



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
01376 520627
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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Monday, 6th March 2023**

Place: **Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors

M.	Lager	(Chairman)
R.	Williams	(Vice Chairman)
K.	Atwill	
P.	Barlow	
J.	Goodman	
T.	Plesance	
J.	Williams	

Also in attendance: Cllr

S.	Hicks	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
C.	Strachen	(Assistant RFO)

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ager and Weeks.

Councillor Jay was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 5th December 2022 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

41. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

42. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Councillor Hicks, who was not a Member of the Committee, asked to speak at this point in the Meeting concerning Minute 44 – 20 mph speed limit in residential areas.

He said that the Town Council had supported a policy of 20 mph speed limit on residential roads and hoped this could be maintained. He said that it worked well in other towns and cities with random enforcement cameras.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hicks for his comments.

43. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's report on matters arising was received.

She explained that she and the Deputy Town Clerk had a meeting with Braintree District Council about Section 106 monies waiting to be spent. Their last meeting had been in 2019. She said that a more updated spreadsheet had now been provided detailing funds available and deadlines; and an explanation was given as to how to access the funding. There was £13,000 to be spent in Whetmead by the end of October and an application form would be completed and three quotations sought for replacement steps and a new notice board which would be taken to the next Town Council Meeting. She added that if a project is on the Open Spaces Action Plan and funds are available the project has a higher chance of approval.

Members discussed the opportunities afforded and the need to produce a list of priorities rather than allow the District Council to dictate what they think should be provided. A strategic approach was needed and appropriate training should be given to new Members. It was suggested that a recommendation be made to Town Council for the Committees to devise a list of priorities.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That Community, Environment and the Policy and Resources Committees have a standing item on their agenda to identify opportunities suitable for funding through Section 106 monies

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

44. 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

A report concerning the Town Council's policy for 20 mph speed limits in residential areas was received.

Members discussed the implications of the scheme and recognised that there was ambiguity as main routes would not be suitable for a 20 mph speed limit but residential estates would be. Enforcement would be an issue and it was debatable whether slower speeds would be beneficial to the environment.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the Town Council has a policy to aim for 20mph speed limits on selective residential areas.

45. WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES

(a) **EQUALITY POLICY**

The Equality Policy was received.

Members agreed that the Duty under Section 149 of the Equalities Act should be stated and ‘pregnant and maternity’ should be included in the policy overview.

RESOLVED That the Equality Policy be amended accordingly and agreed.

(b) **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

The Freedom of Information Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Freedom of Information Policy be agreed.

(c) **PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY**

The Press and Media Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Press and Media Policy be agreed.

(d) **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Public Complaints Procedure was received.

It was agreed that rather than ‘quality of service’ it should state ‘standard of service’ and that rather than ‘resident’ it should be ‘member of the public’. It was agreed that as most complaints would arise from either environment or community issues, the Complaints Panel should be identified as the Town Mayor and Chairmen of the Community and Environment Committees.

RESOLVED That the Public Complaints Procedure be amended accordingly and agreed.

(e) **TRAINING POLICY**

The Training Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Training Policy be received and noted.

(f) **MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCE POLICY**

The Town Clerk explained that this policy had been included erroneously in the Agenda.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

(g) **CCTV POLICY**

The CCTV Policy was received.

Members agreed that at Locational Information ‘static’ should be inserted before camera locations.

RESOLVED That the CCTV Policy with amendments be received and approved.

46. EVENTS CONTROL ACCOUNT

A report was received regarding the Events Control Account.

RESOLVED That the report be received and that an Events Control Account be set up and used as a control account for any events requiring extra funding on top of their designated budget.

RESOLVED That all income raised (above that which has been budgeted for) be moved into the Events Control Account at the end of an event.

RESOLVED That after consultation with the Community Committee Chairman, any underspend in an event budget line be vired to the Event Control Account by the RFO, under delegated authority and reported to the next Community Committee meeting.

RESOLVED That all control account expenditure is reported at each Community committee meeting.

47. UNITY TRUST SAVINGS ACCOUNT

A report was received regarding an Instant Access Savings Account.

Members agreed that a savings account should be set up to gain interest.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the Town Clerk be given authority to open a Unity Trust Savings Account and granted delegated authority to move funds between the Savings Account and the Current Account (and vice versa) as necessary.

48. TELEPHONE/BROADBAND CONTRACT

A report was received regarding the telephone/broadband contract.

Members agreed to vire £280 to the telephone budget.

RESOLVED That the report be received and a virement of £280 be made from the I.T budget line to the Telephone budget line.

49. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(a) BANK RECONCILIATION

The Bank Reconciliations to 31st January 2023 were received.

RESOLVED That the Bank Reconciliations to 31st January 2023 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(b) SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 31st January 2023 were received.

Members agreed that a review of the limit on the credit card should be carried out to prevent personal cards being required to be used at times of high expenditure.

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk undertakes a review of the existing limit on the credit card.

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Receipts to 31st January 2023 from the 95 Day Notice totalling £1,296.99 and from the Unity Trust Account totalling £39,942.12; and Payments to 31st January 2023 from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £5,211.47 net of VAT and from the Unity Trust Account totalling £210,554.02 net of VAT be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(c) BUDGET STATEMENTS, EXCEPTIONS REPORT AND EARMARKED RESERVES

The Budget Statements, Exceptions Report and Earmarked Reserves to 31st January 2023 were received.

Members welcomed the Exceptions Report which clarified discrepancies.

Members spoke about the remaining funds in the Devolution Budget which could be used as part of the Parish Paths Partnership scheme and it was pointed out that this would be discussed at the next Town Council Meeting.

RESOLVED That the Budget Statements to 31st January 2023 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

50. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

51. PROJECT REPORT

The report on current projects was received.

Members were informed that a contractor had been appointed to undertake the line marking on the River Walk with the section near Ebenezer Close being done later in the year. It was hoped the marking would be completed by the end of March but access to sections of the River Walk could be problematic whilst the work was carried out.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.08 p.m.

Councillor M. Lager
Chairman

NS/GK/15.3.2023