Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee
3rd November 2025 7:30pm at The Guildhall

Cllr Eyre	Present		Cllr Gibson	Apology
Cllr T Martin	Present		Cllr Rowlands	Present
Cllr C Martin	Present		Cllr Saunders	Present
Cllr Crayford	Present		Cllr Coniam	Substitution

269 Apologies for Absence

The meeting commenced with the chair welcoming everyone and noting that there were no public applicants for the items on the agenda. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gibson, who was substituted by Cllr Coniam.

270 Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked for any declarations of interest regarding items listed on the agenda. No formal declarations were made, although there was a brief mention of occasional work by a member, which did not necessitate a formal declaration.

271 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous Policy and Resources Committee meeting dated 6th October 2025 were reviewed. Cllr Saunders proposed, seconded by Cllr Coniam and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Meeting dated 6th October 2025.***

The minutes were accepted without any objections, and there were no additional matters arising from the previous meeting that needed to be discussed.

Decision: The minutes of the previous meeting dated 6th October 2025 were approved without objections.

272 Monthly Reports

The Committee discussed the monthly reports submitted. Cllr Saunders raised a query regarding the Committee's expenditure, noting that only £33 had been spent this year. The Chair acknowledged the ongoing projects, such as the photographic work by Councillor Perkin and the CCTV installation, which had not yet been invoiced. The discussion also touched on the youth grants application process, which had faced delays due to illnesses. The Chair mentioned a proposal to disband the youth working group and integrate youth-related matters into broader community discussions.

Decision: The reports were noted.

273 Policy Review

Several policies were identified for review, including the electronic communication policy and the GDPR-related policies. It was noted that some policies dated back to 2018 and might need updating due to new legislation. The proposal was made to review these policies by the end of the year. There was a consensus on the importance of keeping policies up to date.

Decision: It was decided to review the electronic communication policy and GDPR-related policies by the end of the year.

274 Strategic Working Group

The Chair mentioned that further recommendations would be addressed in the private session later in the meeting. The minutes indicated a recommendation to write formally to the CEO regarding the lease transfer of the central car park.

Decision: Cllr C Martin proposed, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Strategic Working Group meeting dated 28th October 2025.***

Task: Write formally to the CEO regarding the lease transfer of the central car park. @*Louise Bareham*

275 To make recommendations for the Community Governance Review

The Committee discussed the Community Governance Review, focusing on potential changes to ward boundaries and councillor representation. It was noted that Priory Ward had seen significant housing developments, and Watling Ward was experiencing major developments. The recommendation was to increase the number of councillors for these wards. The discussion also covered the possibility of tidying up boundaries, particularly in areas like Perry Court, which straddles different wards. The Chair emphasised the importance of opening discussions with surrounding parish councils regarding boundary adjustments.

Ultimately, it was resolved to form a working group to develop detailed proposals. The working group was tasked with meeting twice before the deadline, with proposed meeting dates of 11th and 18th November. The recommendations from the working group would then be presented to the full council on 20th November for final approval before submission.

Decision: It was resolved to form a working group to develop detailed proposals for the Community Governance Review.

Task: Form a working group to develop detailed proposals for the Community Governance Review. @*Louise Bareham* 11/11/2025

<u>Task</u>: Present the recommendations from the working group to the full council on 20th November for final approval before submission. @*Louise Bareham* 20/11/2025

276 Oare Gunpowder Works

The situation at Oare Gunpowder Works was reviewed, with two main recommendations: transferring the site to the Environment Committee and engaging solicitors for the reassignment of the lease

<u>Decision</u>: It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to authorise the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Environment Committee to appoint either Company A or Company B on the basis of best value and allocate up to £7,500 for the legal work associated with the transfer of Oare Gunpowder Works.***

<u>Task</u>: Engage solicitors for the reassignment of the lease for Oare Gunpowder Works. @*Louise Bareham*

277 Faversham War Memorial

The committee considered the recommendations of the report on Faversham War Memorial. The discussion focused on the importance of maintaining the memorial and ensuring it remains a fitting tribute to the fallen. The Clerk confirmed that Swale Borough Council officers supported the transfer, which would be formally proposed at their meeting in January. Councillors expressed some confusion about the ownership and maintenance of the assets, particularly the war memorial cross. It was clarified that while the War Memorial Committee had raised funds for the memorial, the land itself was owned by Swale Borough Council. The transfer would include the memorials, ensuring local control and maintenance. The council agreed to proceed with the transfer, with the understanding that further discussions with Swale Borough Council officers would be necessary to finalise the details.

<u>Decision</u>: It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to proceed with the transfer of the memorial assets.***

<u>Task</u>: Proceed with the transfer of the garden and memorial assets, ensuring all necessary legal and administrative steps are taken. @*Louise Bareham*

278 Draft Budget 2026-2027

The draft budget for the fiscal year 2026-2027 was reviewed. The Clerk provided an overview of the initial figures and assumptions. Key points included the under-budgeting of insurance and business rates for the current year, which would need to be addressed in the new budget. Councillors raised several questions about the assumptions underlying the budget, including inflation rates, staffing costs, and income projections. Income projections were noted to be cautious, particularly due to the temporary closure of the Guildhall for building work. The Clerk explained that grant income could not be budgeted for until secured, and that the draft budget was a starting point for further discussion. It was agreed that the draft budget would be reviewed by all committees to ensure comprehensive input and adjustments. The council would continue to refine the budget in the coming months, taking into account any new developments and financial obligations.

Task: Review the draft budget for 2026-2027 by all committees to ensure comprehensive input and adjustments. @*Louise Bareham*

279 Matters for Report

It was agreed that the agenda would include the policy reviews and a full budget discussion, with an extended meeting time if necessary. No additional items were proposed for the next meeting, and it was noted that the meeting length should be managed to avoid exceeding two hours. Councillors were reminded to submit any further agenda items in advance to ensure proper scheduling and preparation.

Decision: It was decided to include policy reviews and a detailed budget discussion in the agenda for the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

280 Private Session

The committee resolved to enter a private session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The public and representatives of the press and broadcast media were excluded from the meeting due to the sensitive nature of the business to be transacted. This agenda item marked the transition to the private session.

Decision: It was RESOLVED to enter a private session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, excluding the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media due to the sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.

281 Strategic Working Group – Confidential Recommendations

In the private session, the committee discussed confidential recommendations provided by the Strategic Working Group. The recommendations focused on strategic initiatives and confidential matters that required careful consideration. The chair led the discussion, ensuring that all members had the opportunity to provide input. The committee reached a consensus on the recommendations, agreeing to implement them as appropriate.

Decision: It was agreed to engage a land agent to explore potential property acquisitions and expansions, with the understanding that this would be a preliminary step and not a commitment to immediate action.

<u>Decision</u>: It was agreed to seek quotations for conducting a staffing review, aiming to enhance the committee's effectiveness and productivity.

<u>Task</u>: Seek quotations from relevant organisations for conducting a staffing review. @*Louise Bareham*

NB: Please note that we are trialling new AI software to generate our agendas and minutes.