

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8th OCTOBER , 2020

This meeting was conducted remotely in accordance with the provisions of the 2020 Coronavirus Regulations

Present: Councillors Sarah Boad (Chair), Janet Alty, Alan Boad, Mubarik Chowdry, Judith Clarke, Bill Gifford, Louisa Radice and Susan Rasmussen.

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Will Bryce

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Boad declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service – Integrated Risk Management Plan) as a member of Warwickshire County Council.

Councillor A Boad declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 (Warwickshire Unitary Authority) as a member of Warwick District Council.

Councillor B Gifford declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Items 6 (Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service – Integrated Risk Management Plan) and 8 (Warwickshire Unitary Authority) as a member of Warwickshire County Council and in Agenda Item 8 as a member of Warwick District Council.

38. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no representations from Members of the public.

39. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10th September 2020 (Report No.4) are confirmed as a correct record.

40. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) **CURRENT ACCOUNT BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Town Clerk reported that his predecessor had investigated some options related to banking arrangements. It was noted that unfortunately it had emerged that some aspects of the Triodos' bank system were not compatible with certain aspects of the Town Council's existing financial operations and therefore the Triodos account would not suitably meet the Town Council's needs and would be closed.

The existing banking provider could provide access to internet banking, which could increase efficiency of certain processes.

It was noted that the Town Council had undertaken to explore banks with clear ethical stances, however it was also agreed that the practical arrangements needed to be effective and efficient.

It was agreed that the new Town Clerk would be afforded some time to familiarise himself with current banking arrangements and processes before bringing proposals back to the committee in due course.

(ii) STREET CLEANSING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

It was noted that since the previous minutes had been produced Kenilworth Town Council had also agreed not to make a financial contribution to the Barrow Operative service.

(iii) FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS

The Town Clerk noted that the use of You Tube was being explored in relation to the Remembrance Sunday service and this would help inform its future use for Town Council meetings.

A question was raised about Remembrance Sunday and the Town Clerk reported that Town Council officers are working with partner organisations to arrange an event which will by necessity be much smaller this year due to the Covid pandemic. Details will be communicated in due course.

41. WARWICKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY – INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority's current consultation (ending 6th November) on their draft Integrated Risk Management Plan was discussed, including the 5 key proposals:

- Ensure our workforce and ethos reflect the diverse communities we serve.
- Assess our capabilities to improve our ways of working in response to any future pandemics.
- Assess our overall resource capacity to ensure our personal and physical assets are in the right place and at the right time to deliver our statutory duties.
- Develop further opportunities to support the wider community health outcomes and help to protect Social Care and the NHS.
- Implement digital solutions to enhance our service delivery.

The following comments were made:

-The five 'proposals' identified in the draft plan seemed very sensible and were fully supported.

-The issue / challenge of embedding diversity issues into operations was discussed and it was noted that the Fire and Rescue service had indeed been very active on this topic.

-The Town Council is very supportive of the aspirations in the plan.

RESOLVED

(i) that the Town Council supports the aspirations and 'proposals' identified in the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

(ii) that the Town Clerk responds to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council.

42. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The report was discussed and a number of comments made. It was noted that the cost of the Lillington by-election still needed to be clarified with Warwick District Council.

Community Infrastructure Levy – it was noted that further CIL monies were anticipated and consideration would be given to how those funds can be best used.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted.

43. WARWICKSHIRE UNITARY AUTHORITY

Recent activity in relation to the potential move to unitary local authorities was discussed, including:

The publishing of two reports, one commissioned by Warwickshire County Council and one by Warwick District Council (in conjunction with other District Councils), which make the case for a single unitary authority for Warwickshire and two unitary authorities respectively. Links to both reports had now been circulated to all Councillors.

It was noted that Warwickshire County Council plans to request that national government consider Warwickshire in the early tranche of authorities to explore a unitary model.

Any move to unitary local government would have significant implications for town and parish councils, but could offer significant opportunities.

A meeting of town and parish councils in Warwick District took place on 29th September, facilitated by the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC). Whilst attendees recognised there may be some opportunities, smaller local councils felt their ability to take on services was limited. The meeting resolved to await the content of the anticipated government white paper on local government reform.

It was noted that this process had taken place in other areas, including neighbouring Northamptonshire and if appropriate, the Town Council could liaise with other Town Councils about their experiences.

Invitations to WCC led briefings on this topic had recently been circulated to all Councillors.

RESOLVED that the Town Council monitor the evolving situation and consider the matter further as more detail emerges.

44. PURCHASE OF NEW I.T. EQUIPMENT

The Town Clerk reported verbally on the requirement to replace some existing IT equipment in the short term in order to facilitate more efficient working, enable remote working more easily and to provide greater resilience. This can be done within existing budget provision. He advised he would give further consideration to the Town Council's IT infrastructure in due course and bring any further recommendations to the committee. The committee supported these proposals.

RESOLVED that the purchase of two laptop computers, associated peripheral equipment and a mobile phone is approved.

45 ACCOUNTS

It was noted that due to the timing of the handover to a new Town Clerk, information relating to this item had not been included with the agenda. The relevant information will be provided to the next meeting.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 6.58pm.