



Penrith Town Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the:

FULL COUNCIL

Held on:

Monday 28 January 2019, 6.00pm - 8.00pm, Rm.2 Parish Centre, St Andrews Place.

PRESENT:

Cllr. Baker	Penrith Pategill Ward
Cllr. Bowen	Penrith East Ward
Cllr. Burgin	Penrith South Ward
Cllr. Jackson	Penrith North Ward
Cllr. Kenyon	Penrith North Ward
Cllr. Lawson	Penrith Carleton Ward
Cllr. Whipp	Penrith North Ward

Town Clerk

Responsible Finance Officer

PENRITH TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MINUTES
MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2019

Members received a presentation from Eden Arts.

PTC18/81 Apologies for absence

Members received apologies from Cllr. Clark.

Cllrs. Briggs, Donald, and Thorley were absent.

PTC18/82 Declaration of interests

Members were asked to receive any declarations of interest of any disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests relating to any items on the agenda for the meeting. None identified.

PTC18/83 Requests for Dispensations

Members were asked to apply for a dispensation, if a councillor had a pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda and who wished to remain, speak and/or vote during consideration of that item. None identified.

PTC 18/84 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members authorised the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meetings of Council held on Monday 26 November 2018 and 10 December 2018 as a true record.

PTC 18/85 Public participation

a) Members noted that no requests from the members of the public had been received, to speak prior to the meeting.

b) Receive representations from:

• **Town Councillors**

Cllr. Baker submitted an unreserved oral apology to the owners of Speedwel, Eamont Bridge, for incorrectly stating that their property was uninhabited since 2015, during a representation he made at Eden District Council's Planning Committee held on 13 December 2018.

• **District Councillors** –Members noted apologies from District Cllr. Taylor.

PTC 18/85 Public participation continued

• Cumbria County Councillors (CC)

CC Cllr. Bell informed Members that the redesign of the parking and pavement area in front of Mansion House was scheduled to be carried out by the end of March 2019, subject to favourable weather conditions.

Cllr Bell informed the meeting that both she and County Cllr Carrick were concerned about improving walking routes into Town especially from Scaws down into Benson Row and Forest Lane.

CC Cllr. Carrick informed the meeting that the Parking and Movement Study for Penrith had not proceeded. CC Members have therefore taken the decision to provide an opportunity to re-scope the study in collaboration with the Town Council and Eden District Council. Cllr. Carrick hoped to include in the new scope of the Parking and Movement Study, the CCC Sustainable Movement Study and actions/policies from the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Carrick commissioned in 2018 a survey for the Salkeld Road junction and a revised scheme would be consulted locally. The work had already been planned into the annual CCC managed improvements scheme.

CC Cllr. Whipp was pleased to inform the meeting that the Town Council had achieved a grant for Fairhill Recreation Ground via the District Council.

Cllr. Whipp informed Members that CCC administration were exploring ways to devolve activities to the Local Area Committee and the way that Local Area Committees operate was under review and likely to evolve.

Within the Eden Local Area Committee, three working groups had been established for rural matters, children and younger adults and Penrith.

CC Cllr. Whipp, shared the first Penrith Business Improvement District newsletter for the current tenure.

c) Mayors Report

The Mayor attended the Eden District Council (EDC) Chairman's Christmas Carol Service. The Mayor thanked the EDC Chairman for organising the event and was delighted to have been asked to present Lanyards and Caps to North Lakes School Mini Police cadets. The Mayor was pleased to be asked to open a new shop "Another Weigh" and planted a tree with MP Rory Stewart in Castle Park for the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy.

The Mayor expressed congratulations and appreciation to the Fairhill Community Group, local residents and the Council's Services and Contracts Manager for securing a grant from Eden District Council for further site improvements.

PTC18/86 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Members would consider if agenda item 14 should be considered without the presence of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 2 prior to the matter being considered.

PTC18/87 Members' Briefing

Members received oral reports from meetings and briefings:

- Cllr. Bowen attended the monthly Scaws residents meeting.
- Cllr. Burgin attended the CALC executive meeting.

PTC18/88 Matters from Finance Committee

Member considered the following reports and recommendations from the Council's Finance Committee:

a) Draft Budget 2019-20

The Chairman proposed the budget: **Appendix 1**

Members considered the proposed budget and precept: **Appendix 2**

RESOLVED THAT:

The draft budget for 2019-20 including staff pay awards for 2019-20 as appended to Council members as a pink confidential report be approved.

b) Precept Application

RESOLVED THAT:

The Council request Eden District Council to pay the sum of £437,813 to Penrith Town Council as its precept for the year 2019/20.

c) Draft Policies

RESOLVED THAT:

The following policies be approved as recommended by the Finance Committee:

- I. Reserves Policy.
- II. Investments Policy.

PTC18/89 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Members noted an oral update from Cllr. Baker.

PTC18/90 Cumbria County Council Consultation

Members noted that the Council's committees considered the CCC survey for the Joint Health and Well-being Strategy and the committees' and that there were no comments returned.

PTC 18/91 Local Council Award Scheme

Members considered registering for the Local Council Award Scheme, Quality Gold Award, in May 2019, assuming the Council would be then eligible to apply.

RESOLVED THAT:

- I. That in May 2019, if the Town Council met the eligibility criteria of 11 out of 15 members being elected or elected un-opposed to Council, and the Council had retained a CiLCA qualified clerk, the Council would confirm its eligibility by resolution and apply for the National Association of Local Councils, Quality Gold Award.
- II. That if the Council had insufficient elected members to qualify, the Council would apply for the Foundation Award.

