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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 12 June 2023 from 7.30 - 9.00 pm

**Present:**

Councillors:

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Planning Policy and Economic Development)

Keith Martin (Resources)

Paul Rainbow (Public Services)

Steve Drury (Community Partnerships)

Jon Tankard (Climate Change and Sustainability)

Chris Lloyd (Leisure)

Philip Hearn

Stephen Cox

Chris Mitchell

Andrea Fraser (In place of Abbas Merali)

Ciaran Reed (In place of Oliver Cooper)

Phil Williams (In place of Andrew Scarth)

**Officers in Attendance:**

Joanne Wagstaffe, Hannah Doney, Marko Kalik, Kimberley Rowley, Josh Sills, Sally Riley, Sarah Haythorpe

**PR1/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abbas Merali, Oliver Cooper and Andrew Scarth with the substitutes being Councillors Andrea Fraser, Ciaran Reed and Phil Williams.

**PR2/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

**PR3/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair had ruled that the following item of business, which had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting were of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee for the following reasons:

Item 8 – Livestreaming and Virtual/Remote meetings Protocol

To enable a protocol to be agreed for the livestreaming of our meetings.

Item 9 – Substitute Members on Licensing Committee

To enable the Committee to consider details on the legality of substitute members on the licensing committee following Annual Council in May.

**PR4/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Sarah Nelmes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 – CIL applications – Mill End Community Centre as a member of the committee and left the meeting during the consideration of the item.

**PR5/23 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT 2023**

The Committee received the Health and Safety Policy Statement for recommendation to Council.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

That the Health and Safety Policy Statement be agreed.

**PR6/23 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2023-2026**

The Head of Customer Experience introduced the report to the Committee which provided details on a new Customer Experience Strategy which had been developed to continue to drive forward the Council's customer experience agenda for the next three years 2023- 2026.

The Head of Customer Experience advised that a number of things happen during the day while responding to calls. The Team that answer calls also manage the Visitor Centre and are responsible for providing admin support across the Council. In order to guarantee answering calls within a fixed period of time it would require significant additional staff resource with around 4-5 additional staff required who would solely focus on answering calls which would have cost implications of around £145,000-£185,000 a year. The peak times of the calls fluctuate but we know when there are peak times therefore ensure that additional staff are answering calls at these times, although it is limited by the number of staff within the team.

Members made the following points:

When a call is received the person who answers the phone tries to do their best to provide an answer without the need to direct the call. We felt it would be more beneficial for someone to be able to answer the enquiry on the first call rather than pass details onto someone else.

All the call statistics are now provided in the Member information bulletin each month setting out percentage of calls answered within a set time.

How many people in the team and how the team resources is allocated.

The call figures for April had significantly improved what was this down to.

People who don't use the internet how do we monitor how they interface with the Council and how they use our services.

In response to the questions the Head of Customer Experience advised that the Team is made up of a Customer Service Manager, two Team Managers, one Senior Representative, four Advance Representatives, 15 Representatives and two apprentices. There are currently two vacancies, but they have been recruited to. The way the service is managed is the two Team Managers manage the call dashboard and there is a rota which is generated each week enabling the team to rotate around so they are able to again experience of working in the Visitor Centre, answering phones and doing specific areas of admin. With regard to the improvement in call statistics it was noted the number of calls received varies throughout the year with April being a generally quieter month although we do constantly refine the details on how we respond to calls and making sure the team is working in a dynamic way. We do encourage people to use the website where possible particularly with the new website. As

part of our surveying, we undertake surveys over the phone and survey people when they come into the Visitor Centre. There are four computers' downstairs and an i-pad to help show people how to use the website. We will also be running a customer interaction survey this year.

Councillor Philip Hearn moved an amendment to the strategy, seconded by Councillor Andrea Fraser as follows to the third bullet point of page 11 of the strategy: "to provide a telephone option for those who do not have access or are unable to use the internet with the aim to answer calls within 5 rings where possible and answer queries as accurately there and then."

