

Minutes of a Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 23rd JULY 2025** at 2.15 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor M. Bonfield (Town Mayor) – Chairman

Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Sutton
Councillor S. Vile
Councillor C. Tomes

Also in attendance: -

Dr M. Ayres	Town Clerk
Miss A. Spencer	Finance Manager
Mr C. Squires	Project Delivery Officer

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for her inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Foster.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

No declarations were made on this occasion.

3. **TO APPOINT MEMBERS OF SUB-COMMITTEES:**

a) **VEXATIOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND COMPLAINTS POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Further to paragraph 1.17 of the committee's terms of reference, consideration was given to the appointment of the Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints Sub-Committee. The terms of reference for the sub-committee itself were outlined and it was noted that this sub-committee would consist of the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor and two members of the Finance & Governance Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by the Town Mayor and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To appoint the Town Mayor, Councillor Tomes
(Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Vile and Moreton
to the Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints
Policy Sub-Committee.

b) **CAPITAL PROJECTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Further to paragraph 1.9 of the committee's terms of reference, consideration was given to the appointment of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee. The terms of reference for the sub-committee were outlined and it was noted that it would be comprised of three or four members of the Finance & Governance Committee, usually including the Chairs of the Community Services and Environment & Green Spaces Committees.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by the Councillor Moreton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To appoint the Town Mayor, Councillor Tomes
(Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Moreton and
Sutton to the Capital Projects Sub-Committee.

4. **FINANCIAL REPORTS – Q1 2025/26**

a) **Income & Expenditure – Budget Monitoring Report**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the principal sources of the Town Council's income and expenditure for the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. It was noted that the overall position was generally positive with net expenditure £53k under budget. The significant variances were discussed. It was reported to members that investment levels held with the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund were higher than those approved in the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statement for 2025/26. It was noted that this was due to the high level of liquidity and cash funds currently held by the council since the redemption of some units in the CCLA property fund. It was noted that the Money Market Funds had a higher yield than the DMADF at the time of placing the investment and that these funds would be drawn down in the first instance when required. This position was noted.

Given that there was a strong probability that the commencement of the Green Seafront Scheme would be deferred until September 2027, it was noted that any further redemption of units held in the CCLA property fund should be delayed so that yields are optimised.

The Budget Report and commentary on the Council's financial activity was received and noted.

b) **Capital Programme Monitoring Report**

Consideration was given to the Capital Programme Monitoring Report for the first quarter of 2025/26. It was reported that one project had been completed with all other projects ongoing.

It was noted that the forecast expenditure for the year had been significantly reduced. This was due to the probable deferment of the Green Seafront Scheme and the drawdown of any grant by the Football Club. It was reported that the Community Sports Facility project is now likely to be delivered in two phases and it was noted that this will be further considered by the Sports, Leisure & Wellbeing Working Party in the near future.

The contents of the report were noted.

5. **CORPORATE PLAN 2025-30 – TO AGREE NEXT STEPS**

Members considered a briefing note outlining the next steps proposed in order to develop a revised Corporate Plan, including a draft timeline. It was noted that as a result of delays in its preparation, primarily due to the range of projects that the Town Council is currently taking forward, the Plan would now cover the period 2026-30.

Discussion ensued as to the outline content of the Corporate Plan and it was noted that discussion at a councillor workshop held on 12th March had been supportive of retaining the Council's current five priorities, although it was suggested that the phrase Sustainable Tourism should be replaced by Regenerative Tourism.

The importance of public engagement was emphasised and consideration was given to a draft communication and engagement plan, Ideas as to how best to engage with residents were put forward, including opportunities to meet with town councillors at various local venues, a stall at the Friday market and making both print and digital copies of the consultation material widely available. It was proposed by the Town Mayor,

seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To approve the indicative timeline for preparing a draft Corporate Plan 2026-30, as set out in the briefing note circulated in support of this agenda item, together with the draft communication and engagement plan, subject to it being updated in light of the discussion at this meeting.

During discussion of this item consideration was also given to the date for a councillor workshop to develop the content of the draft Corporate Plan. It was noted that this would need to be arranged giving due consideration to a number of other workshops to be held in the autumn, including a councillor finance workshop to be held on Wednesday 3rd September.

6. **INSURANCE CLAIMS UPDATE**

It was reported that one claim had been settled in Q1. It was noted that the council did not have any other ‘live’ claims at the present time.

7. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDA**

The following were listed as matters for forthcoming agendas.

- Further to Minute No. 12 a) of the Environment Committee meeting held on 25th June 2025, it was reported that it had been agreed that a budget of £4,500 for stakeholder engagement would be deferred to 2026/27. It was reported that although the budget was reviewed by the Environment Committee, technically as part of the King George’s Management Account it should be included in this budget for 2026/27 rather than the environment budget. It was further reported that a 50% payment had already been made, and a refund would be requested.
- Review of Strategic Investments - see Minute No. 4 a) above.
- Review of Social Media Policy.
- Finance Workshop – to be open to all councillors and arranged for the afternoon of Wednesday 3rd September.
- Fees and Charges Task and Finish Group – establishment of a task and finish group to review the fees and charges levied for Council services to be included on the agenda for the Council meeting on 15th September 2025. Any recommendations to be taken to the relevant committee meeting as part of the budget setting process.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 5th November 2025.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 p.m.