PTC18/92 General Power of Competence

Members considered applying for the General Power of Competence in May 2019, assuming the Council met the eligibility criteria of 11 out of 15 members being elected or elected un-opposed to Council, and the Council had retained a CiLCA qualified clerk.

RESOLVED THAT:

That the Town Council apply for the General Power of Competence if after the May 2019 elections, the Council was eligible to do so.

PTC18/93 Councillor Vacancy

Members noted that Cllr. Monk resigned from Penrith West Ward and in accordance with Section 89(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, where the vacancy occurs within six months before the day on which the councillor whose office is vacant would regularly have retired, an election shall not be held under Section 89(1) of the above Act, and the vacancy would be filled at the next ordinary election of councillors on 2 May 2019. Vacancies in the office of councillor would not be filled by co-option prior to the 2 May 2019 election.

The Council submitted their thanks and appreciation to Cllr. Monk.

PART TWO

PTC18/94 Asset Management

Members considered if this item should be considered without the presence of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 2 prior to the matter being considered.

RESOLVED THAT:

The matter be considered in the absence of the press and public.

Members received an oral briefing report from officers regarding asset management issues. The briefing was for information only and no resolutions were agreed.

PTC18/95 Close of Meeting

Members noted that due to Purdah the next meeting of the Full Council would take place on Monday 20 May 2019 at 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm, Rm.2 Parish Centre, St Andrews Place. Emerging urgent matters will be dealt with by standing committees up to the date that Purdah commences.

The Annual Town Meeting would take place on Monday 29 April, 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm, Rm.2 Parish Centre, St Andrews Place.

CHAIRMAN:

DATE:

For the attention of all members of Penrith Town Council

Budget introduction from the Mayor

I am very pleased to propose the recommendations in the budget report to the Town Council. I would like to thank Councillor Kenyon, the membership of the Finance Committee and Council committees and officers for their contributions to the draft budget.

The proposed budget for 2019/20 consolidates the progress that the Council has made since its inception and lays the foundation for a sustainable financial future.

The budget will give the Council the resources and capacity to deliver a range of services that will benefit our residents and visitors. During the current financial year, we have progressed our Neighbourhood Plan to its consultation stage; the 2019/20 budget provides the funding to see this major exercise to its conclusion. Another initiative in 2018/19 was support for the Town's successful entry into the Britain in Bloom competition; this again is continued in next year's budget. The budget also creates a fund of £50,000 for activities associated with buying, surveying, legal fees, investing and managing land and property

The Town Council has actively pursued the transfer of services from Eden District Council. To date, we have taken over responsibility for Fairhill Park, Town benches, bus shelters, the Musgrave Monument and the Cornmarket Bandstand, and have entered into contracts for their maintenance. The budget includes permanent funding for these services following a reduction in the Council Tax charged by Eden District Council. Additionally, we are commencing a three-year programme to replace and standardise the benches in our care.

The budget papers include a sustainable forward plan which will increase our reserves in order to make the Council resilient in order to mitigate financial risk; this is a responsible approach in view of the new responsibilities that we are taking on.

The proposed budget results in a 2.0% increase in Council Tax, slightly below the current rate of inflation.

A typical household in Penrith, with a property valued in Band B, will see the Town Council's full Council Tax rise from £62.30 to £63.54, **an increase of less than 3p per week.**

The majority of the overall Council Tax raised in Penrith goes to Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner and Eden District Council. The Town Council's share of the total Council Tax bill is around 4%, yet we can have a far greater impact on the quality of life in Penrith than this would suggest.

We are setting a budget which provides quality services for the Town and enables the Council to plan to develop in the future from a sound financial footing.

CLLR. SCOTT JACKSON

FULL COUNCIL 28 JANUARY 2019

PROPOSED BUDGET 2019/20

AUTHOR: Jack Jones - RFO

**SUPPORTING MEMBER: Cllr Scott Jackson - Mayor
Cllr Ron Kenyon - Chairman of
Finance Committee**

ITEM NUMBER: 8a To consider budget proposals for 2019/20 and an indicative medium-term financial forecast for the period to 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town Council is recommended to:

- I. Approve the Forecast Outturn expenditure 2018/19 of £513,504;
- II. Approve the Proposed Budget 2019/20 expenditure of £460,824, representing a 2.0% increase in Council Tax;
- III. Agree the budgeted transfers to and from financial reserves and the level of those reserves;
- IV. Have regard to the advice of the Responsible Finance Officer in relation to the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of balances;
- V. Note the prospects for future years contained in the indicative Medium-Term Financial Forecast, based on continuing modest annual Council Tax increases; and
- VI. Request Eden District Council to pay the sum of £437,813 to Penrith Town Council as its precept for the year 2019/20.

1. LAW

The Town Council, as a "local precepting authority", has power to issue a precept for each financial year on the principal authority, Eden District Council. The precept or budget requirement must state the Town Council's Council Tax requirement as calculated under section 49A LGFA 1992 and such amount is payable by the billing authority.

2. LINK TO COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

SUBJECT	POWER	LEGISLATION
Setting a legal budget.	The Council is required to calculate its annual budget requirement and its resulting precept by 28 February.	Local Government Act 1992, Sections 41 and 50.

3. LINKS TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The annual budget should provide resources to deliver the Council's priorities for the financial year ahead.

4. REPORT DETAILS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Draft estimates for 2019/20 were considered by the Budget Task and Finish Group on 3 December 2018, prior to their referral to Planning and CCEG Committees.

Changes made during that process were included in the detailed estimates considered by Finance Committee on 14 January 2019 and forwarded to this meeting for approval.

This report presents the resulting Proposed Budget for 2019/20 (Appendix A), which can be financed by a modest increase in Council Tax.

Based on the assumptions described in the report, an indicative medium-term financial forecast (Appendix B) suggests that the Council will be able to set sustainable budgets for subsequent years with similar modest tax increases.

4.2 **PROPOSED BUDGET 2019/20 - APPENDIX A**

The statement at **Appendix A** shows the following detailed information for the Council's Committees and services:

- a) The Actual Outturn for 2017/18, for reference only as many headings are not directly comparable with subsequent years.
- b) The Amended 2018/19 Budget, which represents the Approved Budget as supplemented by the approved carry forward of £66,000 of unspent 2017/18 budgets.
- c) The Forecast Outturn for the current year, which largely replicates the Amended Budget.

Members will appreciate that there is some uncertainty over whether the budgeted expenditure will be achieved, particularly budgets such as the Neighbourhood Plan and Grants, however Officers believe that it is appropriate to retain the full amended budget.

Both CCEG and Planning Committees have requested that any outturn underspendings are allowed to be carried forward into 2019/20.

The Budget Task and Finish Group has advised that these requests should be reconsidered later in this financial year.

Other than monies earmarked for Castle Park, at present, no definite underspending of either Committee's budget has been identified.

Members will recall that approval to carry forward unspent provisions is not automatic as it would require an exception to Financial Regulations, which state that outturn underspendings should be retained in general reserves.

Total outturn expenditure for 2018/19 of £513,504 is forecast to increase by £21,707 from the Amended Budget, for the following reasons:

	£	£
Expenditure per Amended Budget 2018/19		491,797
Castle Park Development Group budget slipped to 2019/20 (prior to re-allocation).	(30,000)	
Salaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 pay award budgeted in contingencies • Recalculation of NI and superannuation to actual levels. 	3,727 1,781	
Additional IT/Data Protection expenditure to meet GDPR requirements.	2,720	
Reduction of Repairs and Renewals budget to part-year provision.	(4,000)	
Creation of an Acquisitions Reserve.	50,000	
Reduction of Contingency budget to part-year provision.	(2,796)	
Other minor variations (net)	275	
		21,707
Forecast Outturn Expenditure 2018/19		513,504

- d)** The Proposed Budget for 2019/20, allows for a continuation (standstill) budget that identifies and provides for the current committed level of service to be maintained. This involves the current year's budget being adjusted to remove any one-off items (principally the brought forward underspendings from 2017/18) and to include the estimated costs of contractually committed changes to expenditure or income; inflationary increases have only been allowed where necessary. The agreed budget process requires growth items (service development proposals) to be identified separately from the base budget. Three growth proposals have been made; as these can be accommodated within the proposed budget, they have been included within the summary budget.

The proposed precept for 2019/20 is £437,813; the increase of £20,074 from the 2018/19 figure can be explained as follows:

	£	£
2018/19 Precept		417,739
Planning Committee: removal of £11,000 brought forward from 2017/18 and £10,000 reduction to reflect less involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan	(21,000)	
Events Grants: Planned reduction of £14,000 in net budget, offset by £7,000 transferred from Inward Investment	(7,000)	
Greening: Removal of £15,000 brought forward from 2017/18 and £500 planned reduction, offset by £3,000 transferred from Inward Investment	(12,500)	
Re-allocation of Inward Investment budget	(10,000)	
Planned increase in Grants budget	4,500	
Salaries:		
• 2018 and 2019 pay awards	7,529	
• Incremental advances	4,958	
Removal of one-off Armistice Centenary Fund budget	(10,000)	
Provision for May 2019 Elections	5,420	
Reduction in IT/Data Protection expenditure following GDPR implementation	(1,000)	
2019/20 Growth Items	6,800	
Adjustment to contribution from General Reserve, mainly reflecting the use in 2018/19 to meet 2017/18 carried forward budgets	50,969	
Other minor variations (net)	1,398	
		20,074
Proposed Precept 2019/20		437,813

e) The position on the Council's three reserves over the two financial years.

f) The resulting Council Tax based on the budgets for the two financial years, taking account of the notified Council Taxbase for 2019/20.

4.3 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST - APPENDIX B

Appendix B shows an indicative forecast of income and expenditure for the years 2019/20 to 2023/24, based on the figures in the 2019/20 Proposed Budget. These are adjusted for planned variations, with inflation being allowed for as a global figure. The forecast includes a small allowance for growth items in the later years; aspirations beyond this allowance would have to be funded by a Council Tax increase or by the reduction or redirection of budgets.

4.4 DETAILED BUDGETS

The following commentary provides details of the individual estimates within the Proposed Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Forecast.

a) INCOME

Eden DC have confirmed that the Council Taxbase for 2019/20 has been set at 5,358.79. This represents a welcome increase of 2.8% over the current year's Taxbase of 5,214.83. EDC have also notified the Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant of £7,940 for 2019/20, a small reduction of £118.

The precept income of £437,813 for 2019/20 is based on a 2.0% increase in Council Tax and the notified Council Taxbase. This will be sufficient to provide for the recommencement of a phased contribution to the General Reserve. The Forecast projects income which will allow sustainable budgets, based on the assumptions described later in this report.

b) PLANNING COMMITTEE

The 2018/19 Forecast Outturn of £41,000 maintains the Amended Budget provision (which included £11,000 brought forward from 2017/18), on the assumption that the Neighbourhood Plan will progress early in 2019. The 2019/20 budget is reduced to £20,000 for ongoing costs related to the Plan, after which a £10,000 residual budget is assumed for future years.

c) CCEG COMMITTEE

The Committee's 2018/19 Budget benefited from a total of £45,000 unspent provision from 2017/18; this has been retained in the year's Forecast Outturn then removed from the 2019/20 Proposed Budget.

