



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 12th March 2025 which commenced at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor D Hare

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

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

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Jorgensen, T Maher and M Smith.

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Newton declared an interest in agenda item 8.1 Town Council Grants 2024/2025 – New Applications, Wokingham Waterside Centre as, in his capacity as a WBC Councillor, he is listed as a Director of Wokingham Waterside Centre.

79. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

80. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 22nd January 2025 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair. (Minutes 61 - 76).

81. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for December 2024 and January 2025 had been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information.

82. FINANCE UPDATE

Members thanked the Town Clerk for the written report which they found useful and informative. It was noted that the 2024/25 finances were on track, with some items of expenditure yet to appear in the accounts. Members also received a copy of the RBS income/expenditure report dated 4th March 2025.

83. INTERNAL AUDIT

Councillors received the interim report from the Town Council's Internal Auditor and noted that there were no significant matters or concerns. Members were pleased to note that the minor issue concerning petty cash had been rectified.

84. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS 2024/25

84.1 New Applications

Councillors considered the six grant applications received in the third 2024/25 grant application period, Tranche 3 – January 2025 intake. It was: -

84.1.1 **RESOLVED** that Berkshire MS Therapy Centre be awarded £1,000 as requested to support the provision of specialist treatments free of charge for people with MS.

84.1.2 **RESOLVED** that Daisy's Dream will not be awarded a grant on this occasion due to the lack of information on the number of Earley residents benefitting from the service. It was noted that Daisy's Dream had been awarded an ETC grant in Tranche 1 – May intake, and the Town Council was organising a joint charity event with Daisy's Dream in April 2025, as part of the support for the Mayor's chosen charity.

Cllr T Holton declared an interest in the next item due to his personal connection with a member of the charity and did not vote.

84.1.3 **RESOLVED** that Earley Day Centre be awarded £1,400 as requested for the purchasing of new chairs.

84.1.4 **RESOLVED** that East Reading Festival will not be awarded a grant on this occasion. It was noted that, whilst Earley residents may attend, the festival is held in Reading borough. Neither Reading Borough Council or any other possible funders have been approached for a grant.

84.1.5 **RESOLVED** that Together: One Step at a Time will not be awarded a grant on this occasion. The Town Council has previously supported this cause whilst it was being established but councillors were of the view that the organiser should by now be taking steps to professionalise the service, possibly setting up a not for profit entity of some kind, one benefit of which would be to open up avenues to other funding opportunities.

84.1.6 Prior to discussing the next grant application, Cllr Littler informed Members that Earley Town Council was listed as a 'corporate member' of Wokingham Waterside Centre, which is a company limited by guarantee without share capital. Whilst this would not prevent ETC from awarding a grant, it was agreed that this fact would be minuted and councillors would review the application objectively. It was: -

RESOLVED that Wokingham Waterside Centre will not be awarded a grant on this occasion. Members were of the view that there were several issues with their application. WWC do not appear to own either the car park where they are proposing to erect lighting and CCTV nor the area they are proposing to refurbish and erect fencing and lighting. No evidence has been provided to show the applicant has permission from the landowner or landlord to carry out the proposed works. Councillors were also concerned that installing lighting and erecting fencing in such an area could require planning permission and noted that no other bodies had been approached for funding nor had other suitable grant options such as from the Police & Crime Commissioner Fund been explored.

84.2 Review of Application

Councillors reviewed the grant application for Readibus which was submitted as part of the Tranche 2 – October 2024 grant application intake. Councillors considered the additional information provided in relation to the purchase of new buses and the confirmation that this designated expenditure does not form part of their general reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** that no further grant award would be made in addition to the £2,500 which had been awarded in Tranche 2.

84.3 Grant Expenditure Reports

Councillors were pleased to note that expenditure reports had been received from:

- Me2 Club
- Link Visiting
- Daisy's Dream

85. HEALTH & SAFETY REIVEW

Members received a written report from the Operations Manager on the results of the external Health and Safety audit, carried out on 17th January 2025 by James Hallam Risk Assessment. They were pleased to note that overall, the audit had been positive and that only a few areas for improvement had been identified. Members requested that a copy of the Council's Health & Safety Policy be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee at a later date.

86. HELP SHOP – UPDATE

Councillors received a written report on the Help Shop and noted that the SLA with Wokingham Borough Council for providing their services such as food bins, recycling bags, garden waste bags, council tax payments and so on had expired in March 2024.

WBC has paid ETC the annual grant to cover the 2024/2025 year but will be carrying out a review of all the grants it makes to other bodies, before a decision is made on whether the SLA with ETC will be renewed.

87. YOUTH SERVICES - UPDATE

Councillors received a written update from the meeting of the Youth Services Working Group which met on 26th February 2025. They were pleased to note that the Youth Club provision at Centrepoint, every Thursday from 5.00pm – 6.30pm was still being well attended.

The Town Clerk reported that during a Working Group meeting with Gareth Mephram, Berkshire Youth, it was evident that Berkshire Youth have a limited number of youth workers and that this would impact any ETC plans to expand its provision. Berkshire Youth suggested they would be looking to recruit new youth workers, ETC had offered to help to promote this.

The intention is to continue with the Thursday evening Youth Club provision at Centrepoint and work will commence on drawing up an SLA between ETC and Berkshire Youth. A meeting is due to be held with Berkshire Youth to discuss activities for the summer holidays and the associated costs.

88. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 7419 - 7453, 7454 – 7466, 7467 – 7486, 7487 – 7519, 7520 – 7562, 7563 – 7572, 7573 – 7575, 7576 - 7608) and Imprest vouchers 100 – 103 and 1037 - 1048).

89. 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 November 2024 & January 2025
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TVP	Police & Crime Bulletin – January 2025 Wokingham North NHPT weekly updates – January & February 2025
MERA	Minutes – January & February 2025
Me2 Club	E-newsletter February 2025

90. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The following press release was requested: -

- Information on the recent Health and Safety Audit and how it will benefit residents.

91. 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

92. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

93. POLICE MATTERS

94. STAFFING

95. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.42pm.