

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Tuesday 3 June 2025 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr Sarah Carney (from item 2)

Cllrs: Jonathan Bourbon	Anne Rickard
Paddy Mooney	Dave Rickard
Nigel Rawlings	

Also in attendance: Cllr Ian Bark (Leader ex officio), Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager), Lisa Pinch (Finance & Office Manager), and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for Chair by the Town Clerk and it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that Cllr Sarah Carney be elected as Chair of the Sub-Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2025/2026.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Anna Killick and Ann Langridge.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 4 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Town Clerk advised members of the outcome of the West Bay Car Boot Sale grants scheme (minute 31), details of which were shown in the minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 March 2025. He further advised that, pursuant to minute 36, Full Council on 25 March had approved the creation of a Governance Working Group which had yet to meet.

The Chair noted that it might be beneficial to hold the first meeting of the Governance Working Group after the new Town Clerk had taken up her post.

5. CCLA PROPERTY FUND INVESTMENT

The Town Clerk reported that the council's investment with CCLA would be repaid in early August, the amount being subject to a deal on 31 July 2025. Options for reinvestment would need to take account of the council's Financial Regulations, Investment Strategy, and Ethical Decision-Making Policy. Initial repayment would be to the council's current account, from where it would be transferred automatically to an associated interest-bearing deposit account. Members were asked to agree this interim course of action, and to consider a process for consideration of longer-term investment decisions.

Members discussed the council's current and deposit account arrangements, and ethical considerations, and

RESOLVED: that a further report be provided to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee when capacity allows, to consider future investment options, and in the interim that the funds be deposited to the council's current account and associated deposit account.

6. POLICIES

The Project Manager introduced Members considered the following draft updated policies:

- (i) Equality and Diversity Policy, [ENCL: 4009](#)
- (ii) Dignity at Work Policy, [ENCL: 4010](#)
- (iii) Safeguarding Policy, [ENCL: 4011](#)
- (iv) Data Protection Policy, [ENCL: 4012](#)

The Project Manager advised that these drafts were produced alongside a wider review of documentation including the Staff Handbook. This work would assist in her studies for the CiLCA qualification whilst also being beneficial to the incoming Town Clerk. The Town Clerk noted that the drafts had drawn on template documents drawn up by the National Association of Local Councils, and he asked members to recommend their approval to Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Members discussed:

- The need for monitoring of policy effectiveness; and
- A need for clarification of the definition of 'harassment' used in both the Equality & Diversity Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy. It appeared only to apply to cases involving a protected characteristic, and members considered that this might be too narrow a definition.

RECOMMENDED: that the draft Equality & Diversity Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Data Protection Policy be approved as tabled, subject to clarification of the definition of harassment used in the first two of these documents.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024/25

Members considered a report of the independent internal auditor, [ENCL: 4013](#), following a visit on 23 May 2025.

RECOMMENDED: that the report of the independent internal auditor be approved.

RESOLVED: that the current and former Finance & Office Managers be thanked for their work.

Members received and discussed the draft annual accounts for 2024/25, [ENCL: 4014](#), which had been tabled for approval. After discussion of the outturn figures for the year, and the impact of the boundary changes on the council's finances, it was

RECOMMENDED: that the annual accounts for 2024-25 be approved.

RESOLVED: that the current and former Finance & Office Managers be thanked for their work.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor and other officers be thanked for their contributions to the financial arrangements following the expansion of the council in April 2024.

8. ANNUAL REPORT

Councillors considered the Town Council's draft Annual Report, [ENCL: 4015](#). The Town Clerk stated that, subject to member approval, the report would be published by the middle of June 2025.

Members noted minor typographical errors on pages 1 and 3 of the draft, and after further discussion of the contents it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Annual Report be approved for publication, subject to the correction of the minor typographical errors highlighted at the meeting.

9. GRANTS 2025/26 AND SLA REVIEWS

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed to publicise the opening of the annual community grants scheme immediately following the meeting, provided the arrangements were approved by members, including the approval of any specific funding priorities in relation to the community grants scheme. It was proposed that applications be accepted until 15 August 2025, and that awards be considered at the meeting of Best Value & Scrutiny Sub-Committee in September 2025.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED: that the arrangements as proposed by the Town Clerk be approved, and that the funding priority for 2025/26 be 'youth and young people'.

The Town Clerk further reported that review meetings for all Service Level Agreement-supported funding would be scheduled for August if possible, and that funding recommendations would be reported at the next meeting of the sub-committee.

Members discussed:

Possible means of streamlining the review process;

- A reduction of 10% in the budget for SLA funding, compared with the actual payments made in 2024/25;
- The importance of ensuring optimal community benefit from the funding provided; and
- The need for councillor representatives to outside bodies to report formally to the council.

RESOLVED: that the arrangements for the 2025/26 grants schemes be noted.

10. INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Town Clerk reported that officers were preparing for the first annual renewal of a three-year insurance agreement with Zurich Municipal Insurance on 1 September 2025. Expected minor revisions to cover provided would be discussed with Zurich at a meeting on 5 June, with further meetings as needed after that to finalise the renewal agreement. As the renewal date was prior to the next scheduled meeting of the sub-committee, members were asked to agree that the arrangements be made under delegation, as had happened in previous years.

RESOLVED: that the insurance renewal process be noted, and that the agreement with Zurich Municipal Insurance be agreed under delegation to the Finance & Office Manager and the Town Clerk or their nominated deputy.

11. FUTURE REPORTS

No matters for future committee reports were proposed.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

No matters for communication were reported.

The meeting closed at **12.07pm**

The next meeting of this Sub-Committee is scheduled to be held on 2 September 2025