

**Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 10 Jun 2025 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors K. Baker (Chairman); J. Anderson; G. Bello; D. Bragg; R. Horskins; M. Kennedy; M. Nagra; A. Swaddle*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk; D. Coe, Finance Manager;*

**Also present:** *Cllr B. Rowland (Virtual Attendance)  
2 members of the public*

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Horskins, and

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ That Councillor Baker be appointed to the position of Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 0

It was proposed by Councillor Horskins, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ That Councillor Swaddle be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 1

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gilder and Rowland. Councillor Rowland attended the meeting virtually.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

**4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2025**

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 25 March 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**5. ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the actions and follow ups update, as provided in the agenda.

**12 September 2023 – Minute 26**

The Town Clerk updated Members that the process for reimbursing VAT charged on sports facilities had moved forward and that it was expected all refunds would be finalised by 1 August, with the outcome reported back to the Committee.

#### **21 November 2023 – Minute 48**

In relation to the water bottle filling station for the town centre, it was noted this was now due to be installed on the week commencing 1 July.

#### **21 November 2023 – Minute 57**

Members noted the new delegate microphone system had now been installed and that, whilst officers were still getting used to the system, the sound quality of recordings had now significantly improved. As such, this action was complete.

#### **23 January 2024 – Minute 67**

The Town Clerk confirmed that he now had a meeting arranged with the Council's IT provider to review, amongst other things, the Council's IT risk assessment.

#### **23 January 2024 – Minute 73**

Members noted that, in relation to the potential installation of a borehole at the allotment site, two companies had been contacted to quote for a feasibility study and test drill.

#### **10 September 2024 – Minute 32**

The Town Clerk confirmed that an audio loop had now been implemented as part of the Council's new meeting delegate system. As such, this action was complete. Members requested that this be publicised.

#### **26 November 2024 – Minute 41**

In relation to the potential extension of the Council's lease of Wheble Park, the Town Clerk advised that draft heads of terms had now been received from Reading Borough Council and that he was now awaiting the final document.

#### **22 April 2024 – Minute 84 e)**

Councillors received updated details of the Council's loans, including the dates of payments, from the Finance Manager. As such, this action was complete.

#### **22 April 2024 – Minute 87**

Members received an updated version of the Council's capital programme schedule at the meeting. As such, this action was complete.

#### **22 April 2024 – Minute 84 b)**

In relation to the high cost of electricity supply to the town centre clock, the Town Clerk advised that he was working with the Council's energy supply broker to move to a new provider, which was expected in the next week.

6.

### **FINANCE**

#### **a) Budgetary Control**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 16/25.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ♦ To note Report No. SR 16/25.

#### **b) Payments**

An expression of thanks was made to the new Finance Manager for providing a fulsome response to a Councillor's recent finance queries.

Following a query regarding the purchase of items from Amazon, the Town Clerk confirmed officers do shop around and shop local where appropriate but that, often, Amazon was found to be the cheapest supplier.

A query was raised as to whether leasing gym equipment at the leisure centre was indeed the most cost-effective option. The Town Clerk confirmed that the lease was agreed by the Council and that, whilst it appears expensive, all maintenance costs are included and equipment was able to be swapped in and out.

Members noted that payment information was only available for one month due to the agenda being required to be issued only a few days after the last month end. Following discussion, Members asked that payment information be circulated monthly to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the payments made from the Council's accounts for April 2025, as provided in the agenda and published online, totalling the following amounts:

|            | <b>Current account</b> | <b>Imprest account</b> |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| April 2025 | £146,389.79            | £70,272.45             |

**c) Internal Audit**

The Town Clerk provided Members with a progress update with regards to the recommendations made by the internal auditor in the report.

In relation to fixing the IT link between the Council offices and Woodford Park Leisure Centre, the Town Clerk advised that he was working with the Council's IT provider to seek a solution.

Members noted that the new Finance Manager had developed a new policy in relation to debtors, including standard template letters and a protocol to progress towards the Strategy & Resources Committee considering the writing off of debts.

With regards to an issue the internal auditor had verifying the pay of certain officers who had been with the Council for some years, the Town Clerk confirmed that this information had now been provided and that the Council was due to re-issue new contracts, with no changes to particulars, to all staff via a new HR provider shortly.

The Town Clerk advised Members that officers were working on an improved management plan in relation to the Council's earmarked reserves which would feed into budget setting in future years.

Following a query regarding earmarked reserves, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Council does release residual amounts no longer required to be held back into the general reserve, with this decision being made by the Strategy & Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the final audit report of the Council's internal auditors for 2024/25, as provided in the agenda.

**d) CCLA PSDF Funds**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the update with regards to the Council's funds within the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF), as provided in the agenda.

7. **OAKWOOD CENTRE INCOME UPDATE**

The Town Clerk presented the Oakwood Centre room hire and catering income updates.

Members requested that the charts be reduced to reflect only a few years income figures, with a note put against any year affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the Bookings and Room Hire income and Catering income charts, as provided in the agenda.

8. **WOODLEY TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

Members noted that a meeting was due to take place shortly between Woodley & Earley Lions and the Woodley Town Centre Partnership with regards to the running of a Woodley beach event in 2026, with the Lions pledging £5k to support this. On behalf of the Town Council and the Partnership, the Chairman thanked the Lions for their support of this event and other initiatives.

A query was raised regarding the lack of detail relating to the Wokingham Borough Council officer report item in the minutes. The Chairman advised that no Borough officer had been in attendance; however, the Executive Member for Economic Development had attended, although he had not expected to provide a report. The Executive Member listened to feedback from attendees and had agreed, in future, that he would be responsible for providing this report.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the report of the Woodley Town Centre Partnership meeting which took place on 16 April 2025.

9. **CAPITAL PROJECTS SCHEDULE**

The Town Clerk provided an updated Capital Projects Schedule at the meeting.

Members thanked officers for their work in completing the projects, noting that the work is managed well by a small team. Congratulations were also extended to the Amenities Team for the new Coronation Orchard, with Members noting excellent feedback from the public.

Following a query, the Town Clerk confirmed that the intention was to update the capital programme process and provide far greater information in future regarding potential projects, rather than just those which have been agreed, providing the Committee with appropriate oversight.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the update on Council projects.

10. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items raised by Members.

11. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

Members requested that officers publicise the installation of the water bottle filling station in the town centre.

Meeting closed at 8:31 pm