

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2026 in the
Council Chamber, Kidderminster Town Hall**

Present: Councillors: Steve Hollands (Chair), John Beckingham, Liam Carroll, George Connolly (substitute), Bernadette Connor, Helen Dyke (Vice Chair), Doug Hine, Fran Oborski and Mary Rayner.

In Attendance: Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Pugh, Corporate Services Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Ben Brookes

ABSENT: None

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The CEO pointed out that all members have a dispensation to discuss matters relating to the precept (See agenda item 13: Budget 2026-27)

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil

45. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th October 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

46. Approval of Accounts

The CEO presented details of income the Council received from 1st October to 31st December 2025, totalling £1,056,653.45 (excluding VAT).

The income (appendix 2.1) included

- £799,720 received from the Public Works loan Board towards the Town Hall Transformation Project,
- £62,677.04 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and
- £130,380.75 and £42,788.51 income from Town Hall bookings and ticket sales

Appendix 2.2: payments from 1st October 2025 to 31st December 2025, totalling £1,748,485.88 (including VAT)

- Loans: repayment of bridging finance to WFDC: £800,000, plus loan charges: £83, 694.10
- Town Hall Transformation Project: £347,794.06
- Town Hall re-opening: £130,763
- 4 months of salaries: £163,694

Members expressed concerns regarding receipts and expenditure not properly explained on the lists. The CEO acknowledged those concerns, which he felt were due to communication issues between the Town Council and the accounts team at the District Council and that this would improve when SLA is finished and the Town Council deals with its own accounts.

In some cases, KTC officers not following procedures and the Corporate Services Manager had written to all officers advising them on the need to protect public monies and to keep proper records. He was happy that there was no fraud or misappropriation of funds involved but agreed that this needed to be addressed. The CEO was directed to update the report on the Council's website as further information on these matters became available.

The CEO said that he would bring forward purchase/ procurement amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations to the next Committee meeting, for approval. This would also include Social Value criteria, promoting local purchasing, subject to value for money.

RESOLVED: To approve payments totalling £1,748,485.88 (including VAT) over the period from 1st October 2025 to 31st December 2025.

47. Budget monitoring

The meeting reviewed the Council's income and expenditure from 1st October 2025 to 31st December 2025 against budgets set for 2025-26.

(Councillor Mary Rayner left the meeting at 6.30 pm)

The strong performance of revenue income on the Town Hall budget line, which is anticipated to be close to £200,000 (budget £80,000), was welcomed by Members. The meeting complimented the Business Development Lead, Curtis Fudge, and the Town Hall team, for these achievements.

It was noted that there was overexpenditure against some accounts and the CEO would take year-end figures to the April meeting for approval.

48. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

The Committee received the Bank reconciliations for October, November and December 2025.

- Oct: £1,120,018
- Nov: £ 758,591
- Dec: £ 769,071

The Committee heard that the CEO was monitoring cash flow before drawing down any further on the loan approval (£450,000 remaining out of £1,250,000 approved). Members would be updated as this arose.

49. Vision 2025-2029

- A) The CEO presented the Action Plan report, which showed how the Council was performing at 31st December 2025 against the various aims and objectives set out in the Council' Vison 2025-2029.

Under 1.B: "Provide outstanding parks, playgrounds and public spaces," it was asked that the frequency of tree inspections be included in the report.

The meeting welcomed the reduced number of red flagged items due to completion of Town Hall project, re-opening of the Town Hall and the improving financial situation for the Council.

B) The Committee considered the recommendations for amendments to the Council's Vision 2025-2029, and

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council the following amendments to the Council's Vision 2025-2029:

- *1.H. We will exercise best practice as an employer, promoting fairness and equality for our employees and volunteers*
- *3.H. Support and encourage the understanding of different cultures and peoples through organisations such as the Twinning Association and our various local faith groups*
- *3.I. Encourage and support the promotion of Kidderminster's history, heritage and tourism.*

50. Strategic Risk Register

The CEO presented the Strategic Risk Register at 31st December 2025, which reflected reduced risks around the Town Hall Transformation Project and the Council's finances since the previous review.

