



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

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Monday, 24th February 2020**

Present: Councillors M.C. M Lager (Chairman)
R. Williams (Vice Chairman)(arrived at 8.45 p.m.)
Mrs S. Ager
K.L. Atwill
P.R. Barlow
J.C. Goodman
Mrs A. Kilmartin
T.A. Pleasance
Miss M.L. Weeks

Also in attendance: Cllr S.E. Hicks
J. Sheehy (Town Clerk)
Mrs G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)
Miss N. Smith (Assistant RFO)

78. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R.P. Ramage who had a previous engagement and Councillor R. Williams who would be late as he was working.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 27th January 2020 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

80. INTERESTS

Councillors P.R. Barlow and M.C.M. Lager both declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 87 – Boys' Brigade Grant, as they know John Boon, Group Leader. Later in the Meeting, Councillor P.R. Barlow added to his interest as his grandson is a member of the brigade.

81. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

82. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

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

Members were advised that the Town clerk had met with a topographer and heritage surveyor with regard to the Town Hall Site Improvement Project. It was thought that the Planning Officers would insist on the wall being replaced but he had been advised to extend the scope of the application to include improved accommodation as well as any alterations to existing outside space. Members were advised that a full report would be provided at a future committee date when sufficient material for a planning application had been completed by the Council's appointed consultants.

RESOLVED That the Report be received and noted.

83. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Details of Members' Attendance at Meetings were received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

84. MEETING SCHEDULE

A draft Meeting Schedule for the Civic Year 2020/2021 was received.

Members discussed whether it would be necessary for a second Town Council Meeting in January to consider the budget. It was agreed that a second Meeting should be put into the schedule but cancelled if it proves to be unnecessary.

RECOMMENDED TO TOWN COUNCIL That the Meeting Schedule for the Civic Year 2020/2021, to include a second Town Council Meeting in January 2021, be received and agreed.

85. REVIEW OF THE VOICE

A report was received.

Members were advised that as part of the Council's ongoing plan of action to improve corporate identity and review key services for value for money that a full graphic design overhaul of the longstanding 'Voice' publication should be commenced.

Members discussed what should be included in the newsletter and it was agreed that it would be appropriate to broaden the editorial panel. It was suggested that several different formats of The Voice be prepared for the Editorial Panel to consider and a report brought back to the Committee.

RESOLVED That the report be received and Councillor Miss M. Weeks be part of the Editorial Panel of The Voice.

RESOLVED That the Editorial Panel consider several different formats of The Voice and a report brought back to the Committee.

86. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(a) BANK RECONCILIATION

The Bank Reconciliations to 31st December 2019 were received.

RESOLVED That the Bank Reconciliations to 31st December 2019 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(b) SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 31st December 2019 were received.

The Town Clerk said that a full procurement process would take place for replacement Christmas lights this year.

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Receipts to 31st December 2019 and totalling £219,761.43 and the Schedule of Payments to 31st December 2019 and totalling £315,291.59 be received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

(c) BUDGET STATEMENTS AND EARMARKED RESERVES

The Budget Statements and Earmarked Reserves to 31st December 2019 were received.

The Town Clerk explained that being close to the year end, the figures were true to projection.

RESOLVED That the Budget Statements and Earmarked Reserves to 31st December 2019 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

87. BOYS' BRIGADE GRANT

Councillors P.R. Barlow and M.C.M. Lager had declared interests. Councillor P.R. Barlow added to his interest that his grandson is a member of the brigade.

A report was received concerning a request from the Boys' Brigade to vary the conditions of its grant towards the Junior Park Run.

Members were supportive of the request but considered that in view of the lapse in time the unused grant should be returned and a further application made.

The Town Clerk explained that there would be a review of the Grant Aid procedure in due course.

RESOLVED That the Boys' Brigade be informed that whilst the Town Council is supportive of the request it would be necessary for the unused grant to be returned and a new grant aid application made for the technology project.

Whilst the above matter was being discussed Councillor R. Williams arrived at the Meeting.

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 (Section 3 and 5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

88. ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

A report was received regarding a contribution towards a retirement gift for the outgoing CEO.

Members agreed that it would be inappropriate for the Town Council to give a contribution from public money but Members could make a personal donation if they so wished.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted with Members to make a personal donation at their discretion.

89. REPLACEMENT LIFT

A report and quotations were received regarding the modernisation of the Town Hall lift.

It was explained that the lift, which was 25 years old, had become more and more unreliable and increasingly expensive to repair and was no longer demonstrating value for money. Members were advised due to the age of the lift that it fell below modern standards for accessibility.

Members recognised that the budget for major repairs would need to be used along with reserves.

RESOLVED That the report be received and subject, to officers being satisfied with all the terms and conditions, the contract for refurbishing the lift go to Eastern Lift Services at a cost of £20,480 excluding VAT.

90. LAND MANAGEMENT

A report concerning a proposed licence agreement was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

91. LAND ACQUISITION

(a) A report concerning new, strategic acquisitions was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

(b) An update concerning ongoing acquisitions was received.

In view of the time, it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders.

RESOLVED That Standing Order 3(x) be suspended to allow business to be completed.

RESOLVED That the update be received and noted.

92. LEGAL MATTERS

A report was received.

Members then considered the advice from the Essex Wildlife Trust and the potential ecological impact on the River Walk and that surface water drainage, including road run-off, could flow directly into a piped system.

RESOLVED That the report be received and advice sought from Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Anglia Water and the Environment Agency about the absence of an above ground SUDS element into the surface water drainage to prevent road run-off containing pollutants flowing directly into a piped system causing ecological damage to aquatic river wildlife.

93. DISPUTES

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

94. STAFFING AND ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

A resume of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Meeting held 2nd December 2019 was received.

RESOLVED That the resume of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Meeting be received.

95. PUBLIC DOMAIN

It was agreed that Minutes 88 – Essex Association of Local Councils, 89 – Replacement Lift, and part of Minute 92 – Legal Matters, discussed in Private Session, should be moved into the Public Domain.

RESOLVED That Minutes 88 – Essex Association of Local Councils, 89 – Replacement Lift, and part of Minute 92 – Legal Matters, discussed in Private Session, should be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.50 p.m.

Councillor _____
Chairman

JS/GK/5.3.2020