



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

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Monday, 24th June 2019**

Present:	Councillors	M.C. M	Lager	(Chairman)	
		R.	Williams	(Vice Chairman)	
		Mrs S.	Ager		
			K.L.	Atwill	
			P.R.	Barlow	
			J.C.	Goodman	
		Mrs A.	Kilmartin		
		Mrs S.C.	Lager		
			T.A.	Pleasance	
			R.P.	Ramage	
		Miss M.L.	Weeks		
	Also in attendance	Cllr P.	Ryland		
J.			Sheehy	(Town Clerk)	
Mrs G.		Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)		
Miss N.		Smith	(Assistant R.F.O.)		

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S.E. Hicks who had a previous engagement.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 15th April 2019 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

4. **QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No members of the press or public were present.

5. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

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

He explained that confirmation of an outstanding legal agreement for the Highways Devolution Pilot scheme has been completed and should therefore be underway imminently. The Chairman said that Members should look for areas where staff can undertake appropriate work.

RESOLVED That the Report be received and noted.

6. **BUSINESS PLAN**

A revised Business Plan for 2019/2020 was received.

Members discussed the Business Plan and expressed their concerns in relation to Section 106 payments by developers for infrastructure such as education, health and community facilities, and considered that there was no way of holding organisations to account. Members cited as, an example, developments on North Ward where it had been asked that Section 106 payments could be used to improve the facilities of Rickstones Pavilion. It was considered that Ward Members should be consulted before this money is spent.

The Town Clerk explained that the Section 106 Task and Finish Group would reconvene and that it was hoped to use such funding to improve public open spaces. Member considered that there would be merit in having a Community Infrastructure Levy particularly if the District Council could not deliver S106 projects with limited resources, and that this item should be referred to the Task & Finish Group for S106.

RESOLVED That the Business Plan for 2019/2020 be received and adopted.

7. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

(a) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Bank Reconciliations to 30th April 2019 were received.

The Town Clerk explained that there was no facility to make payments direct from the Mayor's Appeal Fund and it was therefore necessary to transfer monies into the General Fund first.

RESOLVED That the Bank Reconciliations to 30th April 2019 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(b) **BUDGET STATEMENTS**

The Budget Statements to 30th April 2019 were received.

There were some discrepancies noted in the Budget Statements¹. The Town Clerk explained the difficulties in using the system and new automated budget software which had been reformatted and updated recently.

The Chairman detailed the Earmarked Reserves including how there was little money in the reserves for the Puppet Festival and that the invoice for Election Expenses had still not been received but was anticipated.

Members were asked to consider viring £1,000 from the Grant Aid Budget to allow the Citizens Advice to receive its full grant of £10,000.

RESOLVED That £1,000 be vired from the Grant Aid Budget to the Citizens Advice Budget so that the full grant of £10,000 could be paid.

RESOLVED That the Budget Statements to 30th April 2019 were received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

(c) **SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS**

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 30th April 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Receipts to 30th April 2019 and totalling £292,123.24 and the Schedule of Payments to 30th April 2019 and totalling £47,344.46 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

8. **MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Details of Members' Attendance at Meetings were received.

RESOLVED That details of Members' Attendance be received and noted.

9. **ONLINE BANKING & BANKING PROVIDERS**

A further report concerning banking arrangements was received and Members asked to consider the way ahead.

A recommendation had been made to transfer the Town Council's account to the Unity Trust Bank as Lloyds had proved to be inflexible to accommodate the Council's internal control procedures. Members recognised that the Unity Trust Bank was a small bank but could offer a better service with a dedicated point of contact. If there was more than £35,000 in the savings account this would negate all fees. It was agreed that the credit card and a current account with a small balance should be retained at Lloyds and investments into fixed term contracts should be with banks with AAA rating in accordance with guidance from the Secretary of State.

The Town Clerk said that the Unity Trust Bank could satisfy the Town Council's needs with regard to online banking and would be in line with the adopted Treasury Policy. It was agreed that the banking arrangement with Lloyds should be retained whilst transferring over to Unity Trust Bank.

¹ Discrepancies arose when transferring budget documentation into agenda papers with figures transposed onto following lines.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the recommendation accepted to open a Unity Trust Bank Account.

