

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting – 11th March 2026

Agenda Item 6.1 – FINANCE UPDATE

- Period Covered – Up to 27th February 2026
- RBS Income & Expenditure report also provided to the Committee
- Budget codes are included in the report below

INCOME

Income from **hall hire** remains on target, regular hires are invoiced at the end of each month so the final income figure for 2026/27 will be higher than the I & E currently shows. The new Friday and Saturday evening booking slots at RLCC and MPCC are proving popular, this will increase annual income going forwards.

Cemetery income (100/1010), whilst being the most unpredictable income stream, this remains steady.

Sports Pitch income from **Sol Joel Park** (220/1040) - this can be significantly affected by the weather, periods of heavy rain may mean that matches need to be cancelled because pitches are not playable so the figures are reassuring.

Help Shop (300/1000) – There has still been no response from WBC on the payment of the annual grant (the SLA has expired and was being reviewed by WBC) so we have budgeted for zero income from this source. We continue to deliver all services as usual, including those delivered on behalf of WBC.

Interest received from ETC's investments with CCLA (330/1160 & 245/1161) are expected to exceed the target despite reductions in interest rates. Interest received is allocated proportionately between the Sibly maintenance fund and ETC's general reserves.

EXPENDITURE

Employment costs will remain below budget this year but the 3 new caretakers who started in mid-January have settled in well and the new rotas are working well. Monthly payments for the cleaning contract now feature in the I & E report (320/4062), these have been fully budgeted for in 2026/27. Interviews for the part-time Bike Workshop Co-ordinator have taken place, the new recruit is expected to be in place in mid-April so their salary costs will not feature in 2025/26 expenditure.

Utilities – Accurate utility charges remain complicated but ETC's Finance Officer ensures, by the end of the year, we never end up paying more than we should. **Gas** charges (4230) are as expected but **Water** charges (4240) are a little higher than expected. The high water costs at Maiden Place CC are a result of works carried out by the Social Club to their toilets during which urinal flushing systems were incorrectly installed. The Social Club has now refunded these monies to ETC (currently shown in Miscellaneous Income 130/1170), this will reduce the final 2025/26 figure. Water costs at Radstock Lane Community Centre show a much higher figure than budgeted. We are aware of an issue over the Christmas holidays where a running tap was not noticed by the caretaker on duty so we are expecting the final figure to be above budget. The Finance Officer will ensure the amount paid for 2025/26 is accurate.

Youth Projects (140/5045) – the weekly youth club continues, it is expected that the final costs for 2025/26 will be approximately £6,500.

Waste Disposal (Dog poo bags) (270/4340) – These remain popular with residents. More bags have been purchased and final expenditure will be below budget.

Elections (330/4175) – This is an ear marked reserve which is built up over 4 years in time for ETC's all out elections, the next one being 2027. During the current term, ETC has had two by elections which has depleted the fund. The costs for the first one, which ran alongside a WBC by election, was £2,694, however, the costs for the second one, which did not coincide with a borough election are likely to be higher (figures have still not been provided).

Tree Management All Sites (200/4305) – the winter tree inspection by the tree surgeon have taken place covering all ETC sites. A significant amount of work has been identified, including some tree removal on H & S grounds. A programme of works has been drawn up which prioritises the most urgent actions. It is likely that a further £3,000 will be spent in this financial year.

Other works to be completed in the current financial year include:

- Rebuilding of Maiden Place car park wall and installation of cycle rails (completed not yet invoiced)
- Refurbishment of workshop toilets (rescheduled for March)
- Investigation and necessary remedial works to the heating system at Radstock House (completed not yet invoiced)

A final review of all financial entries will be conducted before the year end to ensure that all costs have been correctly allocated.

Jo Friend, Town Clerk/RFO

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting – 11th March 2026

Agenda Item 7 – TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS – TRANCHE 3 – JANUARY 2026

To consider the following grant applications for the financial year 2025/2026: -

Organisation	Cancer Network Support
Amount requested	£500
Reason for request	Funding towards 6 sessions of Nordic Walking which are offered free to members (those affected by cancer, with a cancer diagnosis, living with long-term cancer, recovering from cancer or caring for someone with cancer)
No. of Earley Residents	8
Comments	1 st Application (CNS is part of Involve Community Services but funding is separate)

Organisation	Citizen Advice Wokingham
Amount requested	£3,500
Reason for request	To continue to offer free and independent advice.
No. of Earley Residents	373 individual households in Earley.
Comments	2024/2025 Award = £3,000

Organisation	The Cowshed
Amount requested	£2,000
Reason for request	To help maintain 3 existing vehicles that are used to deliver donated items such as clothing, bedding, toiletries to families and individuals in crisis.
No. of Earley Residents	66
Comments	1 st Application

Organisation	Earley Cricket Club
Amount requested	£7,500
Reason for request	Purchase of grounds maintenance equipment and screens. Repairing and upgrading of nets.
No. of Earley Residents	50+
Comments	Application in Oct 25 (Tranche 2) was unsuccessful and applicant was advised that to support any future application the club would need to provide more supporting documentation. Has provided more documentation for this application, including quotations, other financial support information, fundraising details.

