

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON MONDAY 13th OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Alistair Bounds (Substitute), Jo Day, David Harman, Ian Jee (Substitute), Steve Masters, Andy Moore, Gary Norman (Chairperson), Elizabeth O’Keefe, & Meg Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Manship, Finance & Corporate Services Manager

ABSENT

Councillor Nigel Foot

134. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Pam Lusby-Taylor, substituted by Councillor Ian Jee
Councillor Vaughan Miller, substituted by Councillor Alistair Bounds

135. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Billy Drummond as a Member of West Berkshire Council has a general dispensation to discuss any matters relating to the business of that Council.

There were no further declarations of interest.

136. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keefe

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

VOTE: Carried with a majority of 7 with 2 abstentions due to non-attendance.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 9th June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

137. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

138. MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

139. LIST OF PAYMENTS**139.1 BACS PAYMENTS – 1st July to 30th September 2025**

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED: That the lists of BACS payments made 1st July to 30th September be ratified.

139.2 DIRECT PAYMENTS – 1st July to 30th September 2025.

No direct payments were made within this period.

139.3 RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS – 1st July to 30th September 2025.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: The Reconciliation Statements for the period 1st July to 30th September 2025, previously verified by a member of the Audit Working Group are approved and are to be signed by the Chair.

140. BUDGET MONITORING FIRST TWO MONTHS

140.1 INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

The Income and Expenditure account for the period 1st July to 30th September 2025 was received and noted by the Committee.

140.2 EXPENDITURE WITH A VARIANCE GREATER THAN 15% OF ANNUAL BUDGET – 1st July to 30th September 2025

The Committee received the explanation for variance over 15% of annual budget. In particular, the reasons for the reduction in Town Hall Income and for the high water costs.

140.3 APPROVAL OF EMR ADJUSTMENTS IN CONSIDERATION OF THE REDUCED TOWN HALL INCOME

PROPOSED: Councillor David Harman

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED:

- i. To transfer £16k from EMR 438 (Splashpark Surface) to a new EMR 362 (General Reserves in lieu of Town Hall Income) to balance the budget at year-end if needed.
- ii. To set up in the 2026/27 budget, an EMR for the Splashpark, to rebuild funds for a new surface.
- iii. To confirm with the Bank the best way of managing funds held for the return of deposit interest and with this confirmation, to transfer the sum required to Nominal Code 503, 'rent deposits, and to budget moving forward.

140.4 APPROVAL OF EAR MARKED RESERVES (EMR) ADJUSTMENTS IN CONSIDERATION OF THE HIGHER THAN BUDGETED WATER COSTS

PROPOSED: Councillor Andy Moore

SECONDED: Councillor Ian Jee

RESOLVED: To transfer £18k from EMR 371 (Office move & refurb) to a new EMR 363 (Water expenditure) to cover over budget costs.

140.5 VIREMENTS MADE TO THE BUDGET – 1st July to 30th September 2025

PROPOSED: Councillor Alistair Bounds

SECONDED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keefe

RESOLVED: That the virements made to the budget 1st July to 30th September 2025 be ratified.

141. DEBTS OVER £500 AND MORE THAN THREE MONTHS OLD

Members were advised that there were no debts over £500 and more than three months old.

142. INTERNAL AUDIT – TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2025/26 QUARTER 1.

The Internal Audit report for 2025/26 Quarter 1, was received and recommendations noted.

143. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – REVIEW 2025/26

Further to considering the Internal Auditor’s recommendation to separate the model regulations from the local procedures (R1), the Audit Working Group recommended to the P&R Committee that one document be retained. This to keep the regulations and procedures in one place and avoid duplication across documents. Cross referencing with the Model Regulations has been added to support the annual review of the Regulations.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Alistair Bounds

RESOLVED: To retain the cross referencing and recommend the updated Financial Regulations to Full Council for approval and adoption.

144. MEMBER SUBSTITUTION IN COMMITTEES

A paper considering the options, based on the Internal Auditor’s Recommendation to discontinue the practice of councillor ‘substitution’ (R3) had been previously circulated. The CEO offered to provide the Committee with additional information from NALC and SLCC to support their decision.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

RESOLVED: That this recommendation is deferred to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2026, with receipt of additional information from the CEO.

145. CONFIDENTIAL AND PRIVILEGE MATTERS RESOLVED AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Internal Auditor Recommendation (R2)

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that when Council discusses and resolves actions that are 'confidential and privilege' due to data protection legislation and similar, any resolution should be clear in the minutes, a public document, and any 'confidential and privilege' detail should be written in an appendix, referred to in the minutes and held confidentially.

146. INVESTMENT DIVERSIFICATION

The Committee discussed the pros and cons for banking diversification – Internal Auditor Recommendation (R7.1)

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

RESOLVED: The Committee resolved not to diversify further at the present time, but to keep under annual review as part of the Council's Treasury Policy.

147. COUNCIL CREDIT CARD

The Committee discussed the pros and cons for a Council Credit Card – Internal Auditor Recommendation (R8)

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED:

- i. The RFO to investigate an NTC Credit Card, and subject to an appropriate card being identified, to apply for it, subject to consultation with the Chair of P&R.
- ii. The management team to recommend protocols, card holders and card limits for Committee approval.

