

# **Whiston Town Council Meeting Agenda Wednesday 12th February 2025**



## **Serving the Community**

**Whiston Town Council**

**Whiston Town Hall**

**Old Colliery Road**

**Whiston**

**Merseyside**

**L35 3 QX**

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**Sandra Mayers-Town Clerk 07584414866**



# Whiston Town Council

Whiston Town Mayor 2024-2025 Councillor S. Henry.

Mrs S Mayers ~ Town Clerk  
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SM/KM

5th February 2025

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the Ordinary Council meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Whiston Town Hall, Old Colliery Road, Whiston on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025** commencing at **7.00pm.**

Yours sincerely

Sandra Mayers  
Town Clerk

## AGENDA

**Apologies.**

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC FORUM PROVISION FOR THIS MEETING.**

#### **1. Announcements from the Town Mayor.**

To receive verbal reports from the Town Mayor of the Council **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**

#### **2. Announcements from the Town Clerk.**

To receive verbal reports from the Clerk of the Council **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**

**3. Announcement from the Leader.**

To receive verbal reports from the Leader of the Council FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

**4. Declarations of Interest.**

Members are invited to indicate any interest they may have in relation to items on the Agenda for the meeting. Attached for this purpose is a pro forma for use by Members, which should be handed to the Town Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Declaring interests in this way does not preclude Members from declaring an interest, when a specific item is being discussed, during the meeting.

**5. Planning.**

**a) Applications.**

**Members are requested to consider the undermentioned planning applications.**

24/00404/FUL	Installation of a new 2.4m high pedestrian entrance gate within existing boundary fence, erection of 2.4m high double automated paladin gates and single pedestrian gate together with 1.8m wide tarmacadam ramp and footpath and associated works.	St Lukes Catholic Primary School, Shaw Lane, Prescot.

**6. Whiston Woods – Information.**

Members are requested to consider any further updates from the Clerk or Leader of the Council in relation to the proposed Cemetery Extension, Whiston Woods.

**7. Minutes - Ordinary Council Meeting – Appendix 1.**

To receive as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**8. Public Forum, Protocol – Appendix 2.**

Members are requested to consider the report of the Town Clerk in relation to Public Forum protocol.

**9. Accounts.**

Members are requested to note and agree the undermentioned information in relation to finance.

**a). Bank Reconciliation – January 2025 – Appendix 3.**

**b). Final Payment Summary- January 2025 – Appendix 4.**

**d). Monthly Accounts for payment - February 2025.** (to be circulated at the meeting).

**10. Estimates Report – Budget 2025-2026-Appendix 5.**

Members are requested to consider and agree the detailed estimates report in relation to expenditure for 2024-2025 and estimated expenditure for 2025-2026.

**11. Risk Assessment 2025-2026- Appendix 6.**

Members are requested to consider and agree the detailed report in relation to the Council's Annual Risk Assessment for 2025-2026.

**12. Treasury Management 2025-2026-Appendix 7.**

Members are requested to consider and agree the detailed report in relation to the Council's Treasury Management for 2025-2026.

**13. Investment Strategy 2025-2026-Appendix 8.**

Members are requested to consider and agree the policy in relation to the Council's Investment Strategy for 2025-2026.

## WHISTON TOWN COUNCIL

At the Ordinary Meeting of Whiston Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Whiston Town Hall on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025 commencing at 7pm the following were:-

Present  
Councillor S. Henry  
Town Mayor  
(In the Chair)

**Councillors** D. Allen, J. Burke, T. Byron, N. Murray, T. Murray, J. Mimmagh, S. Rees, K. Taylor and G. Wickens.

### **Apologies.**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors C. Powell and R. Gaffney

### **Moment of Silence**

At the commencement of the meeting, the Town Mayor requested all present to observe a minute of silence in remembrance of those who perished during the Holocaust.

### **107. Public Forum.**

The Town Mayor outlined the procedures governing the Public Forum and emphasized the expectation for attendees to conduct themselves appropriately. Failure to adhere to these standards could result in the termination of the session and potential suspension of future forums for upto six months,

Four Members of the public attended the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 7.02pm and was suspended at approximately 7.09pm.

Residents inquired about the future use of the Southmead School Site land. No official information has been released, a school extension and parking provisions have been suggested.

A resident of Whiston Woods campaign group expressed concerns regarding Council support for their campaign and elaborated on issues discussed in a previous meeting.

The resident continued speaking on the subject, the content and manner of which deeply upset the Town Clerk, prompting her to leave the room. As a result, public forum was ended, and residents were asked to exit the building.

**Resolved:That public forum be withdrawn from the next meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

**108. Announcements from the Town Mayor.**

The Town Mayor gave the undermentioned updates FOR INFORMATION ONLY.  
The Town Mayor recently attended a celebration to present Hillsborough campaigner Margaret Aspinall Freedom of the Borough of Knowsley. The event was a memorable and enjoyable occasion.

**109. Announcements from the Town Clerk.**

The Clerk gave the undermentioned updates. FOR INFORMATION ONLY.  
Whiston Community Recognition Awards- please ensure you spread the word. The closing date for nominations is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The criteria and application is on the council's website.[www.whiston-tc.gov.uk](http://www.whiston-tc.gov.uk).

**110. Announcement from the Leader.**

The Leader gave the following updates. FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

**111. Declarations of Interest.**

Declarations of Interest were received on behalf of the following Members who left the meeting room at 7.31pm and returned at 7.34pm.

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
T. Byron	7 App A	Member of KBC Planning Committee
K. Taylor	7 App A	Member of KBC Planning Committee

**112. Planning.**

**a) Applications.**

**Members considered the undermentioned planning applications.**

24/00671/FUL	Subdivision of existing 4 bed dwelling to form 2No 2 bed dwellings.	35 Greenes Road Whiston Knowsley
22/00213/NAM1	Non-material amendment to application 22/00213/rem following the grant of planning permission and approval of reserved matters reference 22/00213/rem (reserved matters application pursuant to planning permission 18/00283/hyb for the erection of 208 no. Dwellings and associated works - approval sought	Land North of M62 Motorway off Windy Arbor (Halsnead)

	<p>for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) amendment sought for house substitutions for plots 206, 222, 228, 234, 254, 255, 270, 325, 328 and 329. Minor layout changes to siting of plots and alteration to the Lawrence house type to include a gable roof rather than hipped roof.</p>	
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**Resolved: That no objection be raised in relation to 24/00671/FUL  
That an objection be raised in relation to 22/00213/NAM1.**

**113. Whiston Woods – Information.**

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the planning application in relation to the proposed Cemetery Extension, Whiston Woods, was to be submitted on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025.

**Resolved: That Whiston Town Council will submit correspondence to the relevant authorities objecting to the proposed Cemetery Extension, Whiston Woods.**

**114. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Members Allowances.**

Members were asked to confirm whether they intended to continue serving voluntarily or claim an annual allowance for 2025- 2026. It was noted that Knowsley Town Council have some Members claim an annual allowance.

