



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held remotely on Wednesday 17th March 2021 commencing at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor C Jones

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

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), and R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer).

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

98. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

99. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 27th January 2021 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair (Minutes 77 – 95).

100. COVID-19 - UPDATE

100.1 Laurel Park

Members noted that an agreement had been reached with Wokingham Borough Council for adult and junior football to resume at Laurel Park in April and continue until the end of May. This decision would be reviewed should government guidance change.

100.2 Sol Joel Park

Councillors noted that cricket would resume at Sol Joel Park on 1st May, government guidance permitting, but that football would not resume before next season due to the extensive grounds maintenance works taking place this month and the start of the cricket season.

100.3 Community Centres

The Committee were pleased to note that the Town Clerk had been successful in obtaining National Lockdown Grants for the two eligible Town Council community centres. Radstock Community Centre and Maiden Place Community Centre had each received £6,810 in grants



due to the fact that they had been unable to operate as usual during the most recent lockdown and the financial impact this had had on income from hall hire. The Town Clerk reported that a further grant of £2,096 for both community centres was scheduled to be paid.

It was noted that officers were preparing for the reopening of the Town Council's community centres to hirers. Available guidance is being followed and it was noted that dates for further relaxation of restrictions remained provisional.

101. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members discussed the financial update as at 28th February 2021. It was noted that the impact on hall hire income as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions remained significant.

102. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for December 2020 and January 2021 had been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information.

103. IT UPGRADE

The Committee noted the Senior Operations Support Officer's report on the predicted costs of the IT Upgrade project. Councillors discussed the options under consideration and noted that officers would be having further discussions with MFG before the final decisions would be made. Members agreed that it was important to make sure the upgrade delivered what the Council needed in terms of hardware and software. It was noted that current delays were being caused by the broadband provider, once this has been resolved the wider upgrade could commence.

104. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Members considered the Earley Town Council grant applications that had been received, noting that grant payments are scheduled to be made in May 2021. The schedule of applications, as provided by the Deputy Town Clerk, was discussed with Councillors being mindful of the distinction between qualitative and quantitative impact. The Committee agreed that the past twelve months had been unprecedented and that there would probably be further fallout from the pandemic resulting in increased demands on some VCS groups. For this reason, and to enable the Town Council to continue supporting sports sponsorship if required, Members agreed that some of the grant budget would be retained for use later in the year. It was

RESOLVED that the following grant awards 2021/22 would be recommended to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 31st March 2021:

	£
ARC	1,500.00
Citizens Advice Bureau (Reading)	1,000.00
Citizens Advice Bureau (Wokingham)	2,000.00
Cruse Bereavement Care	500.00
Earleybus	725.00
Earley Day Centre	200.00
Earley Volunteer Driver Bureau	250.00
EASI	150.00



Home Start Wokingham District	600.00
The Link Visiting Scheme	800.00
Me2 Club	500.00
Queen Victoria Institute (QVI Foot Care)	919.00
Readibus	1,500.00
Relate Berkshire	500.00
South Central Ambulance Charity (Earley & Lower Earley Scheme)	250.00
The Wokingham Volunteer Centre	250.00
WJSC - Wokingham Job Support Centre	300.00
TOTAL	11,944.00

105. TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES

Councillors noted that officers were in the process of reviewing the Council’s policies to ensure that relevant policies were in place and existing policies were up to date.

105.1 Members considered the following policies for recommendation to Full Council for adoption:

105.1.1 Annual Leave Policy

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Leave Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

105.1.2 Sickness Absence Policy (updated)

It was **RESOLVED** that the Sickness Absence Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

105.2 Policy Review

Councillors reviewed the Service to Earley Awards Policy and considered recommendations for amendment. It was

RESOLVED that the following amendment be recommended to Full Council for adoption:

‘That the nomination period for the Service to Earley Awards Policy be amended to open on 1st May 2021 and remain open for 6 weeks. This amendment to remain in place for one year only.’

106. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment made since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 3706 – 3738, 3739 – 3761, 3762 – 3766, 3767 – 3802) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 556 – 559).

107. PUBLICATIONS

It was noted that the following communications had been received and were available for perusal from the Council Offices:



Involve Community Services	Electronic newsletter – 5 th March 2021
Me2 Club	Electronic newsletter – 8 th March 2021

108. PRESS RELEASES

No press releases were requested.

109. 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

110. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

111. OPERATION BRIDGE

112. PREMISES

113. STAFFING MATTERS

114. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.02 pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee