



Ref: Agenda/Council – 10th June 2025

5th June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Town Council are hereby summoned to the Council Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 10th June** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: All Town Councillors
Notice Boards
The Press

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the Members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk and the Committee Clerk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

If a Member has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest, they must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item to which the interest relates. If the Member has been granted a dispensation by the Council, they must still declare the interest but may take part in the discussion and vote.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

This is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest. Upon identification Members can take part in any vote.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-QVoZPiXQ0i7BApdZpLqzw

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

- a. Julie Balaam, Biggleswade Community Agent, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC).

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive the minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on **Tuesday 29th April 2025** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- b. For Members to receive the minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on **Tuesday 13th May 2025** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on **29th April 2025**
- b. Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on **13th May 2025**.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Call For Sites Update

For Members to receive and consider an update from the CBC Local Plans Team at CBC regarding the "Call for Sites".

b. Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Update

For Members to receive and consider an update from CBC regarding the new Local Plan.

*Appendices A – C are available via SharePoint.

c. **Home to School Transport Consultation**

For Members to receive and consider documents relating to Central Bedfordshire Councils (CBC) school transport consultation.

CBC are proposing a change to their Home to School Transport Policy, which would mean only providing mainstream school transport to a child's nearest suitable school. The consultation is open until 30 June 2025.

Impact documents produced by CBC are available on SharePoint, referenced as Appendices 1 and 2.

All supporting documents (Including the relevant appendixes) for the Home to school transport consultation are available via the Central Bedfordshire Council website. Click on the hyperlink **here** (electronic copy) to access further documentation.

d. **Unity Trust Bank and CCLA Bank Account Signatories**

For Members to receive and consider a report from the Head of Finance and Deputy RFO.

e. **A1 Underpass**

For Members to receive a response from National Highways regarding the A1 underpass.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

You can view details of applications and related documentation such as application forms, site plans, drawings, decision notices and other supporting documents for planning applications on the Central Bedfordshire Council website. Click on the hyperlink (electronic copy) on the heading of each planning application listed below.

a. **CB/25/01305/FULL - 19 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JE**

Change of use from estate agents to podiatry clinic. A new entrance and door, brought forward from the current position with a roller shutter above.

b. **CB/25/01306/ADV - 19 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JE**

Advertisement: Front internally illuminated fascia sign, a projecting internally illuminated sign and graphic vinyl applied to the two front windows.

c. **CB/25/01292/ADV – Texaco (Now BP), 173 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EJ**

Advertisement: Freestanding 5m internally illuminated Totem Pole for the purpose of advertising EV chargers.

d. **CB/25/01512/FULL - Broadmead, Biggleswade, SG18 8LF**

Demolition of existing conservatory, single storey rear infill extension, associated alterations, and roof light. Conversion of existing integral garage into habitable accommodation.

e. **CB/25/00991/FULL - 25 Nursery Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HR**

Single storey front porch extension and first floor front extension with alteration to existing doors and windows.

f. **CB/25/01634/FULL - 1 Poplar Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0EW**

Single storey rear extension.

g. **CB/25/01443/FULL - The Yorkshire Grey, 140 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EL**

New timber posts, planters & festoon lights to front & rear terrace areas.

h. **CB/25/01576/FULL - Land to the rear of No.2 and No.8 St Andrews Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8BB**

Erection of a self-build and custom build 1 bed dwelling.

i. **CB/25/00764/ADV - Unit N, A1 Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NE**

Advertisement: 1 internally illuminated fascia sign with an illuminated door welcome surround, 4 Internally illuminated totem signs, 2 illuminated wall signs and a non-illuminated signs to the trolley park shelter.

j. **CB/25/01732/FULL - 15 Sandy View, Biggleswade, SG18 0HS**

Conversion of a covered walkway and garage to form an office/study.

11. PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

- a. A report of the Planning Application Outcomes (by exception applications only) as of **4th June 2025**.

12. ACCOUNTS

a. **Internal Audit – Final Report 2024-25**

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Finance & Deputy RFO and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive, and the attached Appendix A ("Year End Internal Audit Report for Biggleswade Town Council – 2024/2025"). The report to be considered prior to the adoption of Accounts and AGAR.

b. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

1. For Members to approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Return for the financial year 2024/25. Council to authorise. The Chairman of the Meeting (Mayor) and the Town Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement.
2. For Members to approve the Accounting Statement (Section 2) contained in the Annual Return for the 2024/25 financial year. Council to authorise. The Chairman of the Meeting (Mayor) and the Town Clerk to sign the Accounting Statement.

Members to note that the electoral rights of inspection of accounts will begin on Monday 23rd June 2025 and end on Friday 1st August 2025 consistent with Sections 25 to 27 of the Local Audit and Accountabilities Act 2014.

Public Notices will be issued on 20th June 2025. All financial documentation will be forwarded to Mazars (the Council's External Auditor) by 30th June 2025.

c. **Financial Administration**

Position & Accounts for April 2025.

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Finance & Deputy RFO.

In addition, the usual financial documentation is available on the Council website as follows: Financial Transparency Documents | Biggleswade Town Council.

- i. Balance Sheet to 30/04/2025.
- ii. Detailed Income & Expenditure to 30/04/2025.
- iii. Payment Listing from 01/04/2025 to 30/04/2025.
- iv. Summary Income & Expenditure to 30/04/2025.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. None.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-QVoZPiXQ0i7BApdZpLqzw

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

15. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

- (a. Exempt minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting 13th May 2025).
- (b. Century House Report).
- (c. Drove Road Report).
- (d. Christmas Report)
- (e. Staff Survey Report).

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

**Biggleswade Community Agent Report****Full Council Meeting, 10th June 2025****Introduction to the Biggleswade Community Agent role**

The Biggleswade Community Agent (BCA) role is part of a wider team of seven community and village agents working for Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (Beds RCC). The team provide support to local residents (18+) to access a wide range of services and support, across Bedford Borough and selected locations in Central Bedfordshire. The Biggleswade Community Agent role is funded by Biggleswade Town Council, for 14 hours per week.

Report on work of the Biggleswade Community Agent in FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025

The last report to Council was in December 2023, when an update on Q1 and Q2 for FY 2023-2024 was provided. Table 1 below reports on the full years' data for FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025.

Both years have seen a sustained increase in the number of new referrals compared to previous years and the number of returning clients (who have received support from the Community Agent within the last 12 months) remains steady. The complexity of the support needed by clients is generally increasing, particularly where support relates to housing applications and/or clients with complex physical or mental health needs. The amount of 1:1 time spent per client to provide support has increased, with a consequent decrease in the overall number of home visits (fewer but longer visits).

Source of referrals

Around 53% of new referrals for the period were self-referrals or referrals by friends or family. Approximately 35 % of new referrals came from voluntary organisations, including Beds RCC's social prescribers, Carers in Bedfordshire, Mind, Biggleswade Good Neighbours and Biggleswade Baptist Church foodbank. The remaining 12% of new referrals came from a variety of agencies and organisations including social care, community mental health teams and occupational health.

Client demographic

The client base has also broadened during the period to include a greater proportion of clients who are working age and/or families, alongside an increase in the complexity of need of many clients.

In terms of demographic, 63% of new clients are female (of which 45% < 60 yrs. of age, 55% > 60) and 37% male (of which 33% < 60 yrs. of age, 67% > 60).

The majority of clients supported who are over state pension age have long-term health or disability issues and need help to remain independent and/or reduce the risk of self-neglect. An increasing proportion are also facing financial hardship and require support with applications for means-tested benefits such as pension credit and housing benefit and/or foodbank referrals.

Of the clients supported who are working age, the type of needs supported include adults with learning difficulties, parents of children with disability and adults with long-term mental and/or physical health conditions. Other issues include domestic abuse and substance misuse.

The increasing complexity of support required by many clients has led to increased cross-referral and joint working with other services to provide support, including adult social care, Beds RCC's social prescribers, Community Mental Health Teams and local foodbanks.

Table 1 Summary data on Biggleswade Community Agent Support

	2024-2025 Q1-Q4	2023-2024 Q1-Q4	2022-2023 Q1-Q4
New clients¹	77 (↓ 4%)	80 (↑111%)	38 (↑22.6%)
Total number of clients¹ (new and ongoing)	106 (↑ 12%)	95	Data not available
Client issues resolved	383 (↑ 46%)	261 (↑1%)	259 (↑156.5%)
Client visits (home or preferred community venue)	102 (↓ 38%)	166 (↑57%)	106 (↑65.6%)
Total number of referrals made to support agencies	72 ²	Data not available	Data not available
Good Neighbours Scheme referrals made	4 (↓ 20%)	5	Data not available
Number of community groups visited / presented to, to promote the service	7 (↑ 40%)	5	1

NOTES:

1. Total number of clients supported (for both new and ongoing clients) includes other members of the household (e.g. partners or other family members) where they will also directly benefit from the support provided (e.g. an application for the housing register, or attendance allowance where the carer lives with the cared for).
2. Figure includes adult social care, community health agencies, foodbank, CAB, social prescribing service and a range of voluntary organisations.

Major initiatives during this period

During this reporting period, the Beds RCC Community Agent team moved to a new central database for maintaining client data and recording/reporting on the support provided. This new improved system meets updated data protection requirements and provides a consistent approach to recording client information. All new clients from 1 April 2024 are now managed through this system.

Communications and outreach

Due to the service generally operating at or near capacity, visits to community groups to promote the service were relatively low overall. Organisations and groups that were visited include Biggleswade Baptist Church Foodbank, Biggleswade Baptist Church coffee morning at Kings Corner; Beds RCC Wellbeing Hub at Northfields Community Centre and Bloomin' Well Community Garden Group, Spring House. Social media activity to promote the service remains a low priority as the service continues to operate at capacity in terms of the demand for support.

Case Studies

Case study 1

Single-parent family, one child over 18, one under 18. All family members have a range of physical and learning disabilities. Referred to the Community Agent service in June 2023 by their social worker for support with a PIP renewal for the adult child. The family continue to receive ongoing periodic support from the Community Agent with form-filling/phone calls for a wide range of issues including benefits applications and renewals, blue badges, carers grant, disabled travel discounts, housing-related issues, identity documents, financial assessment forms for day care, jury service exemption and community dentist referral. I have supported the adult child by accompanying them to face to face appointments at the Job Centre to help manage their UC claim and Work Capability Assessment process. The family engage well with services and access a wide range of support, but the Community Agent service is the only service that can support them with form-filling and phone calls in a consistent way without having to

start again with a new person each time. The family have said how much they value the support and appreciate the consistency of having the same person support them who understands their situation and needs. Due to the complexity of need in the household, there is considerable joint working with a range of other services including adult social care, children's services, housing association and social prescriber, which adds value to the support provided to by the Community Agent.

Case study 2

Elderly client with long-term physical health issues who lives alone. Client was referred to the Community Agent by a friend in 2024 for support applying for a Blue Badge and Attendance Allowance. Both were successful and Attendance Allowance was awarded at the higher rate. The client then contacted the service again in February 2025 asking for help to renew their garden waste bin subscription online with CBC. Client was visited at home and this was completed. Client lives in private rented accommodation and in conversation during the visit also expressed concerns about a recent letter from their letting agency regarding increasing rent. A benefit check was offered to see what help might be available, the outcome of which was that the client was entitled to pension credit (and associated benefits) and a substantial housing benefit increase. I contacted CBC to ask for advice about the housing benefit as there was a significant gap in what was currently being paid and the new rent. They advised the client had not notified them of increases in the last few years, but if evidence from the letting agency to confirm the previous increases could be provided, then the increased housing benefit could be back dated, resulting in a lump sum payment to the client of housing benefit owed. Overall, the client's financial situation has significantly improved through a range of interventions.

Client testimonials:

"Julie was extremely helpful and explained everything to us as she went along, we would not have been able to complete form without her help" [Support to a client with learning disabilities, to complete a Work Capability Assessment]

"Julie was extremely helpful, empathic, professional and caring whilst not making us feel embarrassed or worried about claiming." [Support to a client with long-term health condition to apply for Attendance Allowance]

"Julie arrived on time and smiling. She was so helpful and informative. It was a pleasure to meet her and I would not hesitate to ask for her help again if necessary" [Support to an elderly client with reapplying for a Blue Badge]

Actions for next period

It is difficult to forecast future demand for the service, but with referral rates remaining high, options for actively promoting the service beyond current reach will be reviewed against capacity. However, as referral rates have been more manageable in the first part of 2025, more outreach work is planned going forward. Work is also ongoing with local foodbanks, in particular the Biggleswade Baptist Church to streamline the referral process for those needing longer term support. The groundwork for more collaborative working with Citizens Advice is also underway to maximise the support provided by both services to local residents.

Many thanks for your interest and support. If you would like to contact the Biggleswade Community Agent please email Biggleswadeagent@bedsrcc.org.uk or call 07534 484750.

Julie Balaam, Biggleswade Community Agent, June 2025

Annex: Detailed breakdown of support provided in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25

Support provided	Number of applications/referrals/interventions	
	2024-2025	2023-2024
Disability benefits applications		
• Attendance Allowance	13	13
• Personal Independence Allowance	7	7
• Disability Living Allowance	4	0
• DWP Work Capability Assessments	3	5
Means-tested benefits applications		
• Universal Credit	1	2
• Pension Credit	1	0
• Housing Benefit	2	2
• Council Tax Support	4	3
• Discretionary Housing Payments	2	1
Benefits advice/support - general	40	25
Benefits checks (using Turn2Us Benefits Calculator)	7	5
Foodbank / veg box scheme / CBC voucher referrals	31	8
Blue Badge applications/renewals	13	15
Housing		
• General support with housing issues, access to housing advice and liaison with housing associations	16	16
• Housing Register Applications	5	6
Medical		
• Support with appointments, medical letters, GP liaison, prescriptions	14	21
Support with utility companies, bills, banking	13	9
Social Care		
• Support with Financial Assessment forms	6	7
• Care Needs Assessment referrals	3	0
• Carers Assessment referrals	2	3
• Care options advice	3	2
Admin support with paperwork	20	25
Legal advice – signposting	6	0
Transport		
• Bus pass /rail card applications/renewals	6	1
• Arranging hospital transport	2	2
• Community Transport referral	0	1
Social Prescriber/CWC referrals	6	6



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 29th APRIL 2025
AT 7.30PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr M. Foster (Mayor)
Cllr. I. Agnew
Cllr. D. Albone
Cllr. G. Barrett (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. P. Guilcher
Cllr. J. Jones
Cllr. M. North
Cllr. S. Patel
Cllr. M. Russell
Cllr. A. Skilton
Cllr. D. Strachan
Cllr. C. Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Miss Asia Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 9 (1 online).

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor 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 to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Mayor advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr. M Knight.

2. MATTERS ARISING

None.

3. ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

The Annual Report as included in the Agenda was presented by Cllr. M. Foster.

During his address, Councillor Foster expressed his gratitude for being elected to a second term as Mayor and thanked Deputy Mayor Councillor G. Barrett for his support over the past year.

Within his report, Cllr. Foster noted that despite continued opposition from Town and Ward Councillors to the proposed development of 416 homes on land north of Furzenhall Road, On the 6th November 2024 the Planning Inspectorate, overturned the original refusal and granted outline planning permission for the development. He also noted that in December CBC's Development Management Committee (DMC) had approved a revised application with additional access routes via the Potton Road/Baden Powell Way roundabout: it is still unclear what will be constructed.

Cllr. Foster recognised the Town Council's efforts throughout the year: In October, the Town Council hosted its inaugural Business Forum. In attendance were local businesses, Members and Officers of the Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council representatives and MP Richard Fuller. The event was a great success.

In November, the Town Centre hosted Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day services and the Annual Christmas Light "Switch-on" event both of which were extremely well attended.

Cllr. Foster also expressed his delight, at being able to host the Biggleswade Civic Service, emphasising the importance of being able to engage with the community. He thanked Susan Lousada, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, for her attendance.

Cllr Foster highlighted the Town Council's efforts to support the continuation of twinning Biggleswade with Erlensee and noted that some members of the Town Council will be travelling to celebrate the event with the Burgermeister and Stadtrat in Erlensee.

Cllr. Foster thanked all Officers and Councillors for the work that they do to help improve the lives of those who live in Biggleswade.

4. REPORTS

a. Public Land and Open Spaces Committee

The Public Land and Open Spaces Committee report included in the agenda was presented by the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. M. North.

Cllr. North highlighted that this year has been a year of achievement for the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee (PLOS).

He informed Members the refurbishment of Kitelands and Brunel play areas have now been completed and that the committee is hopeful that phase two additions to Kitelands will be completed by the end of this year. He noted the refurbishment works at Kitelands are being funded by a generous contribution from Tritax Symmetry.

The PLOS committee have made efforts to make the Jubilee Recreation Area more accessible to residents of housing developments in the surrounding area. In addition, a Tiny Forest – with 600 trees - has been established to add to the amenity value.

Cllr. North recognised the continued efforts of the Public Realm team.

Cllr. North noted that a possible future challenge for the PLOS committee is the takeover of responsibility for the green spaces in Kings Reach.

He also referenced improvements to Flower Beds, Planters and Hanging Baskets, emphasising that the high quality of the displays achieved by Public Realm will be the standard moving forward.

Cllr. North also highlighted that Biggleswade Linear Wood is now under the Town Council's management and is being maintained by the Public Realm Team.

Cllr. North also noted continuing work at the allotment site, both BTC owned cemeteries, the Fairfield Road Recreation Areas and Drove Road Tennis Courts. Plans are in varying stages of development to improve the provision at these sites.

b. Town Centre Management Committee

The Town Centre Management Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. J. Woodhead.

During his address, Councillor Woodhead expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve as chairman of the committee this year.

Cllr Woodhead highlighted the difficult economic climate over the last year, noting that the town has seen several retailers vacate from the Town Centre including a national chain – Peacock's - as well as some independent traders.

He noted Members of the Town Centre Management Committee (TCM) are concerned about the lack of banking facilities in the town, but the Town Council is committed to continuing to work with Cash Access and local Post Office's to look at the possibility of securing a banking hub in the future.

Cllr. Woodhead acknowledged the continued provision of events in the Town Centre, including the D-Day 80th Anniversary in June 2024, Biggleswade History Weekend in partnership with The Bigg Theatre in September 2024, the second Biggleswade Bus Running Day with the United Counties Preservation Society in October 2024, and the recently commenced monthly BIGG Eats initiative.

He also noted the success of Market Stall Days, the well-attended Remembrance Sunday Parade in November, and the popular Christmas Lights Switch-On.

Efforts by the Town Council to increase footfall, such as the Christmas reindeer visit, were recognised. Additionally, the introduction and success of new events—Artisan Markets, Flea Markets, and the Vegan Market in January —were highlighted.

Cllr Woodhead emphasised the success of the Easter Egg Hunt (held in Franklins Recreation Ground) and expressed his excitement for the upcoming Victory Day party on 5 July to jointly commemorate 80 Years since VE and VJ Day.

Cllr Woodhead informed Members that a ShopWatch scheme is in place within the town to combat shoplifting, and the Council maintain good links with the Biggleswade Policing Team esp. our local PCSOs.

With regards to parking, Cllr. Woodhead noted that the Council have now installed the new car parking machines.

Cllr. Woodhead finally thanked Deputy Chairman, Cllr. Patel, and Town Council Officers for their continued support.

c. Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Finance and General Purposes Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. D. Strachan.

During his address, the Chairman thanked Officers for their efforts in managing the budget this year.

He provided an overview of the functions of the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) committee and their relation to the management of the Orchard Centre and Grants process.

Cllr. Strachan noted the financial overview of the Town Council's financial performance for the year 2024/25 shows an overall surplus of £45,379 although this figure is yet to be confirmed in the end of year closedown.

He highlighted The Council applied for £408,000 in additional grant funding and has successfully accessed £174,000. The Chairman noted that the Town Council continues to pursue further grants and S106 funds from CBC. He explained that the Council had incurred unplanned spending to improve football pitches and support CBC in a planning enquiry for land north of Furzenhall.

In 2024/25, the Council used loan monies from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) to fund the first phase of several improvements to the Town's assets. This includes refurbishment of Playgrounds and the Cemeteries as well as upgrading the allotment provision in the town.

Cllr Strachan celebrated that this year the F&GP committee had awarded twenty-three grants totalling £21,807 to various charities and good causes that benefit the residents of Biggleswade, in addition to our ongoing support to fund the employment of a Community Agent by Bedfordshire Rural Community Charity.

He thanked Officers and Members for their continued support of the committee this year.

d. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. M. Russell.

The Chairmen noted that the Biggleswade Town Council team has continued to evolve over the past year, with several staff members joining and leaving the organisation.

During the year, the Committee reviewed and agreed on a number of key policies, including:

- Capability and Absence Management
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment
- Health & Safety
- Grievance Procedure
- Dress Code Guidance

In addition, the Committee adopted a more formal Member Code of Conduct, following recommendations from the National Association of Local Councils and the Local Government Association.

Cllr. Russell also highlighted that another council-wide staff survey was recently conducted, achieving a 100% response rate. The findings are currently being compiled into a report by the external firm, which will be presented at the first Personnel Committee meeting of the new municipal year in May.

Central Bedfordshire - Ward Councillor Update

Cllr. G. Fage, Ward Councillor for Biggleswade East, presented Members with an update on CBC activities over the last year.

Cllr. Fage expressed that CBC is under a lot of pressure as a local authority. CBC are under financial constraints as they are currently down to 17 million in reserves. While they did manage to run a balance budget this year, they will need to ensure they replicate this in future.

Cllr. Fage noted that over the coming years there may be some changes surrounding strategic authorities. CBC's Leader is engaging with neighbouring councils e.g. Luton, Bedford, Milton Keynes, and Northampton to see what that strategic authority and new mayoral area may look like.

CBC has invested in Edward Peak School providing funding for a new hall and Muga pitch with flood lighting, similar investment will take place at Lawnside school.

He highlighted that it had been decided to expand Ivel Valley School, to an adjacent site. Cllr Fage stated that Members and the public will hear more on this in future. He emphasised the importance of considering the children's welfare as a priority when planning applications for the redevelopment of the school are made public.

Cllr Fage referenced the development of 416 homes on land north of Furzenhall Road and emphasised his unhappiness at CBC's decision to grant permission for the development. He apologised to Members and residents in connection to this issue.

He informed Members that the Call for Sites is now closed and that we will soon begin to see where those sites are located. He believes there is potential for up to 20 sites within Biggleswade.

He urged that all councillors should speak with one voice, if possible, as councillors owe that to the residents of Biggleswade.

5. Resolutions and Questions

- a. Members thanked Cllr Fage for his update. They questioned why this was not included on the agenda. Members asked whether other Ward Counsellors were invited to make an update on behalf of CBC and how Cllr Fage was nominated to present the update.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive explained that all Ward Councillors were offered the opportunity to speak as indicated by the agenda and Cllr Fage was the only individual who expressed an interest.

Cllr Foster agreed that the presentation could be included in Chairman's reports rather than the open forum.

- b. Sally Heley Ferguson addressed the Council and thanked Councillor Woodhead for his ongoing support of veterans residing in Biggleswade. She noted that, this year, restorative measures have been enacted to reimburse those affected by the ban on gay people serving in the military between 1967 and 2000. In light of this, she asked the Council to formally recognise LGBTQ+ veterans who were discharged due to their sexuality, to include them in the Remembrance Day parade, and to lay a wreath in their memory.

It was **AGREED** that Members would consider this motion at the next Town Council Meeting.

- c. A Member of the public questioned what measures the Town Council was taking to ensure members of the LGBTQIA + community feel safe and supported. During their address, they referenced the Chairman of TCM's acknowledgment that crime is a concern. The resident then recounted a recent incident in Hitchin involving the burning of a Pride bench. They questioned how the Council intends to reassure the community and clearly convey that such acts of intolerance are not welcome in Biggleswade, particularly in light of the recent decision not to fly the Progress Pride flag. They emphasised that the Council had an opportunity to support young LGBTQ+ residents and make them feel welcome and free to be themselves in Biggleswade.

Cllr Foster thanked the resident for his question.

Cllr Foster reiterated that the Flag policy had already been addressed by the Council and the recent changes to the policy, were intended to create greater consistency rather than to be intolerant towards any group.

Cllr Foster emphasised that he understood the importance of supporting the LGBTQ community. He suggested that moving forward the council would regularly review in what ways the Town Council could support the LGBTQ community. He noted that the Council would ensure the LGBTQ community was considered in all endeavours.

Members also suggested that when the Council receives its updates from the local policing team, Members will question whether there have been any incidents of hate crime as a result of the Council's recent flag flying decision. Members emphasised that they are committed to keeping all residents of Biggleswade safe including the LGBTQ+ community and are supportive of Pride within Biggleswade.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that, in light of the introduction of Martyn's Law. Officers will be conducting academic exercises connected to how the Town Council can keep people safe for future events. Over the next few months, a paper will come to Council that is understanding of terrorism/hate-crime related activity & keeping people safe. This paper will help the Council put plans in place that protect people and recognise the risks that are local to Biggleswade. When Officers are making these plans, they will look to engage with a range of different stakeholders within the community from a range of different backgrounds to ensure the Council is cognisant of the safety needs of all the members of the community it serves.

- d. Cllr Skilton questioned whether considering recent changes in legislation the Town Council are considering changing their policy on who's allowed to use what toilets.

Cllr Foster responded that this was a legislative change and will be considered in due course.

- e. Rhiannon Barrows presented a motion from Biggleswade Pride Community. The Pride Community asked for the following:
- For the Town Council to provide material support to help ensure that this year's pride event is a success and demonstrate that the Town Council welcomes and encourages diversity and inclusion.
 - The Town Council officially recognise Biggleswade pride and demonstrate its support by flying the progress pride flag during the event and sharing promoting the event through their social media channels.
 - The Town Council rescind its recent decision to change the flag flying policy.
 - The Progress Pride flag be purchased using capital reserves and flown during Biggleswade LGBTQ+ Pride.
 - The Pride flag be raised Saturday 28th of June 2025 and be flown throughout the weekend (Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th) and this practice be continued for subsequent years to annually mark Pride Month.
 - Officers utilise 2024/2025 UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) to purchase bunting to distribute to local businesses within the town who wish to participate in the Pride celebrations and to support the overall success of the event.

It was **AGREED** that Members would consider this motion at the next Town Council Meeting.

- f. Members of the public provided an update on the Biggleswade Community Gardens and expressed their thanks to the Town Council for their continued support and the recent allocation of grant funding.

With the funding now secured, they plan to improve the area near the railway. This will include removing graffiti and creating a mural to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the railway. The mural project will run for a year and must be completed by the end of March next year. It will be a community-driven initiative with input from residents.

They also asked whether the Town Council could support the project through advertising, promotion, publicity, and assistance in engaging with community groups.

It was **AGREED** that Members would consider this motion at the next Town Council Meeting.

6. OPEN FORUM – MATTERS RELATING TO BIGGLESWADE

a. Ward Councillors

A member of the public raised a concern about how the Council would ensure that residents of Lawrence Road are not disadvantaged by the new one-way system. She suggested that a better use of funding would be to improve road surfaces and fill potholes, rather than implementing new traffic systems.

Cllr Fage responded that he believed the scheme was final and, as such, it is unlikely that changes can be made. He acknowledged that there is no perfect solution, but assured the resident that her points were noted, and he would be happy to review the designs.

b. Town Councillors

A member of the public raised a concern about the potential for harmful pollutants to enter the waterways in Biggleswade because of the housing development on land north of Furzenhall Road.

In response, members explained that Anglian Water is consulted on every planning application. The approval of the planning application indicates that any necessary environmental considerations have been addressed, and no further action is required at this stage.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8:50 pm.

DRAFT



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 13th May 2025
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr. J Woodhead (Mayor)
Cllr. D Albane (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. I Agnew
Cllr. G Barrett
Cllr. M Foster
Cllr. J Jones
Cllr. M Knight
Cllr. M North
Cllr. M Russell
Cllr. A Skilton
Cllr. D Strachan
Cllr. C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Mr I Campbell – Community Development Manager
Mr H Henderson – Public Realm Manager
Ms F Gumush – Deputy Administration & HR Manager
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 0

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor 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 to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Mayor advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual.

1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2025/26

- a. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Jonathan Woodhead be elected to the Office of Town Mayor of Biggleswade for the Municipal year 2025/26.

2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

- a. The Town Mayor, Cllr. J. Woodhead signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Following his election as Town Mayor, Cllr Woodhead addressed the Council highlighting that he was honoured to be elected as Mayor. He stated that Biggleswade is a wonderful community and conveyed his pride in being part of the Town Council. Cllr Woodhead emphasised during his mayoral term, he is committed to recognising the valuable contributions of local charities, organisations, and businesses within the community.

He invited Members to inform him of any business they feel are currently overlooked, as he is eager to shine a spotlight on their efforts and ensure they receive the recognition they deserve. He concluded by affirming his intention to help foster a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant town throughout his tenure. Details of his selected mayoral charities will be announced in the near future.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

- a. Upon completion of a paper ballot, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. David Albone be elected to the Office of Deputy Town Mayor of Biggleswade for the year 2025/26.

4. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

- a. The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr. D Albone signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Membership of Standing Committees and the appointment of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen are adopted as follows:

a. PUBLIC LANDS AND OPEN SPACES (PLOS)

Cllr. M Foster (Chairman). Cllr. M Knight (Deputy Chairman).

Cllr. I Agnew, Cllr. J Jones, Cllr. M North, Cllr. C Thomas, Cllr. A Skilton, Cllr. D Strachan, Cllr. J Woodhead (Ex-officio Member), Cllr. D Albone (Ex-officio Member).

b. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES

Cllr. D Strachan (Chairman). Cllr. I Agnew (Deputy Chairman).