Organisation	First Days Children's Charity
Amount requested	£1,500
Reason for request	To support the provision of essential items to families in need to provide basic necessities for their children.
No. of Earley Residents	337 children
Comments	2023/2024 Award = £1,500

Organisation	Loddon Valley Ramblers
Amount requested	£2,350
Reason for request	To purchase signage to signpost the Lower Earley Green Corridor Trail.
No. of Earley Residents	Any resident of Earley (Loddon Valley Ramblers has over 400 members with 25% living in Earley)
Comments	2023/2024 Award = £165

Organisation	Together One Step at a Time
Amount requested	£500
Reason for request	To support 12 SEND sessions.
No. of Earley Residents	20
Comments	2024/2025 Award = £386.30

Organisation	Readibus
Amount requested	£5,000
Reason for request	To support the provision of transport services for people with restricted mobility.
No. of Earley Residents	At least 44
Comments	2024/2025 Award = £2,500

Organisation	No specified name
Amount requested	£1,000
Reason for request	To fully fund an art initiative of 12 art sessions to promote wellbeing.
No. of Earley Residents	Unknown
Comments	1 st Application Organiser would be the paid art teacher.

NOTE:

ETC's budget for Grants 2025/26 = £40,000

Total awarded for Tranche 1 = £4,000

Total awarded for Tranche 2 = £8,546.80

Total requested for Tranche 3 = £23,850

Full application details will be provided to the Committee.

Members to **RESOLVE** as appropriate.

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS POLICY

Grants to Community Groups, Organisations & Individuals

Part of Earley Town Council's mission is to engage with residents, working with all to make Earley an even better place in which to live and work. All spending and activity that the Council undertakes focuses on delivering its mission and the Council recognises the important role that its grant spending plays in supporting community groups, organisations and individuals.

1. Introduction

- a. Applications will be accepted three times **per financial year** in May, October and January.
- b. Applications will be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on an individual basis at the first committee meeting following the submission periods referred to in 1a.
- c. Applications received outside of the normal intake will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- d. Each financial year the Council sets a grant budget, therefore the Council will not award grants in excess of the annual budget.
- e. Amounts awarded are at the discretion of the Policy & Resources Committee.
- f. Commercial organisations are not eligible to apply for a grant.
- g. The Council is committed to environmental/green issues and asks where possible for applicants to demonstrate how they promote these types of initiatives within their group/organisation.

2. Criteria

- a. Applicants must complete an application form and provide the following supporting documentation: -
 - Set of financial accounts for the previous year
 - Quotations received (if the request is in relation to a project)
 - Breakdown of income/expenditure
 - Safeguarding Policy (if group/organisation's work involves children or vulnerable adults)
- b. The Council reserves the right to request additional information, if required.
- c. Applications will only be accepted from voluntary/charity organisations or groups who provide much needed support services.
- d. Applicants must demonstrate how the grant will benefit residents of Earley; this includes applications from groups/organisations who operate outside the Earley boundary.
- e. Applicants will be asked for the number of Earley residents who will benefit from the grant and will be asked to evidence how this number is obtained.
- f. Applications cannot be made for groups/organisations operating overseas or for assistance outside the UK.
- g. Applications will not be accepted retrospectively, where the project or expense has already occurred.
- h. Grants will not be awarded for wide scale advertising.
- i. Grants are not awarded for costs that could reasonably be expected to be funded from other sources such as member subscription.

- j. Successful applicants will be notified as soon as practicably possible.
- k. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a reason as to why a grant has not been awarded.
- l. Payments of grants will be made electronically.
- m. All recipients of a grant will be required to provide the Council with a **monitoring** report **within 6 months** on the following:
- How the grant has been spent
 - How the grant has benefitted the community
 - How the grant has assisted the group/organisation
- The report should be supported with evidence for example photos, newsletters or press releases, website links, where possible.
- n. **The Town Council reserves the right not to consider grant applications in cases where previous grant award monitoring reports have not been received.**
- o. Application Forms for Community Grants to Community Groups, Organisations can be found at: <https://www.earley-tc.gov.uk/council-documents/>

Grants for Individuals

Match-funding grants may be given to applicants who have been awarded a grant through the Wokingham Borough Sports Council. In these cases, the request for Town Council funding will be made by Wokingham Borough Council directly to the Town Council. Consideration will also be given to granting match funding for awards made to individuals from other recognised organisations.

In exceptional circumstances, Individuals may apply directly to the Town Council for a grant. These applications may be made at any time during the year.

