



Mayor: Cllr A Kendall, Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
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**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Special Policy, Resources & Finance Committee
23rd April 2024 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software;
and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.**

Present (in person): Cllrs G Oakes (Chair); T Casey; K Gill; E Hopkins; A Kendall; E Potts-Jones; W Read; A Richards; and R Stickland.

In Attendance (in person): Cllr T Lock (Yeovil Lyde Ward); Cllr A Soughton (Yeovil Westlands Ward); Cllr R White (Yeovil Westlands Ward); Cllr D Woan (Yeovil College Ward); A Card (Town Clerk); S Freemantle (Deputy Town Clerk); and Joella Summers (Yeovil4Family Joint Programme Lead).

In Attendance (virtual): Cllr J Snell (Yeovil Westlands Ward).

There were no members of the public present and one members of the press present virtually.

7:00 pm - Public Comment

The member of the press questioned why the Council were reviewing the public participation policy.

7:07pm – the meeting commenced.

11/201 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Lowery (conflicting engagement); S Lowery (work commitments); R Spinner (personal reasons) and A Wilkes (work commitments).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/202 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations at this time.

11/203 MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2024.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 26th March 2024.

11/204 YEOVIL4FAMILIES

The Committee were introduced to Joella Summers - Yeovil4Family Joint Programme Lead.

At this point, Cllr A Kendall declared a personal interest in this item, due to the fact that he hosted refugees and Cllr E Hopkins also declared a personal interest due to her previous friendship with Joella Summers.

A Councillor questioned whether a breakdown was available to show the number of families within and outside the parish of Yeovil that were supported by Yeovil4Families. The Yeovil4Family Joint Programme Lead reported that there was not at present but parameters within in reports could be set for future use of the service. Concerns were also raised regarding the amount of work and expenditure that the Council were already committed to and that there was a limit to how much financial support the Town Council could give, although he did support the proposal in principle. He also commented that he would like to see other parishes contribute. Some Councillors agreed with these points. Some Councillors felt that there was a rush to make the decision.

At this point, Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest in this item, owing to him being the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council.

Support was given by other Councillors to this proposal as the service was seen to be vital for the community. One Councillor spoke of the risk of not supporting the service, whilst another stated that the Gateway was a place that he used to signpost people to access the services there.

A suggestion was made to insert break clauses to review the arrangement at the end of Year 1 and Year 2, so that the financial situation at both Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil4Families could be reviewed. It was also suggested that Yeovil4Families approach other local councils.

The Committee debated whether the Service Level Agreement should stipulate that any financial contributions made by Yeovil Town Council should be ringfenced for support for families who lived in the parish of Yeovil.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to recommend to Town Council to agree a Service Level Agreement of £25,000 per year for 3 years, with break clauses at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 to review the arrangement, which would include reviewing the financial situation at both Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil4Families, and that the agreement should not stipulate that any financial contributions should be ringfenced for support for families who lived in the parish of Yeovil; (3) to recommend to Town Council to fund £25,000 in year 1 (2024/25) by £7,250 2023/24 grant underspend, £10,000 2023/24 New Initiative underspend, with the remaining £7,750 from contingencies; and that year 2 (2025/26) and year 3 (2026/27) a specific budget line of £25,000 be inserted; and (4) a draft Service Level Agreement be submitted to Town Council for agreeance.

8:06 pm – Joella Summers, Yeovil4Family Joint Programme Lead left the meeting and did not return. Cllr E Potts-Jones also left the meeting and did not return.

11/205 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the suggested Public Participation Policy. The Town Clerk also referred to the investigation that she had carried out regarding how other Town Councils managed public participation. She noted that all but one Town Council had one opportunity for public participation, whilst one Town Council encouraged the public to participate in discussions throughout the agenda.

8:23 pm – Cllr W Read left the meeting.

8:25 pm – Cllr W Read returned to the meeting.

8:25 pm – Cllr E Hopkins left the meeting.

Some other suggestions were made to further improve the policy.

8:27 pm – Cllr E Hopkins returned to the meeting.

8:32 pm – Cllr T Casey left the meeting.

8:345 pm – Cllr T Casey returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) subject to the suggestions given in the meeting, to agree the changes as highlighted in the Public Participation Policy; (3) that the Town Clerk would circulate the final draft of the Public Participation Policy to the Councillors; and (4) that the Town Clerk produce a guide for the public.

11/206 DEVOLUTION OF ASSETS AND SERVICES

The Committee considered the report regarding the Devolution of Assets and Services which referred to the detailed notes of the meeting of the Devolution and Organisation Working Party attached within the agenda. The services discussed were Open Spaces, Play Areas and Yeovil in Bloom.

8:57 pm – Cllr A Soughton left the meeting.

8:57 pm – Cllr A Kendall left the meeting and did not return.

9:04 pm – Cllr A Soughton returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to recommend to Town Council that Yeovil Town Council take on the full responsibility of all Open Spaces, all Play Areas and Yeovil in Bloom from Autumn 2024; (3) that up to £354,229 (the amount will be pro ratad accordingly) is funded from Unallocated General Funds for the remainder of this year (2024/25); and (4) to set a budget of £571,969 in 2025/26, as indicated within the report (an additional £354,229).

Public Comment

The member of the press commented that he had found the public comment session at the end of the meeting very useful as he was able to ask questions about the meeting.

9:04pm – The member of press left the meeting and did not return.

11/207 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of the remaining agenda items would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3

9:05pm – The Town Clerk left the meeting.

11/208 STAFFING (STAFF IN CONFIDENCE)

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk.

9:15pm – Cllr D Woan left the meeting and did not return

9:28pm – Cllr R White left the meeting and did not return.

9:29pm – Cllr T Lock left the meeting and did not return.

9:30pm – Cllr T Casey left the meeting and did not return.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to agree to the regrade of the Town Clerk to Chief Executive/Town Clerk to SCP 55 – 62, starting at 58, to be backdated to 1st April 2024.

The meeting closed at 9:32 pm.

Signed: (Chair) Date