



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 25th NOVEMBER 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 Albone (Deputy Mayor)
 Cllr. I Agnew
 Cllr. M Foster
 Cllr. J Jones
 Cllr. M North
 Cllr. S Patel
 Cllr. M Russell
 Cllr. S Sajid
 Cllr. A Skilton
 Cllr. D Strachan
 Cllr. C Thomas

Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
 Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
 Miss A Green - Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 1

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 FOR ABSENCE

a. **Apologies were received from the following Members:**

Cllr. M Knight, Cllr. P Guilcher, Cllr. G Barrett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

All Members declared a general interest in the budget discussion as taxpayers and residents of the town. This was noted as a common interest and did not preclude participation.

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

None.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Mayor informed Members that He and a small group of councillors alongside a member Council staff had undertaken a self-funded exploratory visit to Noise Laurent and Bei. Noting that a formal paper with recommendations would be presented to Council in due course.
- b. The Mayor also expressed appreciation to Network Rail for removing graffiti from Crab Lane.
- c. The Mayor reminded Members of the forthcoming Christmas lights switch-on event scheduled for Friday 28th November in the Market Square. All Members were encouraged to attend.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present online, and no members of the public within the chamber indicated a wish to speak.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

- a. There was no invited speaker.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a. There were no Members' questions.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Approval of previous minutes was deferred to the next full Council meeting.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. There were no matters arising.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Budget Planning 2026/27

The Head of Finance provided an overview of Officers report and informed Members of changes since the circulation of the budget papers.

He reported that the employer pension contribution rate had decreased by three percent following the Bedfordshire Pension Fund valuation, and this revised rate would apply for the next three years. Additionally, Central Bedfordshire Council have confirmed the tax base will increase by 1.66 percent.

The Head of Finance noted that repayments for the Public Works Loan Board had been incorporated into the budget at an annual cost of approximately £7,500. He also advised that Officers were awaiting the surveyor's report on three BTC owned sporting facility buildings, which might necessitate additional capital expenditure. A further paper on the refurbishment of the play areas is scheduled for presentation to Council on 9 December.

Members discussed the both the report and the implications of the Head of Finance's update.

Members **AGREED** to reinstate the £10,000 for agency staff costs, which had previously been removed by the Personnel Committee. Further discussion focused on the need for contingency funding to address potential building repairs and the possibility of assuming responsibility for landscaping and maintenance currently undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members considered the importance of maintaining flexibility in the budget to accommodate unforeseen requirements, such as equipment purchases or capital works, and debated the merits of increasing the capital fund.

Member suggested an indicative approach, proposing that guidance be given to officers to prepare for an increase of approximately £35,000 over the current precept level. This figure would include the reinstated £10,000 for agency staff and an additional £25,000 for contingencies.

It was **AGREED** that this decision was indicative only and subject to review once the surveyor's report was available. Members acknowledged that the final precept would be set in January and that further adjustments might be necessary depending on forthcoming information.

Additional points were raised regarding the potential impact of changes to the national minimum wage, although officers confirmed that existing salary scales were above the minimum and that a 3.5 percent pay increase had already been factored into the budget.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. There were no planning applications included on this agenda.

12. ACCOUNTS

There were no accounts included on this agenda.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. There were no items for information on this agenda.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present online, and no members of the public within the chamber indicated a wish to speak.

15. EXEMPT

- a. **HR Update**

Members **NOTED** the HR update.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 7:35pm