

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 21 October 2024 at 6.16 pm

PRESENT: Councillor GR Brookes (Chairman)
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor AM Sinton (Ex- officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, EJ Bowden, DI Davidson, Mrs K Fellows, J Grady, D James & VP Humphries.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors M Brook, P Clements & RJ Morris.

202. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

203. MINUTES OF THE EXTRA - ORDINARY RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2024.

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Extra – ordinary Resources Committee meeting held on 9th September 2024 in the Council Chamber, St Richards House [*circulated previously*].

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Extra- ordinary Resources Committee meeting held on 9th September 2024 at the Council Chamber, St Richards House, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

204. Notice of Vacancy in Office of Councillor – Droitwich Spa Town Council, Chawson Ward - To confirm the Election of Councillor Dales James following the by election results for the 26th September 2024. To welcome Councillor James on joining the Town Council as an Elected Member [*for information*].

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

205. Renewable Energy – Solar Power & Carbon Reduction Initiative. Pursuant to minute reference 44/2024-2025 of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2024 (below),

RESOLVED To form a Working Group Delegation of Elected Members (with Officers support) towards resurrecting a review of suitable solar panel options for the St Richards House premises. Elected Members putting themselves forward to comprise the Working Group were noted as Councillors S Brazier, M Brook, GA Duffy, N Franks, RP Hopkins & AL Key (subsequently replaced by the Chairman of Resources Committee – Councillor GR Brookes).

To confirm that the Working Group delegation met on 9th September 2024 to begin consideration of options and feasibility. The agreement reached was to register for pre – application planning advice through the Local Planning Authority as the first stage. This application was lodged with and acknowledged by the LPA on 23rd and 25th September 2024. Anticipated timescales for receipt of the professional opinion and guidance are a few weeks.

The resultant report will be updated when received and will be conducive towards making informed judgement on the further feasibility stages and costings. So far the pre- application advice process appears to be cost neutral *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

206. Renewable Energy – Solar Power & Carbon Reduction Initiative. Pursuant to draft minute reference 44/2024-2025 of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2024 (below),

RESOLVED To form a Working Group Delegation of Elected Members (with Officers support) towards resurrecting a review of suitable solar panel options for the St Richards House premises. Elected Members putting themselves forward to comprise the Working Group were noted as Councillors S Brazier, M Brook, GA Duffy, N Franks, RP Hopkins & AL Key.

To coordinate and agree a suitable date for the delegation to meet to enable consideration for options. The Chairman of the Resources Committee- Councillor GR Brookes to be added for the delegation place vacated by former Councillor AL Key.

The Clerk explained that availability was proving difficult to coordinate for a suitable date to meet for the delegation – and suggested either Tuesday 13th August or Thursday 22nd August during the day. This was noted and agreed subject to contacting the absent Members of the delegation (Councillors Franks and Brook) to gauge their availability. It was agreed to finalise and confirm in due course. Should these dates not be possible arrangements will need to be deferred for an alternative date during September

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

207. Bus Shelter maintenance - To confirm that new replacement shelters have now been installed at Trent Close and Bower Hill on Celvestune Way to accord with draft minute reference 159-2024/2025 of the Extra- ordinary Resources Committee Meeting held on 9th September 2024. In addition the shelter at Everton Close on Worcester Road has been repaired and refurbished following traffic collision damage. Repairs and replacement panels are currently progressing for the shelters on Westwood Road (near to Parkway) and Falsome Pits / Copcut on Worcester Road *[for information]*. .

RESOLVED That the information be noted

208. Regular Payments Review - including list of automated direct debits and standing orders. Summary as at end of September 2024 taken from Scribe Accounts System. This accords with the Internal Auditors recommended practice to review the regular automated payments *[lists covering period 1st April to 30 September 2024 attached with Agenda for information]*.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

209. Interim Review of Budgets 2024/2025

The reports attached with the Agenda provide the net position overall and by cost centre for the Municipal Year to date (period of analysis 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024). The overall performance to plan is maintained on track at this stage of the financial period *[lists attached with Agenda for information]*.

