

**MINUTES OF THE PART I BUDGET, STRATEGY AND PRECEPT MEETING  
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE,  
ON TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Ellis in the Chair

Councillors Atkin, Ball, Reeves and Simcock

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald

Deputy Clerk/RFO – Mrs. C. Caddock

Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Thomas

**Apologies:** Councillors Allman, Brereton (personal), Sheridan (personal) and Price (work)

**Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests**

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibility to declare any personal interest or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

*Councillor Ellis – Birchwood Youth & Community Centre (Chair of Trustees)*

*Councillors Atkin and Simcock – Birchwood Carnival Committee*

203/24-25 **FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT THE  
PRE-BUDGET, STRATEGY AND PRECEPT WORKING PARTY MEETING**

The RFO explained that the detailed notes prepared following the Pre-budget, Strategy and Precept Working Party Meeting (circulated to Members in their papers) included a number of recommendations, presented tonight, below (Minute 204/24-25) for formal consideration (incorporating consideration of Earmarked Reserves for 2025/2026).

The Working Party (WP) Meeting had been attended by Councillors Atkin, Ball, Brereton, B. Dhillon, K. Dhillon, Ellis (Chair), Sheridan and Simcock, the Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk and the Senior Maintenance Operative (part of the meeting).

Councillors Evans, Price and Reeves had sent their apologies.

Declaration of Interests were made by:

*Councillor Ellis – Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC).*

*Councillors Atkin, B. Dhillon and Simcock – Birchwood Carnival Committee.*

The RFO reminded Members that the purpose of the WP Meeting was to consider various financial and strategy options to give her a steer on the main items that need to be taken into consideration when preparing the formal proposed strategy and related figures for the 2025/2026 municipal / financial year.

A WP Meeting can make recommendations to take forward to the next Council meeting, but cannot make any resolutions.

As resolved during the Finance Part I section of tonight's meeting (Minute 191/24-25(b)) the WP notes are incorporated into this meeting's Minutes as follows below.

The numbering below relates to the presentation of the WP notes as they were written.

3. **Items for consideration/discussion by Members**

3.1 ***Maintenance Team Operations***

- (a) The RFO stated that BTC currently has six full-time Maintenance Team Operatives, including the Senior Maintenance Operative. We are not, at present, looking to recruit any additional Maintenance Team Operatives.
- (b) To discuss services undertaken by the Maintenance Team that the Council wishes to prioritise for the 2025/2026 financial year:

Members received some information from the Senior Maintenance Operative regarding matters relating to the work of the Maintenance Team, that might impact the 2025/2026 strategy and budget including:

- In the absence of grass cutting, the team have been able to concentrate on other priorities such as hedgecutting, litterpicking, footpath scraping and flytipping removal.
- The Senior Maintenance Operative stated that the efforts undertaken this year have worked well for the Maintenance Team. He believes that if there was additional work, such as grass cutting, it would not have been manageable.
- In addition to litter picking duties, the team undertakes different jobs at different times of the year. They focus on blowing footpaths and scraping areas heavily impacted by moss or weeds during the autumn/winter months, and focus more on hedgecutting during the summer (particularly areas where there are potential health and safety issues, such as sightlines being blocked and footpaths being obstructed).
- The team plant and maintain numerous planters across Birchwood in all seasons and provide and maintain hanging baskets at the shopping centre and high school in summer.
- The Senior Maintenance Operative said that the team's time is spread evenly across all areas of Birchwood, with different areas having different needs.
- He said that, whilst BTC is not able to undertake landscaping on YHG land (unless there is a matter of real emergency) historically, they tend to do more flytipping removal on YHG-owned estates. YHG provides a 'container' to remove the waste to, and arranges to have it emptied. WBC-owned estates generally benefit from landscaping maintenance.

Councillor Ellis asked if purchasing any additional large machinery or additional horticultural equipment would make the Maintenance Team's job any easier.

Several points were raised by the Senior Maintenance Operative, such as:

- If more machinery was purchased, it would have to be adequately stored.
- All staff would require specified external training.
- With new machinery, the Maintenance Team may end up taking on additional work, if it is seen that BTC has the capability (work that should be done by other organisations).

Councillor Atkin asked whether the Council wants BTC's Maintenance Team to commence intermittent grass cutting again next year, and asked for the Senior Maintenance Operative's thoughts.

The Senior Maintenance Operative stated that only he, and two other members of the Maintenance Team are currently trained on the mowers and they are not yet confident of the mowing round.

For operational reasons the mowers are brought back to Parkers Farm during work breaks. This affects the time it takes to complete the mowing round.

Councillor Atkin stated that, initially this year, there was a brief period of upset about grass cutting among residents, however there has not been a sustained number of complaints since.

Councillor Ellis added that WBC were late to start cutting this year due to heavy rainfall, so the grass was longer than normal, which may have added to residents' frustrations.

Two mowers would need to be purchased, along with equipment to tow them in case they break down, and adequate storage facilities would need to be found.

Councillors felt that the cost associated with purchasing mowing equipment would be disproportionate for how much the Precept would have to be increased by, in relation to the benefits to the Birchwood community.

Councillors agreed that to restart intermittent mowing, even using WBC mowers (if they would loan them to BTC again) in order to make the area look more aesthetically pleasing is not as important as the hedgecutting work that the team has been able to undertake this year; which keeps footpaths open, sightlines clear, takes back sharp brambles, nettles, etc. from walkways, and so on.

Current resources are not sufficient to enable the team to do both.

**Recommendation:** That BTC continues to suspend intermittent mowing for the 2025/2026 season and concentrates on other maintenance work priorities.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the recommendation above be formally approved.**

- (c) The team does not currently expect there to be a requirement to purchase any new medium (blowers, hedgecutters, etc.) or large pieces of equipment in the next financial year. If the need arises, these would be purchased from the General Equipment / Vehicles earmarked reserves.

YHG has previously purchased some 'medium' landscaping equipment for the team, which would be accounted through the general Town Council Revenue budget line.

Equipment repairs are covered under the 'Town Council Revenue' cost code.

Members thanked Mr. Johnson for his input/attendance and he left the meeting.

3.2 (a) *Staff wages*

The RFO had presented Members with potential figures relating to staff wages. However, she stated that many of these figures are only ‘best estimates’.

