

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 18TH AUGUST 2025

In attendance:

Cllr Jenkins (Chairman)	Cllr Akker	Cllr Hinderwell
Cllr Webster	Paula Mendham (RFO)	Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk)

25/10 To receive apologies for absence and a vote of acceptance to be taken

No apologies received.

25/11 To record declarations of interests

Members are invited to declare any relevant interests. Notwithstanding this item, Members may subsequently declare an interest at any point during the meeting.

Cllr Hinderwell declared that he was a member of the West Mersea Tennis Club.

25/12 Public session (15 minutes, 3 minutes per speaker)

Priority will be given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda. Once the public session is closed, members of the public are not permitted to speak.

MOP1- Not able to review the accounts within the inspection period. Will wait for a response from the 23/24 accounts before raising any issues with the 24/25 accounts. Will refer any queries to the Council before raising issues with the auditors. Stated that he has a dispensation to make a submission outside of the inspection period.

25/13 To confirm minutes of the Finance & Strategy meeting of 13th January 2025

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of 13th January 2025.

Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

25/14 To review and approve the Terms of Reference

It was resolved unanimously to agree the Terms of Reference with the minor amendments. This is to be agreed at the next full meeting.

Membership 1 - The Committee to meet a minimum of 4 times a year, with the Town Clerk and RFO in attendance. Prime Objectives 2 - remove the word operate. Key tasks - add another heading Strategy - To consider the long-term strategy to be adopted by the Council.

Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

25/15 Water/sewage bills:

- (a) To review Coast Road water/sewage bills and receive an update from RFO and decide what further actions to take
- (b) Consider next steps in respect of other sites
- (c) To decide whether to renew the Everflow contract (current contract ends 4th September 2025)

Following discussion, ***it was resolved*** unanimously to renew the Everflow contract.

Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Akker. All in favour.

25/16 To review the Running Budget and to:

- (a) Decide where action on expenditure items is required.
- (b) Consider the viability of applying for S106 funding for individual projects.

The Running Budget was reviewed and agreed. Some points were discussed and will be reviewed by the Town Clerk and RFO.

25/17 To review and consider the current position on the review of AGAR part 3 2023-24

No correspondence has been received from the external auditor.

25/18 To receive an update on the AGAR submission 2024/25

An email was received acknowledging receipt of the AGAR submission. No further correspondence has been received.

25/19 To agree on actions needed to pursue possible grant opportunity of up to £50k (£45k nett) for a single project, the time scales, Contract Finder and specifications:

- (a) Location-West Mersea Park and Glebe 2
- (b) Scope- new equipment for West Mersea Park and Glebe 2, including renovation of existing surfaces and any remedial work
- (c) Funding- Grant plus precept allocation plus S106 for Glebe 2 under Schedule 4 of S106 agreement for Dawes Lane housing development
- (d) Determine on how to draw up specification for tendering purposes
- (e) Obtain quotes via Contract Finder(or equivalent)
- (f) Apply for grant
- (g) Time scales
- (h) Agree on project management team

Following discussion, the Town Clerk is to contact Enovert regarding applying for a potential grant and to use Contract Finder inviting quotations for park equipment in West Mersea.

25/20 To agree closing current account with Barclays and moving all payments in and out to our Unity account and decide on time scales and actions needed

It was resolved unanimously to close the current account with Barclays and move all payments in and out to our Unity account.

Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

25/21 To confirm bank signatories for all bank and savings accounts

This is to be reviewed by the RFO.

25/22 To establish a Pre-Paid Burials account and method of operation:

- Leave Pre-Paid Burials account as it is.
- Handle Pre-Paid burials in and out of the unity account at present.

25/23 To consider where best to place our savings accounts in order to achieve best interest rates and to comply with our Investment Policy

It was resolved unanimously to close the NS&I account.

Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Webster. All in favour.

It was resolved unanimously:

- To put £100,000 in Redwood 35-day business savings account at 3.85%
- To put £75,000 into Unity instant access account at 2.27%
- To close the Barclays current account
- To review these actions at the next Finance Strategy meeting

Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Jenkins. All in favour.

25/24 To consider what actions are needed to tighten up our purchase order system to ensure that orders placed are recorded and monitored for completion within contracted time scales, signed off as appropriate and invoices presented and paid.

It was resolved unanimously that every purchase needs a purchase order to be raised and entered onto the edge system, where a purchase order number will be allocated.

Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Akker. All in favour.

25/25 To receive an update on the Tennis Club lease

To be discussed at the next full Council meeting.

25/26 To receive up update on the MISA lease

No update was received.

25/27 To receive an update on the Changing Places lease

An update was received:

- Town Clerk is waiting to sign the statutory declaration.

25/28 To receive an update on Broomhills and Land Registry and agree on next steps

An update was received:

- Solicitor has been contacted for an update regarding WMTC's position with registering ownership of the land.

25/29 To re-visit with Colchester City Council the Business Rates Retention Scheme in respect of Willoughby Car Park

This item was deferred.

25/30 To consider current Local Government Reorganisation:

- (a) Possible impact on the Council
- (b) Possible future actions in relation to CCC and assets held in West Mersea

Town Clerk reported that a letter requesting a meeting with CCC to discuss assets has been sent and that one to ECC is to follow shortly.

Meeting closed at 12.30pm.