**Resolved: That Whiston Town Council Members will continue to serve the community of Whiston on a voluntary basis and claim no annual allowance.**

**115. Minutes - Events Committee Meeting.**

To receive as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**Resolved: The Minutes of the Events Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were received as a true and correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.**

**116. Minutes - Ordinary Council Meeting.**

To receive as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**Resolved: The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were received as a true and correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.**

**117. Accounts.**

Members were requested to note and agree the undermentioned information in relation to finance.

a). Bank Reconciliation – December 2024.

**Resolved: That the Bank Reconciliation for December 2024 be noted and agreed.**

b). Final Payment Summary- December 2024.

**Resolved: That the Final Payment Summary for December 2024 be noted and agreed.**

d). Monthly Accounts for payment January 2025.

**Resolved: That the Monthly Accounts for payment for January 2025 be noted and agreed.**

#### **118. George Howard Centre- Overflow Car Park – Usage - St Leo's and Southmead School.**

Members considered a detailed report of the Town Clerk in relation to charges and the continued use of the overflow car park at the above location.

**Resolved: The report was considered, and appropriate measures were discussed and agreed in relation to continued use. Members requested this be reviewed in January 2026.**

#### **119. 27th Knowsley Flower Show, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2025.**

Members discussed supporting the provision of a shuttle bus for the Whiston and Prescot residents. The total cost is £600 with Whiston Town Council and Prescot Town Council each contributing £300. Additionally, £200 is budgeted for advertising our facilities in the Flower Show promotional booklet.

**Resolved: That a contribution of £300 be allocated towards the provision of a shuttle bus to serve both Whiston and Prescot residents and £200 for advertising in the flower show promotional booklet.**

#### **120. Wildlife, Stadt Moers Park, Whiston.**

Recent attacks on wildlife have raised concerns among Councillors and residents. A meeting with Borough Council Officer, C. Holmes, identified key issues. An update on the welfare of the Swan residing at the lake in December 2024 was circulated

**Resolved: That the report be noted, the Council awaits further updates from C. Holmes, Knowsley Borough Council.**

#### **121. Knowsley Borough Council-Consultation – Housing Civil Penalties.**

Members were requested to review the consultation document, which outlines fines of upto £30,000 for housing related violations. Electronic copies were circulated with two printed copies available for reference. Members were encouraged to provide feedback via the Leader, Councillor K Taylor.

**Resolved: That the report be noted.**

#### **122. Knowsley Borough Council-Consultation – Mobile Homes and Caravan Policy.**

The Council reviewed a proposed policy enabling Knowsley Borough Council to impose fees related to mobile home and caravan site management. Members were invited to provide feedback via the Leader, Councillor K. Taylor.

**Resolved: That the report be noted.**



**Confirmation of Minutes**

Minute 107 to 122 be received as a true and correct record and signed by the Town Mayor on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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**Town Mayor**  
**Councillor. S. Henry**  
**The Meeting closed at 8.03pm**



Town Mayor and Members of Whiston Town Council  
Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **PUBLIC FORUM PROTOCOL- PROPOSED.**

### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT.**

Council Members are requested to consider the format and protocol in relation to managing behaviour at meetings in relation to Public Forum.

### **BACKGROUND.**

Public Forum provides an essential platform for residents to voice concerns, share opinions and engage with local governance, however, recent meetings have led to an uncomfortable environment for Council Members, Staff and other participants. To ensure the meetings remain productive, respectful and accessible to all this report outlines key recommendations for managing behaviour and fostering constructive dialogue.

#### **1. Establish Clear Rules and Expectations.**

Adopt A Code of Conduct: create a formal document outlining expected behaviour and consequences for violations, display this at meetings and distribute in advance.

Set Time Limits for Speakers. ( e.g. 3-5 minutes) to ensure fair participation.

Zero Tolerance for Aggression. Any behaviour deemed threatening, disruptive, or disrespectful should be immediately addressed.

#### **2. Implement a Structure Speaking Process.**

##### **Pre -Registration for Public Comments**

Require attendees to sign up in advance to speak, allowing for better organisation and time management.

Moderated Q & A Format: Instead of Open Forum request that residents submit questions via email or in writing in advance of the meeting.

If necessary, invite residents to structured private discussions with Council representative.

Review and adjust Policies: After each meeting assess what strategies worked well and adjust accordingly.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.**

Training for Council Members and Staff focusing on de-escalation and meeting facilitation.

### **CONCLUSION.**

By implementing these recommendations, the Council can foster a respectful and constructive meeting environment whilst ensuring that all community voices are heard. These measures will help create a space where concerns can be raised in a manner that is productive and beneficial to all participants.

<b>MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATION</b>			
<b>Jan-25</b>			
Balance 01/01/2025		£ 482,786.16	
Receipts in January 2025		£ 8,930.52	
Less Payments in January 2025		£ 32,885.20	<b>£ 458,831.48</b>
<b>BALANCES</b>			
Natwest Current A/C-97589667		£ 7,062.02	
Natwest Business Res A/C-89979389		£ 181,769.46	
Natwest Fixed Term Deposit A/c 85172626		£ 100,000.00	
Unity Trust Bank Fixed Term Deposit A/C 20517984		£ 85,000.00	
United Trust Bank Fixed Term Deposit A/C 20232805		£ 85,000.00	
Less unrepresented cheques			
Current a/c balance		£ -	
<b>Total Credit Balance</b>		<b>£ 458,831.48</b>	
Balance c/fwd			<b>£ 458,831.48</b>