On being put to the Committee the amendment was declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 3 For, 10 Against and 0 Abstentions.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, seconded by Councillor Keith Martin, that the Customer Experience Strategy 2023-2026 be adopted.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 10 For, 3 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

Adoption of the Customer Experience Strategy 2023-2026

## **PR7/23 DRAFT SARRATT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR CONSULTATION**

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation reported that Sarratt Parish Council had formally submitted their Neighbourhood Plan (NP) following their own rounds of consultation. Officers are satisfied that the NP meets all of the legal requirements, and we now have a statutory requirement to consult on the plan for them for a period of six weeks. Officers were seeking agreement from the Committee for the consultation to go out. Following the consultation officers would appoint an examiner and the plan go forward for examination and we can make any modifications following that and the Parish Council can then choose whether they agree to take that plan out for referendum. We would organise the referendum and it would then be brought back to the Committee and Full Council to be adopted and to become part of the Development Plan.

Members raised the following points:

Don't put the NP out with another document just do it on its own.

The entire cost of any referendum would be absorbed by TRDC rather than by the Parish Council

How long are we expecting before we will be in a position to get to the referendum as the Parish Council expectations were to have been at referendum in May 2023?

If we are ready to go out for referendum substantially before May 2024 whether TRDC will hold the referendum out of sequence with the local election.

Was concerned about the delay and the impact this would have on planning appeals for Church Street in Sarratt.

Having a NP in place would not impact on the particular applications being referred to although the emerging plan had been commented on during the process.

Need to weigh up doing the referendum during December and not in May when the other elections are taking up and weigh up the process required, and the costs involved.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation we are required to run the referendum and the costs within that. The Council do get some grant funding to assist with the costs. In terms of the timetable, it would depend on whether we get to do the referendum out of sequence or not. Initial talks with Elections had advised it may be possible but will need to clarification on the costs.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed the recommendations as set out in the officer report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Noted the report and agreed the Sarratt NDP for consultation.

## **PR8/23            LIVESTREAMING AND VIRTUAL/REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL**

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, some amendments to the protocol as we now have the new Committee names which will need to be included at Paragraph 2.1 of the document. Following a discussion with the Committee it agreed with the proposer that the amendment should be “all Council public meetings held in the Penn Chamber at Three Rivers House and virtual sub-committee meetings”.

Members made the following points:

Good see we have now implemented this but would have liked to have seen earlier.

Raised points on the provisions for the members of the public who do not wish to be livestreamed but there needs to be transparency for the public on how decisions are made. If they don't wish to be videoed we don't video them but it is reasonable that their voice could still be heard.

Sub-committees are already livestreamed and this will continue.

Councillor Philip Hearn moved the following amendments, duly seconded, to the protocol:

At 4.1 – to replace livestream with video and to remove “for example”

At 4.2 – to replace “and we agreed this request” with “we will seek to make accommodations to allow their voice to be livestreamed but their image to be excluded” and the removal of the third sentence.

After 3 months trial details to be reported in the Members' Information Bulletin.

Officers advised that there was no requirement to change the word livestream to video in point 4.1 and the proposer withdrew this amendment.

On being put to the Committee the amendments and the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the protocol provided at Appendix 1 with the amendments above.

Noted that external advisors/consultants and officers will be able to attend meetings remotely. Following 3 months trial, officers will review the remote attendance and consider extending to members of the public wishing to make representation at the meetings on Part I business and report details in the Members' Information Bulletin.

**PR9/23            SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS ON LICENSING COMMITTEE**

At the Annual Council meeting on 23 May 2023 Members raised concern on a recommendation within the report on appointments to committee that substitute members are not allowed on the Licensing Committee or any sub-committee.

At the meeting Members voted agreement to this but then subsequently rescinded the decision under Rule 22(1a) and voted to allow substitute members on the licensing committee and sub-committee.

The report is being presented to the Committee to advise that under the Licensing Act 2003, ss.6(1), 7(1) and 9(1) substitutes are not lawfully permitted. There is recent case law that confirms substitutes are not permitted: R (Bridgerow Limited) v Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and another (2014) and MuMu Enterprises (Weston) Limited v North Somerset District Council (2014).

