

## **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017 commencing at 7.45pm.

### **Present**

Chairman – Councillor N Jorgensen

Councillors Mrs J Clark, M Firmager, T Holton, Mrs P Jorgensen, Mrs J Rance JP and Mrs A Swaddle.

Also in attendance Councillor Mrs L Chambers and G Grandison

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A Houlbrooke and B Wedge

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### **42. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **43. ESTIMATES OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

#### **43.1 Draft Estimates of Income & Expenditure**

Consideration was given to the Draft Estimates of Income & Expenditure for this Committee noted and approved details of the financial transactions for the period ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 included within the report.

Members further noted and examined the Estimates of Income & Expenditure for 2017/18 and the Revised Estimates for 2016/17 compiled by the Standing Committees, together with the approved Estimates of this Committee and the recommendations received from the Budget Working Party, a copy of which was circulated to Members under separate cover, in order to make recommendations to the Council accordingly.

The Town Clerk advised that Members had received the latest revised Estimates of Income & Expenditure together with the Notes from the Budget Working Party Meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 under separate cover prior to the meeting. Councillors noted an error on the Notes from the Budget Working Party Meeting where apologies from Councillor Mrs P Jorgensen had not been recorded.

Following discussions it was

### **RESOLVED that**

1. the notes of the Budget Working Party, as amended, attached herewith, be approved
2. Recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 be approved subject to the following amendments:

Reduce Sol Joel Park Supplies by £200

Reduce Street Light Capital spend by £400

#### 43.2 Precept Working Papers

Consideration was given to the Town Clerk's Precept Working Papers, copies of which had been circulated with the notes from the Budget Working Party prior to the meeting. Arising therefrom, the Committee was requested to assess the amount required as the Town Precept for 2017/18 and to recommend to the Town Council accordingly.

The level of Precept given within the Town Clerk's Working Paper as amended at minute 43.1 would represent an increase in the Town Council's 'share' of the Council Tax from £66.54 to £69.14 for the year on a Band D property, assuming the confirmation of the revised provisional tax base of 11,755.90 by Wokingham Borough Council.

#### **RECOMMENDED** that

the Town Council Precept for 2017/18 be set at £812,780.00, as per the attached Precept Working Paper.

#### 43.3 Loans & Investments

The Committee noted a report on current loans and investments, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes.

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the amount of capital sum which had been repaid during the year on the GBS Public Works Loan Board loan taken out for Sol Joel Pavilion.

#### 44. **HELP SHOP REPORT**

Following a request, detailed at Minute 31, for information on current trends in the Help Shop, Councillors noted that between 1,000 and 1,400 enquiries were received per month, with approximately one third on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council.

Whilst figures remain constant, trends vary from month to month particularly with sales and enquiries for blue rubbish bags and garden bags experiencing peaks and troughs. These trends are reflected in the amount of money processed and sent to Wokingham Borough. April is the highest recorded month for Council Tax Payments especially as some residents pay the year in advance.

It was noted that the number of people visiting to view planning applications has dropped following the Borough's decision to restrict the issue of paper plans. However it is publicised that plans can be viewed online at the Council offices.

Currently the Help Shop received a large volume of street light enquiries and fault reporting owing to the replacement of street lights in the area.

Customers hail from across the District and not just Earley and include visitors from Woodley Shinfield, Spencers Wood, Winnersh, Finchampstead, Sonning and surprisingly, Wokingham.

The range of services offered by the Help Shop has recently expanded with the facility to process SHINE applications on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council. It was

#### **RESOLVED** that

1. The Town Clerk circulate a spreadsheet highlighting summary information to all Councillors
2. Help Shop be added to the next Policy & Resources Agenda for further discussion

#### **45. SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES**

##### **45.1 Community & Youth Sub-Committee**

##### **45.1.1 Minutes of Meeting**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Community Youth & Sub-Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes.

With regard to the Minute 2.2.3, Thames Valley Police, Inspector Alastair Lloyd requested the Town Council consider supporting the establishment of Cold Calling Zones.

With regard to Minute 3.2, Role of NAG, Councillors noted that the Chairman of NAG had agreed to reconsider the Terms of Reference at the Annual General Meeting to be held in May and it was the view of the police that prior to their approval, these should be the subject of public discussion.

Councillors attention was drawn to the omission from the Apologies list of Councillor M Firmager.

It was

**RESOLVED** that

1. the Minutes as amended be received and approved.
2. the Town Clerk would obtain further information with regard to the Town Council's involvement in the Cold Calling Zones scheme, which was supported in principle.

#### **46. LOCAL AUTHORITIES PROPERTY FUND**

Further to Minute 24 the Chairman welcomed Mark Davies, CCLA and asked him to provide a presentation with reference to the Local Authorities Property Fund. Mr Davies outlined the remit, objectives and benefits of the Fund and circulated an information sheet which included the key facts for Members to look at. It was noted that the minimum deposit entry level is £25,000 with further investment in units of £10,000.

Members asked a number of questions seeking specific information but on weighing up the proposal, were not convinced of the benefits and suggested that further advice be sought from an independent financial advisor and, accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED** that

1. the Town Clerk make enquiries to ascertain the costs of engaging an Independent Financial Advisor to report on the CCLA Property Fund and advise on alternative deposit institutions for the Council to invest in.
2. the Town Clerk provide further information on the cash balances and reserves available which could be invested in the scheme

**47. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

The Committee noted details of Orders for Payment paid since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 493 - 578) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 129 – 152 and 153 - 179), a copy of which, is attached to these Minutes.

**48. PUBLICATIONS**

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

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association: | Minutes of the Executive Committee held 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2016 and amendment email correcting next meeting date. |
| North Earley Multi Agency Group:      | Minutes of Initial Meeting held October 2016.   |
| Me2 Club:                             | December Newsletter   |

**49. PRESS RELEASES**

No press releases were requested.

**50. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.50 pm.