10. PROPOSALS FOR POLICY REVIEW & NEW POLICIES

A proposals' report from the Leader of the Council on potential areas for review was received.

The Chairman detailed his proposals and suggested that these be considered over the next few months.

RESOLVED That the report be received and action taken in due course to refer new and updated policies as outlined to future Policy & Resource committee meetings.

11. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

A report was received and Members noted the outstanding elements to achieve Gold status.

The Town Clerk advised that this was largely a paper based exercise to demonstrate the Council is achieving a certain standard of service, with only a few items outstanding and appropriate resolutions and supporting statements would need to be approved by a future meeting to satisfy judging criteria.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

12. GIFTS POLICY

A Registration of Gifts Policy was received.

Members asked whether this policy should also apply to Members should they be given a gift. Members remembered that there used to be a book for this purpose and the Town Clerk said that Members would be obliged to inform the District Council's Monitoring Officer for gifts over a certain value.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would make enquiries and report back.

RESOLVED That the Registration of Gifts Policy be received and the Town Clerk report back.

13. REQUESTS TO USE OPEN SPACE

A report concerning requests to use open spaces was received.

Members considered that if open spaces were being used they could be subject to damage and a deposit should be charged to cover remedial costs. It was thought that if a commercial business was using the land a fee should be charged.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would devise a policy and bring back to the next Meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be received and a draft policy brought back to the next Meeting.

14. VIDEO MARKETING

A report on video marketing was received.

Members whilst understanding there could be merit in this proposal, considered that it could prove expensive. It was agreed to revisit at a later stage.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

15. BODY WORN CAMERA POLICY

Members were asked to review and adopt the revised Body Worn Camera policy.

The Town Clerk explained that the policy had been updated in view of the General Data Protection Regulations but working practices remained unaltered.

RESOLVED That the Body Worn Camera policy be received and adopted.

16. WITHAM RAIL STATION ADOPTION

A report was received and Members asked to consider ‘adoption’ of the railway station in regard to gardening duties.

The Town Clerk said that he was strongly in favour of taking over these duties at the Railway Station from Essex County Council. It would be a good opportunity to raise the profile of the Town Council and was a deliverable project. Members thought that community groups could be asked to assist. Preliminary details had been agreed with Essex County Council’s community rail team.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the station adopted.

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 following items of business on the grounds of the confidential nature and that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

17. RIVER WALK

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

18. PERIOD GARDEN

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

19. STAFFING

A resume of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Minutes held 3rd June 2019 was received.

RESOLVED That the resume be received and noted.

20. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Members agreed that nothing discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That no item discussed in Private Session should be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.21 p.m.

Councillor _____
Chairman

JS/GK/27.6.2019

Private and Confidential

A summary of the Minutes held in Private Session of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 24th June 2019.

At Minute 17 – River Walk

A report was received.

The Town Clerk explained that he would be meeting with the Town Council's solicitor on Friday to clear up the final points. He reminded Members that there had been a myriad of documents relating to areas of ownerless land, wayleaves, statutory declarations and adverse possessions. He was also aware that there was no indication of legal costs at this stage and would seek advice as to costs.

In answer to a question in relation to Shelley's Meadow, he explained that a visual plan had been drawn up to include all the feature which Mr Wood required and this was currently with the graphics team at Braintree District Council. Once this is available it would be brought back to Committee to arrange a further meeting with Mr Wood to discuss the transfer of Shelley's Meadow to the Council.

It was resolved to receive and note the information.

At Minute 18 – Period Garden

A report was received.

The Town Clerk explained that he had wanted to set out his proposed framework to move on the redevelopment of the Period Garden. Pre-application advice would shortly be sought. He recognised it was an ambitious timeline but achievable and a draft planning application would be referred back to the Committee upon receipt of the pre-application advice from the LPA.

The suggestion was made that the history of the garden should be recorded and archived.

It was resolved to receive and note the information.

At Minute 19 – Staffing

A resume of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Minutes held 3rd June 2019 was received.

It was resolved that the resume be received and noted.

At Minute 20 – Public Domain

It was resolved that no item should be moved into the Public Domain.

JS/GK/27.6.2019