



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2024 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN
COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE,
COMMENCING AT 7.00PM**

PRESENT:

Cllr D Strachan (Chairman)
Cllr I Agnew (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr M Foster (Ex-officio member)
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Mx K Chambers – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public –

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a. Cllr. G. Barrett, Cllr. C. Thomas.

b. **REMOTE ATTENDANCE**

Cllr. S. Sajid.

c. **NO APOLOGIES**

Cllr. M. Russell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. **Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

None.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Cllr. G. Fage, Ward Councillor for Biggleswade East

Cllr. Fage noted Item 10e (S106 Updates) and updated Members that he was chasing CBC Officers for this information to be shared and the website to go live. He mentioned that he will share a point of contact with Officers so that the Town Council can ask for the latest version of the S106 Report.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

No guest speaker was invited.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No Members had questions.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on **Tuesday 2nd July 2024**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. General Reserves Policy

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO gave a brief overview of the general reserves and thanked the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for their support in reviewing the policy.

Members asked for clarification regarding the three months of General Reserves. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that this is tied to statute and that this is the recommended level for a 'small authority' within the Joint Panel Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide.

Members noted 'accessing' on the second page of the policy document at the commencement of clause 5 should read 'assessing' and asked that this is corrected. Under clause 3 on the second page, the line should also read 'may be required'.

Members asked what a suitable timeframe for the next review of this document is. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that this is a significant policy and therefore it is good practice to be reviewed every year.

The Chairman noted that the Capital Reserves Policy will also be reviewed in future meetings.

Members asked for clarification regarding the statement, "Earmarked Reserves are accounted for separately but remain legally part of the General Reserves", and if these

were in addition to the three months previously discussed. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that these are in addition and this will be made clearer.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the draft General Reserves Policy with the suggested amendments and that this be recommended to Council to be adopted at the next Council meeting.

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Bank Reconciliation**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

b. **Budget Planning Cycle 2025-26**

Members noted the efforts of Officers and that this provides a good comprehensive plan.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

c. **Grant Applications 2024/25 – Tranche One**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO confirmed that it is Officer's intentions to distribute the grant information to Members in mid-September so that Members can submit any questions and receive responses from applicants.

Members asked whether the same scoring framework would be used from previous tranches. Officers confirmed that this will be used again and that it will be distributed alongside the application documents before the October meeting.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

d. **BTC Contracts**

Members asked how regularly these contracts are reviewed by the Town Council. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that this is dependent on the length of the contract but it is usually reviewed six months before the exit date.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

e. **S106 Progress**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive thanked Cllr. Fage for the information shared. He noted that the Town Council has written to the Chief Executive and had meetings with the Heads of Services, but this information had not been forthcoming. The Chairman also noted that this issue has been raised within Biggleswade Joint Committee meetings.

Members recognised the importance of a S106 document which allows for effective scrutiny and that the information can be understood by anyone. Members also noted that this is necessary information before the precept process begins.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

f. **Capital Borrowing Regulations 2025/26 Onwards**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

12. **EXEMPT**

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:21pm.