Members raised the following points:

Did we get external Counsel advice to confirm this.

At times it has been difficult to act on any licensing issues where we had to have a sub-committee meeting and wondered if there were enough Members on the Committee to sit on a sub-committee.

Could in future more details be provided on the legal implications on substitute members.

How long had the ruling been in place regarding substitutes and how far back had we checked.

Could we consider extending the number of the members on the committee.

The Chief Executive advised that officers had looked at the legislation. The legislation had been in place for a while but the recent case laws was in 2014 which clarified the situation. At previous Annual Council's we had agreed there would be no substitutes on licensing but we can check this back to 2014 that no substitutes have been on licensing.

Councillor Paul Rainbow moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd the recommendation as provided in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

**RECOMMEND:**

To full Council to rescind the decision of full Council made on 23 May 2023 which permitted substitutes to sit on Licensing Committee.

**PR10/23            APPOINTMENT TO THE SUB-COMMITTEES OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The report also proposes that the Members appointed to them be proportional based on the number of seats each Group has on the Council with the proportionality details provided in Paragraph 2.2 of the report with the Members appointed being:

Constitution (x9): Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Chris Lloyd, Sarah Nelmes, Chris Whately-Smith, Stephen Cox, Oliver Cooper, Debbie Morris, Ciaran Reed

Local Plan (x11): Matthew Bedford, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Chris Lloyd, Sarah Nelmes, Phil Williams, one member to be advised at the meeting, Stephen Cox, Chris Mitchell, Oliver Cooper, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn

Equalities (x9): Raj Khuroya, Khalid Hussain, Anne Winter, Kevin Raeburn, Louise Price, Stephen Cox, Rue Grewal, Lisa Hudson, Reena Ranger OBE

Any Member of the Council is able to be appointed as a Member of a sub-committee and any Member can be a substitute.

It is proposed that the Covid-19 Response sub-committee is not re-established.

The Chair advised the name to be advised at the meeting was Councillor Steve Drury onto the Local Plan sub-committee.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendations, duly seconded, and explained the increased in size for the Local Plan sub-committee.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That Members appointed to all the sub-committees be proportional based on the number of seats each Group has following the election on 4 May.

The proportionality to be as provided in Paragraph 2.2 of the report with the Members appointed being:

Constitution (x9): Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Chris Lloyd, Sarah Nelmes, Chris Whately-Smith, Stephen Cox, Oliver Cooper, Debbie Morris, Ciaran Reed

Local Plan (x11): Matthew Bedford, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Chris Lloyd, Sarah Nelmes, Phil Williams, Steve Drury, Stephen Cox, Chris Mitchell, Oliver Cooper, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn

Equalities (x9): Raj Khuroya, Khalid Hussain, Anne Winter, Kevin Raeburn, Louise Price, Stephen Cox, Rue Grewal, Lisa Hudson, Reena Ranger OBE

That no decision-making powers be delegated to the sub-committees;

That any Member of the Council can be appointed a Member of the sub-committees and all Members can be substitute Members.

To not re-establish the Covid-19 Response sub-committee.

## **PR11/23 CIL SPENDING APPLICATION - PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, AQUADROME, RICKMANSWORTH**

The report sought to allocate a total of £320,524 of CIL funding to local infrastructure projects to support growth in Three Rivers. The application is for CIL funds towards the costs of replacing the bridge connecting Riverside Drive, Rickmansworth and the Aquadrome, Rickmansworth.

The Head of Regulatory Services reported that the report had been submitted following a review of the condition of the bridge which had concluded it would need to be replaced in the next 5 years. An opportunity had become available to seek external funding towards the cost of that bridge (£1.3m being the cost) to the Department of Transport and can seek up to 75% of the funding and put in an application later this summer. A planning application is due to be

submitted for a replacement bridge as Sustran (Part of the Department of Transport) will not consider applications for funding unless the planning application had received permission. Previously we had asked that the decision be delegated so that additional funds (10%-15%) can be considered for the project and would like to with this application to have that delegation in place and have that added so that the project does not get delayed.