The Town Clerk explained the income and expenditure to plan as at 30th September 2024 spread sheet figures presented. The importance of reaffirming that the net total figures for receipts and payments were correct to the budgeting set figures from January 2024 at precept was emphasised. The Town Clerk commented on the healthy overall position to budgets at this stage of the year. Mention was made of various strategic projects making progress and the financial provision. These included the emerging Museum refurbishment (part Community Legacy funded), the Natural Networks initiative (still requiring draw down of the WCC/ Worcestershire Wildlife granted funding of £18K on completion), the Neighbourhood Plan and various infrastructure improvements (allotments, land holdings arboreal work, replacement bus shelters and VAS maintenance/ replacements). The positive impact of supplementary income received from tenancies and community hall reservations revenue were noted. Overall a frugal and measured approach is to be maintained for the finances which should ensure the year end outcome is in line with the interim performance reviewed.

Councillor GR Brookes thanked the Officer Team for their responsible management of the finances. Councillor VP Humphries commented on the positive revenue performance from the Community Hall being linked to the ease of online bookings and the local advertising of the facility.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

210. Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund –To note the accumulated receipts which form part of the Town Council financial reserve position. **To accord with regulatory requirements this money must be spent within 5 years of receipt by the Town Council, or if not, returned the originator – Wychavon District Council.** The accumulated balance breakdown is currently as outlined in the attached summary report *[details attached with Agenda for information]*.

The Town Clerk explained the following from the report.
The reserves holding of accumulated CIL monies held was last reviewed as part of Full Council on 29th April 2024. Minute reference 423-2023/2024 refers for noting. In line with regulations monies received must be spent or returned to the District Council within 5 years of receipt. The monies must be used to support development by funding:

- The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or
- Anything else concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

The Town Council currently maintains Total Neighbourhood Fund Receipts of £20,575.80, comprising four separate CIL payment components as follows *[for information]*.

- (a) £1939.47 Cockshute Hill Development – received October 2019.
- (b) £7614.76 Woodland Way Development- received October 2021.
- (c) £10,434.74 Site Demolition and development of Food Store & Car Parking, George Baylis Road - received April 2024.
- (d) £586.83 plot 5 of 9 self-build dwellings – Oakley Gardens, Newland Lane – received September 2024

Total = £20,575.80

The October 2019 component value is set for imminent expiry. Officer's recommendation is to allocate part of the costs for the recent bus shelter replacements and/or repairs when facilitating settlement of the expected invoices. CIL is part of the capital restricted reserve holding of the Town Council finances.

To ensure transparency there is a requirement to publish the position of CIL monies received, held and expenditure for each Financial Year. This Town Council publishes the full report of budgeting and precept to coincide with the setting of the annual precept in January. The report must include –

- Total Neighbourhood Fund receipts.
- Total Neighbourhood Fund Expenditure.
- A summary of Neighbourhood Fund expenditure- to include for what the Neighbourhood Fund has been applied, and the expenditure on each part.
- The total amount of the remaining Neighbourhood Fund retained at the end of the reported year.

RESOLVED That the information be noted and to include provision towards the bus shelter replacements from September 2024 from the accumulated CIL Holding. The expiry of the £1939.47 Cockshute Hill element was understood and noted to be used as part of the bus shelter expenditure provision. To update the revised total holding as part of the budget setting and precept, including verification of the reserve holdings and CIL restricted capital element in January 2025. To simultaneously update the published CIL position as outlined to maintain the annual requirement for transparency.

211. Annual Review of Bank Mandate Signature Arrangements – The Internal Auditor has recommended as part of the Interim Review 2023/2024 completed on the 7th November 2023, that the Bank Mandate signing arrangements are reviewed and recorded as a separate minute item annually. To note that the established authorised signatories are the Chairmen of the three Standing Committees, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, as well as the Town Clerk / RFO. The signing arrangements are any two of the aforementioned Elected Members with the Town Clerk for all payment authorisations - (cheques and regular automated payment arrangements). The authorised signatories for Members are amended with the Bank on the occasions of any changes to the Standing Committees Chairmanship and the annual arrangements for Mayor and Deputy Mayor. These positions are reviewed as part of the AGM Agenda each May *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

212. Kidderminster Road Land – To receive a short update on the position and options for the redundant Town Council owned land holding at Kidderminster Road *[details attached with Agenda for information]*

The Chairman explained the report for information.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

213. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £22,766.84 and supplementary accounts of £ £1,586.31 were considered for payment. Total expenditure presented **£24,353.15** [full lists attached with Agenda].

Total expenditure authorised = £24,353.15

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £24,353.15 be authorised and duly passed for payment. Total expenditure authorised =£24,353.15

214. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

RESOLVED That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters

215. Heritage Centre Community Legacy Project. To consider the Design Procurement evaluation and recommendations arising from the delegation meeting held on 9th October 2024.

The Town Clerk explained the Procurement process and referred to the Heritage Project report which confirms the recommended award for the Design aspect. This follows the procurement opportunity description and evaluation scoring details published through the Contracts Finder Notice on 7th August. Six sealed bids were received by the closing date of 16 September. These were opened simultaneously in the controlled environment of the Procurement Delegation Meeting of Wednesday 9th October for interpretation and evaluation using the scoring matrix. The seven delegates comprising four Councillors and three Officers individually scored the bids following the evaluation criteria and methodology. Following careful consideration and scoring the unanimous recommendation is for the contract to be awarded to Far Post Design Limited.

The Chairman and Councillor AM Sinton (Mayor) spoke highly of all the bids received and in particular the Far Post Design Limited recommendation. The Town Clerk reaffirmed that he has remained neutral for the process as the Independent Overseer and to ensure due diligence and protocol for transparency has been maintained. It was updated that following this ratification through the Resources Committee (for final financial and commercial authorisation) the successful bidder will be notified. Thereafter the unsuccessful applicants will be contacted and provided with feedback. The Town Clerk explained that the final award and detailed terms of contract for Far Post Design Limited will also need to be ratified by Full Council, most likely at the December 2024 or January 2025 scheduled meetings. In anticipation of this a meeting is being arranged with Far Post Ltd and the Professional Architect for the project during November with Officers.

To note that a similar procurement opportunity exercise with evaluation and recommendations - will follow for the building works part of the project shortly. Final contract awards require ratification by the Full Council. The overall project delivery remains on track to proceed through 2025.

RESOLVED To award the Design Contract for the Droitwich Spa Heritage & Information Centre Refurbishment project to Far Post Design Limited, as recommended following the Procurement Evaluation and Scoring delegation of the 9th October 2024. Final contract terms to be ratified through Full Council at a forthcoming scheduled meeting (likely December 2024 or January 2025).

216. Insurance Claim – Pursuant to minute reference 158-2024/2025 of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 9th September 2024 to confirm that the Town Councils Insurance Company representative attended on 17th September to progress the Investigation Report and prepare statements. Further progress updates will be provided when received in due course.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

217. Mayoral Charity Arrangements 2023/2024-Pursuant to draft minute reference 182-2024/2025 of the Full Council meeting held on 23rd September 2024. To conform to the recommendations of the Internal Auditors Independent Review and resultant report received on 6th September 2024 the attached summary details the actions required for the Town Council. This is conducive towards satisfactorily addressing all of the outstanding matters as identified by Officers and the Internal Auditor over the financial arrangements connected with the Mayoral Charity Fund raising 2023/2024 [*summary report attached with agenda detailing necessary actions and timescales*].

Councillor AM Sinton (Mayor) proposed that he call an Extra – ordinary Meeting of the Full Council at the opportunity of the date for the next scheduled Committee Meeting (Planning and Community & Amenities) on Monday 4th November 2024. This is conducive towards fully interpreting the matter of the Mayoral Charity arrangement 2023/2024. The Mayor is able to call for the Extra – ordinary meeting of Full Council as determined in the adopted Nalc model Standing Orders. The Chairman seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED To defer consideration of this item for interpretation and consideration of the Full Council. To be tabled as the agenda for an Extra – ordinary meeting of Full Council to be held following the scheduled Committee Meetings on 4th November 2024.

The meeting closed at 6.42 pm.

Chairman of Committee



2 December 2024

Chairman of Council

16 December 2024