

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 16th JUNE 2025** at **7.00PM**

PF/01 PRESENT

Chair: Councillor R. Owen

Councillors: Childs; Cowell; Ginger; Hepworth; Lyle; Scott Bell; Taylor

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Lucy Jones, Senior Finance Assistant

PF/02 ABSENT

Councillors Gill, Harris and Parry were absent.

PF/03 WELCOME

The Chair, Councillor Owen, welcomed everyone to the Policy and Finance Committee meeting and advised on essential housekeeping information.

PF/04 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The Chair notified those present that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcasting is permitted during public session of Council Meetings.

PF/05 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED JH/ISB (Unanimous)

That Councillor Taylor be elected Vice-Chair of Policy and Finance Committee for 2025/26.

PF/06 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gill.

PF/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Declarations of Personal Interest

None declared.

PF/08 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were two members of the public present at the meeting.

A resident of Ludford queried if and when audio equipment would be installed in the Guildhall to improve audio quality for both Councillors and the public, whether AI could be used to minute meetings and if the Council would put pressure on Shropshire Council to take action regarding the appearance and, in some cases dangerous condition, of some of Ludlow's buildings.

PF/09 UNITARY COUNCILLORS' SESSION

There were no Unitary Councillors present.

PF/10 MINUTES

RESOLVED GG/DL (6:0:2)

That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on the 7th April 2025, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

PF/11 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the items to action from the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on the 7th April 2025, be noted.

PF/12 FINANCE INFORMATION

a) Payments & Income

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the Cash Book Payments and Income for March and April 2025 be received.

PF/13 b) Payments & Income Reconciliation

RESOLVED KC/MT (Unanimous)

That the Cash Book Reconciliation for March and April 2025 be received.

PF/14 c) Barclaycard

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the Barclaycard Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/15 d) PayPal

RESOLVED DL/KC (Unanimous)

That the PayPal Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/16 e) Petty Cash

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the Petty Cash Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/17 f) Pubic Sector Deposit Fund

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the Public Sector Deposit Fund Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/18 g) Income

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the Income Cash Book Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/19 h) Electric Vehicle Charging

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the Electric Vehicle Charging Reconciliation for January, February, March and April 2025 be received.

PF/20 i) Mayor's Charity Account

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the Mayor's Charity Account Payments, Income and Reconciliation for October, November, December 2024, January and February 2025 be received.

PF/21 j) Mayor's Charity Account Income

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the Mayor's Charity Account Income Payment, Income and Reconciliation for October, November, December 2024, January and February 2025 be received.

PF/22 AGED DEBTORS

a) Report of Debtors

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the Debtors report be received.

PF/23 b) Debtors Explanation Report

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the Debtors Explanation Report be received.

PF/24 c) Write Off Debt

RECOMMENDED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the Ludlow Pride organisation that incurred the debt are no longer in existence and that the debt in the sum of £45.00 plus VAT be written off.

PF/25 INSURANCE**a) Insurance Task and Finish Group**

Councillor Hepworth advised that the Insurance Task and Finish Group would need a list of the past insurance claims made by the Council.

RECOMMENDED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That:-

- a) an Insurance Task and Finish Group be set up to review the Council's insurance requirements;
- b) the Insurance Task and Finish Group membership be made up of Councillors Hepworth, Owen and Taylor.

PF/26 b) Insurance Quotations**RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)**

That insurance quotations be sought from three insurance brokers for buildings, all insured risks and motor insurance for consideration at the next Policy and Finance Committee meeting to make a recommendation to the Full Council meeting on the 28th July 2025.

PF/27 POLICY REVIEW**a) Financial Regulations****RECOMMENDED RO/MT (7:0:1)**

That:-

a) Financial Regulation paragraph 6.6 be amended to read:

For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the Council may authorise in advance for the year.

b) Financial Regulation paragraph 6.9 be amended to read:

The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:

- i. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of [the Council], where the Clerk certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Policy & Finance Committee.
- ii. Fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £100,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Policy & Finance Committee.

- iii. payments of up to £10,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises.

c) **Financial Regulation paragraph 5.18** be amended to read: In cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £10,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

PF/28 RECOMMENDED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That **Financial Regulation paragraph 5.15. be amended to read:** Individual purchases of goods or services (or series of payments for the same service) within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £2,500 excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate Committee, for any items below £5,000 excluding VAT.
 - in respect of grants, Council within any limits set by the grant giving criteria, and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the Council.
 - the Council for all items over £5,000;
- Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of Council or Committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

PF/29 b) Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

RECOMMENDED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy be amended at 4.2 to read:

4.2 Recruitment and Training

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, will be conducted for all staff, and Councillors.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be conducted for volunteers working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- Staff, councillors and volunteers will receive regular training on safeguarding policies and procedures.

