

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**PRIVATE Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th June 2025 in the
Kidderminster Room, Wyre Forest House**

Present: Councillors: Steve Hollands (Chair), Liam Carroll, Helen Dyke (Vice Chair), Fran Oborski, Mary Rayner.

In Attendance: Mr H. Peacocke, Chief Executive
Mr. Adam Stockhall, Public Realm and Operations Manager, and
Mr. Chris Pugh, incoming Corporate Services Manager.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Doug Hine, John Beckingham, Ben Brookes and Bernadette Connor.

The Chairman welcomed Chris Pugh to the meeting and the members wished him well in his new role.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th April 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman welcomed members to the first meeting of the expanded Finance and Overview Committee.

Members noted the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

5. ACCOUNTS PAID

The Committee received the cash book reports detailing income and expenditure from 1st April 2025 to 31st May 2025. It was noted that the finances continue to be dominated by Town Hall income and expenditure.

The total income for the period was £ £644,839.37, comprising largely of the first instalment of the precept - £612,143.

The total expenditure from 1st April 2025 to 31st May 2025 was £ 1,528,424.76, including £ 223,723.77 VAT.

Payments related largely to the Town Hall: £1,275,700 on the transformation project and £18,838 towards re-opening costs.

The other substantial payments were for loan charges of £78,472 and April salaries totalling £31,578.

RESOLVED: To approve payments totalling £ 1,528,424.76, including £ 223,723.77 VAT for the period 1st April to 31st May 2025.

6. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

The Committee received the Bank reconciliations for April, May 2025.

It was noted that the Council's bank balance had declined from £2M at the end of April to £1.3M at the end of May. This arose from ongoing expenditure on the Town Hall project, which no longer receives grant funding.

7. BUDGET MONITORING

The meeting reviewed the Council's income and expenditure at 31st May against budgets set for 2025-26.

RESOLVED: To vire the expenditure on agency costs, as detailed in the report.

8. Accounting Statements 2024-2025 (Appendix 6, to follow)

The Committee received the Council's annual accounts statement for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

The Committee noted the points made in the report and noted that the Council was awaiting the internal auditor's report/ certification to Full Council on 25 June 2025.

9. Internal Audit Report

The CEO told the meeting that officers continued to address the items raised in the internal Auditor's report, including the 2 policies for approval later in this meeting:

- 15.1 Document retention Policy, and
- 15.2 Subject Access Requirement Policy

10. Vision 2025-2029 Action Plan

The CEO told the meeting that full council had approved the Vision 2025-2029 and that officers had now prepared an action plan to monitor how the objectives in the Vision were being progressed and delivered.

The Action plan contains KPI's and Metrics against which officers would report to each meeting of this committee, updating the status, as required.

Members discussed the arrangements at the tennis club and access for the public to use the courts. It was agreed that a representative from the Tennis Club be invited to a future meeting of the Services Committee.

RESOLVED: To Approve the Action Plan for the delivery of the Council's aims and objectives, as set out in the Council's Vision 2025-29.

11. Local Government reorganisation and Devolution Proposals (Appendix 8)

The Committee was requested to:

- Review the list of assets held by WFDC in the parish of Kidderminster .
- Authorise officers to conduct due diligence on all proposed assets.
- Assess the financial implications—short and long term.
- Consider associated risks, including legal liabilities, maintenance obligations, and delivery capacity
- Require the relevant independent surveys as noted in the table below, to be funded by WFDC.
- Require WFDC to pay KTC legal fees for any transfer.

The meeting noted the report and recommended that the Council's Officers are to progress this with WFDC, including financial arrangements to enable the Town Council to absorb the financial costs arising from these transfers.

In view of the above, the Committee recommended that the Town Council defers the decision to transfer the following parks:

- King George V Park
- Willowfield Park
- Forester Way Park
- Jerusalem Walk Park

This deferral accords with the consideration of a wider, more strategic approach from WFDC regarding devolution, as recommended above.

The Committee recommended:

The response from the Town Council to the District Council should require the following:

1. A strategic agreement by the District Council that Kidderminster Town Council should become the "Parks Authority" for all parks and open spaces in the parish of Kidderminster.

This should exclude White Wickets, unless/ until the various issues around title and buildings were resolved.

It was noted that the nature reserves would be transferred to other organisations.

2. The Town Council should request the transfer of strategic town centre car parks, which are important town centre infrastructure. Our partners in Kidderminster BID are also strongly of this view. The following car parks are recommended:

- Aldi Long Stay Car Park
 - Bromsgrove Street Car Park
 - Bullring Car Park
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- Comberton Place - serves as a strategic link for those arriving by train and could strengthen our efforts to support sustainable travel into the town.
 - St Mary's- has the potential to relieve some of the parking pressure currently placed on the churchyard and memorial area, where informal parking is causing ongoing damage and concern.
 - The Horsefair triangle, - a key gateway to the town, is of interest to us given the location of our horse statue there. It represents a chance to visibly enhance arrival into Kidderminster while improving functionality at a prominent location.

Local management of all these sites would help ensure that decisions reflect the town's character, priorities, and day-to-day realities.

3. The Town Council should explore options on the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre
4. The Town council should request the transfer of the unit at Crosbie Grove, currently occupied by KTC Services team.

Members asked if it might be possible to add the ward address to the lands, parks and open spaces listed.

12. Press Release Protocol

The meeting considered a draft press release protocol.

It was noted that in the Vision Action plan, the aim was to have at least one press release per week.

Resolved: To Approve a Press release protocol for the Council.

13. Worcestershire Pension Fund Employers' Discretion Exercise

As this item was likely to disclose personal details, consideration was deferred until after the resolution was passed to exclude the press and public.

14. Approval of Policies

The CEO explained that these policies were part of the list of items picked up by the Council's Internal Auditor and were required for governance purposes.

Resolved: To Approve the Document Retention Policy and the Subject Access Policy, as presented.

15. Forward Work Programme

Noted.

16. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as confidential financial and personal information are likely to be disclosed.

17. Provision of IT infrastructure and Services

Members considered a report setting out future options for IT infrastructure and support services in the Town Hall.

Currently this is covered by an SLA with Wyre Forest District Council. The Town Council sought quotes for infrastructure from other suppliers which were much more competitive and also better tailored to Town Council operations and requirements. There was also concern regarding the longer term

It was noted that the SLA extends to 31 March 2027.

Members asked that security issues be addressed.

Resolved:

1. That the Town Council engage Cloudy IT to provide our Infrastructure and new line.
2. Officers are authorised to work on an exit strategy from our IT SLA with Wyre Forest District Council.
3. Officers to update the next Committee meeting.

18. Worcestershire Pension Fund Employers' Discretion Exercise

As part of the Worcestershire Pension Fund annual Employer Discretion Exercise, the LGPS noted that they do not hold a current policy for this Council on their records. They have therefore requested the Council to provide them with our current employer discretions policy by the 30th of June 2025.

The Council does not have this policy in place. Three of the Council's employees are members of the Scheme. Two employees carried their membership over when TUPE'd from Wyre Forest Council to this Council. One part time employee is also a member of the Scheme.

Resolved:

- A. To apply the same discretions that were allowable at the time of their transfer to the 2 employees TUPE'd over to this Council in 2018.
- B. The CEO is directed to check if the District Council discretions policy has changed since then and to report back to this Committee on any matters that

might need to be considered, if there has been any changes since then.

C. No discretions will be allowed for the part-time employee who is a member of the scheme.

Meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____