



**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 commencing at 7pm.

**Present**

Chair – Councillor C Jones.

Councillors A Bassett, D Chopping, J Clark, R Houlbrooke, S Matthews, A Mickleburgh and P Stothart.

In attendance Jo Friend (Town Clerk) and J Friend (Senior Operations Support Officer).

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The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council. There were no members of the public present.

**30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Eastwell and D Hare.

**31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 were confirmed a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**32.1 Service to Earley Award Panel**

Councillor Mickleburgh enquired on the progress in convening an initial meeting of the Service to Earley Award Panel. After discussion it was agreed that, initially, Councillor Mickleburgh will act as Secretary to the Panel and convene the first meeting as there is no senior Council Officer currently available. The Town Clerk to be kept updated on developments.

**33. SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES**

**33.1 Youth Working Party**

Councillor Clark presented the recommendation of the Community and Youth Sub-Committee that a Youth Working Party be set up. Membership was agreed as Councillors J Clark, A Long and K Yabsley and the Town Clerk. It was suggested that Councillor Bhangra be invited to join the Working Party.

**34. SULV JOINT WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Matthews presented an update on the information gathered in respect of commissioning a report on protection options for the SULV.



On recommendation from the ETC representatives on the SULV Joint Working Group, it was

**RESOLVED** that John Spurling be commissioned by the SULV Joint Working Group to assess the relative merits of protection mechanisms and resources to ensure the future protection of the site and to provide relevant information for ETC to contribute to WBC's draft policy on open green space. Costs would be shared between Earley Town Council and Woodley Town Council.

A representative of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) had confirmed that WBC does not currently have an Open Green Space policy and will be looking to Earley Town Council and Woodley Town Council for input when drawing one up. The Open Green Space designation will not cover the entire Bulmershe Fields site so Councillors suggested that other protections should be looked at as well as the SULV special characteristics.

Councillor Matthews spoke of a number of resources being available from The Local Government Association including information on The National Planning Policy Framework, Green Infrastructure and Local Wildlife Sites.

Councillor Matthews suggested that further research into the Urban Tree Challenger Fund and Fields in Trust would be worthwhile.

Councillors Bassett and Matthews will be meeting with Councillor Littler to review two Land Registry documents in connection with the SULV.

**35. SIBLY TRANSFER**

Councillor Jones informed members that since the publication of this evening's agenda a response had been received from Persimmon. The Town Clerk reported that good progress had been made on the outstanding issues affecting the transfer. Councillors agreed that Councillor Jones and the Town Clerk would be responsible for issuing a press release once final agreement had been reached.

**36. FINANCIAL REPORT**

**36.1 Financial Reports & Payroll**

The Town Clerk advised that since the departure of the Finance Manager, the Senior Operations Support Officer (SOSO) had been managing the day-to-day running of the finances; producing orders for payment, making payments, and raising invoices and had brought the work up to date. Councillors asked that the Council's thanks to the SOSO for her work during this period be recorded.

The Town Clerk advised that ETC's payroll had now been outsourced to SGW Payroll Ltd. Significant work had been carried out by the Town Clerk and the SOSO in supplying all the relevant information required to SGW and the first pay run had been conducted successfully. SGW will act as the Town Council's agent with HMRC in terms of communications and submissions.

**36.2 August 2019 Bank Reconciliation**

The Committee Chair reviewed the August 2019 bank reconciliation.



**37. GRANTS**

The Town Clerk presented a report on the current grant awarding process and her recommendations that a review be conducted.

The Committee agreed that a more transparent and widely publicised application process was necessary. It was agreed that previous applicants who were accustomed to being invited to apply would be notified by email when the grant application information was uploaded to the website. Any applicants enquiring in the meantime would be advised that the grant award criteria was currently under review and no application decisions would be made prior to the end of November.

After discussion, it was agreed that a Grant Review Group be convened to consider both the types and criterion of future grants. Councillors Basset, Chopping and Houlbrooke were confirmed as members. It was agreed that Councillor J Eastwell be invited to join the group which would report their recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee.

**38. INSURANCE**

Councillors were pleased to note a saving of 12% had been achieved on the Council's annual insurance.

**39. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Members noted details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 2287 – 2291, 2292 – 2331, 2332 – 2364, 2365 – 2394, 2395 - 2424 and 2425 – 2450) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 351 - 363)

**40. PUBLICATIONS**

No publications had been received.

**41. PRESS RELEASES**

Consideration was given to whether any of the foregoing items should be the subject of a press release. It was agreed that, when the timing was appropriate, the Sibly transfer receive special press attention.

**42. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present. It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

**PART II**

**43. STAFFING COMMITTEE UPDATES**

43.1 Recruitment of Deputy Town Clerk

43.2 Finance Department

43.3 Christmas Opening Hours



43.4 Other Staffing Matters

44. **FORMER TOWN CLERK**

45. **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.42pm.

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Chairman