- a. Applicants making an individual application directly to the Council must complete an application form.
- b. Successful applicants will be notified as soon as practicably possible.
- c. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a reason as to why a grant has not been awarded.
- d. Payment of grants will be made electronically.
- e. Application Forms for Individuals can be found at: <https://www.earley-tc.gov.uk/council-documents/>

Date of adoption: ~~7th February 2024~~ 11th March 2026

Date for next review: ~~February 2026~~ March 2028



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Earley Town Council recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves either in the office, at Council sites or within the community. Where this is the case, the Council seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers.

This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working.
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone.
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk.
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers.
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

Policy

There is no specific legal prohibition on lone working but the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act still apply. The Council will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the Council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal operational hours. Examples include:

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night.
- A groundsman tending to green space.
- Office workers who work alone in the premises.
- Homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in a confined space is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for their own wellbeing and health and safety and that of their work colleagues.

The key responsibilities are as follows:

Managers

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone.

- Ensure that all lone working activities have been risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers, any control measures necessary to minimise those risks and emergency procedures.
- Make clear to staff the arrangements for lone working and ensure the details of what can or cannot be done whilst working alone have been explained.
- Inform staff of the hazards and the necessary control measures that need to be put in place when lone working.
- Raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working, where required.

Lone workers

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work.
- To follow any instruction given by their Line Manager.
- Raise with their Line Manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working.
- Not to work alone if they have been instructed not to
- Inform their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

Staff

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert management of any unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

Risk Assessments

A Risk Assessment should be in place for lone working activities and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be discussed with the lone worker before undertaking lone working and communicated to all relevant staff.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness/accident
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, a lone working plan will be devised and implemented that meets the needs and risks of the particular circumstances.

The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. For example, the plan for a groundsman lone working with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office.

Here are some example that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Signing-in and out book
- Use of diaries (electronic/hardcopy) with details of meeting/visit/lone working details
- Text messages at start and finish times
- Agreed times of lone working and method of contact
- Buddy System (see below)

Buddy System

In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate (usually when lone working is out of normal operational hours) as a way of reducing risks, the buddy must have relevant details about the lone worker, that may include: -

- where a person is going (address or area if there is no address).
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting).
- mode of transport.
- expected time of return

A buddy must know what to do if a person does not return or make contact at the anticipated time.

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker, their buddy and Line Manager (refer to the Lone Working Buddy Form): -

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure personal safety when lone working, it is important that a person shares details with their manager of any aspects of their health that could lead to increased risk, such as pregnancy, illness etc. A joint plan to mitigate any potential risks can then be agreed. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with confidentiality being of the utmost importance.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered whilst lone working should be reported, recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include: -

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence.

In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support a review of the risk assessment and whether any additional control measures are needed.

If a Lone Worker feels unsafe, unwell, or becomes injured they must call the emergency services if immediate assistance is required. In any other circumstance, a person should call their buddy, Line Manager or a colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on their behalf).

Date of Adoption: 11th March 2026
Policy effective from: 12th March 2026
Date for next review: March 2028

**Lone Working Buddy Form**

This form is to be completed in cases of Lone Working out of normal office hours and a copy should be kept by the Lone Worker, the Buddy and Line Manager, in conjunction with Earley Town Council's Lone Working Policy.

Lone Worker Details

Name	
Address	
Contact Number	

Buddy Details

Name of Buddy	
Address	
Contact Number	
Relationship to Lone Worker	

Line Manager Details

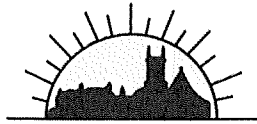
Name of Line Manager	
Contact Number	

If the named Buddy has any concerns about the Lone Worker's welfare, the following members of staff are to be contacted: -

First Contact: Emma Carroll, Deputy Town Clerk – Tel: 07736 148198

Second Contact: Max Brown, Operations Manager – Tel: 07921 831960

Third Contact: Jo Friend, Town Clerk – Tel: 07395 790061



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

REMOTE WORKING POLICY

Introduction

Whilst remote working is not currently a contractual obligation and is not suitable for all job roles, the Council recognises that remote working can be beneficial to individuals when working on specific pieces of work and can improve productivity and efficiency, along with reducing employee stress levels.

Eligibility

It is at the discretion of the Town Clerk to allow staff to work remotely, however remote working is not suitable for all job roles and it must fit the business need of the Council.

When staff are working remotely, this must not impact or increase the workload of other staff who are not working remotely.

Remote working agreement

The Town Clerk can recommend to a member of staff that they work remotely and this may be in relation to a project they are working on or a specific piece of work they are undertaking where remote working will aid productivity.

A member of staff with remote working capacity can make a request to the Town Clerk to work remotely and the agreement should include: -

- Start date
- Number of days to be worked remotely
- Hours to be worked
- Work to be undertaken
- Level of availability to cover workplace if needed

Remote working must not conflict with any other work commitment, and the member of staff working remotely must remain contactable at all times. All IT and Information Security Policies will apply whilst remote working.