The RFO added that the Living Wage Foundation is due to publish its annual figures on 23rd October 2024, and the upcoming budget will take place at the end of October 2024.

Both of these will take place after the currently listed date for the October 2024 meeting, and both may have a direct effect on the proposed 2025/2026 figures for BTC wages.

Unions are also still deliberating the Local Government Pay Claim for 2024/2025. BTC usually mirrors this award for the senior BTC Officers. Any 2025/2026 negotiations would not take place until the implementation of any 2024/2025 award, that was meant to be implemented on 1st April 2024.

The RFO said that given the lack of meaningful figures, she would ask whether Members feel that any discussion regarding wages should be postponed.

This was agreed by Members.

Staff wages will be discussed as a Part II item (confidential) at the next (November 2024) Council meeting.

(b) *Proposed change of Meeting dates*

The RFO asked Members if they might consider cancelling the October 2024 meeting and bringing the November 2024 meeting forward. This would allow better informed and more meaningful discussions regarding staff wages and a number of other issues.

The first Budget of the new Government is on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and any change to the Living Wage will only be known on / around 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.

Members asked whether there was anything urgent that would need to be considered at an October meeting.

Officers said that at present there is nothing specifically urgent that could not wait until a meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The RFO said that one financial ‘time sensitive’ item that would normally have been discussed at the October meeting is the consideration of a grant application in the amount of £150.00 from Birchwood Lions to support the 2024 annual Community Remembrance Service.

Members cannot make decisions at a Working Party Meeting, only recommendations to take to the next Council meeting. Members therefore made the following recommendation:

**Recommendation:** To consider the grant application from Birchwood Lions, as detailed above at the next full Council meeting, with a view, in principal, to approving the £150.00 requested.

**At tonight’s meeting, the grant application was discussed and approved during the Finance Part I section of the meeting (Minute 202/24-25).**

Members considered and agreed that the October 2024 meeting be cancelled and the November 2024 meeting be brought forward to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the December meeting should take place on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Councillor Atkin asked whether this is ‘allowed’ within BTC’s Regulations.

The RFO said she believes so, but would ‘double-check’.

Subsequently the RFO noted that in BTC’s 2024 Standing Orders, Item 1 (b) (iv) it states: *‘In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.’*

The cancellation of the October meeting and the dates for the November and December 2024 meetings will be (*were*) published (*well in advance*) on BTC’s notice boards, website and Facebook page.

If anything urgent occurs that requires full Council to meet, an Extraordinary Meeting can be called.

Whilst the lack of a full Council meeting in October means there will be a deviation from BTC’s Budget and Precept Timetable Policy, within the policy it states that, *‘The timetable for Birchwood Town Council to undertake its annual Budget and Precept setting discussions will, **unless there are exceptional circumstances, remain the same each year.**’*

Circumstances this year include unknown potential changes that may be brought in from the upcoming budget, with the potential for the new government to bring in any number of policies that might affect budget considerations for BTC’s 2025/2026 financial year.

By cancelling the October meeting and waiting until after the budget (also awaiting figures from the Living Wage Foundation and, hopefully receiving Band D figures from WBC) the RFO will have better data and information to enable her to present more specific, albeit still estimated, figures to the Council to allow them to formally approve a properly considered Budget, and set a Precept for 2025/2026.

### 3.3 ***BTC Vehicles and Vehicle Replacement Policy / General Equipment Reserves***

- (a) Members were asked to note that the 2024/2025 earmarked reserves for the General Equipment / Vehicles fund, was £70,000. ‘General Equipment’ would be for larger/more expensive items such as vehicle trailers, office computers, etc., not less expensive purchases that can be absorbed within the ‘Town Council Revenue’ budget line.
- (b) To note that, at the present time, the team is not looking for an additional vehicle. However, at a future date, BTC will be looking at electric tipper van options, which are currently too expensive for the Council to consider.
- (c) The RFO proposed a recommendation that BTC continues to maintain around £70,000 of earmarked reserves for vehicle replacement/general equipment funds.

**Recommendation:** Members unanimously agreed to recommend that BTC continues to maintain around £70,000 of earmarked reserves for vehicle replacement/general equipment funds.

**At tonight’s meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the recommendation above, to maintain £70,000 in this reserve, be formally approved.**

### 3.4 *Community Development/Projects Fund Earmarked Reserves*

- (a) **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)** – The RFO asked Members to consider whether, going forward, the Council wishes to consider the purchase and installation of additional SIDs (approx. £3,500 each).

Councillor Atkin commented that the data from the two SIDs currently in place needs to be analysed to ascertain whether they are having a positive impact, and therefore are a ‘good investment’ for other locations.

Councillor Atkin added that the data might be useful to be used as evidence to prove whether different traffic calming measures might also be considered for other locations.

Councillor Ellis said that he has downloaded data from the SIDs, but needs time to establish the best method of analysing the captured data to see if the SIDs are having the desired effect.

Councillor Ellis added that Croft Parish Council also has SIDs, and anecdotally, they do not appear to be having a significant impact in their area.

The RFO said that there has previously been some resistance from WBC and the Police regarding the installation of SIDs at some locations. Any additional installations would have to be considered in liaison with the Police and the relevant landowner.

**Recommendation:** Councillor Ellis to analyse the data and bring the information to a future meeting, to enable Councillors to make a more informed decision regarding whether BTC should consider funding the installation of additional SIDs in the area.

At tonight’s meeting, Councillor Ellis presented a detailed and comprehensive report that he had prepared between meetings regarding the data captured from the two SIDs currently in situ.

His recommendation, after studying the data, is that the SID on Warrington Road should remain in place. However, Councillor Ellis suggested that BTC should liaise with WBC and enquire if they would install another pole at a different location, potentially on Locking Stumps Lane.

Once this is done, the Admirals Road SID could be relocated to the new location, which would involve liaising with WBC, to ask if they would allocate WBC staff, with a cherry picker, to take the SID down and relocate it. This would attract a recharge cost which could be somewhere between £250 to £600, depending on whether existing poles are in place.

The RFO noted that any relocation would have to ensure that there would be no shrubbery that would shade the solar panels on the device.

Members discussed the report presented by Councillor Ellis and the data retrieved from the SIDs. Some data had been captured in ‘stealth mode’, which meant that the SID had been functioning, but that the visual screen information had been turned off, to ascertain how much driver behaviour altered if the SID appeared to not be working. It did have a slight impact, but more so at the Warrington Road location.

It was also noted that, particularly in the early hours of the morning, on Warrington Road, between midnight and 3am, the speed limit is more likely to be exceeded. In one instance a vehicle was travelling at over 100 miles an hour. At this time of day the number of vehicles is approximately 5 per hour. At peak times the traffic is roughly 250 vehicles per hour.

Members acknowledged that the data collected appears to show that the use of SIDs can have a measurable positive impact, but possibly not in all locations.

Councillor Ellis said that the data collected can potentially be used as 'evidence' to ask other organisations if they can take additional action with regard to traffic calming measures. He added that he had spoken to PCSO Palfrey regarding the issue of early morning speeding traffic, and asked if the Police would be able to undertake any speed enforcement during those hours.

Councillor Ellis asked Members if they would be happy for the report to be shared with the Police.

Members **resolved** that they would be happy for the report to be forwarded to PCSO Palfrey.

**Action** Councillor Ellis to send his report to PCSO Palfrey.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk's office liaise with WBC and the Police with a view to relocating the speed sign from Admirals Road to a location on Locking Stumps Lane.**

It was also **resolved**, that prior to considering the purchase of any additional SIDs, the Council considers the data from the relocation to decide whether the cost of an future additional SIDs could be financially justified.

**Action** Clerk's office to liaise with WBC and the Police regarding the recommendation above.

- (b) **Benches** - The RFO asked whether the Council would like to consider the installation of additional benches in the area (approx. £1,400 each for the metal benches that WBC supplies).

To note that there has also been resistance from WBC and the Police regarding the installation of proposed benches, specifically in relation to their locations.

It has taken two years to get to the point BTC is at now, i.e. for WBC to have agreed that three benches that the Council had initially proposed could be installed. It is hoped that they will be installed later this year.

If proposed locations are near residential properties, consultations need to be carried out, as WBC requires consultation with residents to be undertaken before it will consider installing them on public land that is not in a park area.

Any additional bench installations would have to be considered in liaison with WBC, the Police and the relevant landowner.

Members discussed the above and agreed, they would like to see the addition of two or three more benches in Birchwood during the 2025/2026 financial year.

**Recommendation:** To approve the financing of two/three additional benches in 2025/2026, if appropriate locations can be found and approved by the relevant landowners.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the recommendation above be formally approved.**

At tonight's meeting, the RFO reported that we have still not received confirmation from WBC regarding the allocation of the three benches we asked for regarding the 2024/2025 approved locations; which were budgeted for in this financial year.

- (c) **Litter Bins** – The RFO confirmed to Members that WBC will no longer install litter bins near benches due to food waste and dog waste issues, attracting wasps and causing unpleasant smells. They will also not permit new bins to be installed in or located next to bus shelters due to the potential for ASB and a risk of fire damage to shelters.

We have been advised by WBC that litter bin provision and servicing liabilities should be discussed via their 'tech support'.

Currently, costs for bins purchased via WBC for installation on its land are around £150 for a bin unit and circa £150 for installation onto a PCC paving slab, which reduces challenges with underground services.

Standard parks bins (e.g. Earth Anchor's 'Big Ben' bin) are more expensive at around £500 per unit with installation at around £100.

Supply and installation of litter bins on other organisations' land would have to be discussed and negotiated with them.

The installation of any additional bins will increase the number that BTC's team have to empty at least twice a week, which will have an effect on the time taken to do the bin emptying rounds.

Members discussed the above and agreed that, ideally, they would like to see two or three additional litter bins in Birchwood during the 2025/2026 financial year.

**Recommendation:** To approve the financing of two/three additional litter bins in 2025/2026, if appropriate locations can be found and approved by the relevant landowners. To ask Members and the Maintenance Team to suggest potential sites.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the recommendation above be formally approved.**

- (d) **BTC Bus Shelters** – Councillor Ellis said that he had still not received any specific update from WBC, regarding previously proposed replacements for the two BTC bus shelters in Locking Stumps.

The 'recent' new installations of local bus shelters throughout Birchwood were undertaken by an external contractor.

Councillor Ellis believes the cost of a basic shelter would be around £3,000.

There would be additional costs related to the demolition and disposal of the shelters currently in place.

Councillor Ellis said that he would speak to WBC again about the bus shelters. He suggested that BTC could potentially offer to make a contribution towards the work needed to demolish the old bus stops and install new ones.

**Recommendation:** To approve liaising with WBC to potentially make a contribution towards the replacement of bus shelters.

At tonight's meeting, it was noted that between meetings, Councillor Ellis has exchanged emails with the Public Transport Team Leader at WBC.

They advised that BTC's request for two new replacement shelters has been captured on WBC's 25/26 planning list. The emails suggest there may be a grant system being designed to fund such work. Other options are also being considered.

The RFO recommended that we continue to liaise with WBC regarding this matter and await further updates regarding possible funding/part-funding options going forward prior to the Council making any firm commitment.

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that BTC awaits further information from WBC regarding the above and bring any new updates to a future Council meeting.**

- (e) The RFO asked Members if they have any suggestions for potential community projects going forward. There is already a suggestion for more bulb planting, within the draft Strategic Plan, Objective 3, Action 3.3 (see also 3.8 (a) below).

Members did not have any additional suggestions for the 2025/2026 financial year.

- (f) The RFO stated that all the items above would require use of the Community Development Fund earmarked reserves.

The RFO therefore proposed that Members consider an amount of around £45,000 of earmarked reserves for the Community Development Fund for 2025/2026 (increased from £40,000 in 2024/2025) and that the separate budget heading is removed from the Monthly Expenditure Schedule and Schedule A (see page 133 below).

The RFO explained that this is a more suitable way to manage/record the amount spent from this fund for community schemes, in relation to the Scribe Accounting software.

Members discussed and agreed with the above proposal.

Members were asked to note that this, and other proposed earmarked reserves figures may change once we receive additional information from WBC regarding Band D figures, from the Living Wage Foundation and from the upcoming Government budget.

Councillor Atkin explained to the resident present the way in which Band D properties are used to calculate annual Precepts.

**Recommendation:** To increase the Community Development Fund earmarked reserve to £45,000 and remove this heading from the main budget line cost codes and Schedule A.

