MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2nd November 2026 at 7:30pm

The Town Hall

Present: Cllr C Martin (Chair), Cllr Crayford, Cllr Gibson, Cllr B Martin, Cllr Rowlands, Cllr Saunders

In attendance: Adrienne Begent (Interim Town Clerk)

Public Questions:

Chris Oswald-Jones queried several items on the Budget Report including the justification for an increase for the councillor and staff training budget line, why no electricity increase for the market, a query on the maintenance budget, a reduction in the allotment budget line, an issue with a boundary wall at Davington Hill which required repair, and the mobility and safety project was recorded as 0.

Jonathan Harris queried whether the transfer of TC funds between accounts required two signatures.

371. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr Eyre.

372. Declarations of Interest

None

373. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting dated 5th October 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting.***

374. Monthly Reports

The Detailed Balance Sheet Report was received and noted.

It was proposed by Cllr C Gibson, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the Meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Detailed Balance Sheet Report.***

The Detailed Income and Expenditure Report was reviewed.

It was proposed by Cllr C Gibson, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the Meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Detailed Income and Expenditure Report.***

Cllr Saunders requested the details of Ham Farm be shared.

Cllr Saunders queried why the Facilities budget was ahead of its spending at this point in the year and why the dog waste bags were showing 0 spend.

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375. RFO Report

It was proposed by Cllr Crayford, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the RFO Report.***

The requirement to increase the general reserves was noted.

Cllr Crayford advised the largest political group should present the budget for the minority group to suggest amendments.

Cllr Rowlands advised they would draft a budget and seek responses from the minority group with the proposed budget being presented at the Finance meeting in January 2027.

376. Policies

a) Complaints Policy

The Complaints Policy was reviewed.

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to add that if the Mayor was unavailable the Deputy Mayor would stand in.***

It was proposed by Cllr Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Complaints Policy as amended.***

b) Robe Wearing Protocol

The Robe Wearing Protocol was reviewed.

Under section 3 Hats it was agreed to amend the paragraph as follows:

"For the purposes of this protocol, any references to the wearing of robes shall also include the wearing of ***Town Council*** hats by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Town Councillors – generally worn outside not indoors unless agreed by the Mayor and Town Clerk.

Under section 4.2 Civic Ceremonies and Events it was agreed to amend the following:

"Remembrance Day: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Town Clerk shall wear robes at the Remembrance Day ***Church*** Service."

"General Events: The Mayor may wear robes, when requested to do so, at events to which they are invited. Invitations are to be overseen by the ***Mayor's Secretary***."

It was proposed by Cllr Crayford, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Robe Wearing Protocol as amended.***

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377. Council Apologies

The motion paper titled: *"Motion: Review of the Process for Considering Councillors' Apologies for Absence"*, which had been referred from Full Council was noted and received.

Cllr Crayford suggested seeking advice from NALC and looking at the processes in other councils. Cllr B Martin summarised the process at Swale BC.

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that the current policy was fit for purpose and to retain it until a revised policy was presented.***

It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr B Martin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that Cllr B Martin would draft a policy in conjunction with Cllr C Martin.***

378. Interim Audit Report

The Interim Audit Report was received and noted.

Concerns were raised that there were irregularities on the Asset Register that had not been identified in the report. It was agreed the RFO and the Town Clerk would provide an update report at the next meeting.

379. Budget 2027-28

The Draft Budget Report from the RFO was received and noted.

Cllr Saunders raised queries for consideration including:

- 1090 Bank Interest – was the bank interest figure realistic?
- 4012 Councillor Allowances – was the figure based on 17 Councillors?
- 4100 Salaries – indicated a 15% increase on what basis?
- 4115 Pension – why no increase?
- 4190 Oare Gunpowder Works General – why no budget allocated?
- 4827 Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park – why no budget allocated?
- 1752 Electricity Market Contribution – why has this not increased?
- 4305 Town Quay Maintenance – why no costs recorded?
- 1250 TS Hazard/Town Quay Income – Why no provision recorded?
- 4257 Depot – Why no figure recorded?
- 4170 Vehicles – This item relating to bus hire requires a budget.
- 4670 Remembrance Day – Does the figure need to increase?
- 4811 Dog Poo Bags – Have we enough stock for the next year?
- 4826 Ham Marshes – Need to budget.
- General Reserve – if this was a lower figure would the internal auditor raise concerns?

It was agreed that the largest political group would draft a budget for the minority group to question as previously agreed under MI 375 RFO Report.

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380. Guildhall Wedding Hire Review

The Guildhall Wedding Hire Review Report was received and noted.

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Rowlands, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to increase Guildhall Wedding Hire Rates to £400 (Weekdays) and £550 (Weekend/Bank Holidays) for ceremonies booked from 1st January 2027.***

The meeting closed at 9:32pm

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