

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday, 28th September 2016 commencing at 7.45pm.

Present

Chairman – Councillor B Wedge (Vice Chairman in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J Clark, Mrs P Dunn, M Firmager, T Holton, R A Houlbrooke, Mrs P Jorgensen, Ms J Rance JP, Mrs A Swaddle and B Wedge.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Jorgensen (Borough Meeting)

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 13th July 2016 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

22. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2015/16

Members were requested to note that the external audit for 2015/16 has been completed. There were no matters which caused concern and the Auditor's opinion was that relevant legislation and regulation requirements had been met.

23. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

23.1 Tender Limit

The Town Clerk advised that, at Minute 22.1 of the Meeting of this Committee held on 1st October 2014, it was recommended that the tender limit for 2014/15 be set at £40,000. This was in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1(e) which provided that, where it was intended to enter into a contract for the supply of goods or materials or for execution of works for an amount exceeding that fixed by the Council, a defined tender procedure should be followed. The limit of £40,000 was confirmed at Minute 47.3 of the Council Meeting on 15th October 2014 and reconfirmed at Minute 27.1 of the Policy & Resources Committee on 30th September 2015.

The Committee was reminded that the Policy & Resources Committee had been requested to review the tender limit annually and to make recommendations for the Annual Meeting of Council. In order that decisions could be made ahead of the budget round, Members were requested to consider their recommendation for the tender limit for 2017/18. The Town Clerk advised that he was happy for the limit to remain unchanged

RESOLVED that the tender limit remain at £40,000.

24. LOCAL AUTHORITIES PROPERTY FUND

Councillors noted that, currently through CCLA, the Council places money in the Public Sector Deposit Fund. Following recent reductions in the Bank of England base rate, the interest rate earned by the fund has also reduced.

The Committee has previously considered the possibility of placing money, through CCLA, in the Local Authorities Property Fund available only to local authority investors but resolved not to proceed. Councillors were asked to reconsider whether the Council invest in the Local Authorities Property Fund through a small investment, in order to monitor how the fund performed. A CCLA information sheet had been previously circulated and the Town Clerk stated that they would be happy to present further information to a forthcoming Council Meeting. It was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk invite CCLA to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee with an open invitation to all Councillors to attend.

25. **NALC/BALC**

The Town Clerk provided a verbal report to Councillors following the meeting held on 6th September between NALC and BALC and Town and Parish Councils in Berkshire. NALC/BALC are interested in encouraging larger Councils to rejoin and have asked that the Council consider rejoining at a reduced membership cost of £742 for the period until the end of the financial year, with the feasibility of future flexibility in annual costs.

The Town Clerk explained that NALC represent the interest of a large number of local councils and Councillors in partnership with county associations such as BALC and they are looking to recruit those large Councils which may face a referendum cap and also to assist those Parish Councils who, in line with the Localism Act, are affected by the current devolution of assets. NALC are working to lobby Central Government ministers and DCLG on these issues. Officers of NALC and BALC had also offered a presentation for Councillors to provide an opportunity for members to ask questions.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED

1. that the Town Clerk write to NALC requesting further information regarding the long term fee structure and the benefits of NALC membership,
2. that NALC & BALC Officers be not invited to make a presentation at this stage.

26. **ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

RESOLVED that the various accounts set out in the list attached to these Minutes (Vouchers 227 - 327), be paid in the sums as stated and details of the Imprest Account (Vouchers 061 – 074 and 075 - 094) be noted.

27. **PUBLICATIONS**

The Committee noted that the following publications had been received in the Council Offices and were available for viewing in the Council Chamber:

Me2 Club:	August 2016 Newsletter
Berkshire Youth:	News: July/August 2016

28. PRESS RELEASES

Consideration was given as to whether any of the foregoing items should be the subject of a special press release. It was

RESOLVED that the item relating to the successful external audit should receive special attention.

29. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.32 pm.