



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, 29th January 2020 commencing at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor C Jones.

Councillors A Bassett, D Chopping, J Clark, J Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, S Matthews, and A Mickleburgh.

In attendance Jo Friend (Town Clerk), Emma Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk) and Richard Fryer (Democratic Services Officer).

The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council. There were no members of the public present.

Councillor Jones welcomed Richard Fryer, the new Democratic Services Officer to the meeting.

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P Stothart.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor J Clark in relation to item 5.1; Councillor D Chopping in relation to item 6; and Councillor A Bassett in relation to item 6.

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 20th November 2019 were confirmed a true record and signed by the Chairman.

66. DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT

66.1 Cemetery Charges

Members considered the Amenities and Leisure Committee's proposal. It was

RESOLVED that an increase of 10% to cemetery charges in 2020/21 would be recommended to Council for approval at its meeting of 19th February 2020.

Councillor Mickleburgh entered the meeting

66.2 Budget Working Party Recommendations

Members considered the report arising from the last Budget Working Party meeting which had been held on 24th January 2020. Following discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Budget Working Party be put to Council for approval at its meeting on 19th February 2020.



The Committee thanked the Town Clerk and her fellow Officers for their hard work on this matter, and for producing a very clear, thorough budget document. They expressed disappointment at the lack of support the Town Clerk had received prior to the recent changes to the finance department and noted that the Town Clerk had coped well in difficult circumstances.

Councillors were pleased to note that extra resources were being invested into environment issues, Town Council youth services, improved financial systems as well as investment being made in Council staff.

66.3 Town Council Precept 2020/21

The Precept proposals were presented to the Committee, along with the Budget Working Party's recommendation. In previous years, the Town Council has maintained the lowest rate of increase possible for Earley residents, however, when deciding this year's precept Councillors needed to take into account the extension of Mays Lane Cemetery. The extension project is required urgently if the Town Council is going to be able to continue providing a cemetery service for residents. Councillors noted that this would be a unique project, the extension will use all the available extra land, once completed there will be no further room to expand. After much discussion, the following was unanimously

RESOLVED that the 2019/20 precept be increased by 3% for 2020/21 to £908,271.00, this equates to an increase of 3.5p per week, for a Band D household. In addition, the precept to be increased by a figure of £70,000, funds which will be ring-fenced for the cemetery expansion project. This additional sum equates to a £2 per resident charge for the year. A total precept for 2020/21 of £978,271 be recommended to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 19th February 2020.

Wokingham Borough Council will be advised of the provisional precept figure prior to the Full Council Meeting.

67. FINANCE

67.1 Debtors

Members considered the confidential report, produced by the Town Clerk following a review of debtors prior to migration to new finance software, and it was

RESOLVED that the debts, as per the report and totalling £222.16, be written off.

67.2 Accruals

The Committee noted that the Town Clerk had removed an historic accrual figure relating to the Silverdale Centre from the accounts.

67.3 Bank Reconciliations

The Committee noted that the November 2019 and December 2019 Bank Reconciliations had been provided to the Chair of Policy & Resources for information.



68. GRANTS

Councillor J Eastwell exited the meeting

The Committee thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for the information produced detailing all grant application requests, which had been sent to Councillors under separate cover.

Councillor J Eastwell returned to the meeting

Consideration was given to the schedule of grant applications. After much discussion it was

RESOLVED that, subject to budget approval, awards for financial year 2020/21 be made to the listed applicants and this be recommended to Full Council on 19th February 2020:

	£
ACE (Activity Centre Earley)	100.00
ARC	1,500.00
Berkshire MS Therapy Centre	500.00
Berkshire Vision	500.00
Citizens Advice Bureau (Reading)	800.00
Citizens Advice Bureau (Wokingham)	1,200.00
Cruse Bereavement Care	200.00
Earleybus	725.00
Earley Day Centre	300.00
Earley Volunteer Driver Bureau	250.00
EASI	100.00
Home Start Wokingham District	500.00
Me2 Club	300.00
Readibus	1,500.00
The Link Visiting Scheme	500.00
The Wokingham Volunteer Centre	100.00
Trinity Concert Band	100.00
Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association	100.00
WJSC - Wokingham Job Support Centre	300.00
TOTAL	9,575.00

It was **RESOLVED** that no award be made in respect of the following applications:

1. Keep Mobile – need to become more established as a charitable organisation.
2. Liz Kerry - support in kind would be of more value.
3. Relate Berkshire - no information provided with regards to the number of Earley residents benefitting from their work
4. Sue Ryder (Duchess of Kent) - no information provided with regards to the number of Earley residents benefitting from their work.
5. Thames Valley Air Ambulance - no information provided with regards to the number of Earley residents benefitting from their work.



69. TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Members considered the Tree Management Policy as recommended by the Amenities and Leisure Committee, at their meeting held on 15th January. It was

RESOLVED that the policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption on 19th February 2020.

Councillors suggested that when site specific policies are created, consideration be given to adding the wording “with special emphasis on native species where practicable.”

Councillor Mickleburgh requested that review dates be added to policies once adopted, and the Town Clerk confirmed that this was the Council’s usual practice.

70. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

The Committee noted details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 2689 – 2721, 2722 – 2774, 2775 – 2807, 2808 – 2810, 2811 – 2844, 2845 – 2847, 2848 – 2881), Imprest Account (Vouchers 396-420) and Current Account (Vouchers 18-30).

Councillor Clark requested clarification on item 420 from the Imprest Account, and the Town Clerk confirmed that this was payment of training and accommodation costs for a Town Council youth worker to become a qualified bike technician. This will enable the Bike Workshop to extend its opening hours by 2 hours per week, and for holiday cover to be provided.

71. PUBLICATIONS

Members noted the following items, received and available for viewing in the Council Chamber:

Maiden Erlegh Residents Association	Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 th January 2020
Connecting Communities in Berkshire	Action for All E-Bulletin

72. PRESS RELEASES

The Committee requested a press release regarding the new extended hours for the Bike Workshop.

73. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no members of the public or press present. It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.



PART II

74. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

75. COMMUNITY CENTRE LEASEHOLDER

76. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.07 pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee