

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY ON
MONDAY 29th JULY 2024 AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT

Cllrs: Phil Barnett, Jo Day, David Harman, Ian Jee, Steve Masters, Vaughan Miller, Gary Norman (chairperson), Elizabeth O’Keeffe and Meg Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Manship, Finance & Corporate Services Officer

1. CHAIRPERSON

PROPOSED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: Cllr Gary Norman was unanimously approved as Chairperson to the Policy & Resources Committee for 2024-25

2. VICE-CHAIRPERSON

PROPOSED: Cllr Gary Norman

SECONDED: Cllr David Harman

RESOLVED: Cllr Jo Day was unanimously approved as Vice-Chairperson to the Policy & Resources Committee for 2024-25

3. APOLOGIES

Cllrs: Nigel Foot (sub: Phil Barnett), Pam Lusby-Taylor (sub: Ian Jee) and Andy Moore.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Phil Barnett, as a Member of West Berkshire Council, has a general dispensation to discuss any matters relating to the business of that Council.

5. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Elizabeth O’Keefe

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 10th June 2024, be approved, and signed by the Chairperson.

6. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

7. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

8. LIST OF PAYMENTS & RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

8.1 List of Payments

Cllr Masters, Chair of the Audit Working Group, advised he had reviewed the payments made during the period 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024 and recommended to the Committee that they be approved.

PROPOSED: Cllr Steve Masters

SECONDED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

RESOLVED: To approve the payments made during the period 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024 as at appendix 2 of the agenda.

8.2 Reconciliation Statements

Cllr Masters, Chair of the Audit Working Group, advised that he had checked the Reconciliation Statements against the Bank Statements for both the Council's bank accounts, period 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024, and had signed each to confirm no obvious anomalies. He recommended to the Committee the approval of the Reconciliation Statements.

PROPOSED: Cllr Steve Masters

SECONDED: Cllr David Harman

RESOLVED: To approve the Reconciliation Statements for the period 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024, as at appendix 3 of the agenda.

9. BUDGET MONITORING MONTH 3, 2024/25

9.1 Income and Expenditure Account

Members of this committee **received** the Income and Expenditure Account for the period 1st to 30th June 2024, as at Appendix 4 of the agenda.

9.2 Expenditure against Cost Centres that are over the Annual Budget:

9.2.1. Electricity: The RFO updated members on the work being undertaken to predict the likely electricity budget overspend in the current financial year; and the ways forward being explored to mitigate impact.

9.2.2. Water: The RFO advised members that the higher-than-expected water invoice is likely due to estimated readings. The Council is again able to submit meter readings, and this will be monitored moving forward.

PROPOSED: Cllr Jo Day

SECONDED: Cllr Meg Thomas

RESOLVED:

To approve expenditure against cost centres that are over the annual budget, in accordance with this Council's financial regulation (4.2).

10. DEBTS OVER £500 AND MORE THAN THREE MONTHS OLD

Members noted there are no debts over £500 outstanding.

11. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Cllr Masters advised the Committee that the Audit Working Group had thoroughly reviewed the draft Financial Regulations, and that suggested amendments had been implemented. Cllr Masters thanked the RFO for her work drafting the document. The Committee discussed the Regulations and the RFO took questions from members.

The RFO confirmed that the draft Financial Regulations are based on the new NALC model, published earlier this year, with amendments to reflect the needs and practices of Newbury Town Council. Sections based on legislation that cannot be amended will be emboldened in the final draft. This will be forwarded to all.

RESOLVED: Cllr Steve Masters

SECONDED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

RESOLVED: That the draft Financial Regulations, to include the minor amendments discussed (a typo in 15.3 and an amendment to the budget monitoring suggested by the RFO) be taken to the October 2024 meeting of Full Council, with the recommendation of the Committee for formal adoption. That the RFO, in discussion with the CEO, has delegated authority to make minor amendments between now and then, if deemed helpful, but that the Committee must be advised of any such amendments at its next meeting.

