



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 13th November 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 and M Smith.

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

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Newton.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

43. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

44. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 11th September 2024 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair. (Minutes 21 - 40).

45. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for August and September 2024 had been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information.

46. FINANCE

46.1 Finance Update

Members received a written update from the Town Clerk and noted that the 2024/25 finances were on track. Members also received a copy of the income/expenditure report dated 1st November 2024.

46.2 Unpaid Invoices Update

Members were pleased to note that there were no matters of concern in relation to unpaid invoices.

47. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Councillors considered a CIL co-funding request from Wokingham Borough Council in relation to the installation of a new accessible bridge over the River Loddon adjacent to Showcase Cinema.

Whilst Councillors agreed the project was, in principle, a positive one, they were concerned that there would be only a small benefit to Earley residents and that it would use a disproportionate amount of ETC's limited CIL funds. It was: -

RESOLVED that a recommendation be made to Full Council on 27th November 2024 that funding is not awarded towards the project on the basis that Earley Town Council has a limited amount of CIL available and that the project is unlikely to be of significant benefit to Earley residents. A vote was held: nine in favour, two against.

Councillors suggested that the original WBC plan was to install ramps to the existing footbridge which would have been less expensive than building a new, DDA compliant footbridge. They requested that the borough be asked what had happened to the original plan.

48 TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS 2024/25

48.1 New Applications

Councillors considered the seven grant applications received in the second 2024/25 grant application period, Tranche 2 – October 2024. It was:

48.1.1 **RESOLVED** that Berkshire Vision will not be awarded a grant on this occasion due to the high level of their reserves.

48.1.2 **RESOLVED** that Earley Community Minibus be awarded £750 to contribute towards running costs of the service.

48.1.3 **RESOLVED** that EASI be awarded £378 to contribute towards the cost of purchasing 35 litter picking rings.

48.1.4 **RESOLVED** that Me2Club be awarded £500 to contribute towards the continued provision of support to young people with additional needs and disabilities.

48.1.5 **RESOLVED** that Readibus be awarded £2,500 to contribute towards the cost of providing transport for elderly and disabled people. Councillors asked that officers request clarification from Readibus on the situation regarding their capital reserves.

48.1.6 **RESOLVED** that The Salvation Army – Lower Earley will not be awarded a grant on this occasion due to the lack of detail in relation to the purpose of the grant requested. Further information had been sought by officers but had not been received, should this be provided at a later date, the applicant is welcome to submit an application at that time.

48.1.7 **RESOLVED** that Wokingham Volunteer Centre be awarded £1,000 to support the continuation of services aimed at the elderly and vulnerable adults.

49. HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT

Councillors were pleased to note that an external Health and Safety Audit will be carried out in late November 2024 by James Hallam Risk Management and that the preparation work for this is underway.

50. YOUTH SERVICES - UPDATE

Councillors received a written report on Youth Services and noted that since the report was published, the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had met with Berkshire Youth to discuss various concerns. The outcome of the meeting was positive and further progress had been made. A revised youth survey will be going out to all Earley primary schools in the coming weeks and a weekly, term time youth club will be launched on Thursday 23rd January 2025 at Centrepont Community Centre. This will cater for children aged 9 – 11yrs and a variety of activities will be on

offer. Parents/guardians and teachers are welcome to come along to this first session to see what's on offer and to meet the youth workers.

51. CLIMATE EMERGENCY - UPDATE

Councillors received an update on recent actions taken by officers in support of ETC's Climate Emergency Action Plan and Green Infrastructure plan. These included the installation of LED lights; recycling of tech equipment and cabling; rehomeing of some office furniture; willow weaving at MENR and the installation of two hibernacula (underground chambers for amphibians and reptiles).

The Town Clerk also reported that the first two sessions of the Earley Repair Café held at Centrepont on 13th October 2024 and 10th November 2024 were well attended and had been a great success.

52. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Members noted the charitable activities being supported at the Town Council offices.

52.1 Macmillan Coffee Morning

The Macmillan Coffee Morning held in the Council Chamber on 28th October 2024 raised £158 for charity.

52.2 Kindness Tree

The Town Council Helpshop will be hosting a Kindness Tree on behalf of Link Visiting Scheme, from week commencing 18th November 2024. People will be able to select a tag from the tree, detailing a gift or donation, then bring the unwrapped gift to the offices where we will forward it to Link Visiting Scheme.

52.3 Reverse Advent Calendar

The Town Council Helpshop will be acting as a food collection point for donations in support of Wokingham Foodbank's Reverse Advent Calendar campaign. Council staff have already started donating towards an additional Reverse Advent Calendar box.

53. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 7122 - 7133, 7134 – 7159, 7160 – 7168, 7169 – 7198, 7199 – 7228) and Imprest vouchers 997 – 1003).

54. 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 September & October 2024
TVP	Police & Crime Bulletin – 31 st October 2024 Wokingham North NHPT weekly updates – September & October 2024

MEIRA	Minutes – September & October 2024
ACER	Autumn e-newsletter 19 th September 2024
Me2 Club	E-newsletter September & October 2024

55. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The following press releases were requested: -

- Promotion of the Town Council grant awards
- Launch of Youth Club on 23rd January 2025 at Centrepont Community Centre (to be published in early 2025).

56. 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

57. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

58. ADVISOR TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

59. STAFFING - UPDATE

60. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.08pm.