Cllr. M Foster, Cllr. M Knight, Cllr. M North, Cllr. M Russell, Cllr. C Thomas, Cllr. J Woodhead (Ex-officio Member), Cllr. D Albone (Ex-officio Member).

c. PERSONNEL

Cllr. M Russell (Chairman). Cllr. P Guilcher (Deputy Chairman).

Cllr. M Foster, Cllr. J Jones, Cllr. M. Knight, Cllr. D Strachan, Cllr. C Thomas, Cllr. J Woodhead (Ex-officio Member), Cllr. D Albone (Ex-officio Member).

d. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Cllr. S Patel (Chairman). Cllr. G Barrett (Deputy Chairman).

Cllr. M Foster, Cllr. M Knight, Cllr. M North, Cllr. A Skilton, Cllr. D Strachan, Cllr. C Thomas, Cllr. J Woodhead (Ex-officio Member), Cllr. D Albone (Ex-officio Member).

e. APPEALS

Cllr. S Patel (Chairman). Cllr. M North (Deputy Chairman).

Cllr. G Barrett, Cllr. A Skilton.

6. BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE (BJC)

Under the constitution for the Biggleswade Joint Committee, Members are elected annually to sit on this Committee. The composition of the Committee will be confirmed at the next BJC meeting on the Thursday 24th of July 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council membership of the Biggleswade Joint Committee for 2025/2026 is as follows:

Cllr. (Chairman) - To be determined on the Thursday 24th of July 2025. Cllr. (Deputy Chairman) - To be determined on the Thursday 24th of July 2025.

Cllr. M Russell, Cllr. D Albone, Cllr. G Barrett, Cllr. C Thomas.

Cllr. D Strachan (Substitute), Cllr. I Agnew (Substitute).

7. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed for 2025/2026:

a. Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils

Cllr. M Knight, Cllr. M North, Cllr. C Thomas.

b. Biggleswade Friendship Group

Cllr. J Woodhead, Cllr. M Russell (Substitute).

c. Sir John Cotton Educational Foundation

Cllr. J Woodhead, Cllr. M North.

d. Fen Reeves Meeting

Cllr. M Russell, Cllr. A Skilton (Substitute).

e. Langford and Biggleswade Community Fund Group

Cllr. J Jones, Cllr. M North.

f. Police Liaison Officer

Cllr. P Guilcher, Cllr. S Patel (Substitute).

g. Biggleswade Green Wheel Development Group

Cllr. D Albone, Cllr. M Foster, Cllr. A Skilton (Substitute).

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. P Guilcher, Cllr. S Sajid, Cllr. S Patel.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

Cllr. Thomas – Item 16e.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

None.

10. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Mayor reported on his recent visit to Erlensee, accompanied by Councillor Russell, to mark the 25th anniversary of the town twinning. He invited Councillor Russell to address the Council, during which she informed Members that a commemorative plaque had been presented to the Mayor of Erlensee. The plaque acknowledges the 25th anniversary and in addition they were presented with a reproduction of an historic map of Biggleswade. Photographs of the commemorative items will be circulated to Members in due course.

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

12. INVITED SPEAKER

- a. There were no invited speakers.

13. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a. Members congratulated Cllr Woodhead on his election as Mayor.

Members also recognised Cllr Foster's commitment to being Mayor during his two-years of service. The Council formally thanked him for his efforts during his time as Mayor.

14. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting 8th April 2025. Pg. 15 – Item 9c:

Members requested that the existing wording within the minutes, "Cllr Russell justified the working group's decision...", be amended to 'explained' instead of 'justified'."

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 08th April 2025.

- b. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on Tuesday 18th March 2025.

- c. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Meeting held on Tuesday 1st April 2025.
- d. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Town Centre Management Meeting held on Tuesday 15th April 2025.
- e. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd April 2025.

15. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting 08/04/2025 - Public Open Session.

Cllr Woodhead asked whether a letter had been sent to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), as requested by Members. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed that the letter had been sent. The Mayor then requested that Officers circulate any response once it is received.

- b. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting 08/04/2025 – Items for Consideration: A1 Underpass.

Cllr Russell informed Members that Northill Parish Council have also supported the resolution, and communications have gone out to National Highways, CBC and the MP.

16. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Premises Licence Application - DRINK Tasting Room LTD**

Members considered the premises licence application submitted by DRINK Tasting Room LTD to CBC, seeking authorisation for the sale of alcohol on and off the premises Monday to Sunday 09:00 until 22:30, and the playing of recorded and live music all indoors Monday to Sunday 09:00 until 22:30.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

- b. **Street Naming - Symmetry Park, Phase 3, Biggleswade**

In line with the existing theming on **Symmetry Park**, Members suggested the following street names:

- Overlord
- Fortitude
- Horsa
- Spitfire
- Typhoon
- Halifax

Members **RESOLVED** to provide the above suggestions to CBC who will then make a determination.

- c. **Remembrance Day Parade**

Members noted that the inclusion of LGBTQ+ veterans and the laying of a wreath in the Remembrance Day Parade were not decisions of the Town Council, but rather by

the Royal British Legion, however, Members suggested that the Town Council recommend the request outlined in the motion to the Royal British Legion.

Members **RESOLVED** to write to the Royal British Legion requesting the inclusion of LGBTQ+ veterans in the Annual Remembrance Day Parade, and that they allow a wreath to be laid in the memory of fallen LGBTQ+ service members.

d. **Biggleswade Pride Community**

The Chairman expressed a preference to consider this item as a single block rather than splitting it.

Members highlighted their understanding that the Council is unable to take any further action at this time, as Standing Orders recommend that a decision cannot be overturned within six months unless the following process is adhered to:

The process offers up three options:

- a) A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within 6 months except by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least 5 Members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a Committee.
- b) When a special resolution or any other resolution moved under the provisions of paragraph a. of this Order has been disposed of no similar resolution may be moved within a further six months subject to Standing Order 30(a).
- c) Alternatively, Members could immediately decide to review their previous determination and as long as there is a majority the matter can be progressed. Whilst this is inconsistent with the Standing Orders it is not illegal. Standing Orders are there to act as a guide.

Members sought further clarification on whether the motion had to be taken as a single entity or if it could be divided into parts, given that the requests within the motion were not a direct match to the resolution previously made by the Council.

Ultimately, the Chair determined that it would be preferable to consider the motion as originally presented to the Council by the individual at the Annual Statutory Meeting.

As no resolution could be made on the matter, Members **AGREED** that it proceed to the next agenda item. The matter will be deferred.

e. **Biggleswade Community Gardens**

The motion was outlined to Members.

Cllr. Thomas clarified that the Community Group was seeking the Town Council's support in engaging the public, not material assistance. He suggested that the Town Council would assist in raising public awareness of the project through methods such as advertising, social media posts, website posts ect.

Members welcomed the project and asked whether residents and commuters would be able to contribute ideas for the mural design. Cllr Thomas confirmed there would be a short consultation involving groups from across Biggleswade, with the aim of capturing a wide range of community views.

Members requested that further information be shared with Officers and Councillors to help raise awareness.

Cllr. Thomas stated that the Community Gardens organising committee would be meeting with the project funders on Friday, 16th May, and he will clarify with them when further details on the project can be released.

Members **RESOLVED** to support the Community Gardens motion and separately requested that the Town Council write to the Community Garden Group to request additional contextual information.

f. **Public Works Loan Application**

The Head of Finance and Deputy RFO outlined the report to Members.

At the Biggleswade Town Council Meeting on the 13th May 2025, it was **RESOLVED** to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for borrowing approval for a loan of £79,528 over the borrowing term of 15 years for the essential upgrade of the remaining play areas. The annual loan repayments will come to around £7,839.

It is also intended to increase the Council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 0.48% which is the equivalent of an additional £0.99 a year. This will be subject to a precept increase consultation.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the resolution as laid out in the report conscious that if successful the actual drawdown could not take place until in receipt of an additional resolution from Council.

g. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Saffron Rd, Biggleswade**

Members noted concerns about the proposed road closure, stating that a full closure could cut off access to certain areas. They highlighted that depending on the closure's location, traffic flow may need to be temporarily reversed to maintain access to Saffron Court.

Members also highlighted that the closure would limit access to the Town Council building and the Health Centre. While communications from Street Works suggest access may be available at times dependent on circumstances, Members felt BTC should write to CBC to insist that access to essential services (e.g. The Council building and the Health Centre) and residents' homes must be always maintained.

Members **RESOLVED** to respond to the Street Works Team, emphasising that residents must be able to access their homes, BTC staff and councillors must have access to the Town Council building, and essential services must remain accessible.

17. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/25/01086/FULL - 9 Jemmett Grove, Biggleswade, SG18 0QE**

Loft conversion with side dormer, roof lights and renewable energy panels. Erection of single storey side extension.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

b. **CB/25/00991/FULL - 25 Nursery Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HR**

Single storey front porch extension and first floor front extension with alteration to existing doors and windows.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

c. **CB/25/00421/REG3 - Land to the North and South of Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

Erection of a battery energy storage system (BESS) with associated access, landscaping and ancillary works.

The Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this application based on reports by Landscape Officers on the lack of vegetation and landscaping and the Archaeology Officers who have indicated to the documented multi-period archaeological landscape.

d. **CB/25/01382/VOC - Land to the west of units 6 and 7 Albone Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8BN**

Variation of condition numbers 7 and 8 of planning permission CB/24/03438/FULL (Change of use to open storage (Use Class B8) and erection of perimeter fencing, double entrance gates and single swing gates and resurfacing (part retrospective)). Reason for variation, to enable installation of an external lighting scheme.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

e. **CB/25/01337/FULL - 52 Stratton Way, Biggleswade, SG18 0NS**

Erection of single storey rear extension, and roof light.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

18. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

Members **NOTED** the report.

19. **ACCOUNTS**

Financial Administration

a. **March 2025 Accounts**

Members **NOTED** the draft financial documentation.

b. **2024/2025 Actual Outturn / Closedown of Accounts**

Members **NOTED** the date of the closedown of accounts.

c. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

Members **NOTED** the date.

20. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Bank Reconciliation

The Head of Finance and Deputy RFO outlined the report to Members. He informed Members that the bank statements and reconciliations for the quarter ending 31st March 2025 were shared with Councillor Thomas and the RFO.

Members noted that, following the change of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and change in leadership of other committees, the account signatories will need to be updated in future.

Members **NOTED** the report.

b. Formal Complaint

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave Members an overview of the complaint and the complaint handling process. He informed Members that this item was included on the agenda as it is a requirement of the policy to share this information with Members.

Members **NOTED** the information.

c. Biggleswade FM

Members **NOTED** the Letter of thanks.

d. Bloomin' well CIC

Members **NOTED** the Letter of thanks.

e. Extra Ordinary Council Meeting 3rd June 2025

Members **NOTED** the report.

21. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public wished to speak.

22. EXEMPT

a. Exempt minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 8th April 2025

The minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th April 2025.

b. Kings Reach Football Pitches Adoption Report

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and **AGREED** to the recommendations subject to Members amendment.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8:12 pm**

Item 9a

Sent: 20 May 2025 09:24

Subject: Local Plan – call for sites update

Dear Clerks and Chairs,

You received an email yesterday advising that we have published all the sites received through our call for sites. Our interactive map is set up to show the residential sites we have initially discounted, however some of these sites were not pulled through onto the map. We have now corrected this and updated the map. Accordingly, the number of discounted sites has changed from 132 to 174.

To view the discounted sites, you can select them using the drop-down menu at the top left of the screen. They will show as purple if they have been discounted. If you have any queries, please contact the Local Plans Team via LocalPlan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Kind regards,

Local Plans Team

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

Sent: 19 May 2025 10:36

Subject: Update on the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

Dear Clerks and Chairs,

We are writing to provide you with some key updates on our new Local Plan.

Engagement

Over the past 12 months we've been engaging with residents, town and parish councils, ward councillors and other key stakeholders to help shape the Local Plan. Thank you to everyone who got involved. Through the workshops and the public surveys, we've received a significant amount of valuable feedback that we're now taking into consideration as we prepare for our first formal stage of engagement (called Regulation 18 or 'Issues and Options') which will take place in early 2026.

We've prepared a series of reports to summarise the main issues and themes that were raised through the surveys and workshops. Copies are attached for reference.

Call for sites

You may be aware that we recently ran a 'Call for Sites', where we seek to identify plots of land which meet our needs for the plan period. This can include land for new homes and jobs, renewable energy and green spaces for Biodiversity Net Gain (which is a mandatory requirement for development, to increase wildlife and habitats on a site).

We received 626 submissions, which have now been published on our [website](#). **Please note: This is just the total number of sites that have been put forward for consideration and the Council has not yet completed the analysis which will allow us to understand whether these sites are suitable for the proposed use. A robust site assessment will need to be undertaken to determine each site's suitability, and further information about this process can be found on the [website](#).**

We hope you have found these updates useful. Please do visit our [website](#) for further updates and information.

Central Bedfordshire Council Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford,
Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

Our home to school transport service is funded by Council Tax

The cost of mainstream transport has increased by 179% from 2020/21 to 2024/25. The current cost for mainstream home to school transport arrangements is £7 million per year, which is 36% of our overall budget for education transport costs of £19.7 million.

We are consulting on a proposed change to our mainstream Home to School Transport Policy

This change would mean only providing mainstream school transport to a child's nearest suitable school.

Why are we proposing this change?

- The Department for Education updated its guidance a number of years ago, and it refers only to 'nearest school'. With this statutory guidance becoming the reference point for most local authorities, changing the policy would bring our policy in line with this guidance and in line with neighbouring local authorities.
- It would also make things fairer for pupils. Currently some are eligible for transport to both their nearest school and their local authority catchment area school(s), while others may only be eligible to transport to one school. By transporting children to their nearest suitable school only, every eligible pupil receives the same offer for transport.
- Changing school transport provision to the nearest suitable school only should shorten journeys and reduce the number of pupils eligible for transport, potentially leading to fewer school buses on the roads. Shorter journeys and/or less buses contribute to improving air quality and a lower carbon footprint.

[Find out more about what we're proposing](#)

Take part in the consultation before it closes on 30 June

We are encouraging as many people as possible to have their say on this proposal – it's important we hear from parents/carers and schools but also residents who fund the service through Council Tax.

You can also come to one of our consultation events in June - we're running in person and online events. Keep scrolling for more information.

[Have your say on our home to school transport proposals](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Nearest School Areas (Available via SharePoint)

Appendix 2 - Impact Assessment to Schools (Available via SharePoint)

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Town Council Meeting 10th June 2025
Item 9d: Unity Trust bank and CCLA bank account signatories

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: FINANCIALS: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

Finance: Appropriate signatories for bank accounts.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background:

The Council have three Unity Trust bank Current Accounts. One of these accounts is for general Current Account purposes, another is for Instant Access Savings purposes and finally the other Current Account is used for salary-related transactions only. The Council also has two CCLA accounts.

Current situation:

During the previous Council meetings on 13th June 2023, it was agreed that there should be sufficient active signatories who will be available to approve bacs payments on behalf of the Council as per financial regulations. Recently there have been only two active Members approving the Bacs and there have been delays in approving Bacs payments to suppliers if one of the active Members is on holiday. The Council pays suppliers via BACS payment once every month.

