

NOTES of the FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Monday 10 November 2025 at 18.30 hours.

KAG MEMBERS:                      Graham Fairbairn - Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)  
   Cllr Bob Foster\*  
   Cllr Jon Gardner  
   Cllr Matthew Goldsmith\*  
   Cllr Janice Henwood  
   Cllr Simon Hicks (Deputy Chairman)  
   Cllr Cedric De Souza (Chairman)\*  
   Cllr Adam White

\*Denotes absence

Also Present:                              Cllr Anne Eves  
   Cllr Brenda Williams  
   Cllr Robert Eggleston  
   Cllr Matthew Cornish  
   Cllr Peter Williams  
   Julie Holden – Burgess Hill Town Council CEO  
   Jennifer O’Grady - Burgess Hill Town Council Officer  
   David Hood – Burgess Hill Town Council Head of Finance

*Meeting started 18.30 hrs*

## **98 OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

## **99 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted Cedric De Souza, Matthew Goldsmith and Bob Foster had offered their apologies.

## **100 SUBSTITUTES**

The following substitutes were noted:

Robert Eggleston for Cedric De Souza  
Matthew Cornish for Bob Foster  
Peter Williams for Matthew Goldsmith

## **101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Matthew Cornish declared an interest in agenda item 11 relating to the Schedule of Earmarked Reserves as he is a Trustee of the Park Centre CIO which is part of the Community Infrastructure Fund where funds had been allocated and set-aside for the Park Centre CIO.

Cllr Simon Hicks declared an interest in agenda item 9 relating to the Pricing of Goods and Services Offered by the Town Council as he was an allotment holder.

## **102 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman of the meeting stated a full listing of payments made, including those via the town council's business card, are displayed on the council's website on a quarterly basis and can be reviewed accordingly.

The Chairman announced, also, the retirement, at the end of November 2025, of Graham Fairbairn, the current Responsible Finance Officer, and introduced David Hood as the new Head of Finance.

## **103 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members considered the Notes of the Meeting of the Finance Key Area Group held on 23 June 2025 and agreed they were a correct record and for the Chairman of the meeting to sign them accordingly.

## **104 EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Members received a report, as set out in the agenda item 7, dated 10 November 2025, detailing the outcome of the external auditor's limited assurance review.

Members were please to see there were no items of a material nature that needed to be brought to their attention..

### **RESOLVED**

To note and accept the contents of the report.

## **105 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2025/26**

Members received a report, as set out in the agenda item 8, dated 10 November 2025, presenting the latest monitoring report for the financial year ending 31 March 2026.

Member were informed the current estimated outturn would be in the region of £23k.

During the ensuing discussion, the RFO advised the £15k relating to partner income for roundabout maintenance, which had been noted as a risk, was now confirmed. The RFO advised, also, that with some 5 months of the financial year to go, including the winter months, it was too early to confirm if the £22k risk associated with burial income would materialise.

It was confirmed the saving on the Burial Ground Loan repayment of £13k was due to the loan being drawn down at a later date than planned; and the reduction in salary costs related to, in the main, the 2025/26 national agreement on staff pay being less budgeted.

### **RESOLVED:**

To note the contents of the report.

## **106 PRICING FOR GOODS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL 2026.27**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 9, dated 10 November 2025, recommending charges for goods and services offered by the town council to be increased by 4% or forecast inflation rate as noted at the end of February 2026.

### **RESOLVED:**

To increase charges levied by the town council for its good and services by 4% or forecast inflation rate as noted at the end of February 2026 which-ever is the higher, and for these increases to take effect on 1 April 2026.

## **107 FIRST DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 10, dated 10 November 2025, detailing a first Draft Revenue Budget for Members to consider.

The report noted a potential increase in the Precept of some £133k giving rise to a potential increase in the Band D rate of 9.8%

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

- Subsequent to the report being written, the district council had confirmed the Tax Base would rise to a minimum of 13376.9, a 2.91% increase on the prior year. The first draft budget had included an increase of 1.25% only and this higher level would give rise to a lower Band D rate increase.
- The report requested Members consider transferring £16k from the 2025/26 estimated surplus to the Batchelors Farm Bridge project.
- Concern was raised the current level of the General Reserve fund may not be adequate to meet the Standing Resolution of 20% of Net Budgeted Expenditure, however, it was noted the final level of funds required would be determined by the final 2026/27 budget submission in January 2026 and the level in the fund would be looked at accordingly.
- It was accepted by the meeting this was a first draft budget only and work would continue in regard to reviewing individual Revenue Budget items and the various Earmarked Reserve funds prior to the final budget submission in January 2026.

### **RESOLVED:**

- a) To transfer £16k from the 2025/26 surplus to the Batchelors Farm Bridge project, and
- b) For officers and Members to continue work on finalising the budget for the 2026/27 financial year.

## **108 RESERVES AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2025**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 11, dated 10 November 2025, detailing the level of reserves held by the town council as at 31 October 2025.

The report noted a number of new and/or increased fund allocations or releases back to the 2026/27 first draft Revenue Budget.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the current schedule subject to the approval of the final 2026/27 Revenue Budget.

**109 BANK RECONCILIATION AND OTHER BALANCES**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 12, dated 10 November 2025, detailing a recent bank reconciliation and the levels of core balance sheet items.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the report as presented and for the Chairman of the meeting to sign the bank reconciliation accordingly.

**110 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 19 January 2026, 18.30hrs

*Meeting concluded 19.30 hours*

DRAFT