



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee, held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Wednesday 10th July 2024 which commenced at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor D Hare

Councillors: A Bassett, N Brock, J Eastwell, T Holton, N Jorgensen, G Littler, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, S Newton and M Smith.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk)

1. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

1.1 Councillor D Hare, current Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee, called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for the 2024/2025 municipal year. A nomination for Councillor D Hare was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. It was:

RESOLVED that Councillor D Hare be appointed as Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee.

1.2 Councillor D Hare called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for the 2024/2025 municipal year. A nomination for Councillor T Maher was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. It was:

RESOLVED that Councillor T Maher be appointed as Vice Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Hare and Councillor N Brock declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.2 – Grants 2024/25, in relation to an application from Love Thursdays Youth Club as they have connections to the church mentioned in the application. Councillor S Newton declared an interest in the same item as he knows the applicant.

Councillor T Maher declared an interested in Agenda Item 9.2 – Grants 2024/25, in relation to Link Visiting Scheme on the grounds that he is a volunteer for the organisation. Councillor M Smith declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.2 – Grants 2024/25, in relation to Daisy’s Dream, as this is his chosen charity as Town Mayor.

All Councillors who declared an interest would refrain from taking part in any discussion during the agenda item.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 13th March 2024 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair. (Minutes 95 - 111).

6. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for February, March, April and May 2024 had been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information. A request was made for current bank balances to be included on future bank reconciliation reports.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Finance Update

Members thanked the Town Clerk for her Finance Update report and the accompanying income & expenditure report. Councillor S Newton requested that an estimate be provided on the benefits of the recently installed solar panels at Radstock House and was advised that the Operations Manager is currently working on just such a report.

7.1.1 Budget – Specialist Vehicles

Councillors noted that the 2024/25 budget for Specialist Vehicle Costs, which covers the servicing and repairs of vehicles such as tractors, ride on mowers etc, has exceeded expectations, with further work yet to be completed. It was: -

RESOLVED that the Specialist Vehicle Costs budget be increased to £6,000, funds to be taken from general reserves.

7.2 Internal Auditor

Members considered the Town Clerk's recommendation that Claire Connell be reappointed as the Town Council's Internal Auditor. It was noted that she is a qualified accountant who provides a comprehensive service and is experienced in Town/Parish Council finance and systems. It was confirmed that there would no increase in fees for 2024/25.

It was **RESOLVED** that Claire Connell be reappointed as Internal Auditor for 2024/25.

Councillors requested that the Town Clerk investigate local practice and availability of Internal Auditors and provide a report in 6 months' time to the Policy and Resources Committee, to include a recommendation for ETC's provision in 2025/26.

8. EAR MARKED RESERVES – BUS SHELTERS

Members considered a recommendation from the Amenities and Leisure Committee that £4,000 be transferred from the Bus Shelters Ear Marked Reserve into the Bus Shelters General Maintenance budget for the cleaning of further bus shelters. It was: -

RESOLVED that £4,000 be transferred from the Bus Shelters Ear Marked Reserve into the Bus Shelters General Maintenance budget and the funds be used to complete the professional cleaning of all ETC's bus shelters.

9. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

9.1 Grants 2023/24

9.1.2 Grants Awarded

Councillors noted that thanks had been received from Loddon Valley Ramblers, Reading Male Voice Choir, Together - One Step at a Time and ACER/FoBoS, thanking Earley Town Council for the grants awarded in the 2023/24 financial year.

9.1.3 Updates from 2023/24 Recipients

Councillors noted that updates had been received on the expenditure of ETC grant monies awarded in 2023/24 from:

- Berkshire Vision – social activities for members, access to low-cost minibus, telephone befriending service.
- Loddon Valley Ramblers – installation of two public footpath signs at Earley Gate and Elm Road.
- ACER/FoBoS – installation of replacement permitted footpath sign in Church Road.
- ACER/FoBoS – path to rear of Earley Home Guard Club resurfaced with road shavings.
- Together – One Step at a Time – photographs of equipment purchased provided.