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the Community Development Fund reserve be increased to £45,000 and this heading be removed from the main budget line cost codes and Schedule A.**

### 3.5 *Elections Earmarked Reserves*

- (a) The RFO stated that the costs of the all-out elections which took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 are still unknown. *(At the time of tonight's, November meeting, we had still not received this information from WBC.)*

The RFO 'chased' WBC on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and received a reply stating that they *' . . . haven't sent recharge payment (invoices) out (as) we have been that busy dealing with the aftermath of the elections and then starting the canvas . . . We are going to put some timelines together to sort things out. Please bear with us and we will make further contact.'*

The Council is usually given the option of paying for elections over a period of up to four years, which we confirmed BTC would like to do, in a phone call that WBC made to the office following the elections.

- (b) The RFO suggested that BTC considers holding £12,000 of earmarked reserves for the Elections Fund, in addition to a proposed 2025/2026 £3,000 in the budget line for Schedule A.

This amount in the budget line may change if we receive a specific invoice amount from WBC in time for the preparation of the 2025/2026 Precept.

A £12,000 reserve will help to fund any unexpected by-elections that might occur within the term of office (usually four years) of a Council.

**Recommendation:** To approve holding £12,000 in the Elections earmarked reserves fund, as well as approximately £3,000 in the main budget line (subject to change if we receive an actual invoice prior to setting the Budget).

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

- 3.6 ***Contingency Fund*** - The RFO suggested that BTC considers maintaining an earmarked £30,000 of reserves for the Contingency Fund for 2025/2026.

This will (help to) cover any unexpected costs that might arise that are not fully funded by any specific column item in the current budget line.

The RFO said that this fund could potentially cover items such as legal costs, for example for any solicitor's advice that we might require regarding a new agreement that needs to be drawn up concerning a now ceased tripartite agreement relating to the ownership, maintenance, insurance requirements, equipment replacement, etc. of the multi-use games area at Locking Stumps Primary School.

**Recommendation:** To approve holding £30,000 in the Contingency Fund earmarked reserves for 2025/2026.

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

### 3.7 *Utilities*

- (a) Gas and electricity

Following the market comparison undertaken during 2024, the RFO contacted one of the brokers that we have previously worked with, to ask them to administer the changeover of our gas and electricity contracts at the end of September/beginning of October 2024.

At the July 2024 Part I Finance Meeting, Members unanimously resolved to take new contracts with British Gas Lite for both gas and electricity for a three-year term. (Minute 140/24-25.) This enables BTC to have a better idea of what our costs will be, if we maintain a similar usage, over the next three years.

Gas is expected to be roughly £1,250 per year and electricity approximately £2,000.

(b) Water and sewage

The price BTC is paying for both of our water and sewage services accounts have recently increased. BTC is paying £23.78 per month more than at the beginning of the 2024/2025 financial year.

Back in October 2023, it was announced that costs for these services are expected to rise on average by around £7 per month from 2025, increasing annually, to an additional £13 per month by 2030. Many water companies asked Ofwat to approve real-terms price increases of an average of 25% between 2025 and 2030.

By the end of this financial year, BTC will have paid around £1,400.00 for water and sewage charges.

If there is an additional £7.00 per month increase on both accounts for 2025/2026 that would be an additional £168.00 per year increase.

If the above amounts for gas, electricity and water/sewage are close estimations, this would equal a figure of approximately £4,818.

The RFO therefore proposed that, as we have some more ‘specific’ figures for the water, gas and electricity prices, Item 1 on Schedule A ‘General and Water Rates/Gas/Electric be reduced from £9,500 to around £5,500, which should also allow for any unexpected increase in gas, electricity and water usage.

The projected outturn this year on our current contracts, using the September 2024 actual figures is in the region of £4,500.

**Recommendation:** To approve a figure of £5,500 for Item 1 on Schedule A, as discussed above.

**At tonight’s meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

### 3.8 *Additional Items for Consideration*

(a) Wildflowers / bulbs

Wildflowers – Members were asked if they wish to continue to finance wildflower areas in Birchwood for the 2025/2026 season. A budget of £600 was agreed for the 2024 wildflowers.

Bulbs - BTC does not currently have a budget for bulbs. Any bulb planting would have to be undertaken with permission from the relevant landowner, and in areas where they are unlikely to be mown over too early, to enable them to thrive the following year.

The RFO presented some costs from a major bulb retailer for Members to consider:

- ‘Basic’ varieties of daffodils can be purchased from reputable wholesale suppliers from approximately £160.00 per thousand (or £42.50 per 250) Costs can increase to over £500.00 per thousand depending on the variety.
- Crocus prices start at around £80.00 per thousand for small corms. Larger corms are on average approximately £160.00 - £170.00 per thousand (£42.50 per 250).

- Snowdrops start at around £160.00 per thousand (£45.00 per 250). These grow to approximately 12 – 15 cm tall.
- English Bluebells – £270.00 per thousand (£75.00 per 250) (Norfolk grown) – these grow to approximately 30cm tall.
- Tulip bulbs tend to be a bit more expensive, and do not often thrive by roadsides.

The RFO asked Members whether they wished to propose a specific budget for bulbs for 2025/2026.

The number of bulbs required would depend on the size of the area for planting and would require the approval of landowners.

Wildflowers and bulbs would be paid for from the Community Development / Projects earmarked reserves.

Members considered options for both wildflowers and bulb planting for 2025/2026. Their preference is for daffodils, narcissi and crocuses.

**Recommendation:** To approve a budget of around £600 for wildflowers and £600 for bulbs (a total of approximately £1,200).

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

- (b) *Birchwood Carnival* – To note that the first Carnival Committee meeting for the 2024 Carnival will be taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

*Councillors Atkin, B. Dhillon and Simcock took no part in the discussion (at the WP Meeting) as they are members of the Carnival Committee.*

The RFO asked whether BTC wishes to consider continuing to support Birchwood Carnival financially.

The Town Council has historically supported the event by providing financial (grant) aid for the marquee, tables, chairs and portaloos, and BTC staff provide support with the setting up and taking down of the equipment, etc. on the day.

The Clerk and Administrative Assistant usually assist the Rangers with other related matters during the day, such as the collection of fees from stall holders / vendors. The RFO audits their annual accounts.