The Chairman thanked the RFO for her work.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Committee thanked the author of the report for their work, which has resulted in this comprehensive policy. The Committee noted that the policy gives a general framework and asked after the detail, specifically as to how the Council is seeking to protect the public when on premises or sites managed by the Council. The RFO advised that the associated risk assessments and similar are currently being updated, led by the CEO and Services Delivery Manager.

PROPOSED: Cllr Elizabeth O'Keefe

SECONDED: Cllr Jo Day

RESOLVED:

The Committee asked that “The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974” be replaced with “The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974”. With this amendment the Committee resolved to adopt the Health and Safety Policy.

13. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Cllr Gary Norman declared a personal interest in the next agenda item, ‘Grant for Community United’, as he had been asked, as a volunteer, separate from the Council, to open the “One Community Cricket and Family Day”.

14. GRANT FOR COMMUNITY UNITED

Further to the meeting of 10th June 2024, when the Committee resolved that £3000 grant funding be forwarded to Community United, the question had been raised as to whether this funding could be directed towards Community United’s “One Community Cricket and Family Day”, a project listed with The Good Exchange, number 20333. This would enable match funding from The Greenham Trust. The RFO advised that this decision would need to be made by the Committee.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Steve Masters

RESOLVED: That grant funding of half the outstanding balance sought for Community United’s project “One Community Cricket and Family Day”, project number 20333, be forwarded to The Good Exchange, to enable match funding. And the remainder of the £3,000 be forwarded direct to Community United.

15. EXTERNAL AUDIT – INTERMEDIATE REVIEW PROCEDURES

Smaller authorities with gross income or expenditure over £200,000 (but less than £6.5m per annum) are subject to intermediate review procedures. A random sample of 5% of authorities who would otherwise be subject to basic procedures are selected for intermediate procedures.

The Committee **noted** that Newbury Town Council had been selected for intermediate review procedures and all required documentation had been forwarded to the External Auditor. The Committee thanked the RFO for her work.

16. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2024/25

PROPOSED: Cllr Gary Norman

SECONDED: Cllr Elizabeth O’Keefe

RESOLVED: The Committee resolved to add the following items, taken from the reviewed Financial Regulations, to the Committee’s Forward Work Programme:

- i. **Internal Auditor:** The Policy & Resources committee to evaluate the effectiveness, consider the impartiality and appoint / re-appoint the Internal Auditor annually. (Financial Regulations 3.7 & 3.8)
- ii. **Bank Mandate:** The Policy & Resources committee to determine and review the Bank Mandate regularly (Financial Regulations 1.7.1)

- iii. **Payment Methods:** The Policy & Resources committee to authorise and review the payment methods annually (Financial Regulations 8.1 & 8.3, 10.5, 11.1, 12.2, 16.3)
- iv. **Fixed Term Interest Accounts:** The RFO to brief the Policy & Resources committee at their next ordinary meeting, further to the opening, closing and transfer of funds to fixed term interest accounts (Financial Regulations 15.6)
- v. **Grants:** The Policy & Resources committee to authorise all grants under £25,000, other than those delegated to the Grants Sub-Committee. (Financial Regulations 1.7.2, 6.1.2.1 and 6.2)

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Resources committee is to be held on Monday 14th October 2024, should no meeting be called earlier.

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

PROPOSED: Cllr Steve Masters
SECONDED: Cllr Vaughan Miller

RESOLVED: That under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 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.

19. INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee considered the work of the Internal Auditor over 2023-24 and the reports received. It assured itself of the Internal Auditor's independence, confirming with the RFO that they are independent of the financial operations of the Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Gary Norman
SECONDED: Cllr David Harman

RESOLVED: That having reviewed the work of Auditing Solutions, the Council's Internal Auditor for 2023-24, and having satisfied itself of their Independence, the Policy & Resources committee delegated authority to the RFO for the reappointment of Auditing Solutions, as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2024-25, subject to their quotation for 2024-25 being within the budget set aside, and their commitment that a report for the first part of 2024-25 would be available for Committee consideration at its meeting of 14th October 2024. If either cannot be satisfied, the RFO to call an Extraordinary meeting and provide an alternative proposal.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRPERSON DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 20:30 HRS

CHAIRPERSON

Signature: _____ Date: _____