148. INTERNAL AUDIT – 2025-26 – Q1 – RECOMMENDATIONS, PROPOSED ACTIONS & TIMELINE.

The Internal Auditor's Recommendations, together with proposed actions and timeline had been previously circulated.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council for approval, the actions and timeline, apart from those matters discussed and resolved above (143 – 147), as recommended to P&R by the Audit Working Group and Management Team.

149. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE CERTIFICATE 2024/25

The Committee noted that the Annual Governance Certificate, together with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, year ended 31st March 2025, published on the Council noticeboard and website on 30th September 2025.

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED:

- i. To commend the management of the 2024/25 Accounts to Full Council
- ii. To advise Council that a full review of our Assets is underway, made possible due to the recruitment of the Trainee Parks & Open Spaces Officer. Expected completion and upload of our assets to a purpose designed assets register programme is within the 2026/27 financial year. To avoid a recurrence in future years, the previous year’s asset figure will be restated.
- iii. To advise Council that the Internal Auditor confirms that there is currently no requirement for the Strategic Risk Register to be approved by Full Council, rather than delegated to the P&R Committee, this note from the External Auditor is an advisory. However, on the advice of the RFO, the P&R Committee recommend to Council that we adopt the advice of the External Auditor as from this financial year.

150. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED:

- i. To approve the reviewed CIL statements for years 2019/20 to 2024/25, as agreed with West Berkshire.
- ii. To approve the Council / CIL funding adjustments for the EMRs as affected by the above review.

151. VICTORIA PARK CAFÉ – PERGOLA

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendation of the Community Services Committee meeting, 15th September 2025, to repurpose EMR projects funding, for the Pergola development, as follows: £5,000 from EMR 418, Shaw Cemetery Land Survey; £1,800 from EMR 455, Repair of Market pop-up (4425/310); and £4,600 from EMR 456, Repair of Victoria & Lions (4541/345).

152. VICTORIA PARK – COMPOUND FOR FOOTBALL GOALS

The Committee noted the agreement of Council at its meeting, 29th September 2025, to use £2,000 from EMR 437, 9-aside football, to build a fenced compound behind the Crazy Golf Course in Victoria Park, providing dedicated storage, protected and accessible, for club owned goals. Fencing styled to match existing Crazy Golf fencing. Additional sums required (approx. £1,200) to be found from existing Community Services budgets.

153. GRANT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 26TH JUNE 2025

The Committee received the draft minutes from the Grant Sub-Committee meeting of 26th June 2025.

154. GRANT PAYMENTS

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor David Harfield

RESOLVED: The following grants were resolved:

- i. The BID – Christmas Lights - £10,000
The Committee asks the CEO to continue his discussions with The BID re: for acknowledgement of NTC contributory funds, through banners at the Switch-on event and through the placement of the Council's logo on its website.
- ii. The Volunteer Centre - £500 (TGE Ref 21139 – V365 Volunteer Recruitment Fair 2026)
- iii. Citizens Advice West Berkshire - £20,000
- iv. Community United West Berkshire - £3,000
The Committee requested this grant be considered at the Committee's June meeting in future years, to support the purpose designed.

155. BUDGET 2026/27

PROPOSED: Councillor Meg Thomas

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED: The Committee approved the Budget Review Timeline 2026/27

156. TERMS OF REFERENCE – POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Jo Day

RESOLVED:

The Committee recommends to Full Council for approval the updated Terms of Reference for the Policy & Resources Committee.

157. COUNCIL STRATEGY 2024-27 – MID YEAR KPI DATA

The Committee received the mid-year KPI data against the Council's Strategy 2024-27.

158. COUNCIL POLICIES

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

RESOLVED:

- i. The Committee would like more time to consider policies in greater detail prior to their adoption.
- ii. Two members to be allocated to each policy by the CEO, for the purposes of consultation. Members to be from the P&R Committee and its regular Substitutes, excluding The Mayor. These allocations to include:
 - a. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe
 - b. Information Technology – Councillors Meg Thomas and Vaughan Miller
 - c. Privacy Policy – Councillor Andy Moore.Other allocations to be at the CEO's discretion.
- iii. The reviewed policies to be brought to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee in January 2026 for adoption.

159. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Committee received the additional information on the incident at Christie Heights, as requested at the previous meeting.

The Health & Safety Report was not available. The CEO confirmed that he will discuss future reports with the Services Delivery Manager.

160. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Forward Work Programme was received with no amendments.

161. NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday 13th October 2025, should no meeting be called earlier.

162. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The CEO advised the Committee that there was no requirement to exclude the press and public on this occasion, as he was not able to discuss the draft Staff-Sub Committee minutes.

163. STAFFING MATTERS

The minutes from the Staff Sub-Committee meetings of 30th July 2025 and 18th September 2025, had been previously circulated. In respect to the 18th September meeting, the confidential and privilege appendix was not available for circulation. There were no questions.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE CHAIRPERSON DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED
AT 21:30 HRS**

CHAIRPERSON:

Signature:

Date: