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MINUTES

Meeting of:	**Policy and Resources Committee**			
Date:	**Tuesday, 10th December 2024**			
Place:	**Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**			
Present:	Councillors	P.	Barlow	(Chairman)
		J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)
		L.	Barlow	(arrived at 7.50 p.m.)
		B.	Fleet	
		L.	Headley	
		J.	Martin	
		R.	Playle	
		R.	Ramage	
		B.	Taylor	
		N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
		J.	Reeves	(Finance Assistant)

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heath.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

61. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 16th September 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

62. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

63. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

64. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that she had received notification that the cost of the by election would be £8,115 but she questioned this amount as there had been no polling cards. She would be arranging a meeting with the Returning Officer and added that this amount exceeded ear marked reserves for election expenses.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

65. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Members were asked to receive and approve the following policies for renewal –

(a) **Public Artefact Donation Scheme**

The Town Clerk explained that an update had been required to include details about the online museum.

RESOLVED That the Public Art Donation Scheme be received and additions approved.

(b) **Body Worn Cameras**

The Town Clerk explained that an amendment had been necessary to be GDPR compliant.

RESOLVED That the Body Worn Camera policy be received and amendments approved.

(c) **Vexatious Complaints Policy**

The Town Clerk explained that there could be problems with complaints through Social Media and the policy had been amended so if vexatious, they would not be answered.

RESOLVED That the Vexatious Complaints Policy be received and amendments approved.

(d) **Lone Worker Policy**

The Town Clerk explained that the Lone Worker Policy had been amended to ensure staff keep themselves safe and a risk assessment would be conducted for each lone worker.

RESOLVED That the Lone Worker Policy be received and amendments approved.

66. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A proposed Safeguarding Policy was received.

The Town Clerk explained that a Safeguarding Policy was required. She said that everyone would receive online training. It was agreed that details of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board would be added to the policy.

RESOLVED That the Safeguarding Policy to include details of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, be received and approved.

67. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUDGET 2025/2026

The draft Policy and Resources Committee Budget for 2025/2026 was received.

Members went through the budget noting that surveys and consultation had increased as a proposed large Section 106 project would require public consultation.

Members spoke of ways that the budget could be decreased and noted in particular the civic reception budget. In answer to a question the Town Clerk explained that the current budget included funding to hire a hall and pay for food, drink and a DJ. Members questioned why it would be necessary to have a DJ for the reception and discussion resulted in an undertaking that these costs would be considered by the Estimates Sub-Committee at their Meeting on 17th December 2024 which was open to all Councillors to attend. It was noted that the costs of the Newsletter would increase and it was important to ensure that it was fit for purposed with vital information included which would make it more beneficial to residents.

RESOLVED That the draft Policy and Resources Budget for 2025/2026 be received, accepted and taken to the Estimates Sub-Committee for further discussion on ways to reduce the budget.

68. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(a) BANK RECONCILIATION

The Bank Reconciliations to 31st October 2024 were received.

Members were informed that these documents should show a balance of zero and were signed by two different Councillors each month. It was noted that there were a number of unpresented receipts which would be chased.

RESOLVED That the Bank Reconciliations to 31st October 2024 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(b) SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 31st October 2024 were received.

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Receipts for the period from 1st July to 31st October 2024 from the 95 Day Notice Account totalling £172,623.75, from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £20.80, from the Petty Cash Account totalling £300, Unity Trust Instant Access totalling £963,940.64 and from the Unity Trust Account totalling £1,478,552.81; and the Schedule of Payments for the period from 1st July to 31st October 2024 from the 95 Day Notice Account totalling £170,000.00, from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £173,430.33, from the Petty Cash Account totalling £290.61, from the Unity Trust Account totalling £1,445,847.78 and from the Unity Trust Instant Access totalling £630,000.00, be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(c) BUDGET STATEMENTS, EXCEPTION REPORT AND EARMARKED RESERVES

The Budget Statements, Exception Report and Earmarked Reserves to 31st October 2024 were received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Income and Expenditure figures gave a percentage over spend or underspend and the Exception Report gave an explanation. It was explained that money specifically needed for a project but not spent would be put into Earmarked Reserves. The Council was duty bound to ensure that three to twelve months of expenditure was held in reserves.

In answer to a question the Town Clerk explained that the older CCTV system might require replacement cameras or wireless receivers and there was money in the budget should a decision be made to extend the system.

RESOLVED That the Budget Statements, Exception Report and Earmarked Reserves to 31st October 2024 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 8.14 p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow
Chairman
NS/GK/19.12.2024