

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2024, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- **Deputy Mayor:**
- Councillor N R Yates
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor K J Jackson
- Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor C Wood
- Councillor W Rogers (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Margaret Warman - Compliance and Governance Officer
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer

Councillor Rogers recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.

103. APOLOGIES

- Councillor A K Harper (Absent)
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor C Smith
- Councillor J T Salt

104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
- ii. Other Interests: None.

105. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 26 March (approved at the Town Council meeting on 9 April 2024)

The minutes were **confirmed**.

106. ACCOUNTS MATTERS

To **approve** the bank reconciliation for February 2024- all accounts (attached).

Councillor Yates requested information about the previous five years, to show how income and expenditure had changed.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

107. AUDIT

a) To **receive** a report following the April internal control visit by Councillors Hawley and Eardley (attached).

The report was **received**.

b) To **confirm** that the final internal control visit of the year will take place on 15 May 2024.

Confirmed.

c) To **confirm** the internal audit visit is planned for 23 May 2024 (instruction letter attached).

The Chief Officer stated that the internal auditor has confirmed that she will conduct the internal audit again this year.

Confirmed.

108. GRANTS

a) To **approve** the grant application form for 2024-25 (attached)

Councillor Yates questioned whether the form was different from the previous year's form. The Chief Officer confirmed that there were no changes.

All **agreed**.

b) To **approve** the grant evaluation form for 2024-25 (attached)

The Chief Officer explained that this evaluation form is sent to those who have received funding, and must be returned before receiving any future funds.

All **agreed**.

- c) To **receive** an update on grants paid and evaluations received in 2023-24 (to be tabled)

The Chief Officer tabled information about grants paid in 2023-24; it was confirmed that those who have not completed the evaluation form, have been chased.

Councillor Jackson questioned why not all funds had been spent. The Chief Officer explained that it was due to delays with receiving the correct paperwork. It was agreed that outstanding funds must be spent by Friday 26 April.

109. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR HAWLEY

(Referred from Town Council)

Town Council meetings have been increasing in length. We need to bring Council meetings in line with Standing Orders to reduce meeting times, especially in relation to 10 and 1p, 3f and 3g.

To **agree** potential changes to procedures and/or changes to the Standing Orders.

Proposed to defer this item by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

110. PROMOTION OF BUS SERVICES

To **approve** that the Town Council will pay 50% of the cost of 10,000 leaflets containing information about Biddulph bus services (all providers).

The Chief Officer confirmed that the County Council has received additional funds which would be used to extend the 93-bus service. The leaflets would promote all Biddulph services.

Councillor Jackson questioned whether there is any future control over amendments to timetables. It was discussed to add a disclaimer.

Councillor Yates questioned whether the bus timetable can be amended as a route for school children. This was unlikely at present.

It was proposed by Councillor Hart to fund 50% of the quote; seconded by Councillor Brady. All **agreed**.

111. POLICIES (attached)

- a)** To **approve** the reviewed Tree Strategy

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

- b)** To **approve** the reviewed Reserves Policy

Councillor Hopkins questioned whether the Reserves Policy is in line with the national policy.

The Chief Officer explained that previously the general reserves had been set at £200,000 (half the precept amount). There had been concerns as to whether this was enough. She had reservations about the suggested £400,000 figure.

Councillor Hart proposed to split the difference and put £300,000 into general reserves; seconded by Councillor Wood. All **agreed**.

The Chief Officer stated that the policy will be brought back with amendments for approval.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

112.

- a)** To **consider** disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations

None.

- b)** To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy

Alliance Environmental Services Ltd. would be new additions to the list, following receipt of appropriate documentation.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

113. TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON A LITIGATION MATTER AT THE BURIAL GROUNDS

Update received.

114. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS

There is no update therefore this agenda item will be deferred.

115. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON LICENSES/ LEASES ISSUED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Update received.

116. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STRUCTURAL SURVEYS UNDERTAKEN ON THE TOWN HALL

Update received.

117. TO APPROVE THE NEXT STEPS REGARDING THE STATION ROAD FOUNTAINS

It was agreed that the Chief Officer would progress this action.

118. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON FIRE DOORS AND REMEDIAL ACTION NEEDED

Update received.

119. TO APPROVE ANY QUOTATIONS RECEIVED SINCE THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

The Chief Officer tabled two quotations to complete the boiler service.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

The Chief Officer confirmed that two of the laptops currently used by staff are not performing well. Quotes had been received from Prism for two new laptops, and the set-up costs.

Proposed by Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed** forthwith.

Mrs Warman, Miss Hancock and Mrs Williams left the meeting at 7.10pm.

120. STAFFING

a) To **consider** a request for a change of hours for a caretaker
Action proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Wood.

b) To **approve** that the Customer Support Apprentice will complete the Level 3 Business Administrator course; a change from the Customer Service Specialist apprenticeship.
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates. All in favour.

c) To **approve** engaging a new Occupational Health specialist
An appropriate course of action was approved.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm .

Signed..... Date.....