Health & Safety

When an employee is working remotely, it is the joint responsibility of the Town Clerk and the individual employee to ensure that measures are taken to ensure the health and safety and welfare of the employee.

Anyone remote working should complete a Display Screen Equipment Assessment, and this should be recorded on the employee's staff file and should be reviewed on an annual basis or if there is a change in situation. A risk assessment also needs to be undertaken and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Town Clerk retains the right to check the employees remote working area should the need arise, in order to ensure that Health & Safety and Information Security is being adhered to.

Both the Town Clerk and the employee should monitor hours worked to ensure that the employee is not working excessive hours and that hours comply with the Working Time Directives, where applicable. Any accidents that occur as a direct result of remote working must be reported to the Town Clerk.

Remote working capacity

The below table shows the staff with capacity to work remotely at the discretion of the Town Clerk: -

Post	Main Location	Remote Working Capacity
Town Clerk	Office (Desk)	Yes
Deputy Town Clerk	Office (Desk)	Yes
Projects Manager	Office (Desk) & Site based	Yes
Operations Manager	Office (Desk) & Site based	Yes - Limited circumstances
Finance Officer	Office (Desk)	No
Administration Support Officer	Office (Desk)	No
Senior Administration Officer	Office (Desk)	No
Helpshop Assistant	Office (Desk)	No
Groundsmen	Site based	No
Maintenance Officers	Site based	No
Park Rangers	Site based	No
Caretakers	Site based	No

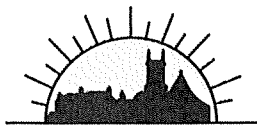
The list below identifies limitations to remote working capacity (this list is not exhaustive)

- Access to certain software
- Staff providing phone and in person cover
- Role is site based e.g. Caretakers, Groundsmen, Maintenance Officers and Park Rangers

Date of Adoption: 11th March 2026

Policy effective from: 12th March 2026

Date for next review: March 2028



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

Earley Town Council recognises that most people who contact Earley Town Council are polite and respect the responses and/or information provided by Council staff. The Town Council welcomes feedback and will investigate complaints in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure to ensure that a complainant's concerns are addressed.

Policy

This policy is designed to address how vexatious correspondence and complaints, which includes requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, are dealt with by the Town Council. This is in order to protect staff/councillors from unreasonable behaviour of members of the public and to ensure that staff resources are not spent dealing with unreasonable correspondence, which will prevent the Council from fulfilling its wider duties. This policy does not restrict reasonable correspondence and requests for information from being dealt with fairly.

1. Definition of vexatious correspondence or complaints

1.1 The Local Government Ombudsman advises: -

Unreasonable actions are those which, because of the nature or frequency of contact with an organisation, hinder the organisation's delivery of services or consideration of complaints.

Some unreasonable actions emerge over time as complainants become more persistent in pursuit of their complaint. It should be recognised that many complainants act in a legitimate but persistent manner in order to pursue their complaint. Therefore, it is important to recognise the difference between "persistent" and "unreasonably persistent" actions.

1.2 The Information Commissioner's Office advises: -

Four themes are to be considered when assessing whether a request for information is vexatious:

- a. The burden (on the public authority and its staff)*
- b. The motive (of the requester)*
- c. The value or serious purpose (of the request)*
- d. Any harassment or distress (of and to staff/councillors)*

1.3 Earley Town Council defines a 'vexatious complaint' as something that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted. A vexatious complainant is not looking to resolve an issue but seeking to cause unnecessary aggravation or annoyance to the Council.

1.4 It is considered that an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant may: -

- Have insufficient grounds or no grounds for complaint and only make a complaint for reasons/intentions that they will not disclose

- Submit repeated and/or frequent requests for information when responses have already been provided
- Refuse to accept responses that have been provided or offers of assistance
- Refuse to follow the Council's Complaints Procedure or accept the outcome of a complaint
- Refuse to accept that the issue/s are not within the remit of the Council
- Make the same complaint repeatedly, but with minor differences or change the basis of a complaint, whilst the complaint is being dealt with
- Make unfounded complaints about staff dealing with/responding to complaints
- Make an unreasonable amount of contact with the Council through various means of communication
- Employ a 'scattergun' approach, by contacting others or various organisations to pursue a complaint, such as councillors, local authority, police, a Member of Parliament etc
- Electronically record conversations/meetings without consent from the other person/s involved
- Harass, verbally abuse, intimidate or make unreasonable demands on the staff dealing with the complaint

(This list is not exhaustive)

2. Determining unreasonably persistent and vexatious correspondence/complaints

- 2.1 The Town Clerk will consider if correspondence received is classed as unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious, taking into consideration the characteristics detailed in item 1.4.
- 2.2 If the Town Clerk determines the correspondence is unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious, the Town Clerk will consult with the Chair of Policy & Resources, providing background.
- 2.3 In the first instance, the Town Clerk and Chair of Policy & Resources may decide that future correspondence with the correspondent is restricted, which may include allowing contact to be made by the correspondent with a particular member of staff only and/or contact to be made by the correspondent in writing only. Restrictions will be tailored and implemented based on the individual case.

