



## **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, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025** which commenced at 7pm.

### **Present**

Chair – Councillor D Hare

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

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and M Brown (Operations Manager)

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### **43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M De Jong. Cllr S Newton had indicated that he would be arriving late.

### **44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr G Littler declared an interest in agenda item 8; Town Council Grants 2025/2026 Tranche 2 - Reading Haydn Choir, as he is a member of this group.

Cllr D Hare declared an interest in the same agenda item as he is a member of Shinfield Cricket Club. Cllr A Bassett declared an interest in the same agenda item in relation to the EASI application, as her husband is a member of its committee.

### **45. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

### **46. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 were confirmed as a true record and **RESOLVED** for signature by the Chair. (Minutes 20 - 42).

### **47. BANK RECONCILIATIONS**

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

### **48. FINANCE**

#### **48.1 By-election charges**

Members noted that the charges for the Town Council by-election held in June 2025 had been paid. Costs totalled £2,694.45.

Further charges were expected to be payable for the Town Council by-election scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

#### 48.2 Fireproof Cabinet

The committee noted that a large fireproof cabinet had been purchased and all deeds, leases and similar documents were now stored within it.

#### 48.3 Utility Charges

Members received a report detailing how the issues of obtaining accurate, timely invoices for all ETC centres from our electricity supplier, SSE, had been settled. Numerous attempts made by Earley Town Council to chase and pay invoices had been unsuccessful and it was discovered by officers that the OFGEM code of conduct states that energy bills cannot be charged if they are over 12 months old and the fault lies with the supplier. SSE had agreed to waive all charges for the unbilled electricity for the period 11/2023 – 09/2024 and the committee agreed to move the savings into general reserves. Members expressed their thanks to the ETC accounts officer for his perseverance in seeking a resolution on this matter.

#### 49. BUDGET 2026-27 PRIORITIES

Councillors were provided with a current income and expenditure report and asked to discuss the priorities for the Policy & Resources Committee for the 2026-27 budget ahead of the first Budget Working Party meeting which is scheduled to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

There was a suggestion to set aside funds to support actions related to the green corridors project and woodland management recommendations from the recently published Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

A further suggestion was to set aside funds that could be used to implement changes suggested in the town plan once finalised. Members also discussed the possibility of rebuilding the BMX facility, it was acknowledged that this would be a major project.

#### 50. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS 2025/26 – TRANCHE 2

Councillors considered the nine grant applications received in the second 2025/26 grant application period, Tranche 2 – October 2025 intake. It was: -

50.1 **RESOLVED** that ARC be awarded £2,500 to help provide counselling to non-school attendees and those who are not in school or work.

50.2 **RESOLVED** that Earley Cricket Club will not be awarded a grant on this occasion as it was agreed that the application contained insufficient information. Earley Cricket Club to be informed of the reasons for the decision and the additional information that would be required should they wish to submit an application in the next round which opens in January 2026. Cllr D Hare did not vote.

50.3 **RESOLVED** that Earley Adopt a Street Initiative (EASI) be awarded £410 to buy litter picking hoops, gloves and junior litter pickers to support their operations. Cllr A Bassett did not vote.

50.4 **RESOLVED** that Earley Environmental Group be awarded £300 towards the cost of printing three 2026 editions of the newsletter for those without internet access and for use at events.

50.5 **RESOLVED** that Me2Club be awarded £500 to support young people in building confidence and developing independence through volunteer led activities.

*Councillor Littler left the room*

50.6 **RESOLVED** that Reading Haydn Choir will not be awarded a grant on this occasion due to the late application which would result in the grant money being received retrospectively after the proposed event would have taken place.

*Councillor Littler re-entered the room*

- 50.7 **RESOLVED** that Wokingham Job Support Centre be awarded £2,000 to help fill the shortfall in the cost of providing services to new clients.
- 50.8 **RESOLVED** that The Wokingham Volunteer Centre be awarded £,1000 to help support volunteer services for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- 50.9 **RESOLVED** that Wokingham Waterside Centre be awarded £1,836.80 to purchase 32 buoyancy aids which will enable more children and young people to access water based activities.

**51. MAIDEN PLACE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Town Clerk requested that the Chair withdraw this agenda item due to information not being available to answer questions which were submitted prior to the meeting. The Deputy Town Clerk to obtain the relevant information and provide it to the committee members via email. The works will then be commissioned.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the proposals in principle, subject to satisfactory answers being obtained.

**52. RADSTOCK LANE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members received an update on Wokingham Borough Council's transfer of Earley Town Council's lease on Radstock Lane Community Centre to an Academy as part of its academisation plans for the school.

Despite the best efforts of ETC representatives to protect the long-term future of the community centre, an extremely important community asset, they had been unsuccessful in their battle to have the community centre excluded from the transfer. This was due to WBC withholding all details of the transfer until shortly before it was due to take place, and, as a WBC officer had confirmed, their blocking of all ETC requests to engage directly with the Trust over the future of RLCC prior to the transfer being progressed. Members were angry that the Town Council, as the representative of Earley residents, had been treated in this way and remained of the view that the transfer of the lease of this community centre went against government guidelines for the academisation of schools.

It was agreed that ETC write a letter of complaint to WBC about its treatment of the Town Council, and that WBC's actions had breached the Town and Parish Charter as well as the government guidelines on what properties should be transferred as part of the academisation process. The complaint will also detail the actions of the WBC officer responsible for the transfer. The letter to be signed by all Town Councillors.

The Town Clerk reported that the transfer had gone through on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025 as WBC had planned, and Radstock Primary School is now listed on the Orchard Learning Alliance website as one of its schools. The Chief Exec from Orchard Alliance has now contacted ETC officers and an introductory meeting will be held in due course.

**53. YOUTH SERVICES - UPDATE**

Councillors received an update on ETC's weekly youth club provision. Owing to several factors, attendance had been reducing however many of these factors have now been addressed and Berkshire Youth have reported an increase in numbers attending.

Members noted that the Youth Services Working Group and Berkshire Youth had drawn up a Service Level Agreement to cover the services that are being provided. Members reviewed the document and **RESOLVED** that it be signed by the Town Clerk.

**54. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – TOWN & PARISH QUESTIONS**

Members, at the request of Full Council, were asked to review the proposed ETC guidelines for tabling questions at Wokingham Borough Council meetings.

The committee **RESOLVED** that the guidelines be adopted.

**55. WBC CONSULTATION**

Councillors noted the following Wokingham Borough Council consultation:

- Development of new engagement and consultation strategy – [www.engage.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.engage.wokingham.gov.uk)

**56. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 8138 – 8169, 8170 – 8174, 8175 – 8212, 8213 – 8236, 8237 – 8241, 8242 – 8278, 8279 – 8301), Imprest vouchers (1104 - 1116) and one-off payments (47 – 54).

**57. PUBLICATIONS**

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

CCB (Connecting Communities in Berkshire)	E-newsletters September & October 2025
TVP	Police & Crime Bulletin – September & October 2025 Wokingham North NHPT updates – September & October 2025
MERA	Minutes – September & October 2025
Involve	E-newsletter October 2025

**58. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

It was requested that a press release be issued once the work on the wall at Maiden Place Community Centre had been carried out.

**59. 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**

**60. STAFFING**

*Councillor S Newton entered the meeting at 8.40pm*

**61. YOUTH OFFER**

**62. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.44pm