

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 22 APRIL 2025, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

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

Councillor Harper was 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
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer

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

115. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

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

116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

- ii. Other Interests

None.

117. MINUTES (ATTACHED)

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 25 March 2025 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 8 April 2025)

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

118. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliation for February 2025- all accounts (attached).

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

- b) To **receive** a detailed cost centre report at 14 April 2025 (attached). A variance report will be presented in the meeting.

The Chief Officer tabled the cost code variance report; there were no questions. The Chief Officer tabled a list of projects that were ongoing or completed in 2024-25, which were funded from earmarked reserves; some projects were reimbursed from UK Shared Prosperity fund or other partners. This information was requested from a previous meeting.

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

Councillor Rogers thanked officers for the level of detail within these documents.

- c) To **receive** a copy of the Practitioners Guide for 2025.

Councillor Rogers explained that the document details the requirements for the following year.

The Chief Officer explained that any amendments to Town Council policies and procedures will be in line with this document.

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

119. TO CONFIRM MEMBERSHIP OF THE COOPERATIVE COUNCILS' INNOVATION NETWORK

The Chief Officer explained that it was previously agreed to join the cooperative councils' innovation network; this action was completed.

The Chief Officer had attended a meeting; she would provide future updates. It was **confirmed**.

120. POLICIES

To approve the following policies (attached):

- a) Reviewed Mayoral Handbook

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **Agreed**.

- b) Reviewed Guidance on Recording in Public Meetings Policy

There was a discussion as to whether the policy is still required due to all meetings being recorded and published to YouTube.

Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **Agreed**.

- c) Reviewed Policy on the Use of Amanuenses

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

- d) Reviewed Employee Code of Conduct

Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **Agreed**.

- e) To consider proposed changed to the Financial Regulations before formal approval at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **Agreed**.

121. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

- 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

All **Agreed**.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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.

122. TO CONSIDER THE REVISED GRANTS POLICY (ATTACHED). A REVISED APPLICATION FORM WILL BE CREATED FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF THE POLICY. THE GRANT SCHEME SHOULD OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS AT THE END OF APRIL 2025

The Chief Officer stated that the agenda item had been discussed previously at the Town Hall finance working group. The proposal had been to create a matrix in order to score grant applications and make the process easier.

The policy had been reviewed; the Chief Officer explained there is more specific guidance in the documents that accompany each grant scheme.

There was consideration of a number of options:

- Ringfencing allocations for specific organisations; there were varying views on this.
- Retrospective applications should not be permitted.
- Consideration of the 'priority' groups

Councillor Jackson suggested a trial for this year (2025-26).

It was agreed to advise applicants that a new process was being trialled and that this would result in a scoring system, so each applicant should provide as much detail as possible.

Scoring would be completed by officers and shared with Councillors in advance of the June meeting of this Committee.

Proposed by Councillor; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

It was agreed to not change the application form.

**123.TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE
DEVELOPMENT- CONTRACT UPDATE MEETING TO BE HELD ON 22
MARCH**

The Chief Officer explained that the meeting has been moved to Tuesday 29th April at 10am.

It was agreed to meet prior to the meeting to discuss the finer details: 2pm on 28th April.

Proposed by Councillor; seconded by Councillor. Agreed.

**124.TO CONSIDER ANY QUOTATIONS RECEIVED SINCE THE AGENDA WAS
PUBLISHED**

Quotations were considered in relation to annual services of the boiler, automatic doors and the asbestos inspection. The Chief Officer also advised that she was seeking a quotation for a broken window.

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Harper and agreed.

**125.ITEM REFERRED FROM THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE
(WOODHOUSE BURIAL GROUND) WORKING GROUP: TO APPROVE
NEXT STEPS WITH THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE DEVELOPMENT**

It was agreed to obtain quotes from a quantity surveyor and architect. Proposed Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

**126. TO APPROVE ACTIONS IN RELATION TO OUTSTANDING TENANT
FEES**

Councillor Rogers explained that the tenant from Room C left without paying in 2023-24.

It was discussed whether to write-off the debt and not pursue it. There was discussion about deposits for future tenants.

It was agreed to not write it off and keep it on the books. Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

127.TO RECEIVE THE OUTCOME OF STAFF APPRAISALS AND TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Officer advised that she had completed ten appraisals. The outcome was:

Officer	Current Level	Proposed Level
CO	49	TBC (49 is top of level)
EP	26	27 (top of level)
CG	28	29
F	14	15
A	12	13
CS	10	11 (top of level)
SC	7	Top of level
C x 3	5	Top of level

The Chief Officer appraisal was yet to be completed. All other officers had had an exemplary year; the Chief Officer was proud of their work.

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Yates.

There was consideration of the role of the apprentice after August 2025.

The Chief Officer's appraisal would be considered in May.

128.TO CONFIRM ONGOING ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING CARETAKING PROVISION

The Chief Officer advised that the four caretakers were happy with the current shift pattern; she would like Councillors to formally confirm these arrangements.

Councillors confirmed they were happy to confirm these arrangements.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm.

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