Next steps:

For clarity, Member signatories for both Unity Trust Accounts and CCLA are now Cllr Agnew, Cllr Albone, Cllr Foster, Cllr Knight, Cllr North, and Cllr Strachan.

In addition, the Council also has two Officer signatories, Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Mr. Peter Tarrant and the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Mr. Karim Hosseini.

None of the above signatories have submit rights on any of the accounts.

Officers with “submit and view” rights are:

Head of Finance and Deputy RFO, Ernest Bour

Assistant Accountant, Alexander Wilkinson

Accounts Administrator, Lindsay Jewell (Application in progress)

Two Members have volunteered for their name to be added to the signatories of all Unity Trust Accounts and CCLA accounts. The Members are Cllr Patel-Chairman of TCM and Cllr Woodhead-Mayor.

Recommendation:

Members to approve the Chairman of TCM and the Mayor as additional signatories on the Unity Trust Accounts and CCLA accounts.

Ernest Bour

Head of Finance and Deputy RFO

Sent: 09 May 2025 13:48

Subject: National Highways response – A1 Biggleswade underpass enquiry – ref: 23390024
NHHC:09266002106

Dear Peter Tarrant

Thank you for your email of 25 April 2025 to our Customer Contact Centre for the consideration of an underpass on the A1 at Biggleswade. I'm replying as a team member responsible for the management of the A1.

We appreciate you taking the time to contact us with this enquiry.

There is no plan for an underpass at this location from National Highways. The planning application relates to a development and local developer delivering the works and isn't being funded by us.

We've previously responded to Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the underpass and advised them of the following:

"The cost of constructing an underpass beneath a main motorway can vary significantly depending on several factors, such as location, the size and complexity of the project, environmental concerns, soil conditions, and local construction prices. However, to provide a rough ballpark figure would be anywhere from £1 million to £10 million.

As the footbridge is being put forward by the developer who would be funding it, to us there is no real reason to investigate an underpass over a footbridge."

Thank you again for contacting us. If you need any further information about this, please feel free to contact me. For anything else please contact our Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Item 11a

Outcome of CBC Planning Applications						
Date	Application No.	Location	Description	BTC Objection	Outcome from CB	Notes
09/07/2024	CB/24/01812/REG3	Lawnside Lower School, Lawnside, Biggleswade, SG18 0LX	Erection of an extension to provide 6 new classrooms, a Multi-Use Games Area, (MUGA), a new staff car park accessed from The Avenue, 7 additional vehicle parking spaces accessed from Lawnside, cycle provision, widening of the existing western footpath to the school, improved footpath along The Avenue, landscaping and associated works.	The Town Council strongly objects to the above application for the reasons as stated above – overdevelopment of the site, severe access problems and unacceptable disruption during the construction phase.	Awaiting Outcome	Target Date for Decision: 26/09/2024
12/11/2024	CB/24/03022/FULL	Biggleswade Academy, Mead End, Biggleswade, SG18 8JU	Creation of new pedestrian drop off/pick up point for parents, enhanced pedestrian access within the site, provision of two disabled car parking bays, new fencing, vehicular access gate and associated ancillary works.	The Town Council OBJECTS to this application on the basis of highways safety concerns.	Awaiting Outcome	(Mead End Entrance) Target Date for Decision: 19/12/2024
11/03/2025	CB/25/00421/REG3	Land to the North and South of Dunton Lane, Biggleswade	Erection of a battery energy storage system (BESS) with associated access, landscaping and ancillary works.	The Town Council has STRONGLY OBJECTS to this application based on reports by Landscape Officers on the lack of vegetation and landscaping and the Archaeology Officers who have indicated to the documented multi-period archaeological landscape.	Awaiting Outcome	Target Date for Decision: 13 / 05 / 2025 13/05/25 - The Town Council rejected the application again based on reports by Landscape Officers on the lack of vegetation and landscaping and the Archaeology Officers who have indicated to the documented multi-period archaeological landscape.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUCL
Town Council Meeting 10th June 2025
Item 12a: Final Internal Audit Report 2024/2025

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

Finance: Compliance with the Internal Audit Report.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

Officers received the final Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2024/25 from the Council's Internal Auditor (Heelis & Lodge) on 19th May 2025.

Section 2.13 of The Financial Regulations states that:

"The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors."

The Auditor observed:

1. The Council have effective internal financial controls in place. For instance, Income controls were checked and a sample of income received and banked cross referenced with cash book and book statements.
2. The Council has effective and robust budgetary procedures are in place.
3. Appropriate accounting procedures were used during the year end and can be followed through working papers to the final documents.

Auditors Conclusion

The Auditor wanted to place on record their appreciation to the Town Council staff for their assistance during the course of the audit work, their hospitality and the **quality** of documents presented for the audit.

Recommendation

For Members to consider the final Internal Auditor Report for 2024/25.

Peter Tarrant
Clerk & Chief Executive

Ernest Bour
Head of Finance & Deputy RFO

Appendices:

Appendix A: Final Internal Audit Report for Biggleswade Town Council 2024/2025

HEELIS&LODGE

Local Council Services • Internal Audit

Year End Internal Audit Report for Biggleswade Town Council – 2024/2025

The following Internal Audit was carried out on the adequacy of systems of control in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and the guidance and instruction in the Practitioners Guide 2024 and should be read in conjunction with the Interim Internal Audit dated 6/11/2024. The following recommendations/comments have been made:

Income: £2,057,271 Expenditure: £2,011,497 Reserves: £580,256

2025 AGAR Completion:

Section One: [Yes – to be approved by council](#)

Section Two: [Yes \(draft figures\) – to be approved by council](#)

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025: [Yes](#)

Certificate of Exemption: [No](#)

Financial regulations

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Tenders

Appropriate payment controls including acting within the legal framework with reference to council minutes

Identifying VAT payments and reclamation

Cheque books, paying in books and other relevant documents

Standing Orders in place: [Yes](#)

Reviewed: [10/12/2024 \(Ref: 9.a\)](#)

Financial Regulations in place: [Yes](#)

Reviewed: [13/8/2024 \(Ref: 9.a\)](#)

VAT reclaimed during the year: [Yes](#)

Registered: [Yes](#)

Submission Period:

Amount:

[01/04/2024-30/06/2024](#)

[£27,253.76](#)

[01/07/2024-30/09/2024](#)

[£37,317.10](#)

[01/10/2024-31/12/2024](#)

[£38,349.83](#)

[01/01/2025-31/03/2025](#)

[£28,869.95](#)

[There was one tender \(Christmas Lights\) during the year that exceeded the £30,000 Public Contract Regulations threshold. The contract has been advertised in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations \(Ref: 4/3/2025\).](#)

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Suffolk, IP13 0PP

Tel: 07732 681125

Email: heather@heelis.eu

Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy FILCM

Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

Budgetary controls
supporting documents

Verifying the budgetary process with reference to council minutes and

Precept: £1,838,460.08 (2025-2026) Date: 21/1/2025 (Ref: 9.a)

Precept: £1,625,930 (2024-2025) Date: 23/1/2024 (Ref: 9.a)

Effective budgetary procedures are in place. The precept was agreed in full council and the precept decision and amount has been clearly minuted. The Clerk ensures the council are aware of responsibilities, commitments, forward planning and the need for adequate reserves. Budget papers are prepared to ensure councillors have sufficient information to make informed decisions. Budgets are monitored during the year.

Income controls

Precept and other income, including credit control mechanisms

All were found to be in order. Income controls were checked and a sample of income received and banked cross referenced with the Cash Book and bank statements.