9.2 GRANTS 2024/25

9.2.1 New Applications

Councillors considered the nine grant applications received in the first 2024/25 grant application period, Tranche 1 – May 2024. It was:

- 9.2.2 **RESOLVED** that ARC be awarded £2,000 to contribute towards the costs of providing 80 counselling sessions.
- 9.2.3 **RESOLVED** that Citizens Advice -Wokingham be awarded £3,000 to contribute to ongoing provision of service. The decision to not award the full request was made because of the level of reserves held by the organisation.
- 9.2.4 **RESOLVED** that Daisy’s Dream be awarded £500 to contribute towards the delivery of 12 face to face and 1:1 therapeutic sessions.
- 9.2.5 **RESOLVED** that Home-Start Wokingham be awarded £1,000 to contribute towards the continued provision of support to families.
- 9.2.6 **RESOLVED** that Keep Mobile be awarded £1,000 to contribute towards the costs of providing community transport for people with disabilities and those over 70 years old.
- 9.2.7 **RESOLVED** that the request from Love Thursday Youth Club would be declined as the application had not been specific about actual ‘need’. Councillors were aware that more than one organisation was involved in this project but the application lacked clarity on who exactly was asking for the funds and who would be spending them.
- 9.2.8 **RESOLVED** that Together – One Step at a Time be awarded £386.30 to contribute towards the costs of purchasing sensory equipment for SEN children.
- 9.2.9 **RESOLVED** that The Link Visiting Scheme be awarded £1,500 to contribute towards the costs of monitoring and managing volunteers so that services to reduce loneliness and isolation can continue.
- 9.2.10 **RESOLVED** that Wokingham Job Support Centre be awarded £500 to contribute towards service running costs.

10. YOUTH SERVICES

10.1 Update

Councillors received written and verbal updates from the Town Clerk on work to resume the provision of youth services for young people in Earley. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk have had several meetings with Gareth Mephram from Berkshire Youth to discuss options on how ETC can work with Berkshire Youth to provide youth services in Earley.

Berkshire Youth are currently undertaking a survey at Maiden Erlegh Secondary School and have tried to do the same across primary schools in Earley, on behalf of ETC, to gather information on what types of youth provision young people would like to access. Berkshire Youth will collate the findings and provide a summary to ETC. The Town Clerk shared information with Members on the contents of the survey and all agreed that it was more suited to an older cohort rather than primary school children. The Town Clerk will discuss this concern with Berkshire Youth.

Berkshire Youth will also be delivering detached youth sessions at Sol Joel Park, Paddick Drive, the Events Field and Chalfont Park in July and August, along with other activities which they aim to hold in the summer holidays.

10.2 Youth Services Working Group

The Town Clerk recommended that a Youth Services Working Group be established to progress ETC's work on youth services in Earley, to meet and discuss options with Berkshire Youth and to report back to Policy & Resources Committee on a regular basis.

Councillor S Newton expressed an interest in being a member of the working group and Councillor S Matthews submitted a request from Councillor H Sarasan to be involved in the work.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Youth Services working group, comprising of 5/6 members plus the Town Clerk, would be established, to study the information produced by the work referenced in Appendix D; make recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee on the nature of youth services to be delivered and costs involved; and to work alongside the third party to ensure delivery of the service. It was agreed that Councillor S Newton and Councillor H Sarasan would be members of the working group and that the Town Clerk would extend the invitation of membership to all town councillors.

11. RADSTOCK HOUSE

Members noted that work to replace all guttering and renovate the soffits and fascias at Radstock House has been completed. The Town Clerk reported that officers were pleased with the high standard of the work and the professional manner of the contractor.

12. POLICIES

Members considered the CCTV Policy which had been updated following the upgrade of the CCTV system at Sol Joel Park. It was: -

RESOLVED that the CCTV Policy be adopted.

13. GREEN FAIR

Councillors were pleased to hear that plans for the Green Fair being held on 3rd August 2024 are progressing well and that only 3 pitches remain available. Councillor M Smith reminded Members that volunteers for the Councillor's stall were still needed.

14. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 6774 - 6800, 6801 – 6806, 6807 – 6845, 6846 – 6864, 6865 – 6885, 6886 – 6898, 6899 – 6906, 6907 – 6920) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 958 – 969).

15. PUBLICATIONS

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

CCB (Connecting Communities in Berkshire)	E-newsletter June 2024
TVP	Wokingham North update 6 th , 11 th and 24 th June 2024
MERA	Minutes - 13 th June 2024
Me2 Club	E-newsletter June 2024

16. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Councillors requested a press release in relation the ETC’s Grants – Tranche 2, October 2024 intake, to be made nearer the time.

17. 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

18. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

19. LEASES – PADDICK DRIVE

20. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.41pm.