

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 28 JANUARY 2025, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

- **Mayor:**
Councillor N R Yates
- **Deputy Mayor:**
Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor K Jackson
- Councillor J Jones
- Councillor W Rogers (Chair)
- Councillor C Wood

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.

86. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor A K Harper (Absent)
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor Smith (Absent)

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

88. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL INVEST IN CYBER ESSENTIALS FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER 2024 PRESENTATION FROM PRISM

Councillor Rogers reminded the Committee of the presentation delivered by Prism in relation to 'Cyber Essentials'.

Councillor Hawley questioned whether the quote had been considered in the proposed budget. The Chief Officer confirmed that it is considered under the software allocation.

There was discussion about the potential risk if this piece of work was undertaken.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Wood to proceed. 6 voted for. Councillor Jackson voted against; it was **agreed**.

89. MINUTES (ATTACHED)

- a) To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 26 November 2024 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 14 January 2025)

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- b) To **receive** the notes of the Town Hall Finance Working Group meeting held on:

- i. 21 November 2024
- ii. 5 December 2024
- iii. 17 December 2024
- iv. 16 January 2025

All were **Agreed**. Councillor Jones did not vote.

90. TO CONFIRM UPDATED LETTING CONDITIONS AND BOOKING FORM FOR 2025 (ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer noted that these documents had been sent out in advance for consideration.

Councillor Hawley questioned what the changes to the documents were; it was confirmed that the CCTV information had been updated and paying by Purchase Orders was removed in this recent revision.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

91. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a)** To **approve** the bank reconciliation for October and November 2024- all accounts (attached).

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

- b)** To **receive** a detailed income and expenditure at 22 January 2025 (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Wood. All **agreed**.

92. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER WITH STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chief Officer reported that she attended a working group at SMDC where the aim was to create a Town and Parish Charter; it is a document that combines the aspirations for consistent communication across the layers of Council in the Staffordshire Moorlands, and will ultimately include information from the County Council.

The Chief Officer read sections of the draft document to the Committee, to provide some context.

It was **received**.

93. POLICIES

To approve the following policies (attached):

- a) Reviewed Induction Training and Development Policy

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- b) Reviewed Complaints Procedure

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

- c) Reviewed Data Protection (GDPR) and Retention Policy

Councillor Jackson questioned whether due to the 'Cyber Essentials' quote being accepted, there should be a slight amendment to note this within the Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- d) Proposed to archive Dress and Appearance Policy; reference to appropriate dress removed from Councillor Handbook (March 2024) as not relevant.

It was discussed whether a dress code was required. Councillor Hawley felt the Policy was outdated; Councillor Eardley felt that staff needed guidance.

It was proposed to archive the policy by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Wood. 3 voted against; it was **agreed**.

- e) Reviewed Co-Option Policy

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

94.

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

There was nothing to **consider** for disposal.

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

Proposed by Councillor Yates; seconded by Councillor Wood. 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

95. TO CONFIRM THAT THE LENGTHSMAN WILL COMPLETE TREE WORK ON BEHALF OF STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AT BIDDULPH VALLEY WAY USING THE DIVISIONAL HIGHWAY PROGRAMME FUNDING FROM COUNCILLOR YATES

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

The Chief Officer noted that there may be a small amount of funding from Councillor Flunder too.

96. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT (PRE-CONTRACT MEETING MINUTES ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer had circulated the minutes for information; there is no contract to sign as of yet, but she hoped there would be a further update for the February Town Council meeting.

The Chief Officer reported on UK Shared Prosperity Fund spend.

It was **received**.

97. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON UKSPF GRANT FUNDING FOR SURROUND SOUND IN THE TOWN HALL

The Chief Officer applied for funding as part of Arts and Culture allocation of this pot, to fund new surround sound in the Town Hall. £3800 has been offered.

Film Hub has a specialist who will survey the room and advise on the required equipment.

It was **received**.

98. BUDGET AND PRECEPT CONSIDERATIONS

- a)** To **confirm** Committee budgets (proposed budget attached)

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Wood. All **agreed**.

- b)** To **confirm** room hire rates at Biddulph Town Hall (proposed and current fees attached)

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

- c)** To **confirm** fees and charges for Council services (proposed and current fees attached)

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- d)** To **confirm** Precept requirements, following information from the District Council on the parish tax base figure. The tax base for 2025/26 is 6401.

Councillor Lawton wondered how many properties there were in each council tax band in Biddulph.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

- e)** To **agree** the content of a press release (to be tabled)

The Chief Officer discussed a draft press release.

Proposed by Councillor Lawton; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

99. QUOTATIONS (TO BE TABLED)

- a)** To **confirm** RCD 'flick' testing quotation; work completed following recommendation from Health and Safety Advisor

It was **confirmed**.

- b)** To **confirm** Display Energy Certificate renewal quotation

It was **confirmed**.

- c)**

EMERGENCY ITEM

Councillor Rogers queried whether Councillors were happy to accept an emergency item. All **agreed**.

The Chief Officer reminded Councillors that the solicitor had advised that the 30-year lease on the Visitor Centre should be treated as though it was a purchase; searches should be completed.

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

100. STAFFING:

- a) To **confirm** current caretaking arrangements

The Chief Officer advised Councillors that current arrangements would be reviewed in March.

All **agreed**.

- b) To **approve** a temporary increase in hours to prepare for audit.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jackson to increase the hours for this year. All **agreed**.

Councillor Rogers thanked the team for their hard work in putting together the reports pack associated with this agenda.

The meeting ended at 7.28pm.

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