

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr U. Ahmed



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MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5th NOVEMBER 2024 at CIVIC OFFICES COMMENCING at 7.00pm.

Present

Cllr. Davis - Chairman	Cllr Carter (arriving later)	Cllr Pierce	Cllr McGinn	Cllr Cook	Cllr de Launey
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Also in attendance: Cllrs; Gorse, Holding, Lowe, McClements, Katherine Kynaston and Adam Brookes from Telford and Wrekin, Lynne Skehan RFO and Karen Roper CEO/Town Clerk.

66/24 Welcome from the Chairman – In the absence of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman Cllr Davis opened the meeting and invited Katherine Kynaston to address the meeting.

Katherine Kynaston (KK) presented a 6-year proposal from Telford and Wrekin to devolve responsibility of the Library to the Town Council covering the following points:

- Staffing arrangements
- Services
- Statistics relating to service users
- Models of service delivery
- Opening times
- Premises
- Transferable Assets
- Book stocks and
- Training and support for Town Council
- Operating costs
- Financial offer from Telford and Wrekin to cover the first 3 years of running costs and some transitional funding to cover an additional day to allow opening for 3.5 days per week.

KK said the final date for handover if agreed by the Town Council would be 1/4/25 but T&W would prefer it to happen sooner proposing 1st February as a target date.

Members made the following comments:

- Cllr Pierce said she had visited Newport Library, and the experience was very positive. They were well organised and had created a vibrant space that was community focussed.
- Cllr Lowe confirmed his view that Newport Library was a great experience.
- Cllr Holding said this is a 6-year deal with funding for 3 what happens after this initial 3 years? It was confirmed that the Town Council would provide the funding for the final 3 years.
- All staff will be subject to TUPE rules and work would be undertaken with T&W HR working with the Town Council, as their new employer, to assist with the transfer. This would include consultation with staff.

Cllr de Launey proposed to accept the transfer of the library to Wellington Town Council in principle and the following members voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, McGinn, Cook, Pierce and de Launey, there were no votes against and no abstentions.

Cllr Carter joined the meeting.

Wellington Flooding Update

67/24

Cllr Davis welcomed Adam Brookes (AB) and invited him to address the meeting.

AB was in attendance together with his colleague Lucinda Lycett to report on progress since the flooding event that occurred on 26th September 2024. He covered the following points.

- Key locations for flooding hot spots were Arlestone/Bucks Head and additionally Whitchurch Drive and Clunbury areas.
- Overview of the situation with 20 + houses suffering internal flooding and probably more that did not report the incident.
- The M54 and railway lines were flooded
- Intensity of the rainfall was measured to be over 100mm / hour creating flooding from both sewer and Hurley Brook although 67% of flooding was due to surface water.
- Historical flood management schemes had been overwhelmed, Arlestone and Bucks Head areas are heavily urbanised leaving no space for water to drain away.
- Lower lying 'at risk' areas were identified, e.g. the railway (in particular under the railway bridges) and Whitchurch Drive.
- Work was underway to model the existing management of the system and included close inspection and ongoing maintenance of the existing system
- Multiple land owners are involved in some areas which means private landlords may have responsibilities and obviously complicates matters.
- Work is well underway with partners Severn Trent Water to map issues and find solutions.
- Businesses at a high risk of flooding and sadly probably have no affordable flood risk insurance.
- Government offers a Flood Recovery Framework grant of up to £5000 if triggered, for domestic properties suffering internal flooding. This will provide funding to install anti flood barriers, one-way valves and any other measures that can be applied to a building to make people and properties less vulnerable to the physical impacts of flooding. This grant requires up front funding by the property owner to undertake a survey costing £800.00 which would be refundable following the survey.
- One of the problems identified was that flooding occurred in some of the most deprived areas of Wellington who may not have access to £800. This therefore has a significant Impact on the grant take up.
- Part of the solution must be self-help and good use of technology possibly high-water level sensors on drains to issue timely warnings. Residents could have access to a flood box to enable them to close roads to vehicles preventing bow waves.

Cllr Pierce declared an interest and took no part in the following discussion.

Borough Councillor McClements emphasised the importance of communication stating that Adam and his team had done a great job on the night of the flooding. She said she was aware that there are residents who are not reporting their flooding situation and they would not have access to £800 for the survey therefore could not access the grant.

