

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 12 June 2023 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillor GR Brookes (Chairman)
Councillor M Brook
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor Mrs J Chaudry
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor N Franks
Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Ex- officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors, PD Clements, DI Davidson, VP Humphries

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs C & EJ Bowden, J Grady, RP Hopkins ,RJ Morris & AM Sinton.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

51. To note the Membership and Chairmanship of the Committee, as determined at the Annual Council meeting on 15 May 2023 (details at end of Agenda).

52. MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3RD APRIL 2023.

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 3rd April 2023 in the Council Chamber, St Richards House [*circulated with Agenda*].

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 3rd April 2023 at the Council Chamber , St Richards House, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. Year End Internal Auditors Visit 2022/2023 – 18th May 2023 - To confirm that the visit has taken place as outlined. The Internal Auditors report of observations and recommendations is presented as attached [*for information*].

The Town Clerk explained the Internal Audit process and timetable of two visits each year covering interim and year end reviews. The presented report was referred to and there were no questions arising. The Clerk also explained the process whereby the Annual Governance Statement and Annual accounts are presented through Full Council on 19th June 2023 prior to sign off and then submission to the External Auditor. The confirmation of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights for the signed off year end accounts (2022/2023) is also qualified as part of the Full Council later in June.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

54. Decarbonisation Advice & Review Reports as part of the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Programme (PEEP)

(A) Further to previous updates at the Resources Committee Meetings in January, February and April 2023, to confirm that the LED Lighting conversion and fitting

work has been completed for both Town Council buildings during April. The WCC Scheme funding contribution confirmed on 20th February 2023 (intervention rate of 26.50% which represents as £3,264.80 of the total project cost of £12,320) has been invoiced for settlement. The works comprised replacement of all remaining lights to LED, including some Smart LED upgrade provision for both premises *[for information]*.

(B) A Survey request has been received and response completed for the Peep Scheme on 25 May 2023. The following issues have been highlighted for the Scheme Administrators feedback based on the Town Council experience.

- Duplication and Complexity of the processes.
- Timescales from October 2021 to May 2023 to achieve one tangible benefit.
- The necessity for rework and two separate Peep Surveys to be completed by different Service providers.
- The disproportionate amount of time and resources expended.

The resultant funding was awarded at a reduced rate without prior notification

Councillor N Franks asked whether the Solar PV aspect was to be considered further by the Town Council. The Chairman and the Town Clerk explained that this had been part of the Resources Committee agenda at the meeting on 16 January 2023 (minute number 255/2022-23 refers). A decision had been reached and resolved by the Committee not to proceed further at that time in consideration of various factors. The Town Clerk suggested that Councillor Franks may wish to meet with the Committee Chairman and himself in order to provide an informed overview of the details and factors that had been considered. This may then enable a further feasibility option to be considered and produced in due course for the Solar PV opportunities. Councillor Franks was agreeable with this approach and a separate meeting can be arranged and further updates through the Resources Committee in due course.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

55. Scribe Accounting System option to automate the invoicing process. - To consider the outlined details and cost proposal to include the digital invoicing and room bookings functionality with the existing Scribe Accountancy System. This addition will enable efficiencies and savings to be made for the automated invoicing, collections & settlement and room bookings, covering Town Council business arrangements for Community Hall hirers and Allotment Tenancies *[Costed proposals attached with Agenda for consideration]*. The Town Clerk explained the proposed arrangements and benefits to the Town Council operations. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED To proceed with the presented additional options detailed in the proposal to include Room Bookings and Allotment Tenancy invoicing as part of the Scribe Accounting Package. The authorised cost is as outlined of £1,408.00 (excl VAT).

56. Investment Policy Review and Options – To coincide with the new Administration in May 2023 and consideration of the ongoing strategic priorities outlined within the Financial Report produced to support the estimates, budget setting and precept calculations in January 2023, it is important to review investment and reserve position options. The following linked information has been recommended for consideration of suitable options by Worcestershire CALC in February 2023.

[The Public Sector Deposit Fund | CCLA](#)

Recent Bank Base Rate increases have started to improve savings rate potential which is relevant for reviewing the investment policy and options. The recommendation from the Committee in February 2023 is that this item is referred to an early Resources Committee Meeting of the New Administration after May 2023 as an Agenda item for further informed consideration *[for information]*.