**FINAL PAYMENT SUMMARY January 2025****Month 10 January 2025**

1 BACS	B H Dyson-Caretaker at Foxshaw Close Playground	£	75.00
4 BACS	Knowsley Borough Council-Council Tax - Rates for 3 Centres	£	1,541.00
5 BACS	Knowsley Borough Council Open Space, Ground Maintenance.	£	1,333.22
4 BACS	HMRC-Tax and NI Monthly Contributions	£	2,954.84
4 BACS	Merseyside Pension Fund-Pension Contributions	£	2,832.60
4 BACS	Prudential Insurance (AVC's)	£	800.00
1 BACS	ICU Group Monthly Service	£	340.80
1 BACS	Lyreco Stationery and blue roll	£	212.12
1 BACS	Chubb Spare Parts	£	8.70
1 BACS	D Sparrow (Plumbing & Heating) Supply and fit float valves to toilets WTH	£	608.37
1 BACS	R Miller Reimbursement for work shoes	£	54.99
1 BACS	Canon Billing 01/08/24 - 31/10/24 and 01/11/24 - 31/01/25	£	123.98
1 BACS	B & Q replacement piping for kitchen at WTH	£	10.58
1 BACS	B & B Hygiene Ltd Cleaning Materials	£	189.72
1 BACS	Amazon Business Adapter pack	£	8.05
1 BACS	Amazon Business HDMI Adapter pack	£	24.65
1 BACS	Amazon Business Projector	£	419.99
1 BACS	Amazon Business Cables	£	11.65
1 BACS	Amazon Business Sound Bar	£	58.99
1 BACS	Barlass Roller Shutters replacement motor GHC	£	480.00
1 BACS	Beesley & Fildes Rock Salt GHC	£	399.00
1 BACS	Beesley & Fildes Rock Salt WTH	£	330.60
1 BACS	S T Electrical & Security Ltd 2 new switch fuse spares for Roller Shutters	£	192.00
1 BACS	Premier Pest Control Services 26/01/25 to 25/04/25	£	138.00
1 BACS	B & Q Trade UK Batteries and cable ties	£	19.96
1 BACS	St Nicholas Church donation towards upkeep of Church graveyard	£	550.00
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>13,718.81</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>13,718.81</b>
<b>Total Direct Debits</b>			
1	DDR	Ash Waste Services. Refuse collection, Whiston Town Hall	£ 214.74
1	DDR	Ash Waste Services. Refuse collection, Whiston Town Hall	£ 144.20
1	DDR	Ash Waste Services. Refuse collection, George Howard Centre	£ 89.01
1	DDR	Water Plus. Water - George Howard Centre (4078082681)	£ 101.10
1	DDR	Water Plus. Water - Robert Foulkes Centre (6000391688)	£ 392.92
1	DDR	Water Plus. Waste - Whiston Town Hall (4033613348)	£ 73.72
1	DDR	British Gas Electric WTH (604043059)	£ 14.01
1	DDR	British Gas Gas WTH (603228234) monthly	£ 1,463.72
1	DDR	British Gas Gas GHC (604043063)	£ 754.80
1	DDR	Invosys (prev Connected World) Telephone/internet charges	£ 131.95
1	DDR	Chubb Fire & Security. George Howard Centre	£ 94.61
1	DDR	Chubb Fire & Security. Whiston Town Hall	£ 94.61
	Go	Global Connect Internet at RFC	
	Cardless		
	payment		
		Bank charges (97589667)	£ 153.00
		Bank charges re SumUp device	£ 46.41
			£ 10.18
		<b>Total DD</b>	<b>£ 3,778.98</b>
		<b>Wages</b>	<b>£ 15,387.41</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 32,885.20</b>
1	Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976		
2	Section 137 Local Government Act 1972		
3	Section 111 Local Government Act 1972		
4	Section 112 Local Government Act 1972		
5	Section 10 Open Spaces Act 1906		
6	Section 176 Local Government Act 1972		
7	Schedule 13 Local Government Act 1972		
8	Section 143 Local Government Act 1972		
9	Section 214 Local Government Act 1972		
10	Section 15(5) Local Government Act 1972		
11	Section 145 Local Government Act 1972		
12	Section 111/175 Local Government Act 1972		
13	Audit Commission Act 1998		
14	Section 31 Local Government Act 1997 Crime Prevention		
Total Payment R & P Book			
<b>Total Payments January</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>32,885.20</b>
		Accounts Sheet for January	£ 13,718.81
		Direct payments for January	£ 3,778.98
		Wages	£ 15,387.41
<b>Total Payments January</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>32,885.20</b>



## Estimates Report 2025 - 2026

**To: The Town Mayor and Members of Whiston Town Council  
Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

### **Precept and Annual Budget 2025-2026.**

#### **1. Introduction:**

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Whiston Town Council as the local precepting authority issues a precept each year to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC). The precept must state Whiston Town Council's budget requirement for the forthcoming financial year which is then payable by KMBC.

This report details the budget requirements of Whiston Town Council for the financial year 2025-2026 and the precept required to meet that budget.

The precept represents a large percentage of the Town Council's total budget requirement.

There is a duty to issue the precept demand to KMBC by mid-February in the preceding year to which the precept relates (in this case 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026). This enables KMBC to perform the necessary calculations needed to inform residents of their Council Tax demand.

In arriving at the level of Council Tax, the Town Council will not benefit from the business rate and the sole determination of the level of the tax will be the estimated expenditure divided by the tax base of 3587 for 2025-2026.

To assist Members, schedules of estimated and actual expenditures for 2024-2025, together with the estimated expenditure for 2025-2026, are available within the report.

#### **2. Payment of Precept**

KMBC, as billing authority pays the precept by instalments during the month of April each year in line with the Local Authority Regulations (Funds) (England) 1992.

### 3. Parish Consultation information.

Members will recall that the tax base for 2024-2025 was **3408** and the Borough Council have now indicated the tax base for 2025-2026 will be **3587** giving an increase of 179 properties.

### 4. Budgetary Control

Balances available to the Council are reported monthly. In addition, the accounts are balanced every month together with the bank reconciliation. These records are examined by both the internal and external auditors.

### 5. V.A.T.

All figures included within the estimates are **net** of V.A.T.

### 6. Contingency

The Council is advised to include a sum of £2,000.00 within the estimates to cover payments made during the year not accounted for within the budget.

It is recommended that this amount remain in place for 2025-2026.

### 7. Virement

This report will include several instances where the Council is requested to approve virement from various budget heads of expenditure to cover any overspend or underspend during the 2024-2025 year.

It is recommended that virement be used to allow for any underspend / overspend during 2024-2025.

### 8. Earmarked Reserves

It will be necessary, as part of the supporting documents for the accounts to specify budget heads which have been specifically earmarked for expenditure during the year.

In 2024-2025 the following items were earmarked

(a) Additional - Repairs and Maintenance	3,000
(b) Multi Use Games Area – Replacement	17,750
(c) Decarbonisation Fund	10,000

#### (a) Repairs and Maintenance.

Allocated 2024-2025	3,000
Utilised during 2024-2025	3,000

It is recommended that **£5,000** be allocated to this budget for 2025-2026 to allow for repairs / maintenance and ongoing improvements.

## 9. Pricing Policy 2025-2026.

Members will recall that **no increases** were implemented during 2024-2025, the current hire rate is £9.00 per hour for community groups and business users pay the hourly rate to £18.00.

All private functions over the weekend period now pay £25.00 per hour to hire any of the Council facilities.

**Having explored charges implemented at similar type venues locally, Members are requested to consider the undermentioned increases for 2025-2026.**

	<u>Current rate</u>	<u>Increased rate@11.2%</u>
Community groups	£9.00 per hour	£10.00 per hour
Business users	£18.00 per hour	£20.00 per hour

**Members may wish to consider increasing the £25.00 per hour for weekend function to £30.00 per hour @ 20% increase for 2025-2026.**

Members are required to consider implementing the small increase in hire rate.

Any increase agreed will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the benefit of any increases for weekend functions may not have a significant impact on the income for 2025-2026 as we already have several confirmed weekend bookings at Whiston Town Hall.

A concession of four weeks free room hire is available, upon request, to all new non-established groups wishing to hire any of the three Community Centres.

Members are requested to consider the continuation of this concession.

## 10. Multi Use Games Area 2025-2026.

This facility attracts approximately 12 session each week and is booked most evenings between the months of September and April each year.