The correspondent will be informed in writing by the Chair of Policy & Resources of the unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious decision, the reasons why and informed of the restrictions imposed.

- 2.4 However, if the Town Clerk and Chair of Policy & Resources decide that the correspondent has behaved in such a way that imposing restrictions are futile, then further correspondence with the correspondent will stop.

The correspondent will be informed in writing by the Chair of Policy & Resources of the unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious decision, the reasons why and informed that any future correspondence will be passed directly to the Town Clerk, who will inform the Chair of Policy & Resources of its receipt and will decide whether the correspondence raises genuine new issue/s or is again considered vexatious. If the correspondence is considered reasonable, it will be responded to. If the correspondence is again considered unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious, the correspondent will not receive a response, unless the Council is obliged to do so, in accordance with any legislation.

- 2.5 A review of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious status or restrictions imposed can be carried out after six months from the date of the letter.
- 2.6 There is no appeal against an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious decision.

3. Review of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious decision

- 3.1 An unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant can request that their status or restricted correspondence is reviewed six months after the original decision and must request a review in writing to the Town Clerk at townclerk@earley-tc.gov.uk
- 3.2 The Town Clerk will contact the Chair of Policy & Resources to discuss whether there has been any further unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious communication or whether communication with the correspondent has improved during that time.
- 3.3 The Chair of Policy & Resources will write to the correspondent advising of the outcome of the review. If improvement has been made, future correspondence will be responded to in the usual manner. If there has been no improvement, correspondence will continue to be treated as vexatious and the complainant can request a further review in another six months.

4. Record Keeping

The Town Clerk will be responsible for keeping appropriate records of unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious cases and the action that has been taken by the Council. Records will be kept of: -

- Name, address and contact details of person/s who are deemed as vexatious
- Details of the imposed restrictions
- Timeframe of the imposed restrictions
- Details of any review undertaken
- Communication relating to unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious decisions taken, including letters/emails informing the individual

5. Further guidance and advice

Can be found at: -

Information Commissioner's Office

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/freedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations/section-14-dealing-with-vexatious-requests/>

Local Government Ombudsman

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/information-for-organisations-we-investigate/councils/guidance-notes/managing-unreasonable-actions-by-complainants-a-guide-for-organisations>

Date of Adoption: 11th March 2026

Policy effective from: 12th March 2026

Date for next review: March 2028

Earley Town Council

Policy & Resources Committee meeting – 11th March 2026

Agenda Item 11 – CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

Following requests from staff members we investigated employee Cycle to Work schemes to see if it would be feasible to introduce one for town council staff. As a town council that is very much in favour of 'green' initiatives and actions which can improve the local environment, such a scheme would fit with ETC's aims whilst also enhancing its offer to staff. The idea was discussed by the Staffing Sub-committee who were in favour of introducing such a scheme at ETC.

About the Cycle to Work Scheme

- Part of the Government's ambition to make cycling more attractive
- Society benefits from less congestion, and better air quality
- Employees benefit from cheaper travel costs and better health
- Wider benefits - estimated physical inactivity costs to the NHS is £1Bn

How it works

- The Cycle to Work scheme is a salary sacrifice scheme
- A hire agreement between employer, or an agreed third party, and employee to have a bike (including electrically assisted cycles) and any associated safety equipment e.g. helmets, lights and panniers
- Agreement should be 12 or 18 months in length
- Bike hire is 'charged' to the employee through a reduction in salary
- The employee does not own the bike during the hire
- *But* can purchase the bike for a nominal fee at the end of the contract
- The bike theoretically should be used for at least 50% commuting

Financial Benefits of the Scheme

- Benefits of salary sacrifice
- **Employee** pays less tax and NI
 - Basic rate Taxpayer saves 32% on the cost of a bike via the reduced salary (Tax 20% NI 12%)
 - I.e. for every £100 sacrificed (spent) on the bike will cost the employee only £68
 - Higher Rate Taxpayer saves 42% (Tax 40% NI 2%)
 - I.e. for every £100 sacrificed (spent) on the bike will cost the employee only £58

Employer pays less National Insurance

- 13.8% on the reduced employee pay
 - For every £100 sacrificed towards a bike saves the employer £13.80

No need to administer as a Benefit-in-kind to HMRC

Costs and potential issues

- Employer
 - Cycle Hire Contracts needed with Employee
 - Employee contracts of employment need to be amended to acknowledge salary sacrifice (reduced pay)
 - Administration of scheme: Contracts, payroll, recovery of costs for employees leaving
 - LGPS Pension contribution unaffected: Cost based on pre-salary sacrifice earnings
 - Ensure scheme operated in compliance with legislation