The Internal Auditor has recommended as part of the Year End Visit Observations completed on 18th May 2023 that consideration for investment provision is included as part of the annual budget setting and precept for 2023/2024 – anticipated in December 2023 and January 2024. The Year End Recommendation Report in full is Agenda item 5 point D (1) refers.

The information was noted as presented and explained by the Town Clerk. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

57. Options for Boiler Replacement – St Richards House. Pursuant to Minute Number 254 of the Resources Committee meeting held on 16th January 2023 to update on the options being collated for consideration of the central heating boiler replacement. To note that this work is not within the PEEP scheme or any connected funding scope and will be a cost from Town Council reserves. Details and options are currently being collated with different Service Providers for further informed consideration and to accord with procurement requirements. The Officers recommendation is to delegate analysis and interpretation of the options and specifications to a Working Group of the Resources Committee to take forward. Where practically possible it is advisable to complete the replacement work and installation by late September 2023. It is hoped that the options will be available for further consideration in time for the next scheduled Resources Committee meeting on 24 July 2023 and in August thereafter. To consider the Working Group delegation and membership.

The Town Clerk explained the background to the rationale for the resolved position for the boiler replacement at St Richards House. This included updating that the imperial gauge aged radiators and internal pipe network for the building was compatible for a new boiler following the fitting of metric conversion connections and isolation valves to the plant room. The suggestion for delegation to a Working Group to coordinate costings, estimates and options throughout July and August was put forward. This is conducive with progressing the project timeously for final consideration of the preferred and most suitable option to proceed by early autumn. This in turn should enable works to be undertaken prior to seasonal reliance on the heating system.

RESOLVED The information was noted and to delegate preliminary consideration of available options, scope and costings to a Working Group comprising Councillors GR Brookes, GA Duffy & N Franks. Meetings for the working Group to be agreed in due course. Final project option to proceed to be considered and verified through the Resources Committee.

58. Consideration for provision of a new Network Server for Droitwich Spa Town Council – The appointed IT Consultant for the Town Council (TCS Computer Solutions) has notified in early May that the existing business server for the computers is nearing the end of life cycle. Microsoft will cease operational support from October 2023. The professional recommendation outlined is for a replacement new server and back- up unit running the latest Microsoft Windows network operating systems software. Recommended specification and cost estimates are attached with Agenda.

Councillor N Franks asked for the IT Consultant to confirm that their suggested 64GB RAM specification for the replacement server was the most cost effective option in the context that a lesser capacity server may be suitable at a lower cost In addition to confirm the guarantee timeframe of the replacement equipment.

In general discussion it was considered that the outlined specification for the replacement server had been made on “a like for like basis” with the existing arrangements and that the server was required to be capable of supporting two websites with the general Town Council and Heritage Centre/ Museum IT platforms.

The Town Clerk confirmed that he would clarify the two points with the IT Consultant in the course of taking the replacement arrangements forward and update Councillor Franks accordingly.

RESOLVED To proceed with the arrangements as outlined and specified in the proposal for a replacement server (HP ML350 G10 tower server and Intel 4208 multi core CPU). The cost provision is authorised to accord with the proposal of £7615.00 + VAT for supply and installation. Subject to clarification of the two questions raised by Councillor Franks regarding RAM Capacity and guarantee timeframe.

59. Regular Payments Review - including list of automated direct debits and standing orders. Summary as at end of May 2023 taken from Scribe Accounts System. This accords with the Internal Auditors recommended practice to review the regular automated payments. The last reviews took place in February, June & December 2022 and February 2023 for automated payments and in October 2022 for all payments to align with interim year analysis of income and expenditure [*All Payments Lists attached for information with Agenda covering period 1st April 2023 to 30th May 2023*].

The Town Clerk explained the process for presenting the regular review of all payments including automated direct debits and standing orders. This included the confirmation that lists of all payments as well as remittances were appended to the Town Council website. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

60. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £28,255.13 were considered for payment. Total expenditure presented £28,255.13 [*lists attached with Agenda*].

There were no questions arising.
Total expenditure authorised = £28,255.13

RESOLVED-. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £28,255.13 be authorised and duly passed for payment. Total expenditure authorised = £28,255.13

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Chairman of Committee

24 July 2023

Chairman of Council

19 June 2023