Members may wish to implement an increase of £2.00 per hour for 2025-2026 making the charge from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 £20.00 per hour.

This facility has required a significant number of repairs during the past couple of years. The Council have earmarked an amount of £17,750 towards a replacement surface. In November 2024 the Council considered a full report in relation to the replacement along with funding options.

Members may wish to consider earmarking a further £10,000 to this earmarked fund during 2025-2026.

## 11. Insurance 2025-2026.

Zurich have again offered adequate cover at the best rates for a five-year period, and it was agreed that Zurich Municipal be the insurance providers for the Council until March 2026. No significant claims have been made during the past three-year period.



## **12. Risk Assessment 2025-2026.**

A mandatory comprehensive Risk Assessment review for 2025-2026 is circulated each year in February for Members consideration and approval.

## **13. Election Cost 2025-2026.**

This budget head of £6,000 has not been utilised during the year.

It is recommended that this amount be set at £8,000 for 2025-2026.

## **14. Telephone upgrade to digital 2025-2026.**

It is necessary to upgrade the current telecom system from analogue to digital. Costings have now been obtained and the additional cost for this has been included in the administration telephone budget.

## **15. Energy Efficiency Measure 2025-2026.**

It will be necessary to consider a more effective way of Whiston Town Council becoming more energy efficient. Members may wish to consider the production and implementation of a policy that gives a firm commitment, and sets targets for improving its carbon footprint, over the next ten-year period. This would initially involve upgrading the fabrication of buildings and would incur significant costs which would have to be planned for going forward. In the meantime, should any immediate work be necessary, then these funds would be met out of reserves held by the Council.

**The Council implemented a Decarbonisation fund which currently stands at £10,000.**

Members may wish to consider earmarking a further £10,000 to this earmarked fund during 2025-2026.

## **16. Heating – Whiston Town Hall.**

Members will be aware that, within the next ten to fifteen years, energy from gas will not play a part of Zero Carbon Britain and therefore other methods for clean heating are being implemented, which will include Hydrogen and Heat Source Pumps. To enable the Council to move towards a more energy efficient heating system would involve significant costs and require radically improving insulation etc. Government funding may become available to help with these costs in the future.

A local heating professional carried out a detailed survey of the current heating system. The findings of the report have indicated that this site would not be suitable for hydrogen or heat source pumps without improvements being made to the fabrication of the building, which would include insulation to roof space (limited due to the amount of flat roof area), cavity wall insulation, triple glazing and replacement radiators / pipework etc.

The current recommendations for Whiston Town Hall Site, should a replacement boiler become necessary, would be to install a condenser boiler and separate water heating system which would cost in the region of £50,000.00.

### **17. Provision of Christmas Lights, Whiston Village 2025-2026.**

The Christmas Lights in the Village had an annual inspection and switch on and off during November 2024 and January 2025 and a budget was set aside in the sum of £3,000 to take account of any possible repairs. (see open space for costing)

It is recommended that an amount of £2,000 be allocated to this budget for 2025-2026

### **18. Public Open Space, Maintenance 2025-2026.**

Members are requested to note that an agreement with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council is in place for maintenance work on all leased public open space for a three-year period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028. This amount has been included within the public open space budget for 2025-2026.

### **19. Income 2025-2026.**

The level of income each year cannot be accurately calculated as hire of the Council's facilities is on a demand basis, although regular weekday booking income is projected.

George Howard Centre- Lickers Lane.

Members will note that the projected income for this Centre has significantly increased due to the Council securing a contract with a new permanent user group and the current permanent user extending the term of hire. It is anticipated that this usage will continue for 2025-2026.

Whiston Town Hall

The income has also increased at this Centre due to new regular user groups and an increase in weekend function hire.

### **20. Financial planning 2025-2026.**

The future is difficult to predict, with increasing pressure on service provision, increase in utilities, three buildings, multi-use games area and a children's playground to improve and continuously maintain. The reserves, held by the Council are deemed sufficient to meet any reduction in income on a short-term basis.

### **21. Precept Amount 2025-2026.**

Please note: a narrative will be published to explain any increases within the precept.

Set out below is an indication of the budget amount required, the percentage increases and the impact on the band D equivalent per household per year.

**Using a tax base of 3587. Amount required (see final balance Page 6.).**

**£343,612.27 minus £26,00.00 pension surplus = £317,612.27 for 2025-2026.**

#### **Option 1. Allocating 0%**

A standstill band D equivalent property to pay £88.43.x 3587 would give an amount of £317,198.41.

A shortfall of £413.86 plus any additional earmarked amounts to be met out of reserves

### **Option 2 - Allocating an increase of 0.125%**

A band D equivalent property to pay £88.54 per year giving an increase of £0.11p per year would give an amount of £317,592.98

Any additional earmarked amounts will be met out of reserves held by the Council.

### **Option 3 - Allocating an increase of 3%.**

A band D equivalent property to pay £91.08 per year giving an increase of £2.65 per year would give an amount of £326,703.96

This would give an increase of £9,515.95 for 2025-2026 this could be allocated to earmarked projects for 2025-2026.

## **22. Annual Report 2025-2026.**

This year's Annual Report will again be published in-house. As the Annual Report is no longer delivered to every household within Whiston, 200 copies will be printed and these will be left at strategic points within the area and residents will be able to view the full report on the Town Council's website.

## **23. Refurbishment of Centres 2025-2026.**

Members are requested to note that ongoing repairs and maintenance have been budgeted for. Any essential work that becomes necessary will be met out of reserves held by the Council.

## **Whiston Town Hall – Accessible Toilet Improvements.**

Members will be aware that the current accessible toilet entry and alarm system does not meet the required standard set under the Human rights Equality Act 2010, and therefore initial estimates have been obtained in the region of £10,000.00, making it necessary to obtain tenders for this work.

Members are requested to agree to the above improvements. The cost of this to be met out of the reserves held by the Council. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, Tenders will be required for this level of expenditure.

## **24. Conference and Training 2025-2026**

Training for both manual and clerical staff is a mandatory requirement and is rolled out on a year by year basis, therefore it will be necessary to include a budget of **£1,500.00** for 2025-2026.

It is recommended that this amount remain within the administration budget for 2025-2026.

## **25. Community Donations 2025-2026**

Members are requested to note that the budget head for 2024-2025 was exceeded, making it necessary to use contingencies to allocate funds for additional community donations. The allocation has been capped at £500.00 per organisation per year.

Members are requested to consider increasing this budget head to £5,000 for community donations and continue to cap the amount of £500 per organisation per year.

## **26. Whiston Town Council Events 2025-2026**

Members implemented a level of expenditure of £5,000 for 2024-2025 and this has not been fully utilised during the year. A number of very successful events during 2024-2025 have been provided for the residents of the area.

Members are requested to consider this budget head remain at £5,000 for 2025-2026

## **27. Salaries/Wages 2025-2026.**

As in previous years Members are requested to agree to staff salary, pension and NI increases. These are allocated, during the year, in line with the recommendations of the National Joint Council for England, Merseyside Pension Fund and HMRC. An increase of 3% is included within the salaries budget for 2025-2026.