Sports & Recreation/Town Projects

The one-off full budget of £30,000 funding towards the Castle Park Development Group has been slipped to 2019/20 and re-allocated to Town Projects. This deferral was proposed by the Budget Task & Finish Group, following which CCEG Committee suggested retitling the Sport and Recreation budget as Regeneration.

Officers believe that a more appropriate title would be Town Projects, as the Town Council does not have a statutory role in regeneration.

The background to the budget is that Members considered a request dated 03 November 2016 to support the Castle Park Development Group's Heritage Lottery Fund Application by match funding Eden District Council's contribution of £167,000. Council resolved (minute CCEG/16/62 Castle Park Development Group):

- i. That match funding of £15,000 be earmarked for 2017/18 and retained by the Council in the Council's reserves until the outcome of the HLF bid is known.*
- ii. That match funding of £15,000 be earmarked for 2018/19 and retained by the Council in the Council's reserves until the outcome of the HLF bid is known.*
- iii. That if the HLF bid is not successful the retained reserves of £30,000 be awarded to Castle Park."*

The Town Council is awaiting further communication from Eden District Council as to what its plans are for progressing the Castle Park Vision Plan. The Town Council is also in the process of developing its own projects for the Town. All projects and expenditure will need to be approved by the CCEG Committee prior to commencing.

Arts & Entertainment

The Events Grants budget is reduced from £60,000 to £30,000 for 2019/20 onwards; the reduction reflects the removal of the £20,000 brought forward and a planned decrease of £17,000, however a transfer of £7,000 from Inward Investment will top-up the budget. In addition, the Proposed Budget shows the termination of the £23,000 devolved grants income from Eden DC.

Environment

The Committee has requested that the two budget headings of Penrith in Bloom and Britain in Bloom be combined and described as "Greening". For convenience, this change has been made in the descriptions in the 2018/19 Amended Budget onwards.

The combined budget is reduced to its "normal" level of £18,000 for 2019/20 onwards, by the removal of £10,000 brought forward and £5,000 one-off budgets, however a further £3,000 has been transferred from Inward Investment. The Community Gardeners/Greening 2019/20 budget is similarly reduced by a non-recurring amount of £500.

Tourism

In 2019/20, the £10,000 budget for Inward Investment has been re-allocated to Events Grants £7,000 and Greening £3,000.

Grants

Last year's Medium-Term Financial Forecast proposed a £4,500 increase in the Grants budget in 2019/20; this has been included in the Proposed Budget and maintained in subsequent years.

Corporate Communications

Following a request from Members, the majority of the Corporate Communications budget has been moved from the Finance Committee to the CCEG Committee budget, on the basis that the Community Engagement Officer reports to that Committee. This change, affecting all detailed headings other than Signage, has been made for the statements in both Appendix A and B.

The Website Proposed Budget for 2019/20 includes £250 which had inadvertently been omitted, while the 2018/19 Forecast Outturn for Community Engagement has been increased by £450 to cover expenditure on the Newsletter. Otherwise the only variations are due to inflation.

d) FINANCE COMMITTEE

Staffing

The 2018/19 Forecast Outturn for Salaries is based on September 2018 actual expenditure, projected to the year end.

The 2019/20 Proposed Budget includes the known 2.0% pay award and staff incremental advances.

Increments are included for subsequent years, while pay awards are provided as a global sum.

Accommodation

Existing accommodation arrangements are assumed to continue into the future; the Budget will need to be adjusted for any changes to these arrangements when they can be quantified.

Civic Functions

The £10,000 budget for the Armistice Centenary Fund is removed in the Proposed Budget; the only other change is a small increase in the Civic Regalia budget.

Cost of Democracy

Expenditure of £5,420 is provided for the 2019 and 2023 Elections; this assumes that all seats are contested, with premises costs shared with Eden DC.

IT

In the 2019/20 Budget, an allowance of £1,000 has been transferred from the GDPR budget to meet the costs of compliance with that legislation.

Devolved Services

The Forecast Outturn for 2018/19 provides for the latest estimated costs and grant income for assets already transferred from Eden DC and those which could reasonably be transferred in the remainder of the financial year. Previous plans allowed for Toilets to be transferred in 2018/19; the latest position is that Council has resolved not to transfer the toilets yet has agreed to maintain a dialogue with Eden District Council to consider future toilet provision. As a result, the medium-term forecast now provides for a possible transfer in 2020/21, the earliest practical start date.

Expenditure on all assets is continued into future years, with grant tapering out on a phased basis.

- **Allotments**

The allotments are managed by the Penrith Allotment Association and the Council receives a rental income of £450 per annum. A break-even budget is assumed on the basis that the Town Council may incur some expenditure; this assumption is projected forward into subsequent years.

- **War Memorial**

An extra £300 is included in 2018/19 for planting and a further £300 in 2019/20 for flower beds.

- **Benches**

The 2018/19 Forecast expenditure reflects the late transfer of the benches to the Town Council; for 2019/20 onwards the full expected annual cost is shown.

- **Bandstand**

The 2018/19 Forecast Outturn has benefited from an additional £1,524 grant from Eden DC, which will continue on a tapering basis into 2019/20 onwards.

