

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2020 – REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor Davies
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Jones
Councillor Brady
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hart
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Perkin
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Salt
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Yates

Councillors Barlow and McLoughlin were also in attendance

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.

b) Other Interests:

Councillors Hart and Yates- Friends of Biddulph Valley Way

Councillor Davies and Brady- Trustees of Staffordshire North and Stoke on Trent Citizens Advice

Councillor Jones- Treasurer of Biddulph Lifeline

Councillor Salt's Mother had a plot on the Greenfingers allotment site.

Councillor Salt- member of the Festival Committee.

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Adams

62. MINUTES

a) The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 (signed at the Town Council meeting on 11 February 2020) were **confirmed**.

63. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (ALL ATTACHED) THAT WERE DUE TO BE INCLUDED ON MARCH/APRIL 2020 AGENDAS (POSTPONED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC):

- Financial Regulations – Proposed Councillor Perkin, seconded Councillor Rogers
- Reserves Policy – Proposed Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Perkin
- Investment Strategy – Proposed Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Perkin
- Pay Policy – Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Perkin
- Asset Management Policy (New) – Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Davies. The Chief Officer noted that the external auditor had flagged the management of assets as needing additional consideration last year; this new policy would strengthen the position of the Town Council showing that it had considered the value of its assets and would review/ manage going forwards.
- Asset Register- Councillor Salt asked if the assets were barcoded. The Chief Officer would look at this going forwards.
- Internal Control Report from Councillor Dave Hawley (29 January 2020) was received. Councillor Hawley noted that he had been unable to do his usual end of year review due to current circumstances, but would resume these visits as soon as possible. Councillor Hawley reiterated his findings in January; he had found nothing out of order.

64. TO CONSIDER EMERGENCY PLANNING AND CREATING A SMALL GROUP TO TAKE THIS FORWARD (PRESENTATION ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer reported that she had attended an Emergency Planning webinar; a small group should be formed to consider how to protect the town and community and build resilience.

The Chief Officer noted that had the Town Council not stepped up with Covid-19 and been well supported by volunteers, there may have been gaps in the response. Support had been received by the County and District Councils.

The new group would consider how the Council could support the town and High Street with the re-opening of shops; going forward, there is a need to look at the transformation of the town centre, to support traders. The Town Council needed to carry out an assessment of our capabilities. The Town Council would work with the District Council to consider public realm improvements and use of the High Street.

Councillor Hall suggested that members digest the information and those wishing to volunteer to contact the Chief Officer. The following volunteered - Councillors Davies, Hawley, Hart, Harper, Jones, Perkin, Rogers, Salt and Yates.

The Chief Officer would email those above with a time to meet.

65. FORMALLY APPROVE STORAGE FOR MARKET EQUIPMENT, SIGNAGE AND OTHER ITEMS (6-MONTH ARRANGEMENT AGREED APRIL 2020)

The Chief Officer noted that there were no concerns about current provision; this would be kept under review. The agreement worked really well.

66. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE YEAR-END FIGURES FOR 2019-20 (ALL ATTACHED) INCLUDING:

- **Balance Sheet**
- **Cash and Investment Reconciliation**
- **Income and Expenditure Account**
- **Trial Balance for Month 12**

The above were received and approved.

67. TO APPROVE EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2020-21:

EMPLOYEE:

LGPS contribution banding from 1 April 2020

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The table below sets out the contribution bands which will be effective from 1 April 2020. They are based on the pay bands for 2019/20 as increased by the September 2019 consumer price index (CPI) figure of 1.7%.

Please ensure your HR and payroll teams take the necessary action to implement the changes from 1 April 2020.

Band	Pensionable pay range	Main scheme contribution rate	50/50 section contribution rate
1	Up to £14,600	5.5%	2.75%
2	£14,601 - £22,800	5.8%	2.90%
3	£22,801 - £37,100	6.5%	3.25%
4	£37,101 - £46,900	6.8%	3.40%
5	£46,901 - £65,600	8.5%	4.25%
6	£65,601 - £93,000	9.9%	4.95%
7	£93,001 - £109,500	10.5x%	5.25%
8	£109,501 - £164,200	11.40%	5.70%
9	£164,201 or more	12.50%	6.25%

EMPLOYER: 25.6% for 2020-21

It was proposed by Councillor Hart to approve the above, seconded by Councillor Davies and agreed.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair to move: -

"That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated."

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

68. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE INSTALLATION OF WIFI AND A NEW IT SYSTEM IN BIDDULPH TOWN HALL

Three quotes would then be requested for the work.

69. TO AGREE A CONTRACTOR TO UNDERTAKE THE POCKET PARKS PROJECT (SPECIFICATION ATTACHED)

It was agreed to accept the quotation.

70. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COUNTRY PARK VISITOR CENTRE LEASE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON 16 JUNE 2020 (LEASE DISTRIBUTED BY EMAIL ON 20 MAY 2020)

There was a vote, and all agreed to move sign the lease and begin work on the building.

71. TO RECEIVE QUOTATIONS FOR A RETAINED HUMAN RESOURCES ADVICE SERVICE (TO BE SENT SEPARATELY)

It was proposed to accept the quote, seconded and agreed.

72. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON TOWN HALL MANAGEMENT AND AGREE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS (ALL PAPERWORK RECEIVED FOR REVIEW ON 21 MAY 2020):

1. Management Agreement
2. 25-Year Lease
3. Service Level Agreement for provision of reception services
4. TUPE liability- caretaking team
5. To approve that staff undertaking caretaking responsibilities will become members of the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme, with no break in service, with effect from 1 July 2020

The Chief Officer asked that any issues be raised before the meeting of the Town Council the following week, so that the agreements could begin on 1 July 2020. There was discussion about the documents.

73. TO RECEIVE A DRAFT STRUCTURE FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL STAFF TEAM (EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JULY 2020) AND TO AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOWN COUNCIL ON 16 JUNE 2020, INCLUDING A PROCESS FOR RECRUITMENT

The proposed structure was agreed and interview arrangements were considered.

A five-minute break was taken at this point.

74. GRANTS

Grant applications were considered and fund allocated accordingly.

75. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the next Finance Strategy and Management Committee will be Tuesday 7 July 2020, 6pm

The meeting closed at 9.06 pm

Signature

Date