Employers National Insurance percentage increase and threshold reduction have impacted on this budget head and this amount has been included in each cost centre with an overall annual estimated increase of £8,500. for 2025-2026.

## **28. Town Mayors Allowance 2025-2026.**

This amount was reduced to £650.00 for the 2024-2025 financial year and is payable for out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the term of office.

It is recommended that £650.00 is sufficient for 2025-2026.

## **29. Hospitality Budget 2025-2026.**

This budget was set at £200.00, allowing the Council some flexibility should the Council wish to host events during the year.

It is recommended that £200.00 is sufficient for 2025-2026.

## **30. Reserves 2025-2026.**

Should Members wish to allocate the undermentioned amounts for 2025-2026 these will be met out of reserves held by the Council.

£10,000 Multi Use Games Area.

£10,000 Decarbonisation.

£10,000 Accessible Toilet – WTH.

£5,000 Repairs / Maintenance.

**£35,000 out of unrestricted reserves which currently stands at £373,131.03**

### **31. Action Required for 2025-2026.**

Town Council Members are now required to consider the undermentioned Action.

1. Note that the Borough Council will pay the precept by instalments during the month of April 2025.  
It is recommended that this be noted and agreed.
2. Note the Tax Base of 3587 for the year 2025-2026.  
It is recommended that this be noted and agreed.
3. Set a precept amount for 2025-2026.
4. Approve virement for overspend and underspend on various budget heads for 2024-2025.
5. Consider including a repairs and maintenance budget in the sum of £5,000.00 for 2025-2026 ( Not included in budget – earmarked reserves)
6. Consider adding an additional £10,000 towards the cost of replacement and improvements for the Multi Use Games Area 2025-2026. (Not included in budget- earmarked reserves)
7. Consider adding an additional £10,000 towards the decarbonization fund 2025-2026. (Not included in budget- earmarked reserves)
8. Agree a pricing policy for 2025-2026.
9. Agree a contingency amount in the sum of £2,000.00 for 2025-2026. (included in Administration Page 1.).
10. Agree to an amount of £5,000.00 for the Community Donation fund and also agree to capping an amount of £500.00 per organisation per year for 2025-2026. (included in Administration cost centre 1.).
11. Agree the Town Mayor Allowance of £650.00 for 2025-2026. (included in Administration cost centre 1.).
12. Note and agree the anticipated financial position of the Council in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.
13. Note and agree Staff training/ conference proposal of £1,500.00 as referred to in the report for 2025-2026 (included in Administration cost centre 1.).

14. Agree to implement salary and pension increases, during the year, in line with the recommendations of the National Joint Council for England and Merseyside Pension Fund and Inland Revenue for 2025-2026.
15. Agree to set a hospitality budget of £200.00 for 2025-2026. (included in Administration cost centre 1.).
16. Agree to include a budget of £8,000.00 for election costs in 2025-2026.(included in Administration cost centre 1.).
17. Agree to an amount of £5,000.00 for Whiston Town Council Events 2025-2026. (included in Administration cost centre 1.).
18. Agree to a budget for repair / switch on of Christmas Lights in Whiston Village at an estimated cost of £2,000.00 for 2025-2026. (included in Open Space cost centre 5.).
19. Agree to the Accessible Toilet upgrade at Whiston Town Hall during 2025-2026 estimated at £10,000 (to be met out of reserves)

### **32. Schedule of Powers**

- (a) Section 15 (5) Local Government Act 1972
- (b) Section 111 Local Government Act 1972
- (c) Section 112 Local Government Act 1972
- (d) Section 137 Local Government Act 1972
- (e) Section 145 Local Government Act 1972
- (f) Section 111/175 Local Government Act 1972
- (g) Section 214 Local Government Act 1972
- (h) Audit Commission Act 1998
- (i) Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- (j) Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 13
- (k) Section 10 Open Spaces Act 1906



## Risk Assessment 2025-2026

**TO: The Town Mayor and Members of Whiston Town Council**

**Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

### **1. Introduction**

Amendments have been made in relation to updating information and Members are requested to adopt the revised risk assessment for 2025-2026.

It is recommended that the Council, at least annually, carries out a complete risk assessment. The Council should decide which risks it faces and how it is going to reduce the impact of these risks on the Council's ability to provide its services. This risk assessment should be agreed and minuted.

The Council will appreciate that the risk assessment involves a wide ranging, analysis of the work of the Council and in the main, whilst not minuted specifically, many of the relevant issues have already been addressed and will continue to be monitored.

### **2. Insurance**

Whiston Town Council has insurance cover with Zurich Municipal and adequacy of this cover is monitored. Zurich was the approved provider for the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. The undermentioned amounts are within the combined insurance schedule and are indexed linked.

<b>Insured</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Part A – Material Damage</b>	
Whiston Town Hall – Premises	1,969,795.19
Whiston Town Hall – Contents	96,725.50
George Howard Centre – Premises	1,510,808.88
George Howard Centre – Contents	96,725.50
Robert Foulkes Centre – Premises	353,686.47

Robert Foulkes Centre – Contents	29,017.65
Robert Foulkes Centre, Garage – Building	32,070.60
<b>Part B – Business interruption</b>	
All premises	120,000.00
<b>Part C – All Risks</b>	
Chairman’s Chain of Office	3,224.17
Deputy Chain of Office	1,612.11
Whiston Town Hall – Perimeter Fence	24,181.37
Whiston Town Hall – CCTV Equipment	11,284.64
George Howard Centre - CCTV Equipment	11,284.64
George Howard Centre Perimeter Fence	24,181.37
Computers	4,425.88
Multi Use Games Area	177,330.08
<b>Part D – Money</b>	<b>Limit any one Loss</b>
Loss of None Negotiable Money – as specified on policy	250,000.00
Loss of Other Money –	
a) in transit	5,000.00
b) in the private residence of any Member or Employee	500.00
c) in the Premises –	
i) in custody of Member or Employee	5,000.00
ii) locked in Safe or Strongroom	5,000.00
iii) locked receptacles – other than Safe	500.00
<b>Part E – Public Liability</b>	
Limit of Indemnity	15,000,000.00
<b>Part F – Hirer’s Liability</b>	
Limit of Indemnity	2,000,000.00
<b>Part G – Employer Liability</b>	
Limit of Indemnity	10,000,000.00



### **Part H – Libel & Slander**

Sum Insured 250,000.00

### **Part N – Fidelity Guarantee**

**Sum Insured**

Persons Guaranteed – All Members & Employees 1,000,000

### **Part O – Personal Accident**

Cover Limit to: any one person/Employee/Director/Councillor/Volunteer  
500,000.00

Any one incident 2,000,000

### **Part P – Legal Expenses**

5,000

Limit of Indemnity 200,000

## **3. Financial Records**

The Town Council has in place Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, these are reviewed each year and adopted at the Annual Meeting. These documents provide procedures and guidance for the Council on administrative and financial matters.

