



Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held at the Town Hall on 20 October 2021 at 7pm

Councillors present:

James Bradbury	Jenny Budgell
Clare Cape	Robert Giles
Angie Litvak-Watson	David Poole
John Scragg	George Simmonds
Myla Watts (Chairman)	

Officers present: Mark Smith, Chief Executive
Nick Rees, Director of Resources
Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services
Lynsey Nichols, Head of Communications
Jessica Mantell, Democratic Services Officer
Kingsley Walker, Duty Officer

Also present: Kathryn MacDermid

Public Present: There was one member of the public present

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no written and one verbal question from a member of the public, which is appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The response to this question was not part of the meeting but is appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Nick Murry due to another commitment, Councillor Andy Phillips due to personal reasons and Councillor Mary Norton due to ill health.

32. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION

Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson was substituting for Councillor Nick Murry.

33. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

34. MINUTES

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 01 September 2021 were a correct record, they were proposed by Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson and seconded by Councillor Robert Giles. With all in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

The minutes were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

35. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

36. SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

i) CIVIC MATTERS SUB COMMITTEE

Councillor John Scragg presented the minutes. Councillors noted the minutes from the Civic Matters Sub Committee meeting held on 14 September 2021 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

37. ADVISORY GROUP NOTES

i) CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY GROUP NOTES

Councillor John Scragg presented the notes. Councillors acknowledged the notes from the from the Climate Emergency Advisory Group meeting held on 06 September 2021 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved except for Item 8 due to be resolved on Item 9 - Global Covenant of Mayors.

38. COMPLAINT POLICIES

The Chief Executive presented a report regarding an update to the Council's Complaints Protocol and the introduction of a Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy. Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson proposed an amendment to the Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy to revise the wording of the text found on Page 25 of the policy, to state "If the complainant continues to behave in a way which is deemed unacceptable then the Grievance and Complaints Panel in consultation with the Corporate Management Team may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and cease any investigation into his or her complaint", this was seconded by Councillor James Bradbury. Due to the equality of votes, the Chairman exercised her casting vote.

Councillor Robert Giles requested a minor amendment to the Complaints Protocol's scope to state its application to complaints "made by the public" and a minor amendment to the Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy to include "conducting a campaign against the Council's Officers that may or potentially amount(s) to being defamatory in nature" within the non-exhaustive list of examples of unreasonably persistent behaviour. Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson requested a minor amendment to the Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy to change the pronouns used throughout the policy to 'their'. These suggestions were welcomed by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that:

(i) Councillors agreed to adopt the new Complaints Protocol and the suggestion from Councillor Robert Giles regarding the wording of its scope be included.

(ii) Councillors agreed to adopt the new Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy subject to the amendment raised by Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson regarding the revised wording of the relevant passage found on Page 25 of the policy and the suggestions from both Councillor Robert Giles regarding an additional item to the list of unreasonably persistent behaviour and Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson regarding the use of pronouns be included.

39. GLOBAL COVENANT OF MAYORS

The Director of Community Services presented a report regarding the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, membership of which is open to all nations, with the overall aspiration to step up climate ambitions and commit to delivering action at the pace that science dictates. With the majority in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

Councillors agreed that the Town Council sign the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

40. FINANCE UPDATE REPORT (MONTH 5)

The Director of Resources presented a report regarding the financial results after the first 5 months of the financial year.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the Income & Expenditure position after 5 months to August 2021.

41. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION: AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR MONTH 5

The Director of Resources presented a report on behalf of the Head of Finance, regarding the accounts payable and bank reconciliations at the end of the current period, Month 5 2021/2022.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the report.

42. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

Councillors requested communication on the Complaints Policies within the Town Council's newsletter and the signing of the Global Covenant of Mayors be communicated to the Youth Council.

43. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of this Committee will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 08 December 2021.

The meeting concluded at 8:11pm

These Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the Committee as a true record of the meeting

Chairman:

Date:

DRAFT

Public Question

At the invitation of the Chairman, one member of the public made the following verbal question:

Thank you Chairman, it was just a question about the Community Donations Sub Committee which I attended the other day. I was a little perturbed that the whole of the budget for that Committee was spent in one night. In fact, there was one person who did suggest we only have one meeting in a year and give all the money away in one lump. There are a lot of charities and volunteer organisations in Chippenham that rely on the grants from the Town Council and I do believe that Sub Committee was originally set up to help people who wanted to hire the Neeld Hall and couldn't afford the cost of the Neeld Hall but they could apply for a grant to use the Neeld Hall. I do feel that all of the grants shouldn't be put out in one go almost and I wondered if there was anything in Standing Orders or the terms of reference for the Community Donations Sub Committee which could shed light on the fact that all the money was given away when from my point of view it should have been stretched out over the year. It is just a question on those terms of reference to see if that is actually allowed.

NOT PART OF THE MEETING

APPENDIX B

Written response to the public question asked at the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting on 20 October 2021.

Thank you for your question made at the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting on 20 September 2021 regarding whether there is anything stipulated in the Community Donations Sub Committee's terms of reference to prevent the entire budget being used in one meeting. The terms of reference and scheme policy relevant to this Sub Committee do not prevent Councillors resolving to distribute grants in this manner.