

**Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on
Monday 20th July 2020 at 7.00 pm. (Zoom meeting)**

Present

Councillors: Martin Colston (Chairperson); Sue Farrant; Jon Gage; Stephen Masters; Gary Norman, Elizabeth O'Keeffe; Erik Pattenden and Tony Vickers.

In attendance

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer, Cllr. Nigel Foot (non-voting member)

1. Apologies for absence

Councillors: Olivia Lewis; Jo Day
Absent: Councillor Jeff Cant,

2. Declarations of interest and dispensations

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillors Stephen Masters Erik Pattenden and Tony Vickers are also Members of West Berkshire District Council, which is declared as a general interest on their behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow them to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council (WBC) business. A dispensation is in place to allow all Members to discuss the budget and the precept.

Councillor Erik Pattenden declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item no. 20 and said that he would withdraw from the meeting for that item.

3. Minutes

Proposed: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

Seconded: Councillor Sue Farrant

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 20 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

4. Questions and petitions from members of the public

There were none.

5. Members' questions and petitions

There were none.

6. Health and safety reports

The information was received and noted by the Committee.

The Committee noted the exceptional issues that had arisen in dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic and thanked the Council Staff for the way that they had dealt with these.

7. List of Payments

The Committee noted the lists of payments made during Quarter 1 2020-2

8. Income and Expenditure Account 2020/21

The Committee Noted the Income and Expenditure Account for the period ended 30 June 2020.

Proposed: Councillor Martin Colston

Seconded: Councillor Steve Masters

Resolved: To approve expenditure against any cost centres that are over the annual budget, in accordance with this Council's financial regulation

9. Internal Audit Report

The Committee received the final interim internal audit report for the financial year 2019/20 from Auditing Solutions Ltd. It was noted that there were no issues arising and the Committee thanked the CEO and the staff for the satisfactory report.

10. Grants Sub-Committee

The Committee received a report from the subcommittee Chairman, Councillor Gary Norman.

The date of the next Grants subcommittee meeting was confirmed as 1st September.

11. Newbury Library Service

The Committee received a report from Mr. Paul James, Culture and Libraries Manager, West Berkshire Council.

Proposed: Councillor Martin Colston

Seconded: Councillor Sue Farrant

Resolved: To pay the first quarter of the annual budgeted contribution to West Berkshire Council for Newbury Library (£3,750)

12. Newbury Youth Project

The Committee considered the 3-year Service Level Agreement with Berkshire Youth for the provision of Youth Outreach services in Newbury. members asked for the following amendments:

- The Council can appoint a Link Councillor to liaise with the Waterside centre when Berkshire Youth are operating from there
- Councillors can suggest locations which the project might address.

The Committee expressed the satisfaction of the Council that this agreement would soon be in place and thanked Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe, The CEO and Berkshire Youth for their work in delivering the Agreement.

Proposed: Councillor Jon Gage

Seconded: Councillor Steve Masters

Resolved: To Approve the 3-year Service Level Agreement with Berkshire Youth for the provision of Youth Outreach services in Newbury.

13. CIL and Section 106 Monies

The Committee noted the balances available and considered the future use of CIL and Section 106 monies received.

Proposed: Councillor Martin Colston

Seconded: Councillor Tony Vickers

Resolved:

- A. That the balance of Section 106 funds (£12,541) is allocated to the proposed Community Café in Victoria Park.
- B. £10,000 CIL is allocated towards the City Recreation grounds project to complete all the works in phase 1 to include new seats & benches, replace all the bins (not just the 2 new ones) and provide CCTV security in the area
- C. £8,600 CIL is allocated to erect deer- proof fencing to protect the new 120 tree enclosure to be provided at Wash Common.

14. Membership of Working Groups

Proposed: Councillor Martin Colston

Seconded: Councillor Sue Farrant

Resolved: That the membership of the Audit Working Group and The Strategy Working Group for the 2020/21 Municipal Year remains unchanged, that is, as follows:

- A. Audit Working Group: Councillor Stephen Masters (chair), Councillor Martin Colston, Councillor Vaughan Miller and Councillor Gary Norman
- B. Strategy Working Group: Cllrs Martin Colston, Jo Day, Chris Foster, Roger Hunneman and Erik Pattenden. (Subs: Martha Vickers and Olivia Lewis)

15. Mayor's Benevolent Fund Accounts

The meeting noted the summary financial report for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund 2019/20

16. Forward Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee meetings 2020/21
Noted.

17. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Proposed: Councillor Jon Gage

Seconded: Councillor Steve Masters

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential financial business to be transacted.

18. Debts over £500 and more than three months old- loss of income due to Coronavirus

The meeting heard that Town Hall tenants had not paid rent during the lockdown. Government guidance in this matter is that the period is not rent-free and tenants in arrears should agree payment terms with their landlords. The Council would be flexible, supporting the tenants and their businesses, but a balance was needed between the Council's duty to the public and the obligations of the tenants.

The meeting considered how the Council might deal with any of these matters.

Proposed: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

Seconded: Councillor Sue Farrant

Resolved: To authorise officers to deal with the Town Hall tenants and resolve matter outstanding, following consultation with the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

19. Council lands at Hutton Close and Sayers Close.

The Committee considered the valuation reports received on these lands.

Proposed: Councillor Martin Colston

Seconded: Councillor Sue Farrant

Resolved: To authorise officers to explore future use options on these lands.

(The meeting requested that the relevant reports be received in time for the next Strategy review in October)

(Councillor Steve Masters left the meeting at this point)

20. CCTV in the Town Hall

The Committee received a report from the CEO recommending a new CCTV system in the Town Hall, for reasons of health and safety, as well as security, to protect the assets and staff of the council, as well as Councillors and members of the public.

Proposed: Councillor Erik Pattenden

Seconded: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

Resolved: To approve the proposal for CCTV and associated IT infrastructure in the Town Hall, to be funded with the £5,000 provision in the Policy and Resources Committee Project Fund and the balance from reserves.

(Councillor Erik Pattenden and Steve Masters left the meeting at this point)

21. Website contract

The Committee heard that following staff losses the provision of website design and support services had been reviewed. It was felt that the Council did not have sufficient work to employ someone full-time in this role and that better value for money could be achieved through the use of outside consultants, as required.

A design brief had been prepared and 5 suppliers invited to quote. 4 responses had been received. The meeting considered the responses and requested the CEO to have the proposals further researched to enable the Committee to make a decision in this matter.