

EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING

Minutes 21st May 2026

1) Present: Cllr Sharp, Martin, Arger, Hotson Ash and Alesi plus Clerk and RFO

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to nominate Cllr Sharp as Chair of the group – agreed unanimously.

Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Hotson seconded to nominate Cllr Martin as Vice Chair of the group – agreed unanimously.

Cllr Martin Chaired the meeting as Cllr Sharp was running late.

2) Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Perry and Riordan

3) Dispensations – NA

4) Minutes of last meeting

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve minutes of the meeting on 9th April 2026 – agreed 3 for , 0 against 2 abstained.

5) Action Plan

Clerk noted still chase SCCT – booking fees and lease

Also “work experience in summer” – member of KCC Youth Parliament and UK Youth Parliament. HR suggested risk assessment and voluntary agreement.

6) RFO update

a) Contracts – attached utility contracts agreed RFO will research and report back with some proposals

b) Scribe – RFO verbal update

Entering data into Scribe – getting used to the system

Budget phased through the year

Aim to bring a quarter one (April / May / June) budget monitoring report to group in July and then onto Council.

Then open up access to all Cllrs and section will include for signature – so bank signatures can view payments to be signed – RFO to draft a procedure note.

The Group thanked the RFO for all her hard work.

7) Verbal update on complaint from SMFC CIC

Received complaint on 13th May 2026 due to the delay in getting quotes for the drainage works on main pitch.

On the 18 May 2026, agreed that SMFC CIC to do the verti-drain, top dressing and seeding work this year and Council already agreed in principle to do the drainage work (Council minutes 11th May 2026) aim to reconfirm on 1st June 2026.

Agreed the Councils should have been able to get three quotes – need more focused in early 2027 and agree contractor well in advance.

8) Priority Funding report for discussion

Following feedback from Cllr workshop the EFS group discussed and used the following criteria to help allocation

1. Project within the Council Vision and Strategic Action Plan
2. Deliverable by Council or partner organisation within two years
3. Support of public / consultation
4. External funding to help deliver project

With the above in mind and based on discussions the proposed allocation of Council Reserves and CIL

1. It sets General Reserves at 40% of precept = £120,000
2. Note we must retain the Ring Fenced Reserves
3. Sinking funds from 2025/26
4. This leaves £45,431.79 of Council reserve to be allocated
5. CIL reserves to be allocated = £72,588.05
6. A total of £118,019.84 to be allocated.

Proposed allocation of Council reserves

- Surrenden Field Pavilion - £22,500
- 3G pitch contingency - £20,000 – if not used consider for reallocation later in year.
- Surrenden Field playground - £2,931.79

Total £45,431.79

Proposed allocation of CIL

- Youth Club - £10,519.84
- Wimpey Field - £2,000.00
- Jubilee Field - £5,000.00
- Surrenden Field general - £3,000
- Bell Lane Public toilet - £5,000.00
- Surrenden Field Playground - £42,068.21
- Public Toilet disabled - £5,000.00

Total £72,588.05

The group felt that the Headcorn Rd project was not deliverable as KCC own the land and refuse to do the project, that use the Ring fenced reserves to purchase £200 of litter picking equipment and that the Staplehurst Community Centre Trust need to bring forward a formal proposal to deliver the agreed planning application.

9) Jubilee Field Management Group Terms of Reference – version 1 attached

Following debate Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to recommend to Council – agreed by 4 four 1 against and 0 abstained.

10)MBC Planning Complaint – draft paper and letter attached

Following debate agreed to amend and recommend that we need to complain due to the concerns of ourselves and residents and that the delays directly caused an increase in cost of £19,267.13.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to recommend letter – with amendments made in the meeting – to Council – agreed unanimously.

11)Health and Safety

Working through details – struggling to get contractors in to do the work.

COSHH – an issue due to mix of paint / solvents maybe green group?

Action

- Work with Caretaker and Cllr Alesi to clarify what the Council needs and COSHH plus storage.
- Double check with Greener Group.
- SCCT clarify if they need anything?
- Throw out the remaining

12)Next Meeting 18th June 2026