2016	
2/11/2016	Tourism review – to review provision of management information, resources available for tourism promotion and support for social media activity.	In order to make better use of council resources and promote tourism as a driver of regeneration	TC	November 2016	
30/10/2016	As part of budget, to approve budget allocations for clerk and deputy town clerk as full time employees	Councillor proposal	E Goodyer	December 2016	
07/11/2016	Document retention policy and procedure note	As part of risk appraisal / management	TC	December 2016	
07/11/2016	Lone worker policy	As part of risk appraisal / management	TC	December 2016	
30/10/2016	Approve budget	Financial regs	TC	December 2016	
24/10/2016	Approve Risk Management Register	To comply with Financial Regs	TC	Jan 2017	
24/10/2016	Approve Asset Register	To Comply with Financial Regs	TC	Jan 2017	
24/10/2016	Playground inspection regime 2017	Safety of playground users / risk management	TC	Jan 2017	
2/11/2016	To approve an investment strategy and list of counterparties	Financial regs	TC	Feb 2017	

2/11/2016	Pensions policy and arrangements	Legislative changes	TC	Jan 2017	
2/11/2016	Insurance policy and arrangements	Financial regs / best practice	TC	Jan 2017	
7/11/2016	Pensions policy	Legislative change	TC	Jan 2017	

## **BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Town Council Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 18 October 2016 at 6.30pm in the Ante-Room, Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: G Roughead (Chair)  
A Forbes  
C Seymour  
G Smith

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk  
2 member of the public

### **OPEN SESSION**

In the public session safety concerns were raised about young people playing on the road at the Parade.

Concerns were also raised about lack of adequate play facilities in Berwick. After discussion by Members, the Committee felt it was important that young people and school classes should be engaged, be able to contribute ideas and have a voice on regeneration of the town's play parks.

#### **P036/16 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillors I Dixon and G Hill.

#### **P037/16 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 September 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### **P038/16 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

#### **P039/16 4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

#### **P040/16 5. LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Northumberland Association of Local Councils Enews of 18 October 2016

provided a link to a news item about the Neighbourhood Planning Bill which received its second reading on Monday, unopposed. Opposition MPs used the debate to flag up concern over planning department resourcing and the legislation's absence of measures on infrastructure.

**P041/16**

## **6. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

### **16/00395/PREAPP**

**Change of use to mixed use.**

**Showroom, 7 - 11 Silver Street, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.**

**TD15 1HU**

Members had concerns with Sunday opening due to being located within a residential area.

### **16/03044/FUL**

**Proposed replacement of existing aluminium windows and front door at front of house with UPVC windows and blue composite door of a more appropriate design to suit style of house.**

**12 Warkworth Terrace, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1LE**

Members appreciated that the proposal is more in keeping with the rest of the property.

### **16/03276/BT**

**BT request to remove phone box - 01289 307066.**

**Opp 14 Highcliffe, Spittal Hall Road, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.**

The plan for a public consultation pleased Members, however, they were concerned that if the boxes were taken away they could affect those without a telephone, especially the elderly. Members would also like more details on the public consultation as well as what is classed as low usage.

### **16/03277/BT**

**BT request to remove phone box - 01289 307199.**

**PCO Newfields, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.**

The plan for a public consultation pleased Members, however, they were

concerned that if the boxes were taken away they could affect those without a telephone, especially the elderly. Members would also like more details on the public consultation as well as what is classed as low usage.

**16/03278/BT**

**BT request to remove phone box - 01289 331289.**

**Opposite Homebase, Northumberland Road, Tweedmouth,  
Northumberland.**

The plan for a public consultation pleased Members, however, they were concerned that if the boxes were taken away they could affect those without a telephone, especially the elderly. Members would also like more details on the public consultation as well as what is classed as low usage.

**16/03307/FUL**

**Proposed renewal of bay window to existing kitchen.**

**The Cloisters, 12 Ravensdowne, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.  
TD15 1HX**

Members were curious as to whether the building was listed, and therefore, should there also be a Listed Building Consent application.

**16/03363/FUL**

**Proposed replacement of front door.**

**85 Low Greens, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1LX**

No objection.

**16/03420/ADE**

**Advertisement consent for branded signage for new Premier Inn hotel.**

**Playhouse Cinema, Sandgate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.**

**TD15 1EP**

No objection.

**16/03505/FUL**

**Retrospective change of use of upper floors, from office to residential, to**



form 2-bed roomed maisonette.

**65 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1BA**

No objection.

**16/03565/FUL**

**Installation of 3no. exterior LED lights for Premier Inn hotel building.**

**Playhouse Cinema, Sandgate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.**

**TD15 1EP**

No objection.

**16/03590/FUL**

**Proposed refurbishment & sub-division of existing retail unit to form two separate units.**

**42 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1BN**

Members were glad that the space is to be used.

**16/03635/FUL**

**Construction of single storey extension at south side of the property.**

**27 Church Road, Tweedmouth. TD15 2AN**

No objection.

**16/03653/FUL**

**Renovation, remodelling & new extension to two dwelling houses, demolition of existing dwelling house to rear & erection of new dwelling house on the same footprint.**

**23 Tweed Street, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1NG**

No objection.

**P042/16**

## **7. PLANNING APPLICATION DECISION LIST**

The decisions provided in the attachment were noted.

**P043/16**

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting would be Tuesday, 22 November 2016 at 6.30 pm.