- Employee
 - Receives less take home pay (but has the use of a new bike)
 - N.B. Employee salary must not fall below the National Minimum Wage as a result of salary sacrifice scheme
 - LGPS Pension contributions and benefit unaffected by salary sacrifice
 - Reduced pay may affect loan eligibility or mortgage applications based on salary
 - Salary sacrifice (pay reduction) has a minor effect on:
 - Some state benefits
 - Maternity Pay
 - Statutory Sick Pay
 - Employee will need to settle any outstanding balance from their final pay if they leave before the hire contract ends.
 - Final outstanding balance does not attract the advantages of salary sacrifice benefits

Options for Cycle to Work Schemes

- **Run an in-house** cycle to work scheme
 - *But* see Costs and potential issues – employer **OR**
- **Utilise an FCA authorised Cycle to Work Scheme provider**
 - This ensures Legal compliance
 - ETC would act as an appointed Representative of the Scheme provider
 - Requires a written contract detailing the arrangement between the Provider and ETC
 - Provider administers the scheme
 - Employee enters hire agreement directly with Scheme Provider
 - Provides advice on salary sacrifice arrangements
 - Provider can assist with the promotion of the scheme with employees

F.A.Q.s

- Can employees add their own funds to the cycle hire purchase?
 - No but they can buy additional cycling equipment under the scheme
- Is the value limited to £1,000?
 - No, but an internal limit maximum is usually set between £1k and £2k
- Does HMRC need to authorise the scheme?
 - No

- Can the employee keep the cycle at the end of the hire?
 - 3 Options:
 - 1/ Extend Hire Contract for no cost and transfer bike ownership at a later date for a negligible/nominal fee
 - Most common option
 - Another Bike may be hired during this extended hire
 - 2/ Return Cycle & Equipment
 - Not often taken up as option 1/ usually preferred
 - 3/ Buy Cycle & Equipment at end of initial contract
 - A fee of between 18-25% payable
 - Not popular given the cost involved and given the benefits of option 1/
- Who cares for the Cycle & Equipment
 - Though the Cycle remains the property of the Provider the Employee is responsible for its maintenance and security so it is advisable that insurance is taken or checked with the Employees home contents policy

Practicalities for ETC and how a scheme might work

- Use a reputable Scheme provider e.g.: -
 - Halfords
 - Green Commute Initiative
 - Others
- SGW can facilitate a Salary sacrifice scheme in their payroll
- Any staff member interested in accessing the scheme would be talked through the details and any implications for them by ETC's Finance Officer before they commit

RECOMMENDATION

ETC's Finance Officer has been in communication with Halfords at Winnersh as a local, reliable Provider. They have confirmed they can administer such a scheme for ETC at no cost.

The recommendation is that ETC proceed with setting up a Cycle to Work Scheme with a £2,000 limit, administered through Halfords, Winnersh and processed through our regular payroll provider.

Members to discuss and to **RESOLVE** accordingly.

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY DIRECT DEBIT DECEMBER 2025

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
8525	Allstar	Fuel YK60UUJ 17/11/25 EN65HDF 12/11/25	£135.19
8526	Allstar	Fuel YS06BSO 19/11/25	£86.20
8527	Castle Water	SJP Water Nov 25	£168.20
8528	Castle Water	SJP Water Oct 25	-£153.56
8529	Castle Water	MPCC Water Nov 25	£778.93
8530	Castle Water	IC Water Nov 25	£64.56
8531	Castle Water	RLCC Water Nov 25	£67.51
8532	Castle Water	CEM Water Nov 25	£10.73
8533	Castle Water	Allotments Water Nov 25	£16.02
8534	Crown Gas & Power	RH Gas Nov 25	£219.47
8535	Crown Gas & Power	SJP Gas Nov 25	£221.89
8536	Crown Gas & Power	RLCC Gas Nov 25	£782.38
8537	Crown Gas & Power	MPCC Gas Nov 25	£825.47
8538	Culligan (UK) Limited	SJP Water Cooler Rental Nov 25	£55.43
8539	Culligan (UK) Limited	RH Water Cooler Rental Nov 25 + 2 Bottles	£122.16
8540	Elavon (Opayo)	Credit Card Terminal rental Dec 25	£22.80
8541	Focus Group	RH Telephones Rental Dec 25 + Calls Oct 25	£224.08
8542	O2	Mobiles Rental 14/11-13/12	£190.88
8543	PHS Group	MP Social Club Sanitary Disposal 27/12/25 - 26/03/26	£11.09
8544	PHS Group	IC Sanitary Disposal 27/12/25 - 26/03/26	£5.54
8545	PHS Group	IC Sanitary Disposal ESPO Charge 18/12/25 - 17/03/26	£5.54
8546	PHS Group	RH Sanitary Disposal 27/12/25 - 26/03/26	£11.09
8547	PHS Group	RLCC Sanitary Disposal 27/12/25 - 26/03/26	£129.94
8548	PHS Group	MPCC Sanitary Disposal 27/12/25 - 26/03/26	£129.94
8549	SSE Energy Solutions	Street Lighting Electricity Nov 25	£862.30
8550	Virgin Media	Broadband RH 07/12 - 06/01/26	£49.20
8551	Wokingham Borough Council	MPCC Rates Dec 25 (9 of 10)	£237.00
8552	Wokingham Borough Council	RLCC Rates Dec 25 (9 of 10)	£469.00
8553	Wokingham Borough Council	RH Rates Dec 25 (9 of 10)	£1,572.00
8554	Yorkshire Gas & Power	Tractor Shed Electricity Nov 25	£37.10
8555	Yorkshire Gas & Power	IC Electricity Nov 25	£168.59
8556	Yorkshire Gas & Power	SJP Electricity Nov 25	£230.89
8557	Yorkshire Gas & Power	RLCC Electricity Nov 25	£276.55
8558	Yorkshire Gas & Power	MPCC Electricity Nov 25	£391.01
8559	Yorkshire Gas & Power	RH Electricity Nov 25	£469.35