The amount of grant aid awarded in 2024/2025 was £2,717.80 plus VAT. This amount is taken from BTC's annual grant budget (currently £5,000 for 2024/2025).

In the longer term, the Carnival Committee's aim is to try to be self-sustaining.

Members discussed BTC's support for this annual community event. It was noted that costs might increase slightly.

**Recommendation:** To approve financial support for the 2025 Carnival by paying for the marquee, tables, chairs and portaloos, as in previous years.

*Councillors Atkin and Simcock took no part in the consideration of the recommendation at tonight's (November) meeting, as they are both members of the Carnival Committee.*

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

- (c) *Lettings* – the RFO confirmed that the Council is still not taking any bookings from external groups for the meeting room.
- (d) *North Warrington Cavy Club (NWCC) Storage Fees*

Councillor Ellis declared his interest, left the room and took no part in this discussion, as the Cavy Club hires BYCC for its events and the cost charged by BTC for storage has had an impact on an amount that NWCC no longer donates to BYCC.

The RFO asked Members to consider the 2025/2026 fees for storage of NWCC items.

The 2024/2025 fees were set at £400 for the year, a £100 increase from the 2023/2024 fee, due to an increase in the amount of items following the setting of that initial fee.

In response to a question from Members, the RFO confirmed that the number of items stored by NWCC has remained constant in 2024/2025. Members discussed this item.

**Recommendation:** To maintain the storage fees for NWCC at £400 for 2025/2026.

*Councillors Ellis took no part in the consideration of the above recommendation. He is Chair of Trustees of BYCC, where the NWCC holds its events and the cost charged by BTC for storage has had an impact on an amount that NWCC no longer donates to BYCC.*

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

- (e) *Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC) Tenancy*

As Chair of Trustees of BYCC Councillor Ellis declared an interest in this item prior to leaving the room and took no part in these discussions.

The RFO reminded Members that the tenancy fee is currently agreed as a 'peppercorn rent' of £1 per year.

The RFO asked whether the Council wished to consider increasing the fee, possibly to £1.00 per month – i.e. £12 per year? This would help to cover the cost of the 'admin' required to invoice for the amount.

The RFO also suggested that Members might wish to consider setting an amount for a fixed number of years, possibly for each term of a Council, so that the tenancy fee can be paid in one 'lump sum', in advance.

Members discussed the above suggestions.

**Recommendation:** To approve an increase in the tenancy fee from £1 to £12 per year (starting from the 2025/2026 financial year) and for this amount to be collected in advance for the cycle of a Council.

Councillor Ellis returned to the meeting.

*At tonight's (November) meeting, Councillors Ellis took no part in the consideration of the above recommendation, as he is Chair of Trustees of BYCC.*

**At tonight's meeting, it was RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

- (f) *Vehicle Tax* - the RFO asked Members to note that, regarding vehicle tax, zero-emission vans, we believe that from April 2025 BTC may be charged the same vehicle excise duty as petrol and diesel light goods vehicles, currently £335 a year for most vans. This would therefore increase expenditure by an additional £670.00 at the current rate.

The Government has yet to confirm if a pay-per-mile tax system will be introduced in the upcoming October 2024 Budget, and if so, what the timeline might be for the implementation of such a system, and how much vehicle owners will be charged.

At present, our current vehicles average annual mileage total is 23,300 miles:

- HK64 NNM (tipper) – 8,200 miles
- SC19 TYF (tipper) – 5,600 miles
- MK71 FUU (electric van) – 5,200 miles
- MK71 FVC (electric van) – 4,300 miles

It has been suggested that the implementation of a pay-per-mile road tax system might require some form of GPS tracking, or other tracking technology and/or mileage reporting to monitor and record the mileage each vehicle has been driven.

The exact rate to be charged per mile might vary, depending on a number of factors such as vehicle type and emissions. There might also be a cost to acquire ‘tracker’ technology for the two vehicles (tipper trucks) that do not currently have them. Dashcams might also be required to ‘prove’ when vehicles have been driven. These are currently ‘unknowns’.

- (g) *Insurance/Subs/Fees/Vehicle Tax* – To note that this includes:

- Vehicle tax – (£670.00 in 24/25)
- Insurance – both the full annual insurance policy and ill health (approx. £7,206 in 24/25)
- Scribe – ‘one-off’ set up fee for 10-year accounting package license (£797.00)
- Scribe – accounting package monthly subscription (£1,068 in 24/25)
- ChALC annual subscription (£1,551.66 in 24/25)
- SLCC annual subscription (£298.00 in 24/25)
- Internal auditor (£792.00 in 24/25)
- Data Protection Officer (£1,115.00 in 24/25)
- Payroll services (approximately £790.00 in 24/25)
- Information Commissioner’s Officer annual registration (£35.00)
- Employment Law (from Jan 2024 annual fee £1,461.00)
- Health & Safety (from Feb 2024 annual fee £1,654.00)
- Parish Online (£425.00 +VAT in 24/25)
- Bank charges – unknown – likely to be approximately £500.00

Approximate Total for 2024/2025 = £18,064.66. Some of these amounts are likely to increase in 2025/2026.

There will be additional vehicle tax for the two electric vehicles (as mentioned in (f) above).

The Employment Law and Health and Safety fees will increase, with an account, with WorkNest, to supply both services, as resolved at the September 2024 meeting.

The RFO has spoken to WorkNest since the September 2024 meeting and negotiated the 5-year deal (£3,800.00 per year) with a ‘break clause’ at 36 months if necessary, with no financial penalty. This will be formally presented at the November 2024 meeting.

The RFO asked Members to consider having the budget line for this item (Item 2 on Schedule A) in the amount of around £21,000 for 2025/2026.

**Recommendation:** To approve an amount of around £21,000 for this item on Schedule A.

**At tonight’s meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

(h) *Deliberative Democracy Tools*

The RFO stated that this has not been a consideration for previous budgets. However as part of BTC’s Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2028 (Objective 2, Action 2.3) BTC will ‘ . . . investigate the potential use of deliberative democracy tools to investigate services that residents would like.’

The RFO said that there are hundreds of books, academic publications and online information and discussion forums available regarding Deliberative Democracy, its philosophy, applications, key concepts, codes of use, etc.