Members raised the following points:

How had it come about that we now needed to replace the bridge following the recent repairs and the cost implications.

There were no climate risks included particularly around flood.

Clarify the additional funds and contingencies and the delegation for this.

The bridge is very crucial and integral for the use of the Aquadrome.

When we review our Governance arrangements for CIL we look at the point systems and how many points each project is given.

It was advised there is no project overspend what was being asked for was contingency funding.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the project was being run by the property and leisure team and works had been undertaken recently but we need to have a longer term plan. The team went out to consultants, through a full procurement exercise, to get a report underway. The planning application will have the level detail associated with having a replacement bridge. The engineering consultants, who are independent of the Department of Transport, will provide feedback on taking this forward and had looked at a business plan on how you replace the bridge and what you need to do. To get the funding it has been a certain width to accommodate active travel. If we don't get the funding agreed, we will need to consider if this is still the right bridge or can we narrow it although it would still be a significant cost. The additional funding would depend on how much grant funding would be received, high inflation and having some contingency funding due to any work not taking place until next year. The delegation was being provided to not delay the project.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, with the amendment on the delegation and contingency funding of (10-15%) be included. The bridge was in need of being replaced and we had the opportunity now to apply for the Department of Transport funding.

Councillor Stephen Cox, duly seconded, proposed an amendment that the increase be up to 15%. The proposer accepted the amendment.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

Pedestrian Bridge, Aquadrome, Rickmansworth

The recommendation is that Members approve CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of this report and summarised in the table below for 2023/2024:

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure
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Three Rivers District Council <u>Rickmansworth Aquadrome Pedestrian Bridge replacement</u>	Replacement of existing pedestrian bridge from Riverside Drive
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Any request for additional monies for this specific project is delegated to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Lead Members, to determine having regard to the economic context and timescales for implementation, and who would consider an increase of up to 15% of the total CIL monies agreed.

That regular reporting on the project be made.

## **PR12/23 CIL SPENDING APPLICATIONS – MILL END COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Councillor Sarah Nelmes left the meeting.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst Vice-Chair in the Chair

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the report seeks to allocate a total of £9,000 of CIL funding from Rickmansworth Unparished area funds for a local infrastructure project to provide a replacement roof.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Vice-Chair in the Chair the voting being unanimous.

### **RECOMMEND:**

approve CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of this report and summarised in the table below:

Table 1.

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure	Total Cost	CIL Amount	Year required	funds
Mill End & District Community Association	Replacement Roof	£20,000.	£5,000.	2023	
	Electrical Works	£4,000.	£4,000.	2023	
			TOTAL: £9,000		

And any changes to the scheme proposals or variation of the financial requirements by up to 25% of the agreed commitment to be delegated to the Associate Director to determine in consultation with the Lead Member.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes returned to the meeting.

## **PR13/23 SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR END POSITION FOR 2022/23**

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed, seconded by Councillor Keith Martin, the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Lead Member for Resources went through each of the recommendations to the Committee.



Members made the following comments:

Rationale for the monies to be carried forward and not put into general reserves?

The Head of Finance advised that we know that plans are in place to spend the money and it is simpler to do it through a carry forward mechanism.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 10 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

**RECOMMEND:**

That the favourable revenue year end variance after carry forwards of £138,356 to be noted.

That the capital year end position as summarised in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 3 be noted.

To approve to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2022/23 to 2023/24 which total £490,772 to enable completion of projects as detailed at Appendix 2.

To approve the rephasing of capital projects from 2022/23 to 2023/24 which total £10,885,484 as detailed at Appendix 4.

To approve the creation of a new Commercial Risk earmarked reserve to manage financial risk associated with commercial ventures.

**PR14/23      WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee consider the work programme.

It was agreed to add into the work programme an application for CIL funding from Sarratt Parish Council for the July meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the amendment above the work programme be agreed.

**Chair**