

## **Rother District Council**

Report to	-	Community Governance Review Steering Group
Date	-	21 January 2021
Report of the	-	Assistant Director Resources
Subject	-	The Parish (Town) Council for Bexhill-on-Sea – Budget Requirement 2021/22

---

### **Introduction**

1. As Members will recall, at the meeting held on 24 November, the Community Governance Steering Group (CGRSG) recommended to Cabinet that full Council be requested to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transition Bexhill Town Council to agree the Community Governance Order (CGO) required to create the new Parish Town Council for Bexhill-on-Sea.
2. This was duly agreed by full Council on 21 December 2020.
3. This meeting has been called to enable the Steering Group to consider the first year budget requirement (precept) of the Town Council and inform the Chief Executive and Cabinet Portfolio Holders' decision making. The CGO cannot be completed without the Budget Requirement and the Council Tax liability for 2021/22 being included.
4. Members will also recall that Cabinet agreed to the appointment of an interim parish council administrator to undertake all the necessary preparatory work to establish the new Parish Council for Bexhill-on-Sea. Linda Butcher has now been appointed to this role and will be present at the meeting to assist Members in their deliberations. Ian Davison, lead Solicitor from Surrey Hills Solicitors will also be present at the meeting.
5. At the last meeting it was also agreed that representations from organisations and individuals who wished to express a view regarding the budget would be taken into account for the purposes of setting a realistic budget for the first year. To this end, representations were invited via social media messaging, the Council's website and MyAlerts. An email was also sent to the stakeholder group invited to take part in the Community Governance Review consultation last year. Attached at Appendix A is a copy of the responses received at the point of Agenda publication – any further responses received will be provided at the meeting.

### **Budget Requirement**

6. The Assistant Director Resources and Finance Manager have prepared a proposed precept in consultation with the Interim Parish Council Administrator and is set out at Appendix B. The proposed first year precept is estimated at £276,765. The estimates are still being finalised at the time of writing this report and an updated Appendix B will be circulated prior to the meeting, if necessary.
7. Members will see that the proposed precept includes provision for employee costs including interim staff employed after 1 April 2021, premises and

equipment costs to set up the town council office, estimated costs for the May 2021 election, insurances and professional services such as accountancy, legal and banking.

8. Subject to any changes to the estimated precept, the 2021/22 Council Tax charge for the new Town Council will be £16.82 for a Band D property. This is further analysed below over the various Council Tax Bands:

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Bexhill Town Council £</b>
Band A	£11.21
Band B	£13.08
Band C	£14.95
Band D	£16.82
Band E	£20.56
Band F	£29.69
Band G	£28.03
Band H	£33.64

9. In addition to the Precept the Council will also transfer to the new Town Council, the balance of local Community Infrastructure Levy based on 15% of Bexhill CIL receipts. This is currently being assessed and will be confirmed in due course.

## **Conclusion**

10. Members are requested to consider the budget requirement and recommend to the Chief Executive and Lead Member the budget requirement to be included within the CGO.

Robin Vennard  
Assistant Director Resources

**Representations Received:**

**Bexhill Environmental Group**

Dear sirs,

As a local Community Group, Bexhill Environmental Group would like to see Bexhill Town Council sufficiently funded to ensure that practical help can be provided with undertaking local projects in the town where, for example, assistance is needed in identifying opportunities for grant funding and making the applications.

Advice on dealing with local government issues and communications with Rother District Council is another area where assistance may be sought.

The Budget should, therefore, ensure there is sufficient funding to cover the costs of people to deliver this service to the community.

We will wish to continue to plant more trees, in the town on streets, make more wild flower verges, and maybe survey where to best place electric car chargers amongst many other projects we have in mind, once COVID allows us to move forward.

