



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

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

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

Present: Councillors: P. Barlow (Chairman)  
L. Barlow  
J.M. Coleman  
B. Fleet  
R. Playle  
R. Ramage  
  
N. Smith (Town Clerk)  
H. Andrews (Deputy Town Clerk)  
G. Kennedy (Planning Officer)  
C. Strachan (Assistant RFO) (arrived at the Meeting at 7.48 p.m.)

### 26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heath, Hewitt, Martin, and Taylor.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and approved.

### 27. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 28. INTERESTS

No interests were declared at the time but at Minute 39(b) – James Cooke Wood Improvements, Councillors R. Playle and R. Ramage declared non-pecuniary interests as they knew one of the directors of a company who had given a quote.

### 29. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

**30. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**31. TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES**

Members were asked to review and approve the following policies –

(a) Body Worn Camera Policy

The Town Clerk explained that once a revised policy had been agreed then it would be circulated to appropriate staff members.

**RESOLVED** That the Body Worn Camera Policy be received and agreed.

(b) Lone Worker Policy

**RESOLVED** That the Lone Worker Policy be received and agreed.

(c) Public Artefact Donation Scheme

In answer to a question the Town Clerk explained that the display of artefacts were actively managed.

**RESOLVED** That the Public Artefact Donation Scheme be received and agreed.

(d) Public CCTV Policy

The Town Clerk explained that all the new cameras had now been installed but the camera by Conrad Road was causing a problem and an alternative location might be found.

**RESOLVED** That the Public CCTV Policy be received and agreed.

Members were asked to receive and approve the following new policy –

(e) Vexatious Complaints Policy

The Town Clerk explained that this policy was to protect both staff and Members from members of the public who continually come back on a subject for which a satisfactory answer had been given.

**RESOLVED** That the Vexatious Complaints Policy be received, agreed and reviewed annually.

The Assistant RFO arrived at the Meeting.

**32. 2024 – 2025 DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY**

The proposed Policy and Resources Committee Budget and Strategy for 2024 – 2025 was received.

Members agreed both the draft budget and Corporate Strategy.

**RESOLVED** That the Policy and Resources Committee Corporate Strategy and draft budget for 2024 - 2025 be agreed with the budget figures referred to the Estimates Sub-Committee.

**33. TREASURY AND INVESTMENT**

The Treasury and Investment Review Update was received.

The Assistant RFO had investigated whether returns could be improved. The Council currently invests its surplus in a 95 day notice account but was seeking the potential for better returns. The Assistant Responsible Finance Officer had investigated options for improved returns. Members were informed that the CCLA PSDF might have been worthwhile but there had been questions over returns if the market it invested in 'turned' adversely. The PSDF fund contains a collar, whereby if the Net Asset Value (NAV) were to move into negative territory the investor would receive 100% of their investment back as long as the NAV stayed within the range of +/-20 basis points. A further option of NS&I had been mooted but was unavailable to the Council. Members suggested that half of the funds in the 95 Day Account could be moved into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

**RESOLVED** That the Treasury and Investment Update be received and noted.

**RESOLVED** That half of the funds deposited in the 95 Day Account be moved into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund for a period of six months.

**34. RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Risk Register 2023/2024 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that this document had been produced on the advice of the Internal Auditor.

Members asked if the document could be put in a graphical form with a focus on those that would have the greatest impact.

**RESOLVED** That the Risk Register be received and produced in a graphical form highlighting those risks which would have the greatest impact.

**35. EARMARKED RESERVE – EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT**

A report regarding the purchase of a replacement rotary ride-on mower was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the main mower had broken earlier in the year and it was proposed to purchase a second-hand one that would have been refurbished. £1,000 would be given in part exchange for the old mower so £10,000 would be required from earmarked reserves for the replacement.

**RESOLVED** That approval be given for £10,000 to be taken from earmarked reserves to purchase the replacement mower.

36. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

(a) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Bank Reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Bank Reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

The Schedule of Receipts and Payments to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Schedule of Receipts to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 from the 95 Day Notice Account totalling £75,812.17, from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £15,002.90 and from the Unity Trust Account totalling £75,981.18; to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 the 95 Day Notice Account totalling £852.54, from the Unity Trust Account totalling £457,403.24 and from the Unity Trust Instant Access Account totalling £2,224.76; to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 from the 95 Day Notice Account totalling £980.85, from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £4.97, from the Unity Trust Account totalling £65,277.16 and from the Unity Trust Instant Access Account £400,000; and the Schedule of Payments to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £77,013.84, from the Unity Trust Account totalling £70,316.07 and from the Unity Trust Instant Access Account totalling £50,000; to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 from Lloyds Bank Account totalling £1,476.84, from Unity Trust Account totalling £64,878.29 and from Unity Trust Instant Access totalling £50,000.00; to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 from the Lloyds Bank Account totalling £2,709.83 and from the Unity Trust Account totalling £485,534.92.

(c) **BUDGET STATEMENTS, EXCEPTION REPORT AND EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Budget Statements, Exception Report and Earmarked Reserves to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Budget Statements, Exception Report and Earmarked Reserves were received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

37. **TREE MAINTENANCE EMR**

Members were asked to approve spending from the Tree Maintenance Earmarked Reserves.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the budget for tree works had almost been spent but additional work was required and there could also be emergency work that needed to be undertaken.

**RESOLVED** That authority be given for the Tree Maintenance Earmarked Reserves to be used.

**38. 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.

**39. SECTION 106 FUNDING**

(a) Bee Friendly Planting Project

A report was received about the Bee Friendly Planting Project. The Bee Friendly Trust had provided a quote for £2,650.03 for planting the area on the River Walk near to River View. Members recognised that it would cost more for the Open Spaces team to undertake the planting. The money for the planting would be provided through Section 106 monies.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the quotation from the Bee Friendly Trust for £2,650.03 be accepted.

(b) James Cooke Wood Improvements

A report was received.

Councillor Playle and Ramage declared non-pecuniary interests as they knew one of the directors of a company which had given a quotation.

The proposal was to install a boardwalk in James Cooke Wood which would provide accessibility for the whole year. Three quotations had been provided and the balance of the funds would be used to provide a noticeboard for the wood.

Members recognised that the quotation from Maydencroft at a cost of £19,867.56 provided the best value and agreed that a notice board be purchased from Panelwarehouse at a cost of £1,715.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the quotations from Maydencroft for the boardwalk at a cost of £19,867.56 and Panelwarehouse for a notice board at a cost of £1,715 be accepted.

(c) Funding Opportunities

The Chairman explained that the last Administration had asked that this item be on the Environment and Community Committee Agendas as a prompt but as there was now a comprehensive list of Section 106 funding opportunities and a Working Group to take this forward it was considered to be unnecessary.

Members agreed that this item should be removed from all future Agendas.

**RESOLVED** That Funding Opportunities be removed from future Community, Policy and Resources and Environment Committee Agendas.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.38 p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow  
Chairman

NS/GK/15.12.2023