This is not matched in numbers by the publicly available (easily found) deliberative tools. Most ‘paid for’ tools are subscription-based and very expensive. These include, but are not limited to:

- Delib Ltd – ‘Simulator’. This is promoted on the Gov.UK website. The cost ranges between £4,995 to £9,995 per licence per year.
- ‘Loomio’ – Priced in USD – we would need a subscription for up to 3,000 members which is currently advertised at \$2,999 per year. However, this does not have a UK based cloud server, which is not preferred for GDPR regulations.
- ‘LiquidFeedback’ – prices start from EUR 4,769 (inc. VAT) installation, and monthly updates/maintenance/support starting at EUR 536 (inc. VAT).

Councillor Ellis has previously investigated Deliberative Democracy tools.

Councillor Ellis stated that for BTC as a Council at local level the options above, or similar, are not only financially prohibitive, but the majority are over-complicated for BTC’s needs.

The RFO said that there is not currently a specific amount allocated for this in the 2025/2026 budget. She asked Councillors to consider how best to progress this matter.

Members discussed the above and agreed that, going forward, despite being in the Strategy, it would be preferable to use simpler options to obtain thoughts and comments regarding Council matters from BTC’s community.

**Recommendation:** Rather than using specific tools, to use simpler methods for consultations such as ‘SurveyMonkey’, which would require a plan to be purchased (these vary in price) or in-house prepared questionnaires with open-ended questions, or other free options, such as Microsoft Forms.

**At tonight’s meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

(i) *Training*

The RFO stated that this has not been a consideration for previous budgets. However BTC's Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2028 (Objective 2, Actions 2.1 and 2.2) considers training for both Councillors and Staff.

The RFO presented Councillors with some examples of training costs that have been / might be incurred:

Councillors – the majority of ChALC training courses are currently £35.00 per head per course (£420.00 if all Councillors undertake one course).

Council Officer – NALC Foundation Status. Currently £50.00 registration and £80.00 for assessment.

There are elements of this training that may be difficult to achieve due to time constraints, e.g. the achievement of 12 CPD points within the previous 12 months; along with the time it will take to prepare and publish all the relevant documentation required.

There are several policies that BTC does not yet have in place which would need to be created and approved by Council.

Staff – The costs of staff training varies from year to year. Prices below are current prices from our 'usual' suppliers. Some training needs to be refreshed on a two-yearly basis, others on a three-yearly basis. These include (but are not limited to):

- First Aid: First Aid at Work £390.00 +VAT, Requalification £288.00 +VAT
- Mental Health First Aid: Workplace First Responder £238.00 +VAT
- Legionnaire's Disease: £21.00 per head
- Working at Heights: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- Manual Handling: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- Lone Working: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- Personal Safety: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- Sharps: £300.00 (in 2022)
- Fire Safety: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- General Health and Safety: Usually included as part of BTC's H&S contract
- Brushcutters: £222.00 per person inc. VAT and Lantra registration – valid for 5 years
- Hedgecutting: £222.00 per person inc. VAT and Lantra registration – valid for 5 years
- Polepruning: £222.00 per person inc. VAT and Lantra registration – valid for 5 years
- Ride on mowers and pedestrian mowers (Lantra accredited): £660.00 per course of up to four candidates, plus a Lantra fee of £36.00 per person) inc. VAT – valid for 5 years

In 2023/2024 training costs (not including VAT) were £1,884.00. These included 3 x First Aid Requalification, 1 x ChALC 'Meetings and Procedures', 1 x Brushcutter and Hedgecutter (cost negotiated to £300.00), 2 x full First Aid qualifications and 4 x Legionnaires courses.

In 2024/2025 to date Officers have undertaken several online courses, provided free of charge by WorkNest.

Later in this financial year we are expecting training for 4/5 x ChALC Chairmanship Training - £140.00/£175 and 5 x Brushcutter and Hedgecutter – approximately £1,500 plus VAT if we can negotiate the cost.

Councillors and staff may also be required to undertake some additional, role related training.

There may also be other ‘ad hoc’ training that might be requested by Councillors or staff, to develop their roles within the Council (to be approved by Council prior to arranging).

If the Council wishes to undertake LCAS Foundation Level training – one of the criteria is that there should be a policy for the training and development of Councillors and staff.

The RFO said that as training costs can be significant, depending on the amount of training required in a particular year, she would like to ask Members to consider setting a training budget for the 2025/2026 financial year, maybe in the region of £2,000 to £3,000. This would require a new item line on Schedule A.

Members discussed the above.

**Recommendation:** For a new item of Training/Staff and Councillor Development to be added to Schedule A in the amount of around £3,000 for 2025/2026.

**At tonight’s meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

### 3.9 *Band D Figures*

The RFO informed Members that we will not receive the Band D figures from WBC for another few weeks, therefore it is unknown yet whether there will be a positive or negative impact on the budget from these figures.

At tonight’s meeting, the RFO informed Members that she has, again, ‘chased’ WBC for the Band D figures. These could have an effect on the figures to be presented at the December 2024 meeting, when a final, formal decision is required regarding the 2025/2026 Precept.

### 3.10 *Income*

The RFO stated that the main income this year continues to come from bank account / saving account interest.

There has been an additional income amount of £400 from the storage fees for North Warrington Cavy Club. There will also be income for the supply and maintenance of the hanging baskets for the 2024 season of £1,000.

Depending on interest rates from September 2024 to the end of March 2025, we expect a ‘general income’ figure for 2024/2025 of between £8,000 to £9,000.

Income for 2025/2026 will depend on the interest rates going forward. In 2022/2023, when interest rates were lower, the interest income was just under £2,100.

The RFO suggested ‘erring on the side of caution’ when predicting the income for 2025/2026 with a proposed expected income figure of around £4,500.

Members discussed the above.

**Recommendation:** To use the lower figure of £4,500 for expected income when calculating the proposed Precept figures for 2025/2026.

**At tonight’s meeting it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

3.11 **Proposed Schedule A / Projected Year End March 2024 Balances and Precept Options**  
(Note, these are based on 'best estimate' figures using the 2024/2025 6-monthly, i.e. to the end of September 2024, actual figures as guidance.) See pages 133 and 134 below.

- (a) **Schedule A** – The proposed changes to Schedule A from the projected expenditure outturn 2024/2025 to the budget estimated expenditure 2025/2026 are as follows:

**Item 1** – Water and Sewerage Rates/Gas/Electric – as BTC now has fixed 3-year gas and electricity costs and some idea of water/sewerage costs going forward, this amount has been reduced down from £9,500 to a proposed £5,500.

