



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee, held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Reading, on Wednesday 16th March 2022 which commenced at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor D Hare

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

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), M Brown (Operations Manager), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), Councillors G Littler, C Smith, and M Smith.

The meeting opened with a minute's silence to remember all those impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Councillor D Chopping entered the meeting

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C Jones, T Maher, and A Mickleburgh.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Hare declared an interest with regard to Agenda Item 8 – Town Council Grants, as he has been involved with the Earley Help Hub.

100. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

101. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 26th January 2022 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair (Minutes 76-97).

102. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members received the detailed income and expenditure report as of 28th February 2022. It was noted that the council had faced increased energy costs as a result of its gas supplier going into administration, and that these were likely to increase further. Whilst they were pleased to note that hall hire income was more than budgeted for, this income was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. Specialist vehicle costs had been high due to necessary servicing and the resulting repairs but, it was hoped, these costs should reduce in future years. It was also noted that essential repairs at Sol Joel Park and the pavilion had resulted in higher costs this year. Councillors were pleased to note the healthy state of the accounts overall.



103. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received the interim internal audit report. Members were pleased to note that the accounts continued to be well maintained and that controls were operating well. The Chair thanked all the officers involved for their efforts which had produced such a positive report.

104. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for December 2021 and January 2022 had been made available to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for information.

Cllr G Littler entered the meeting

105. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

105.1 The Committee considered the grant applications received. The schedule of applications was considered. It was

RESOLVED that the following grant awards 2022/23 would be recommended to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 30th March 2022:

Name	Amount
ARC	1,500.00
Berkshire MS Therapy Centre	750.00
Citizens Advice (Reading)	750.00
Citizens Advice (Wokingham)	2,000.00
EarleyBus	725.00
Earley Day Centre	500.00
Earley Help Hub	600.00
Earley-Adopt-a-Street-Initiative (EASI)	300.00
Home-Start Wokingham	600.00
Keep Mobile	600.00
Link Visiting Scheme	500.00
Me2 Club	500.00
Queen Victoria Institute (QVI Foot Care)	916.00
Reading Male Voice Choir	200.00
Sue Ryder – Duchess of Kent Hospice	300.00
Trinity Concert Band	300.00
Wokingham Waterside Centre	2,000.00
TOTAL	13,041.00

Members requested that further information be sought regarding three other applications.

105.2 Councillors considered the grant application submitted by Loddon Primary School PTA. The request was for a substantial sum of money and, after discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendation to Full Council would be for refusal.

106. CLIMATE EMERGENCY



106.1 Minutes

Members received the Minutes from the Climate Emergency working group meetings of 22nd February and 1st March 2022. Councillors noted, in the March 2022 Minutes, the intention to invite Cllr A Neal to join the working group, that such a decision must be made by the Policy and Resources Committee, and that this would therefore be regarded as a recommendation. It was

RESOLVED that Cllr A Neal be invited to join the Climate Emergency working group.

106.2 Green Infrastructure Policy

The draft Green Infrastructure Policy was considered and it was

RESOLVED that the draft Green Infrastructure Policy be recommended for adoption by Full Council at its meeting on 30th March 2022.

Cllr C Smith provided a verbal report on the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Members noted that a written report would be submitted to Full Council at its meeting of 30th March 2022.

107. PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

It was noted that the drafting of the Social Media Policy had not been completed, and that, with the agreement of the Chair, the matter would be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

108. EARLEY STATION FOOTBRIDGE

Councillors received a verbal update following the meeting held on 7th March 2022 and attended by Wokingham Borough Council, Earley Town Council and Woodley Town Council. The Town Clerk reported that WBC had now provided ETC with a Buildability Report (dated July 2021) and that whilst some of ETC's queries had been answered at the meeting, substantial questions remained unanswered, and several problems still required solutions. Those present at the meeting were left with the impression that WBC had yet to commit to a path forward.

Councillors G Littler, C Smith and M Smith left the meeting

109. WBC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members discussed issues that the Town Council wished to be considered by Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Topics to be submitted included: The continuing problems with partnership working, primarily the failure of WBC to properly consult and co-operate with town councils on matters relevant to them; and the process used to set climate emergency targets as it appeared that targets had been set and then baselines determined which raises questions over the viability of policies derived in this manner.

110. COVID RECOGNITION PLAQUE

It was noted that the plaque had been received and Members were keen to make arrangements for its installation. Councillors agreed that Cllr N Brock be invited to unveil the plaque, in her capacity as a local GP and in recognition of her work throughout the pandemic. Friday 18th March 2022 was suggested as a potential date for unveiling, with Wednesday 23rd and Friday 25th March 2022 as alternatives.



111. LODDON BRIDGE VIADUCT

The Committee noted that Cllr A Neal and the Town Clerk had met with representatives from Winnersh Parish Council on 21st February 2022 to discuss suggestions of how the 50th anniversary of the Loddon Bridge Viaduct disaster could be commemorated. Councillors were pleased to note that progress had been made, and that a further meeting, to include Woodley Town Council, was planned.

112. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment made since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 4645 – 4676, 4677 – 4705, 4706 – 4707) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 46 – 48, and 640 – 646).

113. PUBLICATIONS

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

Berkshire Youth	Newsletter February 2022
Me2 Club	Newsletter February 2022

114. PRESS RELEASES

A press release was requested for the Covid recognition plaque.

115. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

PART II

116. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

117. OUTSTANDING BALANCES

118. LEASES

119. STAFFING MATTERS

120. ADVISOR TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

121. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.33pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee