

**Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on  
Monday 16 January 2023 at 7.30 pm, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newbury.**

**Present**

Councillors: Martin Colston (Chairperson); Jo Day; Sue Farrant, Jon Gage, Stuart Gourley, Roger Hunneman (substitute for Cllr. Nigel Foot) and Sarah Slack.

**In attendance**

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

**38. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Nigel Foot and Erik Pattenden  
(Councillor Steven Masters joined the meeting via Zoom link)

**39. Declarations of interest and dispensations**

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillor Steve Masters is also a Member of West Berkshire District Council, which is declared as a general interest on his behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow him to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council (WBC) business.

The Chief Executive Officer declared that all members of the Town Council had a general dispensation to discuss matters in relation to the Town Council's budget and precept-setting.

**40. Minutes**

**Proposed:** Councillor Sarah Slack

**Seconded:** Councillor Roger Hunneman

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 10 October be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

**41. Questions and petitions from members of the public**

There were no questions or petitions from members of the public.

**42. Members' questions and petitions**

There were no questions or petitions from members of the public.

**43. Review of the Council's Strategy 2019-2024**

The Committee noted the Action Plan report for the Strategy 2019-2024, at 31 December 2022 and the recommendations from the Strategy Working Meeting on 13 December 2022

The Chairman presented a review of the Strategy and highlighted the main changes proposed for the following year.

The Committee was pleased with the progress made and the aims and objectives delivered, except in relation to the Community Café in Victoria Park.

The Committee noted the minor amendments regarding updates and deadlines, as well as the following additions:

- **1. Help make Newbury a unique, welcoming, safe and well cared for town**
  - A. Provide outstanding parks, playgrounds and public spaces  
*Add: 10. Carry out our responsibilities as riparian owners of any relevant lands in our ownership*
  - C. Run thriving allotments  
*Add 2: Request new developments to include allotment provision where appropriate*
  - E. Ensure our public and historic buildings are properly cared for and well used  
*Add 2: Begin work in 23/24 on a long-term strategy (20 plus years +) to include plans for the future of our public buildings and other assets, to include the next cyclical survey and forward maintenance plan, including stonework.*
  - F. Help deliver a well-presented town with high quality public amenities that support well-being, safety and visitors  
*Add d) Encourage the owners of the Kenneth centre and the planning authority to ensure any redevelopment of the town centre is in keeping with the historic town centre in terms of both appearance and scale.*  
  
*Add h) Provide town centre facilities for cyclists*

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Stuart Gourley

**Resolved:** To Recommend that Full Council on 30 January approves the draft review of the Council Strategy 2019 to 2024, as published.

#### 44. **2023/24 Budget**

The Committee considered the draft budget and noted the main changes included for 2023-24.

The CEO pointed out the main changes, relating to the new Grounds maintenance contract, salaries to provide for pay awards and the staff structure review and provision for the Community café in Victoria Park.

The Chairman told the meeting that this budget was below the current rate of inflation and he was proud that this Council had kept both the precept and Band D payments below the CPI index during the 4 years of its administration.

The meeting thanked the Chairman and the CEO for their work in reviewing the Council's Strategy and preparing/ presenting this budget.

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Jon Gage

**Resolved: To approve** the budget for 2023/24 in order that the Council can consider its adoption and formally set its precept when it meets on 30 January 2022.

**45. Health and Safety Report**

The CEO presented the quarterly Health and Safety report.

Members noted HS7, and that the Strategic Risk Register had been updated in October 2022.

It was also noted that some risk management provisions were behind schedule due to staff absences, however, there were no imminent health and safety risks.

**46. Debts over £500 and more than three months old**

The CEO reported that this was only one tenant in the Town Hall who is keeping to the agreement for payment of arrears. The Committee welcomed this news.

**47. List of Payments**

The Committee noted the payments made during the period 1 October and 31 December.

**48. Income and Expenditure Account 2021/22**

The Committee Noted the Income and Expenditure Account for the period ended 31 December 2021.

**49. Grants Subcommittee**

The Committee received a report on the meeting of the Grants Subcommittee on 21 November 2022 (Minutes already circulated)

**50. Internal Audit Reports, Q1 and Q2 2022-23**

The Committee received the internal Audit reports for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2022-23. The reports said that all was satisfactory and there were no issues to be addressed.

The meeting thanked the CEO and the accounts team for this outcome.

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Sarah Slack

**Resolved: To approve** the Q1 and Q2, 2022-23 reports received from the Council's internal auditors.

**51. Responsible Financial Officer**

The CEO told the meeting that as RFO is a statutory position, the Council's standing orders provide as follows:

- (a) The Staff Sub-Committee reviews all employment policies for Council Staff and makes appropriate recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee
- (b) In respect of the Chief Executive Officer & Responsible Finance Officer, to:
  - i. recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee appropriate staffing arrangements for the post and relevant salary scales and conditions;
  - ii. provide the Town Council with related Job Description and Person Specification; and
  - iii. propose to the Town Council such recruitment and selection processes as are required for appointment to the post (Standing Order 31.7)

The Staff Subcommittee met on 5th January 2023 and recommended the terms and conditions, job description and person specification for the role as sent to the Committee.

The CEO told the meeting that the staff budget 2023-24 approved at minute No. 44 included provision for the staff structure review and this post.

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Sue Farrant

**Resolved: To approve** the Job Description, Person requirements, terms and conditions for the Council's RFO, as recommended by the Staff Subcommittee.

## 52. **Affixing of the Council's seal**

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Jon Gage

**Resolved: To approve** the affixing of the Council's seal to the 99 year lease of Greenham house Gardens from West Berkshire Council.

## 53. **Charges at Shaw Cemetery**

The meeting received a report from the Community Services Manager regarding a motion to amend the criteria to be used when applying "out of parish" charges for services at Shaw Cemetery.

The meeting was asked to approve the following definition:

*In-Parish Fees are appropriate when:*

*a) the deceased was a resident of the Parish of Newbury at the time of death;*

*b) the deceased had resided in the Parish of Newbury in any period of one year or more in the 10 years prior to the time of death;*

*c) having been a resident of the Parish of Newbury for a minimum of 5 years, the deceased had been relocated in exceptional circumstances (for example to enable medical care or for military or equivalent service) beyond their reasonable control.*

*Documented proof of residency and reasoning in support of b) or c) above must be provided.*

*The final decision to charge the In-Parish Fee rests with and is at the discretion of the Council.*

The meeting heard that if approved, the amended definition could result in reduced income of £5,000 per annum (approx.) and that the budget approved at minute no. 44 above would have to be amended to include this before being recommended to full Council on 30 January.

**Proposed:** Councillor Martin Colston

**Seconded:** Councillor Jo Day

**Resolved:**

- 1) **To amend** the out of Parish Definitions as proposed above when determining charges at Shaw Cemetery.
- 2) **To authorise** the approval of minor changes to the definition, subject to no further loss of revenue to the Council.

**54. Forward Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee meetings 2022/23**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee meetings 2021/22. It was agreed to add the management of the letting of the Town Hall suites to the programme for the April meeting.

**55. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Proposed:** Councillor Jon Gage

**Seconded:** Councillor Jo Day

**Resolved:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for item 19 of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential personal business to be discussed.

**56. Staff Sub Committee**

The meeting received a report on the staff sub-committee meetings held on 23 November 2022 and 5 January 2023. (minutes already circulated)

The business of the meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_