- **Fairhill Park**

The 2018/19 Approved Budget provided for £13,000 expenditure and £9,750 grant income; these estimates have been revised to £4,184 and £13,218 respectively in the Forecast Outturn. For 2019/20, estimated expenditure is £3,570 and income £9,910.

- **Coronation Garden**

Previously the expenditure on the Garden has been estimated as £1,100; this has been revised to £2,000 in each year, however it is now probable that it will not transfer until 2019/20.

- **Fairhill UU Planting Maintenance**

The provisional estimate of maintenance work is £1,310 from 2019/20 onwards. The Council has received £4,000 income from United Utilities, which it is assumed will be used in four annual instalments of £1,000 to offset the expenditure.

- **Fairhill Site Improvements**

The Council has received £4,500 income following the sale of land to United Utilities; it is assumed that this will be spent on improvements in 2019/20.

- **Signage**

Most of the Corporate Communications budgets have been transferred to CCEG Committee, leaving the signage budget of £750 in Finance Committee, within the Devolved Services heading.

- **Community Caretaker**

The 2018/19 Forecast Outturn introduces the £4,000 part-year costs of the new contract; this is increased to £8,200 from 2019/20 onwards.

- **Contribution to Devolution Reserve**

The 2018/19 Approved Budget set a target of £45,594 for Devolved Services, being the reduction in Special Expenses charged by Eden DC. This target has been increased by £750 to £46,344 as a result of the Signage budget being added to the Devolved Services heading. In the early years to 2022/23, it is forecast that the total cost of services will be lower than £46,344 and that the difference is contributed to the Devolution Reserve. After 2022/23, the reducing grants from Eden DC mean that the total costs will exceed the £46,344 target and so no contribution will be made to the Reserve.

Data protection (GDPR)

The 2018/19 costs of GDPR compliance are forecast as £3,500, compared to the £2,000 budget. For 2019/20 onwards, ongoing costs of £1,000 have been consolidated into the IT budget.

Other Overheads

Most budgets have been repeated with inflation where appropriate. The Printing, Postage and Stationery budget has been increased by £500 in each year to reflect usage. The 2018/19 Outturn for Legal Fees is expected to be £500 higher than budget due to extra work relating to Allotments.

Finally, the 2019/20 Subscriptions budget has been revised to £2,000 to allow for increases in LGA, CALC and the application costs associated with the Local Council Award Scheme Gold award.

Repairs & Renewals

There has been minimal expenditure on repairs and renewals in the year to date, so the outturn is shown as £1,000; the budget reverts to its full £5,000 for 2019/20 onwards.

e) PROPOSED GROWTH ITEMS

Three growth proposals have been made during the budget process, as follows. Additionally, the medium-term forecast allows for modest additional growth for 2020/21 onwards:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Youth Forum Event: Venue hire, publicity, refreshments, etc	500	-	-	-	-
CILCA Training: Services & Contract Manager	1,300	-	-	-	-
Benches: Replacement programme	5,000	5,000	5,000	-	-
Allowance for future growth	-	3,000	3,000	6,000	5,000
Total	6,800	8,000	8,000	6,000	5,000

f) CONTINGENCY

The contingency provision is reduced to £2,000 for the remainder of 2018/19, then reverts to £5,000 for subsequent years.

g) INFLATION

Anticipated price inflation has been included in the detailed budgets for 2019/20. For 2020/21 onwards, the Forecast allows for pay and price inflation at a rate of 2.25% pa.

4.5 **RESERVES**

The Proposed Budget and Medium-Term Forecast develop the existing plans for building up reserves, as follows:

Acquisitions Reserve

Council on 26 November 2018 approved a scheme of delegation for land and property, which included the allocation of “up to £50,000 for a Capital Programme to support the activities associated with buying, surveying, legal fees, investing and managing land and property”. In order to facilitate this decision, an amount of £50,000 has been transferred to create a new Acquisitions Reserve in the 2018/19 Forecast Outturn.

Members should note that the Reserve’s balance is shown as £50,000 throughout the years of the Medium-Term Forecast. This will clearly not be the case as the intention is to spend the funds, however their use cannot be built into the budget until a spending programme is formulated.

General Reserve

The Amended Budget for 2018/19 provided for £66,000 to be used from the General Reserve to fund the carry forward of unspent budgets from 2017/18; this figure has been revised to £87,667 in the Forecast Outturn. The main reasons for the increase are the £50,000 contribution to the Acquisitions Reserve, offset by the deferral of the £30,000 budget previously allocated to the Castle Park Development Group.

The Council has had a target of increasing the General Reserve to a balance equivalent to 50% of its forecast net expenditure by 2022/23. In preparing the Proposed Budget, it became apparent that the transfer of £50,000 to the Acquisitions Reserve, and the consequent reduction in the General Reserve, would require unpalatable increases in Council Tax to achieve this timescale. The reserve’s target has therefore been revised to reach 50% of net expenditure in 2023/24. This slower accumulation of the General Reserve is acceptable as in the early years the Devolution Reserve is expected to be buoyant.

For 2018/19, there was a “holiday” from the required contribution to achieve this; the Proposed Budget and Medium-Term Forecast reinstate the transfer to the Reserve, on a phased basis calculated from a reasonable annual increase in Council Tax. The alternative “straight line” phasing of contributions towards the target would have required unreasonable Council Tax increases over the period of the Forecast.

The target for 31 March 2024 of £230,785 can be met, as shown in Appendix B.

Devolution Reserve

As noted above, the Reserve will be built up from contributions from the Devolved Services budget heading until the total cost of those services reaches £46,344. Appendix B shows that the final contribution will be in 2022/23, when the Reserve will have a balance of £152,791. Again, this is a relatively artificial figure as there are likely to be demands on the funds before 2023. Given the uncertainties and risks involved in taking over responsibility for devolved assets, at this stage no decision should be made on the use of the reserve, which could be to meet unexpected expenditure, improve assets or mitigate rises in Council Tax.

4.6 COUNCIL TAX

The current year's Band D Council Tax is £80.10 per property. The Proposed Budget for 2019/20, including the notified Council Taxbase, would result in the Tax increasing by £1.60 to £81.70, a rise of 2.0%. This means that a household in a Band D property paying full Council Tax will see a rise of 3p per week. It is considered that this is an acceptable increase, particularly as inflation (measured by CPI) is currently 2.3%.

Central government retains the ability to limit Council Tax increases proposed by local Councils; this can be imposed by requiring a referendum to be held to ascertain the taxpayers' opinion. For 2018/19, the Government deferred the setting of referendum principles for town and parish councils for three years, subject to them exercising "restraint". Its latest consultation on local government finance confirms this conditional deferral, referencing the national average increase of 4.9% in 2018/19, compared to 6.3% in the previous year.

Looking ahead, the Medium-Term Forecast at Appendix B shows that the General Reserve target of £230,785 at 31 March 2024 can be met by a 2.0% increase in Council Tax in each of the years 2019/20 to 2023/24.

Although the Forecast assumes only a small allowance for new budget growth, based on continuing modest increases in Council Tax, it indicates that sustainable budgets are possible over the medium-term without substantial budget reductions being required.

5. ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

Legislation requires major precepting and billing authorities to “have regard” to the advice of their chief finance officer relating to the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of financial reserves when setting its budget requirement. Although this duty is not extended to local councils, it represents good practice which should be followed, and it has been incorporated in the draft Reserves Policy.

The RFO’s advice is that the Council’s estimates contained in the Proposed 2019/20 Budget are sufficiently robust to enable the Council to set its budget for the year. In particular:

- The estimates provide for existing committed levels of service, based on known expenditure and trends, and for agreed growth items;
- Inflationary pay scale increases and incremental advances effective from 1 April 2019 are known and have been incorporated in the estimates;
- Appropriate allowance has been made for potential future non-pay inflation;
- Contingency provisions have been made for unforeseen expenditure;
- Operational risks are identified, assessed and managed, with appropriate insurance cover obtained where required;
- A prudent approach has been taken to the generation of income; and
- In financial terms, the Council has matured since its creation and has a good record of sound budget and financial management.

Councillors’ attention is specifically drawn to the following risk factors:

- Although the proposed budget allows for the certain effects of the 2019 pay award; additional demands made on staff which cannot be accommodated within their contractual working week will have to be met from existing budgets as officer support.
- The risk of transferring assets from Eden DC is mitigated by the availability of devolution grants and the availability of budgeted monies earmarked for the Devolution Reserve.
- In the event of any of these assumptions proving to be inadequate, there is a general contingency budget of £5,000, which would be used before resorting to a withdrawal of funds from reserves.

Finally, the Treasurer advises that the Council's budgeted reserves, being consistent with the Reserves Policy, are adequate for the 2019/20 financial year and as the basis for subsequent years.

Although the proposed budget results in a lower General Reserve than its opening level and the medium-term prospects lengthen by one year the planned period taken to reach its target level, this is more than compensated in 2019/20 by the balances in the Devolution and Acquisitions Reserves.

The overall picture is therefore one of a sound financial position.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report deals solely with financial issues.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	CONSEQUENCE	CONTROLS REQUIRED
The Council sets an invalid or inadequate budget.	An inability to raise a valid precept or insufficient resources to deliver the Council's objectives.	A robust budget process.

8. APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT

- 2019/20 Proposed Budget
- Medium-Term Financial Forecast 2019/20 to 2023/24

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2019/20 Budget Working Paper file
- Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation 2019/20

APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20

APPENDIX A

ACTUAL 2017/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19		BUDGET HEADING	FORECAST 2018/19		APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20	
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
			INCOME				
			Precept:				
372,145		417,739	Council Tax		417,739		437,813
7,031		8,058	EDC - CTRS Grant		8,058		7,940
			Other Income:				
0		0	Investment Interest		30		30
0		0	Miscellaneous Income		10		10
379,176		425,797	TOTAL INCOME		425,837		445,793
			EXPENDITURE				
			PLANNING COMMITTEE:				
6,335		8,000	Officer Support		8,000		0
7,420		9,500	Planning Consultancy		9,500		0
859		23,500	Consultation		23,500		0
0		0	Block Allocation		0		20,000
14,614		41,000	Planning Committee Total		41,000		20,000
			CCEG COMMITTEE:				
			Sports & Recreation:				
5,000		30,000	Castle Park Development Group		0		0
0		0	Town Projects		0		30,000
			Arts & Entertainment:				
5,785	5,000		Officer Support	5,000		5,000	
34,500	60,000		Events Grants	60,000		30,000	
(24,000)	(23,000)		Devolved Events EDC Grant Income	(23,000)		0	
16,285		42,000			42,000		35,000

