

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 25 MARCH 2025, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Mayor: | • Councillor M A Hopkins |
| Councillor N R Yates | • Councillor K Jackson |
| • Deputy Mayor: | • Councillor J Jones |
| Councillor A C Lawton | • Councillor J Salt (17.45pm) |
| • Councillor D J Hawley | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |

Councillors Yates, Salt and Proudlove were in attendance but did not sign the attendance sheet.

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.

Councillor Rogers stated that a late request for Councillor Proudlove to attend as a substitute for Councillor Wood had been received. He queried whether Members were prepared to approve this. It was agreed that this would be appropriate, but that the correct process should be followed in future.

101. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor C Wood – Substitute Councillor D Proudlove
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor C Smith

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Salt declared an interest in item 114. Part E.

ii. Other Interests

None.

103. MINUTES (ATTACHED)

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 28 January 2025 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 11 February 2025)

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

104. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS MATTERS

a) To **approve** the bank reconciliation for December 2024 and January 2025- all accounts (attached).

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

b) To **receive** a detailed income and expenditure report at 19 March 2025 (attached).

Councillor Hawley questioned where the actual amounts are above the budget amounts.

The Chief Officer could provide this information in a larger report, but had previously been advised that this was not necessary. In most cases, expenditure was greater than the budget where additional grant funding had been received, e.g. with the Lengthsman, who had completed additional District and County Council work. Councillors concluded that this report was acceptable, but that a separate 'exceptions' report should also be created.

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

c) To **receive** a verbal update on anticipated income and expenditure before year-end, including UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

The Chief Officer advised that additional funds are expected before the end of the financial year: £2980 for Lengthsman work, £20,000 for service charges, £3,800 for Shared Prosperity sound system work, £55,000 for Town Hall frontage work and around £20,000 for VAT reimbursement.

The Chief Officer stated that there are some funds that require carrying forward to the following tax year, such as CCTV development and Library of Things funding.

It was **received**.

d) To **confirm** internal audit arrangements

The Chief Officer reported that the internal auditor is available to work with the Town Council again this year, and can complete the majority of the audit online due to the amount of information that the Town Council puts on the website.

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

Councillor Salt entered the meeting at 17.45pm and did not vote on this item.

e) To **receive** the internal control report from February 2025 (attached)

Councillor Hawley introduced the report and recommendations. Councillor Rogers gave thanks to Councillors Hawley and Eardley.

It was **received**.

f) To **confirm** that there were no recommendations following the 2023-24 audit, as we move towards year-end.

The Chief Officer reported that there are no actions to be brought forward at year end. The team are awaiting the 2024-25 documentation.

It was **confirmed**.

g) To **consider** any significant events in 2024-25 that have impacted on the Town Council's activities.

The Chief Officer presented the significant events in 2024-2025 and asked Councillors to reflect on them and the Town Council's response. She queried whether there were any others.

The Chief Officer suggested key areas for consideration could be:

- Ongoing high energy bills and associated Town Hall costs
- Biddulph Works Together
- Town Hall frontage and other capital projects (lamps, bench and trough)
- Cinema For All and Outside (inc. new cultural arts)

- New environment policy
- New partnerships- Chain Reaction and Trent Head groups
- Mental Health First Aid training

Councillor Salt stated that the learning opportunities from the fountains at Station Road should be included in the list.

There was consideration to the discovery of RAAC within the Town Hall.

It was agreed that the Town Council's responses had been appropriate, and had been reported to and considered by the relevant Committees.

105. TO APPROVE A DEPUTY HEALTH AND SAFETY MONITORING COUNCILLOR

It was discussed to defer this agenda item to the next Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting.

Councillor Salt suggested circulating a job description and asking for applicants; this will be decided at the next meeting.

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

106. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE CURRENT ASSET REGISTER AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS

The Chief Officer explained that as each item has been added to Scribe (the accounting package) it is added to the Asset Register. The Chief Officer showed the work-in-progress document on-screen and reminded Councillors about the process. There is another list that is referred to as the 'inventory list'; the Chief Officer explained that this is a complete list of all items that have been purchased.

Councillor Lawton questioned whether there is a procedure to remove items from the asset list. The Chief Officer confirmed that this is done through this Committee.