**Item 2** – Insurance/Subs/Fees etc. – Propose increase from £19,000 to £21,000. This will help to cover additional vehicle tax for the two electric vehicles (from April 2025) and the Scribe monthly fees for our accounting software.

**Item 3** – Employment costs – The projected outturn is £285,500 for 2024/2025. The estimated expenditure for 2025/2026 is £315,000. This is based on the actual difference of an additional £28,575.00 between year-end 2023 and year end 2024.

A potential £30,000.00 increase for 2025/2026 has therefore been added to this year's projected outturn. This is also based on staff hours remaining the same. Once we have additional, more specific figures this may be adjusted.

**Items 4A, 4B and 4C** – Civic expenditure inc. newsletter & other miscellaneous – no change. Chair's Allowance to remain at £1,000.

**Item 5** – Town Council Revenue Expenditure . . . - The projected outturn for 2024/2025 is £45,000.00. To take into consideration continuing inflation, the RFO has proposed a £5,000 increase for 2025/2026 to £50,000.

**Item 6** – Community Developments / Projects – The RFO is proposing to remove this item from the budget line, and for any such spending to be made from earmarked reserves (bins, benches, wildflowers, bulb planting, speed indicator devices, improvements to play areas, bus stops, etc.). *To be replaced with:*

**Item 6** – Training/Staff and Councillor Development – see also, 3.8 (i) above. The RFO is proposing £3,000 in the budget for 2025/2026.

**Item 7** – Town Council Elections – Proposal to decrease this from £6,000 to £3,000 in the budget line (although we do not yet have the costs of the 2024 May elections). BTC will be able to pay election costs to WBC over a number of years. We also have the proposed £12,000 earmarked reserves fund (see 3.5 above).

**Item 8** – Grants – propose to keep the level at the 2024/2025 budget line of £5,000.

**Item 9** – Parkers Farm Estate, etc. – To decrease the budget from £4,000 to £2,000.

**Item 10** – Loans, etc. – To note that this amount is reducing annually as the Public Works Loan continues to be 'paid off'. The payments for 2025/2026 will total £17,710.00. The last payment is due to be made in September 2027.

Members considered the proposed Schedule A figures as presented above by the RFO. These may be subject to change.

At tonight's meeting, the RFO commented that, at present, the estimated total budget expenditure for 2025/2026 is £424,210.

**Recommendation:** To approve, in principal, the Schedule A figures above, whilst noting they may change slightly once Band D Figures are known.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the above recommendation be approved.**

(b) ***Draft Projected Year End Balances and Precept Options for 24/25 and 25/26***

The RFO presented the projected year end balances and four Precept options to Members for their consideration (see page 18 below).

- (i) To note that a £210,000 6-month cash flow level is being proposed from 2025/2026 onwards.
- (ii) It is proposed that an approximate amount of £24,902 is taken from the 2024/2025 estimated underspend, and put back into general balances.
- (iii) The RFO asked Members to note the draft projection year end balances for 2024/2025 and projected year end expenditure for 2024/2026, using the estimated schedule A figures; with 0% , 1%, 2% and 3% Precept increase options for 2025/2026 being illustrated.

BTC has managed to keep a relatively tight hold on its spending in 2024/2025 and currently appears to be in a good position to be able to keep any proposed 2025/2026 Precept increase low.

- (iv) To note that the currently unknown Band D figures will probably have an effect on these projections, when they have been received.

The RFO asked Members to make Precept recommendations for her to work towards for the formal Precept discussions which will take place at the November 2024 meeting. Members considered the figures presented above.

It was suggested that the RFO presents nil, 1%, 2% and 3% Precept options at the November meeting, but as the estimated projected effect of a nil percentage increase would only (using current figures) be around -£2,000 that would be taken from balances, the Council would prefer to consider a nil increase as a first option.

**Recommendation:** To consider a nil percentage Precept increase at the November 2024 meeting, noting however, that there are still some figures from outside sources to be received that might have an effect on this proposed recommendation.

At tonight's meeting, the best estimated figures were presented by the RFO, who commented, again, that it remains impossible to present final figures, until the Band D figures are received from WBC.

**It was unanimously RESOLVED that the Council, in principle, would prefer to approve a nil increase Precept option for 2025/2026, but will wait to make its final decision once the effect of Band D figures from WBC is known.**

#### 4. **Strategic Plan**

The draft 2024 – 2028 Birchwood Town Council Strategic Plan was circulated to Members in hard copy for their initial consideration at the September 2024 meeting.

At tonight's WP Meeting, Councillor Ellis asked Members if, having had a chance to consider the contents further, whether they have any comments, proposed changes or additions, deletions, etc. to put to Council regarding this draft document.

Members had no further comments to make regarding the document at this point in time.

Councillor Ellis said that this is essentially a 'live' document, in that it can reviewed on a regular basis to monitor whether any proposed actions have been progressed. He suggested it be formally reviewed at least annually, possibly every three months.

**Recommendation:** To consider the document at the November 2024 meeting for formal approval.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously resolved that the 2024-2028 be approved, and published on the Town Council's website.**

**Action:** Clerk's office to publish the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan on BTC's website.

**Recommendation:** To review the document on a regular basis, possibly half yearly.

**At tonight's meeting, it was unanimously RESOLVED that the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan be reviewed on a six-monthly basis.**

## 205/24-25 EARMARKED RESERVES - CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERS' RESOLUTIONS

The RFO confirmed that the following resolutions were made earlier in the meeting in relation to earmarked reserves for the 2025/2026 financial year:

- (a) **BTC Vehicles / General Equipment** – That the BTC Vehicles and Vehicle Replacement Policy / General Equipment Reserves for 2025/2026 will be £70,000.
- (b) **Community Development Fund Earmarked Reserves** - That the Community Development Fund Earmarked Reserves for 2025/2026 will be £45,000 (increased from £40,000 in 2024/2025).

This heading will no longer be included in the general budget line and Schedule A, hence the £5,000 increase into reserves.

Items such as new benches, additional speed indicator devices, any proposed new events, litter bins, bus shelters, etc. would be covered by this fund.

- (c) **Elections** - That the Elections Fund Earmarked Reserves for 2025/2026 is £12,000.