Yours faithfully

Chair of BEG

**Individual resident**

With reference to the recent communication regarding Rother creating a new Bexhill Parish Council

My first observation is that already the costs are becoming greater than that advertised within the CGR. Within that consultation it was quoted that band D tax payers would pay an extra £0.27 a week. Or £22.11 per year

This has now been increased with the most recent suggestion of £150k being needed in the 1st year. With 26k taxpayers that equates to in excess of £130 per year without any extra services that people may wish the Parish Council to adopt

It is also quite possible that there will not be elections in May and respectfully, I suggest that the steering group go back to the full council and delay the introduction of a Parish Council in Bexhill for a period of at least 1 year. Preferably 2 years to enable Linda Butcher to do her work in advance of the establishment and re consult the tax payers of Bexhill

As an alternative to this I would suggest the following items are low cost and of benefit to Bexhill

Start up the submission to Best Kept large town in England Create a hub of local organisations and build a plan to submit to residents of what could be done Create a neighbourhood plan Disband the Bexhill Town Forum Create an audit team to ensure that the District council and County Council adhere to their contractual obligations Create a plan of how to introduce electric car charging to Bexhill Take on the administration and upkeep of the play areas only within Bexhill (leave the grass cutting as that contract would be beneficially cheaper if done on a larger scale but audit their contractual obligations Prepare a plan for sport and recreation for Bexhill residents (old and young) and lobby District and county councils accordingly Bexhill is not just about the Arts and graffiti on walls Work with the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce (rather than a battle against) for the benefit of the Town Review all the shop frontages and discuss with the tenants owners how to brighten them up (the town is beginning to look shabby) Review all the on line delivery points and develop a plan how these could better serve the community. I quite like the colour yellow

That's just 11 things that won't cost a great deal and would potentially tidy up the Town and better prepare it for the future way of living

## **SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity**

I would like to bring to the Groups attention a reminder that Local Authorities have an obligation to uphold their commitment to the Armed Forces covenant and I would hope that this would be considered in the future. Also a consideration given to the appointment of an Armed forces Champion/Champion's within the organisation to inform them of veteran issues and be a contact for Armed Forces organisations.

SSAFA Divisional Co-Ordinator (Hastings & Rother)

## **Individual resident – Normans Bay**

Thank you for asking for our views...here are mine...

It will be helpful if you can separate out costs which you regard as 'set up' and 'ongoing.'

Will there be something residents can see that clarifies what resources the Town Council will draw on and what it's remit or job will be. Specifically will it have the remit to raise additional funds and if so how.

## Proposed Budget and Precept 2021/22

Line	Expenditure	£	£
1	<b>Central Support</b>		
2	Employee Costs including interim clerk	96,930	
3	Recruitment	1,300	
4	Training	7,500	
5	HR and Payroll Services	3,170	<b>108,900</b>
6			
7	<b>Premises Costs</b>		
8	Rent and Rates	12,250	
9	Utilities - Electric, Gas, Phones, Waste Collection	3,310	
10	Security, Caretaking and Cleaning	3,340	
11	Furniture	500	
12	Meeting Room Hire	500	<b>19,900</b>
13			
14	<b>Computers and Equipment</b>		
15	ICT Hardware and Software	3,725	
16	Website set up and maintenance	3,000	
17	Fireproof Safe	1,800	<b>8,525</b>
18			
19	<b>Communications and Events</b>		
20	Newsletters	10,000	
21	Notice Boards	11,340	
22	Grants and Community Support	20,000	<b>41,340</b>
23			
24	<b>Member Representation</b>		
25	Election Costs	62,000	
26	Chairman/Mayors allowance	5,000	
27	Members expenses	200	
28	Members training	1,000	<b>68,200</b>
29			
30	<b>Allotments</b>		
31	Maintenance	2,350	
32	Water	630	<b>2,980</b>
33			
34	<b>Other Costs</b>		
35	Insurance including premises and liability	2,000	
36	External Audit Fees	2,000	
37	Internal Audit Fees	350	
38	Legal and Professional Fees	4,000	
39	Subscriptions	3,700	
40	Printing, publications and advertising	6,500	
41	Repair and Renewals	10,000	<b>28,550</b>
42	<b>Gross Expenditure</b>		<b>278,395</b>
43			
44	<b>Less: Income</b>		
45	Allotment Rents	-1,630	<b>-1,630</b>
46	<b>Proposed Precept</b>		<b>276,765</b>