The Council has also agreed internal controls for the receipt of income and the payment of accounts and the Council's independent internal auditor has access to the relevant records and procedures.

The Council receives quarterly reports in relation to the balances, detailed budgetary control, a monthly bank reconciliation and schedule of monthly payments.

It is envisaged that the checks in place can address any concerns in relation to potential fraud or corruption and these issues will be continually monitored to adopt other systems which are considered appropriate and beneficial.

## **4. Vision and Mission Statement**

The Council has adopted a Vision and Mission Statement which contains detailed set targets, and this will be monitored to ensure the Council is performing to the levels it has set bearing in mind the staffing and financial resources available.

## **5. Town Council Premises**

In addition to the relevant cover provided by the Council's Insurance Company the undermentioned risks have been highlighted and action taken where indicated.

### **(a) Whiston Town Hall**

1. A 6.4m high palisade fence is in place around the site and the site is therefore secure during hours the building is not occupied. In addition, a CCTV camera System is in operation which provides cover both inside and outside the building.

2. The premises are also protected by an intruder alarm system including telephone monitoring which complies with the highest standard required by the Council's Insurers.
3. All electrical portable appliances provided by the Council in the Centre are inspected annually by a certified electrician and endorsed accordingly, to ensure they comply with the relevant regulations. All users of the premises are not allowed to bring equipment into the Centre unless it has been inspected and certified accordingly. Users are informed that they are liable for their own equipment.
4. The Council arranges for an independent gas and electrical check of the premises each year and acts immediately upon any recommendation received.
5. The Council also applies for a premises licence each year which ensures that the premises are kept to a high standard i.e. the fabric external and internal décor are continually upgraded. As part of the Premises Licence occasional inspections are also carried out by Environmental Health Section of Knowsley Borough Council to ensure the building is being maintained and complies with the requirements in relation to health and safety.
6. Staff are given the relevant training. This will be dealt with, in more detail, further in this report.
7. At the present time, all users are required to produce their own insurance cover prior to using the Centre. In the case of activities such as martial arts etc, disclaimers will not be accepted. Copies of all hall user's insurance cover are kept in the relevant file.
8. All tables and chairs are checked on a regular basis by the caretaking staff to ensure all wear and tear is detected. Any piece of equipment which does not comply is removed from service.
9. All kitchen equipment is inspected and checked on a weekly basis and the Environmental Health Inspectorate is consulted before any proposed changes are implemented.
10. An asbestos survey has been carried out and remedial works undertaken a copy of the report is held on file.
11. An electronically monitored fire alarm system is in place and the relevant drill is practised and recorded in the fire safety record.  
All users of the premises are instructed on the procedure in case of fire and all the up-to-date current sign posting is in place. Caretaking staff are given intencivo training upon the action to be taken in **case of fire**.
12. The relevant Health and Safety Posters are displayed in a conspicuous place within the building and staff are acquainted with the requirements of the Council and employees.
13. The car parking and surrounds of the building are inspected on a regular basis and, in the case of icy weather, action is taken to treat the car park and footpaths accordingly.
14. The required fire extinguishers are provided and inspected annually by a professional company who specialises in fire equipment, Certified labels are attached to each piece of equipment. Any equipment damaged between inspections is repaired immediately.

15. The temperature of all radiators and hot water temp is checked on a regular basis to ensure the temperature is not at a dangerous level.  
All thermostats have been set accordingly.
16. Legionella Risk Assessment has been arranged for each of the three sites, testing and staff training is current, whilst ensuring legislation is met.
17. Where appropriate, roller shutters have been provided to windows and entrance/exit doors to further protect the building.
18. This building has also benefitted from Photovoltaics. There are 33 panels in total and the Council, receive a feed in tariff. Information in relation to the installation and yield is reported to Council Members.
19. An induction loop system is also installed.
20. LED lights have been installed to the exterior of this building as recommended in a recent fire risk assessment.
21. This building has also benefitted from a fully refurbished kitchen and new fire doors to the entrance hall and new flooring to entrance way.

**(b) George Howard Centre**

All the same action relevant in the Whiston Town Hall applies to this Centre. (excluding items 18/21). This building does not require a premises licence.

**(c) Robert Foulkes Community Centre**

1. The Centre is surrounded by residential properties and is protected by roller shutters;the building does not have any external security fencing or a monitored intruder alarm system.
2. The building does not require a premises licence.
3. This facility has a fire safety alarm system installed and is maintained to a high standard.
4. LED lights are installed to exterior of the building.
5. All the other issues relevant to the Whiston Town Hall and George Howard Centres relate to this Centre. (exclusions 18/21).

**(d) Multi Use Games Area, Whiston Town Hall Old Colliery Road**

This facility is booked on a regular basis with all users completing a hire agreement. This facility has relevant insurance in place. An inspection and maintenance of the pitch is carried out on two occasions during the year by a specialist company. A full rejuvenation of the pitch was completed in December 2020 and a further extensive renovation was carried out during 2022. Recent emergency repairs have been necessary due to tearing of the fabric surface. The Council has earmarked an improvement fund and funding avenues are currently being explored.

### **(e) Public Open Space / Trees**

The Town Council leases approximately 11.8 acres of public open space from Knowsley Borough Council. The Council have agreed (minute 93 refers) that the Borough Council carry out annual maintenance work from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028

The Town Council's public liability insurance covers the use of the relevant open spaces for the benefit of the local community. As part of the maintenance regime, the Borough Council are required to cut the grass and remove any items which would be deemed to be of a dangerous nature.

A full survey of trees on leased land has been requested from the Borough Council's Tree Officer, and some initial works may be necessary. The Borough Council will implement an annual inspection of trees on leased land and advise of any further works required.

Town Council staff currently carry out visual inspections of public open space and issues are recorded and actioned.

### **(f) Foxshaw Close Playing Fields**

This playground has equipment for young people and Knowsley Borough Council has previously installed additional play equipment which is designed to encourage play within a natural environment. This area has recently benefitted from a story telling area. The Borough Council undertakes the following inspections.

- (i) Annual Risk Assessment by Zurich Insurance Co. This is a full technical engineering assessment and highlights any problems with equipment etc. The Borough Council will take action to address any of the relevant problems.
- (ii) A weekly engineering inspection is undertaken by Borough Council staff to ensure equipment is in a satisfactory condition.
- (iii) Ad hoc inspections are undertaken by the Playground Manager of the Borough Council who is Rospa qualified.
- (iv) In addition, the Town Council employs a Caretaker to open / close and litter pick the area. The playground opening times vary according to the season. In summertime this would normally be between 8am and 6pm and any problems which arise during the day-to-day operation of the facility are dealt with as soon as possible. This area has benefitted from improved signage and painting.
- (v) The site has 6.4m high lochrin fencing on the side adjoining the farmer's field which ensures the site is protected as far as possible from illegal use.

## **6. Town Council Staff**

The Town Council employ the following staff.

