

Minutes of a meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, following a meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee on Monday 13 January 2025.

PRESENT:

Cllr. A. Stuart (Chair), M. Best, N. Draycott, D. Livesley, J. Morris, J. Nathan, C. Rawe, A. Samuel, and S. Woodland.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan, Deputy Clerk G. Hughes.

011 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
24/25

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Ashton and Head (both unwell).

012 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
24/25

Cllr. Best noted that he had an interest in the grant application relating to CUDOS Youth by virtue of his membership of CUDOS, and would not participate if there was any discussion on this.

013 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
24/25

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 10 June 2024 be **APPROVED**.

014 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM
24/25

No members of the public were present.

015 FINANCE:

24/25 a. To receive the third quarter income and expenditure financial report

The third quarter income and expenditure financial report was noted, with the Chair noting that having agreed several large projects utilising earmarked reserves, projected outturn for 2024/25 was in line with expectations. No questions were raised.

b. To receive a report on estimated Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2025

A report on the projected levels of Earmarked Reserves at year end was noted, no questions raised.

c. To receive a report on the estimated level of General Reserves as at 31 March 2025

A report on the projected level of General Reserves at year end was noted. The Town Clerk confirmed that the projected level of 23.6% of the precept against the Council's own policy of retaining 25%, was not ideal, but could be rectified during Q4.

d. To review the draft proposal for the award of Community Grant Award for 2025/26 for recommendation to Full Council

The following grant awards were **AGREED** for recommendation to Full Council:

Organisation	Purpose of grant	Amount Requested	Proposed Award
Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre	Running costs	£1,500	£500
Crewkerne in Bloom	Extra hanging baskets	£650	£650
Henhayes Centre	Running costs	£1,000	£500
Merriott Majorettes	Batons/poms/costumes	£500	£500
CAB South Somerset	Crewkerne CAB Service	£1,052	£1,052
Crewkerne Shed	Running costs	£1,000	£1,000
1 st Crewkerne Scout Group	Upgrade surface at front of Scout hut	£2,000	£2,000
Crewkerne Pegasus Karate Group	New crash mats	£1,000	£1,000
CUDOS	Set up and running costs for CUDOS Youth	£250	£250
Crewkerne Boxing Club	New extension	Any	£1,000
Severalls War Memorial Gardening Group	New plants	£350	£350
Crewkerne Gardening Club	Contribution to cost of flower show	£200	£200
Crewkerne & District Twinning Association	Contribution to hospitality and entertainment	£500	£500
Crewkerne Methodist Church	Contribution to increased VAT rate on utility bills	£1,000	£0*
Connect Somerset	Build a neighbourhood team for Crewkerne	£975	£975
Ferne Animal Sanctuary	Equipment for a dog field	£997	£0
Awe & Wonder	Hire costs for GRC	£1,537	£1,537 **
Friends of Crewkerne Station	Plant and compost renewal	Any	£300
Crewkerne Allotment Team	Works to trees	£500	£500
Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership	Hire costs/Public Liability insurance for Wellbeing Group	£900	£900
Crewkerne Rugby Club Youth Section	New tackling equipment	£700	£700
		TOTAL	£14,414

* But to delegate to the Town Clerk to discuss a revised grant application devised to support the community element of the original application.

** Grant 'in kind', but would become payable to new GRC management, dependent on timescales.

e. To consider the draft budget and associated precept calculation for 2025/26 for recommendation to Full Council

Cllr. Stuart introduced the draft budget for 2025/26, noting that a few items remained undecided, notably the expenditure relating to the future management of the George Reynolds Centre (GRC). Various options were being considered by councillors and financial provision had been made in the budget for the most likely scenario, however an element of flexibility also remained.

In addition to changes relating to the GRC, the draft budget included the following for 2025/26 in addition to all ongoing commitments:

- Reduction in CTC staffing budget with the removal of 1FTE.
- Impact on CTC staffing budget due to Government changes to NI contributions and thresholds.
- Increase in community grants budget to support wider range of groups and higher value grants where possible.
- Pressures on Youth Service due to NI costs, and additional plans to run a Skate Jam event in 2025.
- Upgrade of Happy Valley floodlights to energy efficient LEDs.
- Changes to Somerset Council's waste removal arrangements and the need to now pay for waste collections from Town Council open spaces.
- Various health and safety inspections due and associated rectifications.
- Continued provision for service devolution.
- Additional Speed Indicator Device.
- Proposal to increase cleaning of Falkland Square toilets to twice daily.

The budget and precept requirement of £663,503 were **AGREED** by all for recommendation to Full Council for formal approval. (Change to a Band D charge of an additional £4.46 p/a, or 37p per month).

016 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

24/25

None.

017 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

24/25

Monday 10 February 2025, following the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 19.34.

Signed:

Dated:

PR13January2025