The RFO explained that she increased this amount by £2,000 to £12,000 as it was unknown if there would be any additional administrative costs that will be charged by WBC, specifically in relation to the relatively new requirement for checking voter ID prior to allowing people into Polling Stations, which may have an impact on fees charged to local Parish and Town Councils.

We have still not received the invoice for the May 2024 elections.

- (d) **Contingency Fund** - That the Contingency Fund Earmarked Reserves for 2025/2026 will be £30,000.

## 206/24-25 CHAIR'S ALLOWANCE

To note that the Chair's Allowance - Item 4A on Schedule A (see below) remains the same, at £1,000. This amount has not changed for over ten years.

The RFO stated that no other Members receive allowances as a matter of course. Any exception, would have to be approved by Council and formally minuted. She added that the Chair's Allowance (which the Council 'classes' as a 'special responsibility allowance') is published on the Town Council's website: [Chair's Allowance - Birchwood Town Council](#)

In addition, the allowance, when paid, is documented in the accounts for payments, which are published monthly, as part of Part I Finance Minutes. It is paid in two parts through the payroll to ensure that any necessary statutory deductions are made.

The amount of the Chair's Allowance was also discussed at the October Working Party meeting (see Minute 204/24-25 3.11 (a) above) when 'Schedule A' was presented as part of the budget/Precept discussions (Item No. 4A 'Civic - Chairman's Allowance').

**This part of the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm**

DRAFT Schedule A (amended)				Nov-24		
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL						
YEAR-END PROJECTED OUTTURN 2024/2025						
AND FINANCIAL PROJECTION FOR 2025/2026 AND 2026/2027						
ITEM NO.	EXPENDITURE ITEM	BUDGET 2024/2025	PROJECTED EXPENDITURE OUTTURN 2024/2025	BUDGET ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2025/2026	BUDGET ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2026/2027	
1	General and Water Rates/Gas/Electric	£ 9,500	£ 4,500	£ 5,500	£ 6,500	
2	Insurance/Subs/Fees/Car Tax/Bank Charges	£ 19,000	£ 19,000	£ 21,000	£ 21,000	
3	Employment costs (inc employer NI & superannuation)	£ 290,000	£ 285,500	£ 315,000	£ 340,000	
4A	Civic - Chairman's Allowance	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	
4B	Civic - Newsletter	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	
4C	Councillors Allowances/Expenses	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	
5	Town Council Revenue Expenditure (inc. cleaning services)	£ 50,000	£ 45,000	£ 50,000	£ 55,000	
6	Training/Staff and Councillor Development	Δ	-	£ 3,000	£ 3,500	
6	Community Developments/Projects	* £ 7,000	£ 4,000	n/a	n/a	
7	Town Council Elections	£ 6,000	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	
8	Grants/donations	£ 5,000	£ 3,500	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	
9	Parkers Farm Estate/Maintenance	£ 4,000	£ 4,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	
10	Loans inc. Mortgage Fund for Parkers Farm Estate	£ 18,500	£ 18,500	£ 17,710	£ 16,950	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>£ 411,000</b>	<b>£ 389,000</b>	<b>£ 424,210</b>	<b>£ 454,950</b>	
Signed _____		Chair				
Signed _____		Clerk				
Signed _____		RFO				
Date: 6th November 2024						
Δ	To propose a new expenditure item of 'Training' - replacing 'Community / Development Projects'					
*	To propose that Community/Development Projects are now wholly encompassed within earmarked reserves					

Birchwood Town Council - Nov 24 - DRAFT PROJECTION YEAR END BALANCES 24-25 and 25-26		BAND D FIGURES CURRENTLY UNKNOWN			SHEET 1 (slightly amended)
Projection - Year End March 2025 Balances (rounded)		Projection - To Year End March 2026 Balances (rounded)			
Income		0% Increase	1% Increase	2% Increase	3% Increase
Balances B/F March 2023 (audited)	£ 373,807.00	£ 376,902.00	£ 376,902.00	£ 376,902.00	£ 376,902.00
Precept 24-25	£ 383,095.00	£ 383,095.00	£ 386,926.00	£ 390,757.00	£ 394,588.00
General Income approx. (bank interest & other)	£ 9,000.00	£ 4,500.00	£ 4,500.00	£ 4,500.00	£ 4,500.00
<i>(Bank interest remained higher than expected 24/25.)</i>		£ 24,902.00	£ 24,902.00	£ 24,902.00	£ 24,902.00
2025/2026 change in Band D properties (unknown)					
<b>Total:</b>	£ 765,902.00	£ 789,399.00	£ 793,230.00	£ 797,061.00	£ 800,892.00
<b>Expenditure</b>					
See Budget Schedule A					
Projected Expenditure: 24-25	£ 389,000.00	£ 424,210.00	£ 424,210.00	£ 424,210.00	£ 424,210.00
Projected end March 2025 Balances	£ 376,902.00	£ 365,189.00	£ 369,020.00	£ 372,851.00	£ 376,682.00
Less 6 months Cash flow	£ 200,000.00	£ 210,000.00	£ 210,000.00	£ 210,000.00	£ 210,000.00
Therefore projected Reserves / Earmarked funds available	£ 176,902.00	£ 155,189.00	£ 159,020.00	£ 162,851.00	£ 166,682.00
Elections	£ 12,000.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 12,000.00
Vehicles/Equipment	£ 70,000.00	£ 70,000.00	£ 70,000.00	£ 70,000.00	£ 70,000.00
Community Development (inc. SIDs, benches, etc.)	£ 40,000.00	£ 45,000.00	£ 45,000.00	£ 45,000.00	£ 45,000.00
Contingency Fund	£ 30,000.00	£ 30,000.00	£ 30,000.00	£ 30,000.00	£ 30,000.00
Potentially to put back into general balances for 2024/2025 from underspend	£ 24,902.00	-£ 1,811.00	£ 2,020.00	£ 5,851.00	£ 9,682.00
	£ 176,902.00	£ 155,189.00	£ 159,020.00	£ 162,851.00	£ 166,682.00
<b>Band D Precept in 2024/2025 = £120.66</b>		<b>£120.66</b>	<b>£121.87</b>	<b>£123.08</b>	<b>£124.28</b>
		nil increase	+£1.21 per year	+£2.42 per year	+£3.62 per year