

**Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on
Monday 15th January 2024 at 7.30 pm, in The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newbury.**

Present

Councillors Alistair Bounds, Jo Day, Jayne French-Drayton, Roger Honeyman (sub), Ian Jee (sub), Steve Masters, Vaughan Miller, Andy Moore, Gary Norman (Chairperson) and Elizabeth O’Keefe

In attendance

Liz Manship, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

42. Apologies for absence

Councillor Meg Thomas, substituted by Councillor Roger Honeyman
Councillor Pam Lusby-Taylor, substituted by Councillor Ian Jee

43. Declarations of interest and dispensations

Councillor Jayne French-Drayton, as an allotment holder, declared a prejudicial interest regarding agenda item 7, 2024/25 Service Revenues, which includes the Allotments. She would therefore not take part in discussion, nor vote.

44. Minutes

Proposed: Councillor Moore

Seconded: Councillor Day

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Monday 21st November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

45. Questions and petitions from members of the public

There were no questions or petitions from members of the public.

46. Members’ questions and petitions

There were no questions or petitions from Members.

47. Review of the Council’s Strategy 2024 – 2028

Proposed: Cllr Norman

Seconded: Cllr O’Keefe

Resolved: To recommend that Full Council on 22nd January 2024 approves the draft review of the Council Strategy 2024-2028, to include the changes suggested by the Strategy Working Group 12th December 2023.

48. Services Revenues for the 2024/25 Financial Year

Cllr Jayne French-Drayton, having declared prejudicial interests, abstained from this item.

Proposed: Cllr O’Keefe

Seconded: Cllr Moore

Resolved: That the recommendations of the Community Services Committee, agreed 11th December 2023, regarding the Services Revenues for 2024/25 for football, cemetery, markets and 2025/26 for allotments, be approved. See appendix 1.

49. 2024-25 Budget and Precept

Further to general discussion:

Proposed: Cllr O'Keefe

Seconded: Cllr Moore

Resolved:

- a) **To approve** the budget for 2024/25 in order that the Council can consider its adoption and formally set its precept when it meets on 22 January 2024.
- b) When publishing the precept leaflet for residents, to consider whether there is any additional information, to that provided by West Berks, that may assist residents affected by the financial crisis.

50. Ear-marked Reserves

Proposed: Cllr O'Keefe

Seconded: Cllr Day

Resolved: To recommend to Full Council the amendments to the EMR's for approval. See appendix 2.

51. Debts over £500 and more than three months old

It was noted that there are no debts over £500 or more than 3 months old. Cllr Masters commended the RFO for this achievement, who in turn commended her team for their work.

52. List of Payments

The Committee noted the payments made during the period 1 October to 31 December 2023.

53. Budget Monitoring Quarter 3, 2023/24

The meeting noted the Income and Expenditure Account for the period ended 31 December 2023. The RFO explained the over expenditures against the budget lines. The Committee is aware that the 2023/24 budget is likely to be exceeded for reasons outlined at the October 2023 meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Miller

Seconded: Councillor Moore

Resolved: to Approve expenditure against cost centres that are over the annual budget, in accordance with this Council's financial regulations.

54. Interim Internal Audit Report

The meeting received the second interim internal audit report for the financial year 2023/24 from Auditing Solutions Ltd. The recommendation in relation to the bank reconciliation is now current practice. The Locum Clerk has been made aware of the Internal Auditor's recommendation regarding the Standing Orders.

Proposed: Councillor Honeyman

Seconded: Councillor Bounds

Resolved: To **Approve** the Internal Auditor's recommendations.

55. Memorandum of Understanding – Allotments for the Labouring Poor

Proposed: Councillor Miller

Seconded: Councillor Masters

Resolved: To recommend to Council the agreement of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Charity 'Allotment for Labouring Poor'.

56. Health and Safety Report

The Committee noted the update. An important area, the Committee looks forward to receiving updated reports.

Proposed: Cllr O'Keefe

Seconded: Cllr Norman

Resolved: That the new Health & Safety contract with Worknest be reviewed after a year.

57. Forward Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee meetings 2023/24

Proposed: Councillor Norman

Seconded: Councillor O'Keefe

Resolved: To Approve the following addition to the Forward Work Programme for Policy and Resources Committee meetings.

a) That in addition to the quarterly Health and Safety reports, that the Committee receive a review of the contract with Worknest in about a year (January 2025).

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 08:10 pm.

Signed: _____

Chairman

Date: _____