Adam said work had been done to improve the flooding web site information to keep people informed.

Cllr Davis thanked Adam and Lucinda for their presentation commenting that we are living through changing weather situations that are bringing longer and wetter periods.

At 8.02pm Adam and Lucinda left the meeting.

Cllr Carter said the Town Council could offer help with the £800.00 up front payment requirement. A fund of up to £5,000 could be ringfenced to help residents.

Cllr de Launey said he would like to ensure that those residents sign up to have the survey on their property as a stipulation of the grant. Rules will need to be set up to safeguard public money.

Cllr Gorse said she felt that we need to have specific criteria applied to access the grant.

Cllr Carter said initially anyone who qualifies for the Government Grant and did not have access to £800 would be eligible. The Borough would be working with the town council to confirm the situation.

Further work around the eligibility criteria would be done should members agree to the fund.

Motion to Full Council proposed by Cllr Lee Carter and seconded by Councillor Graham Cook.

‘This Council supports the principal of working together with Telford and Wrekin to engage with agencies to resolve the surface flooding encountered by residents and businesses in Wellington. And.....

Will establish with immediate effect an Emergency Flood Relief Grant Fund, the terms and conditions of which will be agreed by P&R and delegated authority to the Clerk’

Cllr Carter proposed the above motion, he was seconded by Cllr Cook and the following members voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, Carter, McGinn, Cook and de Launey, there were no votes against and Cllr Pierce abstained.

68/24 Apologies for Absence – No apologies were received.

69/24 Declarations of Interest – There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting.

70/24 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1st October 2024.
The minutes were proposed as a true and accurate record by Cllr Davis and he was seconded by Cllr McGinn. The following members voted in favour Cllrs Davis, Carter, Pierce, McGinn, Cook, and de Launey there were no abstentions and no votes against.

71/24 Matters Arising – CEO/Town Clerk to report

- **Christmas Lights** – The new contractor was in the process of putting up the lights and was reporting some necessary repairs on the infrastructure.
- **WEST** – The Insurance company had paid the claim for the stolen tools. Paperwork for the premises at the Bowring Park changing rooms was underway with Telford and Wrekin. Storage of petrol for the blower backpacks had been discussed and advice sought from the Fire Service.
- **Save a Life Project** – Cllr Davis said that additional opportunities will be provided later in the year to attain the target of training at least 100 people.
- **Honour Board and Pins** – The CEO/Town Clerk said the consensus seemed to indicate the honour board would be a dark colour wood to match the ‘cabinet housing

the certificate' within the council chamber. The pins would be ordered with a crest design.

72/24 Income and Expenditure reports for September 2024 – RFO Lynne Skehan presented the reports.

Members were really pleased with the new look simplified reports. They indicated the % column was immensely helpful to easily identify over/ under spend against the budget. Lynne talked members through the new budget headings and said there is some further work to do but the financial position was exactly where we needed to be against budget for the time of year.

Cllr Davis said he felt this was a huge step forward for the council following a turbulent year.

Cllr Pierce said she felt things were now running smoothly and hoped we would err on the side of caution if we take on the library.

Lynne said she had questions around the library and recommended that a 5 year financial plan be developed.

Cllr Lowe asked if there was depreciation on the delivery bike. Lynne said this was currently not the case, but she would implement it.

Cllr Cook proposed acceptance of the reports and payments for September 2024, he was seconded by Cllr McGinn. The following members voted in favour Cllrs Davis, Carter Pierce, McGinn, Cook, and de Launey there were no abstentions and no votes against.

The CEO/Town Clerk said she was still working on the Financial Standing Orders 2024 and it was agreed that they would be presented to the December meeting of P&R and the Full Council.

73/24 Regeneration Partnership – The minutes of the meeting held on 17.10.24 were circulated with the agenda. There were no further questions.

74/24 Full Council Agenda - Members agreed the date of the meeting would be deferred to 19th November and subject to the removal of item 8d deferred to December meeting.

75/24 Town Council Strategic Plan – The CEO/Town Clerk asked for members' contributions and was advised to issue an end date to receive comments.

76/24 Next Meeting Date – was agreed as Tuesday 3rd December 2024.

Chairman.....3rd December 2024