



**Minutes of the Oversight Committee held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 19:00 - 20:00 in  
The Bungalow, 8 North Street, EX17 2BT.**

**Present:** Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Guy Cochran, Giles Fawssett, Rachel Backhouse, Joyce Harris and Natalia Letch

**Apologies:** Cllrs Jim Cairney and Liz Brookes-Hocking

**Minute Taker:** Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

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## MINUTES

### 115 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting at 19.04 and noted that there were no new attendees, so member introductions were skipped.

### 116 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr Huxtable reported that he had received questions from a member of the public via email, advising that responses would be provided in writing and posted on the website for public viewing.

### 117 APOLOGIES

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve apologies from Cllr Cairney (work commitments) and Cllr Brookes-Hocking (attending a meeting on behalf of CTC) (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

### 118 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

#### 118.1 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI'S) IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 118.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

There were no dispensation requests.

### 119 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

It was **noted** that decisions will be made with the climate emergency at the forefront of decision and policy making.

**120 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

There were no changes to the order of business.

**121 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that only two responses had been received regarding the government's remote attendance of meetings, which was supposed to be discussed in this meeting. The Town Clerk suggested arranging a further Oversight meeting before Christmas, due to the lack of responses.

**122 COUNCIL AFFAIRS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Chair noted that the minutes mentioned 'Council Affairs and Finance' instead of 'Oversight'. It was **agreed** to defer the approval of the minutes to the next meeting.

**123 FINANCE****123.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 NOVEMBER 2024 AND 30 NOVEMBER 2024**

**Decision:** The transactions between 01 November 2024 and 30 November 2024 were approved. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

**123.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024**

**Decision:** The bank reconciliation to 30 November 2024 was approved. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

**123.3 TO NOTE BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024**

The bank account balances as of 30 November 2024, were noted.

**124 BUDGET 2025/26**

A discussion regarding the initial draft budget for 2025/26 took place. The Town Clerk explained various budget positions, including the reasons for certain figures being in credit or showing negative values due to accruals and previous credits. The discussion covered several budget lines, including salaries, training, civic functions, CCTV, planters, and Christmas expenses. Members also discussed the earmarked reserves and the rationale behind budget increases. A proposed 5% increase in the precept was considered to accommodate future projects and maintain financial prudence. The committee agreed to revisit the budget in the next committee meeting for further review.

**125 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF POLICIES**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to adopt the Model Publication Scheme. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

## 126 COUNCILLOR INTRODUCTIONS

**Decision:** The report regarding councillor introductions was not included in the meeting papers and it was resolved to move the item to the next meeting. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

## 127 MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Cllr Backhouse expressed a desire to understand the motivations of councillors who are not actively participating in council activities. She questioned why individuals would go through the trouble of getting elected if they do not engage in council duties or contribute to community events. She highlighted the struggle of the Youth Service Sub-Committee to achieve a quorum for meetings due to a lack of active members. She emphasized the need for councillors to share the workload and participate actively. Cllr Fawssett supported concerns.

It was acknowledged that whilst councillors cannot be forced to engage, the issue needs to be addressed. There was a suggestion to speak directly to the non-participating councillors to understand their reasons and encourage more involvement. The debate also touched on the political affiliations of some councillors and the support they might need from their parties to become more active.

**Decision:** This item would be added to the January Full Council agenda. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

## 128 DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND

The Town Clerk reported that a letter was sent to Devon County, incorporating some of County Councillor Jackie Hodgson's proposals, which aimed to divest from investments linked to countries accused of war crimes.

Cllr Backhouse had attended a meeting at Devon County where the proposal was discussed but ultimately watered down. The revised proposal focused on engaging with Brunel Pension Partnership, the company managing the pensions, to promote positive human rights outcomes and exclude investments in companies manufacturing controversial weapons. She expressed frustration with the complexity of divesting and the resistance from some councillors who argued that the majority of pension holders were not protesting. She highlighted that even a significant decrease in the £84 million investment would have a minimal impact on individual pensions. She committed to continuing her efforts to obtain clear information from Brunel and to push for more ethical investment practices.

**Decision:** It was agreed to keep the Devon County Council Pension Fund as a standing agenda item to receive ongoing updates from Cllr Backhouse.

## 129 YOUTH ACTION PLAN

The Youth Action Plan for 2024/25 was discussed, noting that the plan had been previously reviewed and typographical changes requested had been made.

It was acknowledged that the plan is a living document that will continue to evolve and be reviewed regularly.

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve the Youth Action Plan for 2024/25.

**130 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Decision:** It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 14 January 2025. Additionally, a meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 December 2024.

**131 PART II**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve the exclusion of the public and press were from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

**132 YOUTH TEAM STAFFING**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to note the contents of the report. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

**133 YOUTH TEAM STAFFING**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve the recommendation in the report. (Proposed by Cllr Harris).

**134 REPORTS PACK**

Signed .....

Dated.....