



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 September 2025 which commenced at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor D Hare

Councillors: N Brock, G Littler, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, A Neal and S Newton.

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

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bassett, M De Jong, J Eastwell, T Holton and B Owen.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 18th June 2025 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair. (Minutes 1 - 19).

24. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for May, June and July 2025 had been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information.

25. AUDIT 2024/2025

Members noted that the audit for year ended 31st March 2025 has been completed. The external auditor has confirmed there are no matters of concern. Councillors thanked officers for all their work.

26. FINANCE UPDATE

Councillors received a written finance update report covering 1st April – 25th August 2025 and an Income & Expenditure report. The Town Clerk explained that utility company finance systems are poor and that ETC's Finance Officer works hard at keeping on top of their erratic invoicing to ensure ETC pays the correct amounts.

Councillor Matthews asked if sports pitch booking income had been affected by the dry weather and was advised that there had been very few cancellations during the summer cricket season, these had been due to heavy rain flooding the dry ground, but that the overall impact on income had been minor.

Councillor Brock asked about the impacts should ETC not receive the Wokingham Borough Council Helpshop grant this year and was advised that the 2025/2026 budget had taken into account non receipt of the grant.

27. EAR MARKED RESERVES

Members received a written report on the Town Council's Ear Marked Reserves (EMR), these are monies set aside for specific work or projects. Councillors agreed that this would be the final review of EMRs until work starts on the 2026/2027 budget.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following recommendations be made to Full Council at its meeting on 24th September 2025:

- *Maiden Place Community Centre – Doors & Windows* EMR (£8,705) be moved to the *Dilapidations & Refurbishment* EMR
- *Radstock Lane Community Centre – Improvements* EMR (£11,095) be moved to the *Dilapidations & Refurbishment* EMR

28. INSURANCE

Members were pleased to note that the Town Clerk had attended a review meeting with the Town Council's insurance broker and noted that cover has been agreed for the next 12 months, there had been a 6% increase to the annual premium. The Town Clerk explained that cover for volunteers had been increased and she confirmed that the insurance covers a variety of areas including council vehicles and public liability.

29. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS 2025/26

29.1 Grant Expenditure Report

Councillors were pleased to note that thank you letters for grants awarded in 2025/2026 had been received from:

- Link Visiting Scheme
- Keep Mobile Community Transport

30. RADSTOCK HOUSE – SOLAR PANELS

Councillors received a written report on the performance of the solar panels installed at Radstock House. The report compared the first seven months of both 2024 and 2025. Councillors were pleased to note that the panels were performing well and there had been a reduction in energy usage at the Council Offices, some of which was as a result of changes in staff behaviours. A further report will be produced at the end of the year to show a full year's worth of data.

31. SERVICE TO EARLEY AWARDS

31.1 Members received a written report from the Service to Earley Awards Working Group's review of the awards. Members discussed the Working Group's recommendations which are aimed at attracting more nominations and from a wider area of the community.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following recommendations be accepted and be put to Full Council at its meeting on 24th September for approval.

- Change the name of the awards to 'Service to Earley Community Awards'
- Introduce a new 'Good Neighbour Award' category

- 31.2 Members received a revised Service to Earley Awards policy which included the Working Group's recommendations. Members requested an amendment in the 'Nominations' section to also require supporting evidence to accompany nominations for the Good Neighbour Award.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised policy with the requested amendment be accepted and be put to Full Council at its meeting on 24th September 2025 for adoption.

32. PROFILE OF EARLEY

Councillor Neal explained that he was suggesting 'Earley' boundary signs be erected in order to enhance Earley's identity and that he was recommending a newsletter be produced to help raise the Town Council's profile with residents. Councillors thanked Councillor Neal for his work and it was: -

RESOLVED that the Policy & Resources Committee supports the idea of boundary signs and suggested costings should be obtained from Wokingham Borough Council. The Committee also supports the idea of a newsletter to raise ETC's profile with residents, but that this should be introduced on an annual basis, an electronic version be produced and hardcopies only distributed to certain locations for collection by residents. Such locations could include doctor surgeries, library, Crescent Centre etc. These recommendations will go to Council for consideration alongside those of the other committees.

Councillor Newton entered the meeting.

33. POLICIES

33.1 IT Policy

Councillors reviewed the IT Policy which had been drafted by ETC officers in preparation of new audit requirements coming into effect in 2025/2026. Most of the content is already covered by existing ETC policies, but this new IT policy puts everything together in one place.

It was **RESOLVED** that the IT policy be adopted.

33.2 Social Media Policy

Councillors reviewed the updated Social Media policy and noted a minor amendment made by ETC officers. Councillors requested that additional wording be added to the last sentence of the document to highlight that a deleted social media post still exists somewhere and can be found.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Social Media policy with the minor amendment and requested additional wording be adopted.

34. CIL CO-FUNDING PROCESS

Members noted that WBC has produced a draft updated Terms of Reference for the CIL co-funding process. Members reviewed the document and agreed that the document was aimed more at Town/Parish Councils with larger CIL funds, so not particularly relevant to ETC.

It was **RESOLVED** that ETC has no comment on the document.

35. YOUTH SERVICES – UPDATE

Councillors noted that the summer activity sessions ETC commissioned from Berkshire Youth had been a success. Approximately 20 young people attended each of the four outdoor sessions which were held at Sol Joel Park and Chalfont Park. Activities included sports, arts & crafts and zorb football. Places were pre-booked, however on the day walk-up places were also accepted.

Councillors noted that since the publication of the agenda, ETC has received the revised draft service agreement from Berkshire Youth, but further questions have been raised with Berkshire Youth. Once the draft has been finalised, a meeting will be called of the Youth Services Working Group to review the draft agreement.

36. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – TOWN & PARISH QUESTIONS

Members considered requests for specific questions to be submitted to WBC meetings, the Town Clerk to submit the question.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Policy & Resources Committee had no questions to raise.

37. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 7912 – 7936, 7935 – 7960, 7961 – 7997, 7998 – 8004, 8005 – 8025, 8026 – 8041, 8042 – 8075, 8076 – 8087, 8088 - 8115) and Imprest vouchers 1079 - 1098).

38. 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 & August 2025
TVP	Police & Crime Bulletin – July 2025 Wokingham North NHPT weekly updates – July & August 2025
MERA	Minutes – June & July 2025
Me2 Club	E-newsletter July & August 2025

39. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The following press release requests were made: -

- Promotion of the conclusion and result of 31st March 2025 year end audit

40. 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

41. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Confidential Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 18th June 2025 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signing by the Chair (Minute 18).

42. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.21pm.