ACTUAL 2017/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19		BUDGET HEADING	FORECAST 2018/19		APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20	
	£	£		£	£	£	£
8,328	33,000		Environment: Greening	33,000		21,000	
163	1,000		Community gardeners/greening	1,000		500	
8,491		34,000			34,000		21,500
12,987		10,000	Tourism: Inward Investment		10,000		0
31,250		27,500	Grants		27,500		32,000
2,974	750		Corporate Communications: Advertising	750		770	
876	750		Website	750		1,020	
0	1,250		Community Engagement	1,700		1,780	
0	1,000		Press Support	1,000		1,040	
3,850		3,750			4,200		4,610
77,863		147,250	CCEG Committee Total		117,700		123,110
			FINANCE COMMITTEE:				
			Staffing:				
95,826	148,394		Salaries	150,900		156,010	
8,549	8,904		National Insurance	13,960		14,450	
18,772	29,069		Superannuation	26,340		27,260	
1,422	2,000		Training & Expenses	2,000		3,300	
124,569		188,367	Sub-Total		193,200		201,020
			Accommodation:				
7,076	7,500		Rent	7,500		7,700	
198	1,800		Heat, Light & Water	1,800		1,850	
300	600		Service Charges	800		650	
0	210		Room Hire	210		220	
0	300		Insurances	300		330	
0	0		Letting Income	(100)		(100)	
7,574		10,410	Sub-Total		10,510		10,650

ACTUAL 2017/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19		BUDGET HEADING	FORECAST 2018/19		APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20	
	£	£		£	£	£	£
1,746	1,500		Civic Functions:				
74	1,000		Civic Functions	1,500		1,550	
115	500		Mayoral Expenses	500		1,000	
318	300		Deputy Mayor's Expenses	500		500	
0	10,000		Civic Regalia	300		400	
2,253		13,300	Armistice Centenary Project Fund	10,000		0	
			Sub-Total		12,800		3,450
			Cost of Democracy:				
187	300		Annual Meeting	300		300	
0	0		Elections	0		5,420	
54	200		Members' Expenses	200		200	
1,304	500		Notice/Honours Board	300		500	
1,545		1,000	Sub-Total		800		6,420
15,413		14,280	IT		15,500		15,280
			Devolved Services:				
(1,400)	(1,400)		Bring Site	(1,400)		(1,400)	
2,387	450		Allotments	0		0	
(100)	25		War Memorial	325		650	
0	375		Benches	(344)		870	
0	195		Bus Shelters	(677)		(310)	
0	558		Bandstand	(966)		(170)	
0	202		Monument	110		290	
0	3,250		Fairhill Park	(9,034)		(6,340)	
0	0		Toilets	0		0	
0	0		Play Areas	0		1,100	
0	0		Coronation Garden	900		1,175	
0	0		Fairhill United Utilities Planting Maintenance	0		310	
0	0		Fairhill Site Improvements	(4,500)		4,500	
1,486	750		Signage	750		750	
0	0		Community Caretaker	4,000		8,200	
3,280	0		General	0		0	
0	41,939		Contribution to Devolution Reserve	57,180		36,719	
5,653		46,344	Sub-Total		46,344		46,344
1,595		2,000	Data Protection (GDPR)		3,500		0

ACTUAL 2017/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19		BUDGET HEADING	FORECAST 2018/19		APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20	
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
			Other Overheads:				
2,216	1,800		Printing, Postage & Stationery	2,300		2,300	
1,043	1,500		Audit Fees	1,500		1,600	
1,606	2,300		Insurance	2,300		2,300	
(320)	0		Bank Charges & Interest	100		100	
6,588	7,700		Accountancy Fees	7,700		7,800	
0	3,000		Legal Fees	3,500		3,200	
0	250		Licences	250		250	
1,557	1,500		Subscriptions	1,500		2,000	
12,690		18,050	Sub-Total		19,150		19,550
36,912		5,000	Repairs & Renewals		1,000		10,000
208,204		298,751	Finance Committee Total		302,804		312,714
0		4,796	Contingency		2,000		5,000
0		0	Proposed Growth Items		0		0
0		0	Transfer to Acquisitions Reserve		50,000		0
300,681		491,797	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		513,504		460,824
			INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN GENERAL RESERVE				
78,495		(66,000)			(87,667)		(15,031)

ACTUAL 2017/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19	RESERVES:	FORECAST OUTTURN 2018/19	APPROVED BUDGET 2019/20
113,246	191,741	General Reserve: Balance brought forward 1 April	191,741	104,074
78,495	(66,000)	Increase/(decrease) in year	(87,667)	(15,031)
191,741	125,741	Balance carried forward 31 March	104,074	89,043
0	0	Devolution Reserve: Balance brought forward 1 April	0	57,180
0	41,939	Contribution from Annual Budget	57,180	36,719
0	41,939	Balance carried forward 31 March	57,180	93,899
0	0	Acquisitions Reserve: Balance brought forward 1 April	0	50,000
0	0	Increase/(decrease) in year	50,000	0
0	0	Balance carried forward 31 March	50,000	50,000
191,741	167,680	TOTAL RESERVES AT 31 MARCH	211,254	232,942

ACTUAL 17/18	AMENDED BUDGET 2018/19	COUNCIL TAX	FORECAST OUTTURN 2018/19	PROPOSED BUDGET 2019/20
£372,145	£417,739	Precept	£417,739	£437,813
5,123.00	5,214.83	Taxbase (Band D properties)	5,214.83	5,358.79
£72.64	£80.10	Council Tax	£80.10	£81.70
59.44%	10.27%	Increase (%)	10.27%	2.00%

**PROPOSED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST APPENDIX B
2019/20 TO 2023/24**

BUDGET HEADING	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£	£	£	£
Precept:					
Council Tax	437,813	452,065	466,735	481,792	497,242
EDC - CTRS Grant	7,940	7,800	7,650	7,450	7,200
Other Income:					
Investment Interest	30	30	30	30	30
Miscellaneous Income	10	10	10	10	10
TOTAL INCOME	445,793	459,905	474,425	489,282	504,482
EXPENDITURE					
PLANNING COMMITTEE:					
Officer Support	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Consultancy	0	0	0	0	0
Consultation	0	0	0	0	0
Block Allocation	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Planning Committee Total	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
CCEG COMMITTEE:					
Sports & Recreation:					
Castle Park Development Group	0	0	0	0	0
Town Projects	30,000	0	0	0	0
Arts & Entertainment:					
Officer Support	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Events Grants	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Devolved Events EDC Grant Income	0	0	0	0	0
	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Environment:					
Greening	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Community Gardeners/Greening	500	500	500	500	500
	21,500	21,500	21,500	21,500	21,500

BUDGET HEADING	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Tourism:					
Inward Investment	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000
Corporate Communications:					
Advertising	770	770	770	770	770
Website	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020
Community Engagement	1,280	1,280	1,280	1,280	1,280
Press Support	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040
	4,110	4,110	4,110	4,110	4,110
CCEG Committee Total	122,610	92,610	92,610	92,610	92,610
FINANCE COMMITTEE:					
Staffing:					
Salaries	156,010	158,720	160,190	161,170	161,170
National Insurance	14,450	14,700	14,840	14,950	14,950
Superannuation	27,260	27,640	27,820	27,990	27,990
Training & Expenses	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	199,720	203,060	204,850	206,110	206,110
Accommodation:					
Rent	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Heat, Light & Water	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850
Service Charges	650	650	650	650	650
Room Hire	220	220	220	220	220
Insurances	330	330	330	330	330
Letting Income	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	10,650	10,650	10,650	10,650	10,650
	£	£	£	£	£
Civic Functions:					
Civic Functions	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550	1,550
Mayoral Expenses	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Deputy Mayor's Expenses	500	500	500	500	500
Civic Regalia	400	400	400	400	400
Armistice Centenary Project Fund	0	0	0	0	0
	3,450	3,450	3,450	3,450	3,450
Cost of Democracy:					
Annual Meeting	300	300	300	300	300
Elections	5,420	0	0	0	5,420
Members' Expenses	200	200	200	200	200
Notice/Honours Board	500	500	500	500	500
	6,420	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,420
IT	15,280	15,280	15,280	15,280	15,280

BUDGET HEADING	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Devolved Services:					
Bring Site	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)
Allotments	0	0	0	0	0
War Memorial	650	675	700	700	700
Benches	870	1,080	1,290	1,500	1,500
Bus Shelters	(310)	50	420	780	780
Bandstand	(170)	630	1,430	2,230	2,230
Monument	290	460	630	810	810
Fairhill Park	(6,340)	(3,040)	270	3,570	3,570
Toilets	0	0	9,100	18,200	27,300
Play Areas	1,100	2,200	3,300	4,400	4,400
Coronation Garden	1,175	1,450	1,725	2,000	2,000
Fairhill United Utilities Planting Maintenance	310	310	310	310	1,310
Fairhill Site Improvements	4,500	0	0	0	0
Signage	750	750	750	750	750
Community Caretaker	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200
Contribution to Devolution Reserve	36,719	34,979	19,619	4,294	0
	46,344	46,344	46,344	46,344	52,150
Data Protection (GDPR)	0	0	0	0	0
Other Overheads:					
Printing, Postage & Stationery	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Audit Fees	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Insurance	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Bank Charges & Interest	100	100	100	100	100
Accountancy Fees	7,800	7,800	7,800	7,800	7,800
Legal Fees	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200
Licences	250	250	250	250	250
Subscriptions	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	19,550	19,550	19,550	19,550	19,550
Repairs & Renewals	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Finance Committee Total	306,414	304,334	306,124	307,384	318,610
Uplift 2019/20 price base for inflation	0	9,090	18,270	27,510	37,590
Contingency	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Allowance for Growth Items	6,800	8,000	8,000	6,000	5,000
Transfer to Acquisitions Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	460,824	429,034	440,004	448,504	468,810
INCREASE/(DECR) IN GENERAL RESERVE	(15,031)	30,871	34,421	40,778	35,672

RESERVES:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
General Reserve:	£	£	£	£	£
Balance brought forward 1 April	104,074	89,043	119,914	154,335	195,113
Increase/(decrease) in year	(15,031)	30,871	34,421	40,778	35,672
Balance carried forward 31 March	89,043	119,914	154,335	195,113	230,785
<i>Target General Reserve</i>					230,785
Devolution Reserve:					
Balance brought forward 1 April	57,180	93,899	128,878	148,497	152,791
Contribution from Annual Budget	36,719	34,979	19,619	4,294	0
Balance carried forward 31 March	93,899	128,878	148,497	152,791	152,791
Acquisitions Reserve:					
Balance brought forward 1 April	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Contribution from Annual Budget	0	0	0	0	0
Balance carried forward 31 March	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
TOTAL RESERVES AT 31 MARCH	232,942	298,792	352,832	397,904	433,576

COUNCIL TAX:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Precept	£437,813	£452,065	£466,735	£481,792	£497,242
(Band D properties)					
Taxbase	5,358.79	5,425.00	5,491.00	5,557.00	5,623.00
Council Tax	£81.70	£83.33	£85.00	£86.70	£88.43
Increase (%)	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%