A member pointed out that District Councillors had recently received Risk Management Training, including the appetite for risk and the CEO was asked to enquire about similar training for Town Council members.

Members asked that the risks around the Music Room in the Town Hall be added to the Register, as this was now becoming an important revenue stream for the Council. The meeting also that the probability of risk no. 8: "Fraud, Misconduct and underperformance" be increased until the matters discussed under minute no. 48 above, re accounting records, are addressed.

51. Complaints Policy

The meeting reviewed the Council's Complaints Policy.

Resolved: To add the following amendment to Clause 5:

"The Town Mayor will consult the CEO in the matter and it will then be referred to the relevant Committee of the Council for consideration. If the complaint involves the CEO, the Mayor will advise the CEO of the position and refer the matter to whichever committee of the Council the Mayor feels should deal with it.

The complainant will be invited to attend and address that meeting if they wish. The decision of the Committee in the matter will be final."

52. IT Policy

Chris Pugh, the Council's Corporate Services Manager, presented a report giving details of the new requirement for Town and Parish Councils to assert their compliance with requirements around information, personal data and use of technology. This would be a new assertion, No. 10, on the Annual Governance and Accounting Return. A key requirement arising from this is that every council must have a formal IT policy in place. This policy was intended to set out clearly how councillors, the CEO, and any other staff should use both council-owned and personal devices when conducting council business. It covers issues such as information security, data protection, appropriate use of email and online systems, and general good practice when working digitally on behalf of the authority.

The draft IT Policy was based on the template provided by NALC (The National Association of Local councils), amended for the Council's purposes.

Resolved: To approve the draft IT Policy as presented.

53. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The CEO presented a report recommending that the Council appoints LCC (Local Consultancy Services) as the Council's internal auditors for the financial year ending 31st March 2025 and until further notice.

Resolved: To appoint LCC (Local Consultancy Services) as the Council's internal auditors for the financial year ending 31st March 2025 and until further notice.

54. Budget 2026-27

The CEO presented a report and draft budget for 2026-27. It included recommendations from the Council's committees, except for the Civic, Community and Events committee which met on 14th Jan and recommended:

- An additional £2,000 for Christmas Lights Electricity (currently at £800) – in order to improve the infrastructure for the lights in the town, and
- £4,000 for Twinning (currently at £1,000) – to accommodate the Kidderminster-Husum Twinning Civic Visit and 50th Anniversary Celebration, as per the WG Chair's report.

These recommendations were approved, with the stipulation that the Town Twinning addition was a one-off, to enable the Council to mark the 50th Anniversary of the twinning with Husum. It was also required that the Anniversary celebrations should be inclusive and accessible to the wider community of Kidderminster.

The CEO presented his report on the draft budget which addressed the following matters:

- The overall revenue and capital expenditures,
- The main items of expenditure
- The Sales budget for 2026-27
- The proposed level of precept to be raised for 2026-27.

The report also listed some of the more discretionary items of expenditure and additional matters proposed in the draft budget.

Members discussed financial provision for the next Town Council elections due in May 2028 and agreed that the budget be amended to provide towards the cost of this election.

The Committee requested that a "Precept Leaflet" be included with the Council tax bills, highlighting the main features of the budget and how the Council would spend the money for the people of Kidderminster.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Council the draft Budget for 2026-27, subject to the amendments listed above.

55. Forward Work Programme

To include an update on the position around financial accounting, as discussed above.

56. Exclusion Of The Press And Public

The Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting as confidential financial information which would not be in the public interest was likely to be disclosed.

57. Approval of Lease of Room- Town Hall

The CEO told the Committee that the Registrars had advised that they would not be returning to the Town Hall, which left 2 meeting rooms available on the ground floor. One of these has been designated as the Duty Manager's Office. The Council has received an offer to rent the other room for one day per week at a rent which represented good value for the Council.

Resolved: To approve the Room Hire Agreement for the use of a meeting room on the ground floor of the Town Hall, for one day per week, in accordance with the terms of the agreement circulated to the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____