Payroll controls

PAYE and NIC in place where necessary.
Compliance with Inland Revenue procedures
Records relating to contracts of employment and pensions

PAYE System in place: **Yes**
Employer's Reference: **419/B971**
P60s issued: **Yes**

The Council continue to operate RTI in accordance with HMRC regulations. Payroll is outsourced. Supporting paperwork is in place and P60s have been produced as part of the year end process. An examination was undertaken on a sample of payroll records from January – March 2025 and no irregularities were found.

Eligible employees have joined the nominated pension scheme. The last date of re-declaration of compliance was March 2023. The next due date is March 2026.

It is noted that the Council undertook a review of salaries at a meeting held on 7/11/2024 following the appraisal process.

Asset control

Inspection of asset register and checks on existence of assets
Cross checking on insurance cover

A separate asset register is in place. Values are recorded at cost value for the AGAR. The total value of assets are recorded at £3,525,350. The figure in the asset register corresponds with the figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the AGAR.

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Email: heather@heelis.eu

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Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

Bank Reconciliation Regularly completed and cash books reconcile with bank statements

All were in order. Bank Reconciliations are carried out regularly. The bank statements reconciled with the end of year accounts and bank reconciliations for all accounts.

Bank Balances at 31 March were confirmed as:

<i>CCLA PSDF</i>		<i>£551,839.60</i>
<i>Unity Trust (payroll)</i>	<i>xxxx8389</i>	<i>£9,826.17</i>
<i>Unity Trust Main</i>	<i>xxxx8376</i>	<i>£36,012.37</i>
<i>Unity Trust Instant</i>	<i>xxxx5970</i>	<i>£2,513.01</i>

The Council had outstanding (PWLB) loans with the UK Debt Management Office (DMO) of £526,551 at the year end, verified by the 31st March statement.

Reserves General Reserves are reasonable for the activities of the Council
Earmarked Reserves are identified

The Council have adequate general reserves (£444,147) and have identified earmarked reserves of £136,109 in their year end accounts.

Year-end procedures Appropriate accounting procedures are used and can be followed through from working papers to final documents
Verifying sample payments and income
Checking creditors and debtors where appropriate.

End of year accounts are prepared on an Income & Expenditure basis. Creditors and Debtors are identified within the year end accounts.

Local Council Tax Support Grant is excluded from Box 2: **NA**
Balance Sheet is correct: **Yes**
Trial Balance is correct: **Yes**

Internal Audit Procedures

The Interim 2024 - 2025 Internal Audit report was considered by the Council at a meeting held on 10/12/2024 (Ref: 9.a).

Recommendations from the Interim Internal Audit have been considered.

External Audit

The External Auditor's report was considered at a meeting held on 8/10/2024 (Ref: 9.b).

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- There are no additional comments/recommendations to make in relation to this audit.
- I would like to record my appreciation to the Deputy RFO for their assistance during the course of the audit work and the quality of documentation provided for the audit.



Heather Heelis
Heelis & Lodge
15 May 2025

Contact details : 1 Hembling Terrace, Mill Lane, Suffolk, IP13 0PP

Tel: 07732 681125

Email: heather@heelis.eu

Heather Heelis Dip HE Local Policy FILCM

Lynne Lodge Dip HE Local Policy

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

<https://biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk/> AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes ✓	No 	Not applicable

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

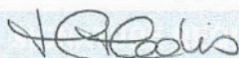
6/11/2024

15/5/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

H Heelis (Heelis & Lodge)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

15/5/2025

✗

'If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

****Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority’s accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each ‘No’ response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DDMMYYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	694,528	534,482	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,533,241	1,625,930	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	352,244	431,341	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-956,189	-1,005,560	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-42,824	-52,734	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-1,046,518	-953,203	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	534,482	580,256	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	663,357	600,191	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,458,931	3,525,350	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	546,980	526,551	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
DD/MM/YYYY
Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

DD/MM/YYYY

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
DD/MM/YYYY

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

 Date

DDMMYY

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Town Council Meeting 10th June 2025
Item 12c: Financial Management Report for April 2025

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: GOOD GOVERNANCE: ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

Finance: Improve Financial reporting with commentary for additional context.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

The usual four reports are on the Council's website. The full pathway for the April 2025 reports is:

<https://biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk/about-the-council/finance-transparency-documents/>

It is difficult to calculate a projected outturn for the financial year 2025/26 based upon one month expenditure. In the absence of any patterns of expenditure or sophisticated profiling it is assumed in most cases that budgets will come in line with actual expenditure at the end of the financial year.

This will be kept under constant review.

The Financial Management Report for April 2025 is available as Appendix A.

Recommendation:

Members consider and approve the April 2025 Financial Management report.

Ernest Bour

Head of Finance and Deputy RFO

Appendix A: Financial Management report for April 2025

Biggleswade Town Council		Management Accounts Finance Report 30/04/2025					APPENDIX A
		Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Committed	COMMENTARY
		FY24/25	FY 25/26	FY 25/26	FY 25/26	Expenditure	
ALLOTMENTS	Income	10740	(17)	12400	(12417)		
	Expenditure	2387	120	7200	6780	300	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		8353	(136)	5200	(5336)		
BURIAL GROUNDS	Income	80045	2320	75018	(72698)		
	Expenditure	8433	5544	9900	(4356)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		71612	(3224)	65118	(68342)		
CAR PARKS	Income	40698	8119	50500	(42381)		Total actual expenditure is high for the April 25 because rent for the first quarter for Rose Lane car park has been paid.
	Expenditure	78937	29234	87701	55242	3225	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(38239)	(21115)	(37201)	16086		
MARKET	Income	20985	1895	23500	(21605)		
	Expenditure	4545	1530	4850	3320	0	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		16440	365	18650	(18285)		
TOWN CENTRE GENERAL	Income	79879	334	3500	(3166)		Excess actual expenditure over budget relates to UKSPF grant expenses.
	Expenditure	83436	26609	65050	(1669)	40110	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(3557)	(26275)	(61550)	35275		
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	Income	84416	0	0	0		
	Expenditure	212282	13026	94000	75124	5850	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(127866)	13026	(94000)	107026		
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	Expenditure	17697	(79)	16380	16459	0	The Council has received the first half of the precept for this financial year.
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	Income	1662390	921500	1862460	(940960)		
	Expenditure	3700	(3155)	4000	(7155)	0	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		1658690	924655	1858460	(950264)		
DEMOCRATIC REP'N & MGM'T	Expenditure	9010	4963	12900	7937	0	This income represents funds for Mayors Charity.
CIVIC ACTIVITIES & EXPENSES	Income	1713	43	0	43		
	Expenditure	3622	(2094)	3250	5187	157	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(1909)	2137	(3250)	5387		
ORCHARD COMMUNITY CENTRE	Income	55055	7171	62000	(54829)		
	Expenditure	23903	4744	40580	30042	5794	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		31152	2427	21420	18993		
RECREATION GROUNDS	Income	13190	5346	21500	(16154)		
	Expenditure	74705	10626	83730	70569	2535	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(61514)	(5279)	(62230)	56951		
CENTRAL SERVICES (includes Magistrates Court and Grants)	Income	810	0	340	(340)		
	Expenditure	1300576	140363	1474669	1321485	12821	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(1299766)	140363	(1474329)	1614692		
PUBLIC REALM (includes Depot and Repairs & Maintenance)	Income	7350	0	18600	(18600)		
	Expenditure	188264	49141	225608	166081	10386	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(180914)	49141	(207008)	256149		
GRAND TOTALS							
	Income	2057271	946711	2129818	(1183107)		
	Expenditure	2011497	280572	2129818	1849246	81178	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		45774	666139	0			

