

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE**

HELD ON MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024 FROM 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Gregory Alderman (Chair), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, John Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Johnson Tamara and Richard Attwell

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services) and James Slack (Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager)

Public: Nil

265/24 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Wendy Bater and Kenson Gurney

266/24 - Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jones declared an interest in agenda item 274/24 as a member of the Rotary Club

267/24 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

268/24 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 September 2024

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 September 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

269/24 - Action Tracker – to review progress of previously agreed actions

Members received and noted the Action Tracker

270/24 - Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report to members and advised that the national pay award for the current financial year had been agreed at £1,290 or 2.5%, whichever is the higher, and this will be reflected in employees November pay.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.
- ii. To note the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 October 2024
- iii. To note the outcome of the External Audit for financial year 2023/24
- iv. To note the current investments

271/24 - Corporate Services Budget Report 2025/26

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to adopt the draft budget proposals and fees and charges for the Corporate Services Department for 2025/26, as well as indicative budget changes for the following three years outlined within the report.

272/24 - Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members.

Councillor Jones expressed concern about the lack of heating within Grove House. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive updated members that the heating was due to be fixed on Thursday 21 November and officers have been given alternative working options within this time.

Councillor Brennan asked whether it could be possible for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to become a standing item on committee agendas for each committee to review relevant KPIs. Officers agreed to schedule appropriate items.

ACTION: The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager

Councillor Crawley asked whether the corporate plan would be formally published. It was advised that this was planned already.

ACTION: The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager

Councillor Jones asked whether the KPIs poster provided within the report could be made public for residents to see. Officers undertook for this to be added to appropriate editions of Talk of the Town.

ACTION: The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To approve the updated Customer Charter as proposed.

273/24 - Marketing and Communications

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report provided to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to set up a Working Group to informally review and comment on the new website's design and use of branding. This Working Group to consist of Councillors Louise O'Riordan, Liz Jones, Johnson Tamara, John Gurney, Philip Crawley and Nicholas Kotarski.

274/24 - To consider the Town Council becoming a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable at a cost of £180 per year

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report.

Members discussed the invitation to become a corporate member of the Rotary Club.

Members asked officers to invite the Rotary Club to send a representative to address the Committee's next meeting to expand on the Club's work, and the benefits to the Council but also to the Club of the Council becoming a Corporate Member.

ACTION: Town Clerk and Chief Executive

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to defer the decision to a later date

and to invite a member of the Rotary Club to address the next Committee.

275/24 - Reports from Outside Bodies

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Councillor Attwell attended the last trustees meeting on the 7th November, he reported that CA are looking at growth revenue for their budget to help increase the revenue as much as possible for the increase in use of their services.

CA is attended by 1000 clients each month with increasing numbers due to the cost of living crisis.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Town Mayor and Councillors Hollick and Kenson Gurney

Councillor Hollick advised members that at the last meeting there has been an invitation from Portz to visit them. A party of 10 members have been formed to attend this visit.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Bater

Councillor Jones gave an update to members. A successful evening was held recently at Vantage restaurant to raise much needed funds. Grant applications are currently being applied for to help the future of the charity.

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors O'Riordan and Alderman

Councillor O'Riordan advised members the charity is in good financial health. The gardens will be getting a fence to prevent any falls.

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman

Councillor Hollick advised that the funds have really transformed both Manshead and Ashton St Peter's as well as the students' attitudes.

Chew's Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney

No update

Poor's Land Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones

Councillor Jones advised the next meeting will be in February next year.

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones

Councillor Jones advised a discussion on the fence installed by the business who holds the lease on behalf of the Old Palace Lodge had taken place. Councillor Kenson Gurney has been asked as a trustee to raise this issue with Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure this fence complies with regulations.

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

Councillor Kotarski advised members that all is going well.

276/24 - Exclusion of Public and Press

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

277/24 - Reference up from Personnel Sub-Committee

Members received and discussed a reference up from the Personnel Sub-Committee.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

- 1.1. To accept the outcome of the Pay Review in full, to be applied from 1 April 2025.
- 1.2. To amend the Council's policy to stipulate that pay progression will be suspended during a capability process, and to give line managers discretion, in consultation with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, to allow staff who have performed exceptionally to progress by two salary points where this is possible.

278/24 - Date of the next meeting - Monday 20 January 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9:10 PM