**Earley Town Council**

Annual Meeting - 17th May 2023

**Agenda Item 10**

**General Power of Competence (England)**

This report contains a recommendation that Earley Town Council adopts the General Power of Competence (GPC (England)).

The Government introduced GPC (England) to assist parish and town councils to become more innovative, cost-effective and efficient (Localism Act 2011, s. 1-8).

**Under the General Power of Competence *“a local authority has the power to do anything that individuals may generally do”.***

Parish and town councils may act only if they have the power to do so, there exists a multitude of legislation detailing the specific powers a council has, for example ‘the power to spend on crime prevention measures’ – Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.31.

A benefit of adopting General Power of Competence is that the council can use GPC as a power of first resort, it need not look for a specific power under which to act. GPC extends the range of things that parish and town councils can choose to do, for example, it enables a council to act anywhere, ie outside its area; to assist an individual; and, provides for actions without the requirement to prove the benefit to the area within its parish boundary – all factors which are not covered by other local government legislation.

Only eligible councils may adopt the General Power of Competence, eligibility criteria being that at least two thirds of its total seats be held by elected councilors and that it has a qualified Clerk. Earley Town Council adopted the power following the last elections in 2019 and it continues to meet the eligibility criteria. Once adopted, GPC remains in place until eligibility is reassessed at the Annual Meeting following the next ordinary elections (2023).

I am therefore recommending that Earley Town Council re-adopts the General Power of Competence as it will provide the council with a wider range of powers under which to act and could be of assistance when delivering the Council’s aims as Members see fit.

Jo Friend

Town Clerk

May 2023