Councillor Salt questioned whether the items are marked as Town Council property. It was agreed to invest in a marking pen.

It was **received**.

107. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY HELP POINT REVIEW (PRESENTATION ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer explained that as a Community Help Point, the Town Council supports a wide range of individuals within the community. This report demonstrates the process that the County Council has gone through to review this set-up.

Councillor Salt reported that the wording 'co-produce' should include service users and requested that this be fed back to the working group.

It was **received**.

108. TO CONFIRM THAT ANNUAL STAFF APPRAISALS WILL COMMENCE AT THE START OF APRIL 2025

It was **noted**.

109. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF WASTE FROM APRIL 2025

The Chief Officer presented a Waste Management Statement, which ensured that the Town Council meet required legislation from 1 April 2025. There had been extensive discussions with the waste provider about appropriate practice.

It was **received**.

110. POLICIES

To approve the following policies (attached):

a) Reviewed CCTV Policy

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

b) Reviewed Pay Policy

Councillor Jackson questioned whether the median salary is of a concern, it was discussed that this is not a concern, but is required to be published.

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

c) Reviewed Drug and Alcohol Policy

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

d) Reviewed Harassment and Bullying Policy

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

e) Reviewed Sickness, Absence and Wellbeing Policy

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

f) Reviewed Public Participation in Council Meetings Policy

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

g) Reviewed Annual Leave and Special Leave Policy

Councillor Hawley questioned whether the changes are due to the legislation changes; the Chief Officer confirmed that this was correct and that it had been considered by the Employment Solicitor.

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

h) Reviewed Protocol to Mark the Death of a Local Holder of Office

Councillor Salt questioned whether a Councillor could request that a flag not fly to mark their death.

Councillor Salt requested that this is added to the policy.

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

i) Reviewed Flag Flying Protocol

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

j) Reviewed Councillor Email & IT Use Guidance

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

k) Reviewed Councillors' Handbook

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

l) Reviewed Carers Policy

The Chief Officer confirmed that these changes have been suggested by the solicitor.

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

m) New Banning Policy

The Chief Officer explained that the reason behind the policy.

If someone was asked to leave, there is a procedure in place to support this decision.

Councillor Hawley left the meeting at 18.31pm.

There was discussion about some possible amendments, which may strengthen the policy.

Councillor Jones proposed to approve the draft with the proposals discussed, and that this should be brought back to the Committee at a later date; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

111.

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

Nothing to consider.

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

Nothing to confirm.

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

112. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT- CONTRACT UPDATE MEETING TO BE HELD ON 25 MARCH

The Chief Officer reported that the meeting was held that morning, led by the Quantity Surveyor. There were no particular concerns to report. Key points were considered.

The next meeting will be held on 22nd April, at 10am.

The report was **received**.

113. TO CONSIDER A DRAFT THREE YEAR BUDGET FORECAST (ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer advised that this was a revision of previous forecasts, based on recent discussions.

Councillor Yates requested the amounts be in a different format.

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

114. QUOTATIONS (TO BE TABLED)

- a)** To **approve** stage lighting annual inspection

It was agreed.

- b)** To **confirm** the provider for regular lift inspections

It was agreed to approve Concept Elevators.

- c)** To **confirm** a provider for PAT Testing

Calbarrie Compliance were proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Proudlove. All **agreed**.

- d)** To **confirm** an approach to boiler repairs

The Chief Officer explained that a part is discontinued; the advice has been to replace the heat exchanger.

It was agreed to revisit this in the future due to the summer months. Members would like to consider the overall position with regard to the Town Hall boilers.

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Yates. All agreed.

- e) To **confirm** an approach to the repair/ replacement of the roller shutter at the Bus Hub

It was discussed that there are two possible options; either install bullet locks or replace the roller shutter.

Proposed by Councillor Yates to install bullet locks; seconded by Councillor Jackson. Councillor Salt Abstained. **Agreed.**

- f) To **confirm** an approach to the repair of the intruder alarm at the Visitor Centre

There was discussion about the usage of the alarm.

It was proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Proudlove to repair the intruder alarm. All **agreed.**

The meeting ended at 7.26pm.

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