PF/30 c) Safeguarding Policy and Confidential Reporting Protocol

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the Safeguarding Policy and Confidential Reporting Protocol be noted.

PF/31 CLIMATE ACTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP**a) Minutes****RESOLVED DL/RO (Unanimous)**

That the minutes of the Climate Action Task and Finish Group meeting held on the 5th June 2025 be received.

PF/32 b) Task and Finish Group Recommendations – 27th March 2025

It was noted that the recommendations had been superseded by the recommendations from meeting held on the 5th June 2025.

PF/33 c) Task and Finish Group Recommendations – 5th June 2025**RECOMMENDED RO/DL (Unanimous)**

That:

- a) the following actions be taken in preparation for Ludlow Green Festival:
 - Key information leaflets to be produced but only in a small number.
 - A QR code to be displayed linking to the information on our website.
 - Councillors who assist with ‘manning’ the stall will be provided with a script of information.
 - Councillors to be emailed asking for assistance in ‘manning’ the stall.
 - Councillor Lyle and Cowell will arrange obtaining free flower seeds to be given away.
- b) an expenditure for labels and seed envelopes (£3.99 for 100 envelopes (6 x 10cm), 100 Labels off: £25.51 plus vat). Expenditure from budget code 101 4062 (climate action) which has a budget of £500 be approved.
- c) the following updates to be made to the Climate Action Plan:
 - Working Group to consider what criteria could be included in 4 – *We will aim to include Climate Emergency reference in all new contract specifications and Invitations to Tender and we will include these references in the evaluation process*; and 11 – *We will aim to ensure all contractors have a ‘Zero to Landfill’ policy which is regularly reviewed and updated.*
 - 20 – To approach Shropshire Council to ensure they have found alternatives to using toxic weedkillers throughout the county.
 - 21 – The Deputy Town Clerk to progress the Hedgerow Maintenance and Management plan to be brought to the next Climate Action Task and Finish Group as a first draft document.
 - 22 – Could a DLF member be invited to a future meeting of the Climate Action Task and Finish Group to discuss? The Deputy Town Clerk to produce a draft document similar to a Toolbox Talk for the DLF.
 - 23 – The Deputy Town Clerk to confirm if Shropshire Council have been contacted regarding reducing non-essential grass cutting of verges throughout Ludlow to allow native wildflowers to grow.

- 24 – To consider before the next meeting ideas for a climate action award draft criterion.
- 25 – To look at the Grant Funding criteria and make suggestions regarding how climate-related criteria could be included.
- 26 – To recommend to Policy and Finance Committee that Ludlow Town Council facilitates a community meeting to discuss environmental issues and climate change. The location should be easily accessible for all to attend.
- 29 – Could we embrace the current volunteer interest in Ludlow and hold a volunteer day/morning (possibly a Saturday) at St Johns Gardens to begin interest in the site start tidying up the beds.

PF/34 4th QUARTER INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2024/25

a) Income and Expenditure Report

RESOLVED RO/DL (Unanimous)

That the 4th Quarter Income and Expenditure Report 2024/25 be noted.

PF/35 b) Exceptions Report

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the 4th Quarter Exceptions Reports 2024/25 be received.

PF/36 c) Budget Operational Variations

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That it be noted that the 2025/26 budget was set in January 2025, and subsequent operational variations required some budgets or partial budgets, to be carried forward from the 2024/25 budget to the 2025/26 budget.

PF/37 d) Carried Forward Funds

RECOMMENDED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the carried forward funds from the 2024/25 budget into the 2025/26, as stated in the 4th Quarter Exceptions Report, be approved.

PF/38 e) Budget 2025/26

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the approved budget for 2025/26 be noted.

PF/39 f) Earmarked Reserves

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the current Earmarked Reserves be noted.

PF/40 CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND INVESTMENT

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Investment statements for March and April 2025 be noted.

PF/41 CIVIC EVENTS

RESOLVED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the list of Civic Events attended by the past Mayor and past Deputy Mayor from February to May 2025 be noted.

PF/42 WEST MERCIA ENERGY

RESOLVED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the annual pricing update from West Mercia Energy, be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Chair

Date

N.B. Closed Session Minutes will NOT be issued for this meeting.