Total Direct Debits £8,894.47

Date Prepared: 9th January 2026

Prepared by: Michaela Orme

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY BACS TRANSFER

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
8560	A1 Locksmiths Berkshire Ltd	3x Maintenance Door Keys	£22.50
8561	A1 Locksmiths Berkshire Ltd	SJP High Security Padlock & Vehicle Gate Lock	£66.50
8562	All Electrics	Intsall LED Lighting RLCC	£588.00
8563	Amazon	10 x Tablecloths for Town Mayor's Reception	£69.95
8564	Arco Limited	Various Uniform & PPE	£439.45
8565	Arco Limited	Safety Glasses PPE	£3.55
8566	Armour Arbor	Annual Tree Inspections	£1,090.00
8567	Bowak Ltd	Cleaning Supplies Various Sites	£360.95
8568	Bracknell Pest Control	Squirrel removal roofspace RLCC 07/01/26	£30.00
8569	Bracknell Pest Control	Mole traps SJP 13/01/26	£60.00
8570	Bracknell Pest Control	Pest traps Allotments 07/01/26	£60.00
8571	Buxtons Limited	Helmet & Protective Trousers	£178.00
8572	Huntley & Palmers Allotment Association	Trading Shed Vouchers for Allotment Competition	£30.00
8573	IT QED Ltd	IT Exchange Online Jan 26	£360.36
8574	IT QED Ltd	IT Azure Subscription Dec 25	£103.06
8575	IT QED Ltd	IT Support Jan 26	£450.00
8576	IT QED Ltd	IT Skykick Office 365 Dec 25	£189.00
8577	IT QED Ltd	SJP CCTV Jan 26	£15.60
8578	IT QED Ltd	IT PC Monitoring Dec 25	£60.48
8579	JRB Enterprise Ltd	Dog Bags x 60,000 Jan 26	£973.44
8580	Screwfix	De-icer, WD40, Glue & other various matierals	£70.92
8581	Select Environmental Services	Waste Collection Dec 25 General Litter Bins	£626.78
8582	Select Environmental Services	CP Waste Collection Dec 25	£24.48
8583	Select Environmental Services	RLCC Waste Collection Dec 25	£148.92
8584	Select Environmental Services	MPCC Waste Collection Dec 25	£214.55
8585	Select Environmental Services	RH Waste Collection Dec 25	£32.09
8586	Travis Perkins	Timber for bench repair Wokingham	£37.80
8587	Tri Security Ltd	3 x ID Badges for new caretakers	£43.20
8588	Viking Office UK Limited	Mop heads & buckets, SJP, RLCC, MPCC, CP	£41.87

Total: £6,391.45

Date Prepared: 23/01/2026

Prepared By: Michaela Orme

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY DIRECT DEBIT JANUARY 2025**Appendix H**

