

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 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, Will Bryce, Mubarik Chowdry, Judith Clarke, Bill Gifford, and Louisa Radice.

Officers: Stephen Marks, Town Clerk

57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Rasmussen

58. Declarations of Interest

Councillor A Boad declared an interest as a member of Warwick District Council in relation to Agenda Item 7 - WDC Parking Charges Proposals, and took no part in the discussion on that item.

Councillor B Gifford declared an interest as a member of Warwick District Council in relation to Agenda Item 7 - WDC Parking Charges Proposals, and took no part in the discussion on that item.

59. Public Forum

There were no representations from Members of the public.

60. Minutes

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19th November 2020 (Report No.4) are confirmed as a correct record.

61. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Allotments – The Town Clerk reported that he had received a request from Binswood Allotment Society for permission to use a portion of a grant previously awarded to them by the Town Council for a different purpose (purchase of equipment) from that originally requested, due to a change of circumstances. The request had been circulated to the members of the allotment sub-committee.

Resolved – That the request from Binswood Allotments Society to amend their use of a portion of a previously awarded grant be approved.

62. Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The committee considered report No. 6 in relation to the current consultation on the draft Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The draft Strategy was discussed and the following key points were identified in response to the consultation.

The Town Council supports the 3 long term strategic objectives identified in the strategy, namely:

Healthy People
Strong Communities
Effective Services

Along with the 3 priority areas identified for focus over the next 2 years:

- Help our children and young people have the best start in life
- Help people improve their mental health and wellbeing, particularly around prevention and early intervention in our communities
- Reduce inequalities in health outcomes and the wider determinants of health

The Town Council is particularly encouraged by the emphasis within the strategy on creating places that contribute to health and wellbeing, including through healthy and active environments and strong communities. The Town Council notes that this is well aligned with its own strategic objectives.

Specifically the Town Council would like to see significant emphasis on the following issues:

- Supporting the wellbeing of pre-school children, particularly noting the role of health visitors in this.
- Addressing the issue of Diabetes and its prevention.

Resolved – That the Town Clerk respond to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council with these comments.

63. WDC Parking Charges

Cllrs A Boad and B Gifford did not participate in this discussion.

The committee considered report No. 7 regarding Warwick District Council's proposed changes to parking charges for 2021/22. Various aspects of the proposals were discussed and the following key points agreed:

That the Town Council opposes the proposed increases in car parking charges for Leamington car parks for 2021/22, based on concerns about the potential impact on businesses in the town centre, particularly in the context of the Covid pandemic and its impacts. The Town Council feels that parking charges should be maintained at current levels for a further year to aid economic recovery.

Sunday Charges – The Town Council opposes the proposed charging structure for Sundays, suggesting instead a £1 charge for all day parking in the Leamington Car Parks identified.

The Town Council opposes the introduction of charging at Newbold Comyn. It is concerned that visitors to Newbold Comyn may park instead in nearby residential streets. It also wishes to see residents and visitors using Newbold Comyn for active recreation, thus contributing to community health and wellbeing and fears that the introduction of car parking charges may have a negative effect on this.

The Town Council noted that it welcomes the free parking provided by WDC during the month of December.

Resolved – that the Town Clerk feed this response back to Warwick District Council.

64. IT & Communications

The Town Clerk updated the committee on issues relating to I.T. & Communications. The Town Clerk had identified a number of further proposed improvements to IT & Communications infrastructure.

Cllr Bryce noted that the Communications Working Group had considered some aspects of this and were supportive of improvements being made.

Cllr Alty proposed and Cllr Gifford seconded that it be recommended to Council that the proposed improvements be approved.

Resolved – that it is recommended to Council that the IT & Communications improvements identified be approved and implemented.

65. Budget monitoring

The committee considered report No 9. in relation to the current year's budget and noted the current position. It was noted that any alternative use of predicted underspends would be considered by Council in January 2021.

Resolved – that the report is received and noted.

Consideration was given to a schedule of payments arising since the last meeting. The Town Clerk noted the grant contribution to Barnardo's had previously been approved by Council during the budget setting process.

Cllr S Boad proposed and Cllr Alty seconded that the schedule of payments be approved.

Resolved - that the schedule of payments (attached) is approved

66. Revenue Budget

The committee considered a revised iteration of the draft budget for 2021/22, amended following discussion at its meeting on 19th November and further information gathered and analysis undertaken since.

Cllr A Boad proposed and Cllr B Gifford seconded that:

A further £5,000 be added to the Community Grants budget, increasing it to £50,000 from the £45,000 in the draft budget; and

that a sum of £6,000 be included in the budget for 'projects', which would enable project ideas that emerged during the year to be considered, developed and implemented.

This would result in a budget requirement from precept of £412,266.

The committee discussed the process for allocating the proposed 'projects' budget and agreed that any project proposal would need to be adequately considered, supported by appropriate justification and would be considered by the committee.

Resolved – that the Community Grants Budget be increased in the draft budget by £5,000 to a value of £50,000 and that a budget of £6,000 be included for projects.

Resolved – that the draft Town Council budget for 2021/22 be amended accordingly and recommended to Council for approval.

The Meeting finished at 18:56