- 1 – Town Clerk
- 3 – Administrative Staff
- 1 – Site Manager

- 4 – Caretakers
- 4 – Domestic Assistants

**(a) Administrative Staff**

The office equipment has all been assessed and complies with the Health and Safety requirements, Administration staff Risk Assessments are carried out by the Town Clerk.

In relation to the use of computers the following action has been taken.

- (i) Each member of staff is offered a free eye test every two years.
- (ii) Staff are given regular breaks from using the computer.

In addition, each member of staff completes a risk assessment form which includes the use of display screens, seating position etc. This is assessed to ensure the appropriate action is taken if any problems are highlighted.

**(b) Site Manager/Caretakers**

Town Council staff are given induction training and, in relation to caretakers, ongoing instructions are given in relation to the undermentioned matters.

1. Security of premises and the need to avoid false alarms
2. Protection of the person and correct way of dealing with client users
3. Fire drill instructions and evacuation of premises in the event of an emergency.
4. Correct use of car park provision
5. Cleaning to exterior of premises
6. Inspection on weekly basis of all equipment used in premises
7. Ensuring all emergency exits are always clear
8. Reporting and recording of faults / defects to Site Manager.
9. Regular weekly check of firefighting equipment and emergency lighting and fire exits
10. Need to maintain accident register and first aid equipment
11. All manual staff working alone have been received the relevant training.
12. Manual staff Risk Assessments are carried out by the Site Manager.

**(c) Domestic Assistants**

All Domestic Assistants are given in-house training prior to commencing work and their work performance is monitored on a regular basis by the Site Manager.

Instructions are also given reference cleaning methods and the use of cleaning materials as well as machinery. All cleaning material purchased complies with the relevant regulations and conforms with the types of material as appropriate.

**(d) General**

Upon appointment (after a 12-week probationary period) suitable staff are issued with a contract of employment and statement of particulars and a signed copy is kept in each individual employee files.

In addition, a welcome booklet is issued to all staff on appointment which sets out detailed information in relation to the undermentioned matters.

1. Probationary period
2. Medical clearance
3. Pension Arrangements
4. Special Leave
5. Annual leave
6. Sickness
  - (a) Entitlement
  - (b) Notification procedure
7. Disciplinary procedure
8. Grievance procedure
9. Equal Opportunities
10. Positive about disabled people
11. Maternity/paternity/adoption
12. Sources of useful information
13. Time off to deal with Emergencies

As an on-going attempt to reduce risk in the workplace, staff have attended appropriate training courses in relation to their role. The undermentioned topics form part of a rolling programme of training.

1. Health and Safety – All Staff 2023
2. Disability awareness – All Staff
3. Emergency first aid – All Staff 2023
4. Personal Safety – All Staff
5. Fire Safety - Manual Staff 2021/22
6. Fire Marshall - Manual Staff 2021/22
7. Manual Handling - Manual Staff 2023
8. Basic Food Hygiene - Domestic Staff 2021/22
9. Cosh - Domestic Staff 2023
10. Customer Care All Staff
11. Communication skills- All Staff 2023
12. Legionella and Legionnaires Disease – Town Clerk 2 x Manual Staff 2024
13. Equality and Diversity – All Staff 2024
14. Health and Wellbeing – All Staff 2024

The Site Manager monitors any issues or problems which may arise with Caretakers / Domestic Staff and necessary action is taken where appropriate.

In relation to the office staff, regular meetings are held to ensure all work procedures are being followed and to make amendments were considered appropriate.

### **7. Legal Powers Applicable to Local Councils**

The Town Council relies upon the advice of the Town Clerk in relation to whether it has the powers to undertake its various activities. In the event of any uncertainty the Town Clerk will consult the National Association of Local Councils.

The powers applicable to all activities will be included in the minutes of the Council and Members need to be satisfied the advice received is correct.

### **8. Borrowing**

The Town Council do not have any outstanding loans.

### **9. Employment Law and Inland Revenue Regulations**

The above issues are managed by the Town Clerk in the main and, when practically possible, the practices followed by Knowsley Borough Council are mirrored by Whiston Town Council.

The financial procedures and records of the Council and those required by the Inland Revenue Regulations, are adhered to. Financial records are available for inspection by both the internal and external auditors.

Changes to the regulations are adopted as they arise and where necessary will be reported to the Council.

### **10. Customs and Excise Regulations**

A representative of the Customs and Excise visits the Town Council to discuss the way the Council records and reclaims VAT and have confirmed that the Council is following the correct procedures. The procedures are checked by the internal auditor and VAT is reclaimed in October and April of each year.

### **11. Annual Precept**

The Council considers a detailed report each year in relation to the annual estimates budget and this report sets out the current financial position and the following year's estimated financial position. The report is produced to assist the Council when setting the Annual Precept.

In addition to the quarterly budgetary statement, the Council is supplied with a monthly overview of balances remaining and a copy of the bank reconciliation, from the previous month, is also provided.

### **12. Section 137 Local Government Act 1972**

Members are aware that the Council may spend up to a prescribed limit of £10.81 per electorate for any purpose, which in its opinion is in the interests of, or will directly benefit, the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it. The purpose cannot include political publicity. The powers of an existing statute must be used if there are any.

In the event of the Council wishing to commit expenditure under Section 137, it will be necessary to receive the relevant advice and to record such in the minutes of the Council.

### **13. Reporting and Recording of Council Business**

Agendas and Minutes of the Council are prepared monthly and are circulated to Members. These documents are also published on the Town Council's Website. The minutes are properly numbered and paginated with a master copy which is kept in safe custody.

### **14. Responding to electors wishing to exercise their rights of inspection**

The office of the Town Council is open to the public between the hours of 8am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4pm on Fridays. Any elector is given the opportunity to inspect Council documents and make copies if necessary. Electors will also be given advice on the action they can take.

The Council has adopted the provisions relating to Freedom of Information Act.

### **15. Consultation Process**

When the Council is consulted on various issues affecting the area, the receipt of the consultation document and the timetable for observation is reported to the Council at the next available meeting. If the timetable is tight, the organisation is contacted to ensure observations can be submitted as appropriate.

### **16. Enquiries from the Public**

All telephone enquiries from the public are written in a book provided for that purpose, and are dealt with as soon as practicably possible. Residents can also contact us via email to access information in relation to booking our facilities.

### **17. Administrative Procedures of the Council**

As part of the Council's investigation into the spirit of Best Value, the Council has made decisions, in relation to administrative procedures of the Council, and these decisions are documented.

It is recommended that the procedures previously agreed be continued.

### **18. Register of Members Interest.**

All interests, declared by Members, are recorded in the Minutes of the Town Council. In addition, all Members' interests are included in the relevant register and changes recorded as received.

Under the new arrangements, the Monitoring Officer of the Borough Council may visit the Council half yearly to ascertain the records are up to date. In addition, the records can be viewed during normal office hours.

### **19. Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit.**

As advised by the external auditor, it is good practice to carry out a review of the internal auditor on a yearly basis and the Council will now be recommended to include this as part of the yearly risk assessment.



The Internal Auditor to be appointed will be Mr Blanchflower who has met with the requirements set by (regulation 6 of the account and audit regulations 2003), the auditor should meet the requirements under each of the following headings.

#### **INDEPENDENCE**

Mr Blanchflower has no connection with any officer or Elected Member of Whiston Town Council and therefore is totally independent. All audit work is carried out ethically, with integrity and the utmost objectivity.

#### **COMPETANCE**

Mr Blanchflower has worked in private sector finance for over 20 years and was previously the responsible Finance Officer for a local Council. Whiston Town Council have absolute confidence and trust in his ability.

#### **RELATIONSHIP**

The Clerk is consulted following each visit and Members are made aware of the significance of the internal auditor.

#### **AUDIT PLANNING**

The internal auditor carries out his final Audit for each year in April/May when the year's accounts are finalised and preparations for the Annual Return are made.

### **20. Annual Governance**

Whiston Town Council Members have a responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. By agreeing this report Members are confirming that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the requirements of the Annual Governance is being met to the level required by Local Council Auditors.

### **21. General Data Protection Regulations.**

Whiston Town Council have in place a General Privacy Notice and a Privacy Notice for Staff, Councillors and Role Holders. Each of these policies are published on the Town Councils website. A detailed data mapping document is held and monitored to ensure compliance with the regulations of May 2018.

### **22. Conclusion**

The above report has been prepared is the initial response to the requirement for Councils to document information and action taken in relation to a full risk assessment. The Council is requested to adopt the main thrust of this report for 2025-2026.



Town Mayor and Members of Whiston Town Council  
Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2025/2026**

### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT.**

Investment of surplus funds by local authorities is governed by the Local Government Act 2003 S 15(a)(a) and Guidance issued by the Secretary of State under that Act.

Members are also requested to consider investing a maximum of £85,000 per financial institution, which is the amount covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

The Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) of the Bank of England announced a change in policy to extend the protection afforded under the Scheme to “Small Local Authorities” (SMAs).

### **1) BACKGROUND.**

In accordance with the Councils Investment Strategy Policy Members will be aware that investments must meet the requirements of the policy.

### **2) RESERVES**

Whiston Town Council has projected reserves of £402,000 of this figure it is anticipated that a sum of £62,750. be earmarked.(see budget report).

### **3) DEPOSIT OPTIONS**

Whiston Town Council have previously used its reserves to generate additional income by placing monies into a fixed term deposit account. The current interest rates being offered to Local Councils is between 4.5% and 5.85%, this would of course generate additional income.

Based on banks who currently offer investments to Local Councils it is hoped that the Council will invest in the undermentioned organisations to a maximum of £85,000. per investment.

<b>Financial Institution</b>	<b>Investment</b>	<b>Interest rate 12 months</b>	<b>Return on Investment.</b>
United Trust Bank	85,000	4.65%	3,958
Unity Trust Bank	85,000	4.5%	3,845.

Members are requested to agree to re-invest 2 x £85,000. with the current providers (when the current term expires in October / November 2025) providing the rates being offered are in line with other Financial Institutions, this would leave an additional £85,000 to be invested. The Town Clerk will seek out the best interest rates for a 12-month fixed term Deposit Account.

#### **4) CONCLUSION**

Whiston Town Council have managed to increase its reserves and is now in a relatively strong financial position having funds in excess of one year's operational cost.

Using the powers under the Local Government Act 2003 s15 (1)(a) Members must consider the Councils Investment Strategy and resolve to invest as outlined above giving the Clerk as RFO the authority to obtain the best interest rates and accounts available at the time of reinvestment.



Town Mayor and Members of Whiston Town Council  
Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **INVESTMENT STRATEGY POLICY 2025/2026**

### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT.**

Investment of surplus funds by local authorities is governed by the Local Government Act 2003 S 15(a)(a) and Guidance issued by the Secretary of State under that Act.

Members are requested to consider the implementation of an Investment Strategy Policy which sets out the policy for managing the investments and giving priority to the liquidity and security.

Members are also requested to consider investing a maximum of £85,000 per financial institution, which is the amount covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

### **1) BACKGROUND.**

Investments below £10,000 are not subject to the guidance but for investments between £10,000 and £100,000 the guidance should apply.

- a) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments, at any time during a financial year to exceed £100,000 the Guidance should apply in relation to that year.
- b) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year, to exceed £10,000 but not £100,000 it should decide on the extent, if any to which is reasonable to have regard to the Guidance in relation to that year.

Whiston Town Council expects its investments during the 2025-2026 financial year to exceed £100,000 and therefore it is recommended to apply the guidance as set out below.

### **2) Objectives**

2.1 The Council will invest prudently any surplus funds it holds, on behalf of the community. Priority will be given to the security and liquidity of its reserves.

2.2 The Council will seek the highest rate of return, consistent with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

2.3 The Council will withdraw monies first from the least secure or higher rated investment funds / banks.

### **3) Specified Investments**

3.1 The Council will invest its reserves in specified investments which are defined by the Guidance as investments that are:

- denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of the investments are payable only in sterling.
- That have a period of maturity of no more than 24 months.
- not defined as capital expenditure (essentially this precludes investment in shares
- or loan capital of any corporate body).
  
- made with a body or in an investment scheme which has been awarded a high credit quality (see below) or is made with the UK Government or Local Authority.

3.2 The Council will only invest in Specified Investments as defined above.

3.3 For the avoidance of doubt , the Council will invest balances which are surplus in the short term deposits with one or more of the UK Government, UK and / or building societies or other local authorities, provided that the credit rating of such institution satisfies the minimum credit rating specified below.

3.4 Decisions on investments within this strategy will be made by Full Council.

### **4) Acceptable Level of Credit Ratings (Risks)**

4.1 The required level of Credit Rating for UK Banks and Building Societies is "A" or above. Fitch Ratings Ltd or the bank is registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSCS) and the Council is otherwise satisfied as to its levels of capital and liquidity.

### **5) Treasury Management.**

5.1 The Council does not use external advisers to offer information, advice or assistance relating to investments, nor does it regard there as being a need for its staff to be trained in investment management given the nature of its investments, but will rely on information which is publicly available. The Council considers a Treasury Management Policy on an annual basis.

5.2 The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by reference to credit ratings. The Council should aim for ratings equivalent to the Fitch F1 rating for short – term investments.

**6) Investment of Money Borrowed in Advance of Need**

In the unlikely event of money being borrowed in advance of need, it will be invested in specified investments in accordance with this strategy.

**7) Review and Amendment of Regulations**

The Investment Strategy will be reviewed annually. The Annual Strategy for the coming financial year will be prepared and reviewed by Full Council.

The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Strategy at any time, subject to the approval of the Full Council.

**8) Transparency**

The Strategy should be publicly available on the Council's website.

**9) Conclusion**

Members are requested to note and agree this policy for the 2025-2026 financial year.