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
8589	Allstar	Vehicle fuel EN65HDF & YK60UUJ	£183.30
8590	Allstar	Vechicle fuel YK60UTY 18/12	£79.29
8591	Castle Water	IC Water Dec 25	£74.85
8592	Castle Water	RLCC Water Dec 25	£76.50
8593	Castle Water	SJP Water Dec 25	£153.75
8594	Castle Water	MPCC Water Dec 25	£160.68
8595	Castle Water	Allot Water Dec 25	£28.86
8596	Castle Water	CEM Water Dec 25	£5.73
8597	Crown Gas & Power	SJP Gas Dec 25	£227.99
8598	Crown Gas & Power	RH Gas Dec 25	£282.78
8599	Crown Gas & Power	RLCC Gas Dec 25	£852.27
8600	Crown Gas & Power	MPCC Gas Dec 25	£950.23
8601	Culligan (UK) Limited	SJP Water Cooler Rental Dec 25	£55.43
8602	Culligan (UK) Limited	RH Water Cooler Rental Dec 25	£110.86
8603	Elavon (Opayo)	Credit Card Terminal rental Dec 25	£22.80
8604	Focus Group	RH Telephones Rental Jan 26 + Calls Nov 25	£235.21
8605	O2	Mobiles Rental 14/11-13/12	£172.36
8606	PHS Group	CP Sanitary Disposal 25/01-24/04	£18.02
8607	SSE Energy Solutions	Street Lighting Electricity Dec 25	£941.00
8608	Virgin Media	Broadhand RH 07/01 - 06/02/26	£49.20
8609	Wokingham Borough Council	MPCC Rates Jan 26 (10 of 10)	£237.00
8610	Wokingham Borough Council	RLCC Rates Jan 26 (10 of 10)	£469.00
8611	Wokingham Borough Council	RH Rates Jan 26 (10 of 10)	£1,572.00
8612	Yorkshire Gas & Power	Tractor Shed Electricity Dec 25	£37.10
8613	Yorkshire Gas & Power	RH Electricity Dec 25	£96.59
8614	Yorkshire Gas & Power	IC Electricity Dec 25	£189.17
8615	Yorkshire Gas & Power	SJP Electricity Dec 25	£217.20
8616	Yorkshire Gas & Power	RLCC Electricity Dec 25	£269.06
8617	Yorkshire Gas & Power	MPCC Electricity Dec 25	£296.27

Total Direct Debits £8,064.50

Date Prepared: 6th February 2026

Prepared by: Michaela Orme

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY BACS TRANSFER

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
8618	A1 Locksmiths Berkshire Ltd	GT85 Lubricant	£7.00
8619	Amazon	200 x Paper Napkins for Mayors Reception	£14.44
8620	Amazon	200 x Paper Plates for Mayors Reception	£23.48
8621	Amazon	Wine Cooler & Name Badge Holders Mayors Reception	£80.81
8622	Ashby Carpets & Flooring	Centre Point New Flooring	£7,400.00
8623	Bourne Amenity Ltd	Bulk Bags Shingle/Hoggin MELNR	£378.60
8624	Creating Technical Solutions	YK60 UTY MOT & Service	£362.84
8625	Fleet Line Markers	Pitchmaker Paint & Line Marker Spray SJP	£697.10
8626	The Food Fairies Catering Company Ltd	Catering for Mayors Reception	£1,008.00
8627	First Fence Ltd	14x1m Standard Bow Top Railing Kit Cem. Extension	£2,810.26
8628	Frasers	Office Pens, Lables, Card & Clear Pockets	£46.81
8629	GLS-Findel	Blue Hand Towels RH & RLCC	£100.76
8630	Ground Management Association	Grounds Membership 04/03/26 - 03/03/27	£196.00
8631	Hampshire Association of Local Councils	BALC Subscription 26/27	£1,600.00
8632	IT QED Ltd	IT Exclaimer Signatures Office 365 m/e 20/2/26	£56.95
8633	Jacobs	Annual Reservoir Supervision Fee 2025	£1,050.00
8634	Premier Office Supplies Ltd	Office Paper & Box Files	£101.14
8635	Screwfix	Various Materials RH, Benches, MPCC, CP & Maintenance	£186.40
8636	SLCC Enterprises	Staff Training Jess Friend April 26	£210.60
8637	Southern Maintenance Solutions UK Ltd	Investigate Heating RH	£402.00
8638	Southern Maintenance Solutions UK Ltd	Invesiagate Leak MPCC	£342.19
8639	Web Marketing Matters	Website Maintenance Jan 26	£216.00
8640	William Luck	Planning Services Jan 26	£439.80
8641	Wokingham Borough Council	Centrepont Rent Jan 26	£293.50

Total: £18,024.68

Date Prepared: 09/02/2026

Prepared By: Ian Johnson

IMPREST ACCOUNT - Payment Requests 1148 - 1156

Vouchers between 26th January 2025 - 2nd March 2026

Number	Details	Amount
1148	Damage Deposit Return MR	£100.00
1149	Damage Deposit Return AR	£100.00
1150	Damage Deposit Return BP	£50.00
1151	Salaries Feb 26	£35,420.12
1152	HMRC PAYE & NI Feb 26	£13,579.68
1153	LGPS Pension Feb 26	£14,790.29
1154	Damage Deposit Return CJN	£50.00
1155	Damage Deposit Return BJ	£50.00
1156	Damage Deposit Return LJ	£50.00
	Total Payments	<u>£64,190.09</u>

CURRENT ACCOUNT - One off payments

Number	Payee	Purchase Description	Amount
56	Earley Repair Café Account	Transfer of Cash donations from the November Repair Café banked with ETC	£121.87
57	Earley Repair Café Account	Transfer of Cash donations from the December Repair Café banked with ETC	£83.95

Date Prepared: 2/3/26

Prepared By: Ian Johnson