

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON MONDAY 19th JANUARY AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Jo Day, David Harman, Pam Lusby-Taylor, Steve Masters, Vaughan Miller, Andy Moore, Gary Norman (Chairperson), Elizabeth O'Keefe, & Meg Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Manship, Finance & Corporate Services Manager

ABSENT

Councillor Nigel Foot

164. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none

165. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none

166. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

VOTE: Carried with a majority of 8 with 1 abstention 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.

167. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

168. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

169. LIST OF PAYMENTS

169.1 BACS & DIRECT PAYMENTS – 1st October to 31st December 2025

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keefe

SECONDED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

RESOLVED: That the lists of BACS & DIRECT payments made 1st October to 31st December be ratified.

169.2 RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS – 1st October to 31st December 2025.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

RESOLVED: The Reconciliation Statements for the period 1st October to 31st December 2025, previously verified by a member of the Audit Working Group are approved and are to be signed by the Chair.

170. BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER THREE

170.1 INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

The Income and Expenditure account for the period 1st October to 31st December was received and noted by the Committee.

170.2 EXTRAORDINARY EXPENDITURE

PROPOSED: Councillor David Harman

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

Extraordinary expenditure, 1st October to 31st December 2025, was ratified:

170.2.1 – Emergency Expenditure

Purchase Order: 3097 – Date 18/09/2025 – Replace defective water heater & associated repairs - £2,185.00.

170.2.2 – Works authorised without 3 quotes

Purchase Order: 3116 – Date 07/11/2025 – Re-instating collapsed lath and plaster ceiling panels & associated repairs.

170.3 EXPENDITURE WITH A VARIANCE GREATER THAN 15% OF ANNUAL BUDGET

The Committee received the explanation for variance over 15% of annual budget, 1st October to 31st December 2025. In particular, the reason for the reduction in Town Hall Wedding income and noting the reduction in Shaw Cemetery income, which will be monitored.

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

PROPOSED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: That the virements made to the budget 1st October to 31st December 2025 be ratified.

171. 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.

172. INTERNAL AUDIT – TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2025/26 QUARTER 2.

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

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

SECONDED: Councillor Steve Masters

RESOLVED:

172.1 That the recommendations received from the Audit Working Group be agreed and recommended to Full Council.

172.2 That the resolved actions resulting from the Internal Auditor’s reports, be recorded within the Policy & Resources Committee’s Forward Work Programme.

173. 2025/2026 CIL RECEIPTS REVIEW

The Council received two CIL receipts within this financial year: £5,979.34 in May 2025 and £11,481.91 in November 2025. Total £17,461.25. The November CIL, £11,481.91, was formally allocated to the Café project by Council 8th December 2025.

PROPOSED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

RESOLVED: Recommendation to Full Council that the May CIL of £5,979,34, be formally allocated to the Café project.

174. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – AMENDMENT to DBS CHECKS

Seeking to process DBS checks for Officers, the CEO has become aware that Standard Checks are not possible for our officers. However, Basic checks are considered sufficient for the purpose and by the Insurance Company.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Alistair Bounds

RESOLVED: To recommend to Council that sections 9.5 and 19.5 read as follows:

9.5 No Officer appointed after 1st April 2025 will have access to the Bank or a Bank Card without a clear DBS Check with NTC in respect to dishonesty, fraud or theft from employer and the agreement of their Line Manager further to a satisfactory 3-month probation review. A Basic DBS check is required for all Officers.

19.5 As required by the Council’s Insurer’s, the CEO shall ensure that all Officers with access to the bank, banking papers, debit or credit card, have a clear DBS check with NTC in respect to dishonesty, fraud or theft from employer. A Basic DBS check is required for all Officers. These to be renewed in consideration of DBS guidelines. For new Officers this will form part of the recruitment process.

175. GRANT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 17th NOVEMBER 2025

The Committee received the draft minutes from the Grant Sub-Committee meeting of 17th November 2025.

176. CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 6TH OCTOBER 2025

The Committee received the draft minutes from the Climate Emergency Sub-Committee meeting of 6th October 2025.

177. STAFF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 26TH NOVEMBER 2025

The Committee received the draft minutes from the Staff Sub-Committee meeting of 26th November 2025.

178. SERVICE REVENUES

178.1 To consider and approve the Services Revenues for the Cemeteries, Markets and Recreation Grounds (2026/27) and Allotments (2027/28)

PROPOSED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

RESOLVED: The Service revenues for the Cemeteries, Markets and Recreation Grounds (2026/27) and Allotments (2027/28) as recommended by the Community Services Committee at its meeting of 15th December 2025, were approved (Appendix 1).

178.2 To ratify the allotments concessionary rates.

PROPOSED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

RESOLVED:

178.2.1 20% Concessionary Rate Clarification: A 20% reduction to the rates for tenants in receipt of any of the following:

- State Pension (where only source of income)
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit.

178.2.2 With the above in place, the Committee ratified the 50% and 20% Concessionary Rates (Appendix 2)

178.2.3 That advice be sought from the CEO regarding obtaining evidence from tenants on application.

178.3 To consider and approve the Services Revenues for the Town Hall and Weddings (2026/27) as recommended by the Strategic Working Group

PROPOSED: Councillor Andy Moore

SECONDED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

RESOLVED: The Service revenues for the Town Hall and Weddings (2026/27, as recommended by the Strategic Working Group, were approved (Appendix 3).

179. BUDGET & PRECEPT 2026/27**PROPOSED:** Councillor Vaughan Miller**SECONDED:** Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

RESOLVED: The Committee recommends to Full Council the draft budget and precept, as recommended by the Strategic Working Group. As follows, with the associated Band D:

Band D Calculations	2025/26	2026/27 Recommended to Council
Budget	£2,145,107	£2,275,075
Precept	1,817,641	1,967,492
Precept % increase from 2025/26		8.24%
Tax Base confirmed by West Berkshire	13,491.52	13,526.89
Band D per annum	£134.72	£145.45
Band D per week.	£2.59	£2.80

180. EAR-MARKED RESERVES**PROPOSED:** Councillor Elizabeth O'Keefe**SECONDED:** Councillor Meg Thomas

RESOLVED: The Committee recommends to Full Council the review and recommendations to the Council's Ear-Marked Reserves (appendix 4)

181. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Committee received the quarterly health & safety report.

182. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**PROPOSED:** Councillor Steve Masters**SECONDED:** Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED: The Committee reviewed and approved the Strategic Risk Register, as recommended by the Audit Working Group and recommended its adoption to Full Council.

183. BANK CARDS & BANKING INTERNET ACCESS**PROPOSED:** Councillor David Harman**SECONDED:** Councillor Jo Day

RESOLVED:

183.1 Bank debit cards, with single transaction limits of £100.00 within a 24-hr period, were approved for each of 3 officers, Lucia Reale, Anna Roberts and Sophie Williams, subject to the satisfactory completion of their probationary periods and satisfactory DBS certificates received.

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Jo Day

183.2 Read-only access to the on-line banking records is approved for Sophie Williams, for the purpose of checking and printing bank statements against the purchase and sales ledger, subject to the satisfactory completion of her probationary period and satisfactory DBS certificate received.

184. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Jo Day

The Forward Work Programme was received with no amendments, other than the addition of the agreed actions following the Internal Audit Reports, as resolved by the Committee in item 172.2.

185. NEXT MEETING

PROPOSED: Councillor Vaughan Miller

SECONDED: Councillor Steve Master

RESOLVED: That the next meeting, scheduled to take place on Monday 20th April 2026, be moved to Monday 27th April at 7.30pm.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE CHAIRPERSON DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21:50 HRS

CHAIRPERSON:

Signature:

Date: