



**HAYWARDS HEATH
TOWN COUNCIL**

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18th March 2025

To all Councillors on the Policy and Finance Committee and others for information

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the **Policy and Finance Committee** to be held on **Monday 24th March 2025** at **7.00pm** at the Town Hall in the Council Chamber when the following business will be transacted.

Yours Sincerely
Steven Trice
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 20th January 2025. (Pages 3 - 5)
3. To note Substitutes.
4. Public Forum - *Members of the public are invited to ask questions or raise issues which are relevant and are the concern of this Council. A period of 15 minutes is allocated for this purpose. Notice of intention to address Council should be given to the Clerk by noon of the day of the meeting.*
5. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda.
6. To receive and consider the list of payments and receipts for the period 1st September 2024 – 31st December 2024 (page 6 and associated documents).
7. To receive and consider the income and expenditure report for the year to date 31st December 2024 (page 7 and associated documents)
8. To confirm bank balances and bank reconciliation statements as of 31st December 2024 (page 8 and associated documents).
9. To consider applications for Town Council Grants. (pages 9-14)
10. To consider the Town Council's Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy (page 15-26)

11. To consider the Town Council's Investment Policy. (pages 24-26)
12. To note the Town Council's Global Data Protection (GDPR) Policies. (pages 27-29)
13. To consider a response to a government consultation on a Combined Mayoral Authority in Sussex. (pages 30-35)
14. To consider any items the Chair agrees to take as urgent business.

Part Two

15. To exclude Public and Press to consider Town Hall staffing matters.

Committee Members: Policy & Finance Committee: AM Cooke (Chair), S Walsh (Vice Chair), A. Bashar, R. Cromie, AM. Lucraft, P. Lucraft, A. Murray A. Rees.

*'During this meeting the public are allowed to film the Committee and officers only from the front of the public gallery, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. **Any items in the Exempt Part of the agenda cannot be filmed.** If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.'*

Town Mayor Cllr Stephanie Inglesfield

Town Clerk Mr Steven Trice

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th January 2025

A.M Cooke (*Chairman*)
S. Walsh (*Vice Chairman*)
A. Bashar
P. Lucraft
A.M Lucraft
A. Murray
A. Rees

* Absent ** Apologies

Also present: Town Clerk, Committee Clerk, RFO

48. Apologies

Member	Reason
None	

49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

50. Substitutes

None.

51. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

52. Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

53. To consider Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026.

The Town Clerk presented the Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026. Without comment or amendment by Members it was agreed. Cllr A Rees asked if the Staff Recognition Budget had been fully expended in the current year, which the Town Clerk said it had not. Cllr AM Cooke encouraged the Town Hall team to spend the remaining Staff Recognition budget, especially as new Officers have recently joined the Town Hall team, this was unanimously agreed by Members.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve the Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026.

54. To consider the Council's draft budget for 2025/2026.

The Responsible Finance Officer presented the draft budget.

Cllr Paul Lucraft moved amendments to the budget, in the face of Haywards Heath Town Council facing a changing environment in the very near future with potential development of Hurst Farm and the potential for move towards devolution, under the following headings as shown in monetary term is the resolution of this item:

- Town Initiatives
- Subscriptions
- Staff Training
- Contingencies and Sundries
- Community Projects
- Advisors Fees
- Community Transport

These additions added £18,000 to the tabled budget. This resulted in the Council Tax rising by 6%. 1% being the rise on the tax base and 5% in Council tax for the 2025/2026 Council year.

Furthermore, Cllr Paul Lucraft also asked for £28,000 to be moved from the Reserves to the Capital Fund to prepare for any opportunities presented by the potential move for devolution of services in line with the Sussex bid for a unitary authority.

These amendments were seconded by Cllr S Walsh.

Members RESOLVED the 2025/2026 budget for recommendation to Full Council with a 6% rise totalling £922,344 and a Council Tax increase of 5% with following budget headings being increased against that presented in the budget presented by officers, this is as follows;

- **Town Initiatives - £5,381 to £8,072**
- **Land off Hurstwood Lane - Management Costs - £0 to £2,500**
- **Subscriptions - £14,017 to £14,317**
- **Staff Training - £2,500 to £3,500**
- **Contingencies and Sundries - £1,025 to £2,025**
- **Community Projects - £10,000 to £15,000**
- **Advisors Fees - £7,750 to £10,750**
- **Addition of £2,500 for Community Transport projects.**

In addition £28,221.35 was moved from restricted reserves to top up the capital budget totalling

- **£14,000 from Haywards Heath Town CIC (Budget 9036) to leave reserve at £5,681.**
- **£5,649.15 from Town Development (Budget 9041) with reserve budget line deleted.**
- **£6,322.20 from CCTV (Budget 9042) with reserve budget line deleted.**
- **£2,250 from Roundabout Liabilities (Budget 9038) with reserve budget line deleted.**

- 55. To consider the review of the Town Council’s Health and Safety Policies.**
Without comment and in noting that Members at any time were able to come in and review specific risk assessment for services, Groundstaff work and other bespoke assessments for the Town Hall;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the review of the Town Council’s Health and Safety Policies.

- 56. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2025 — to receive, consider and note the Mid-Year Internal Audit Report 2024/2025.**

Members noted the report, which showed a clean bill of health, and extended their thanks to the RFO and Town Clerk for ensuring another clean bill of health was received.

Members **RESOLVED** the **Mid-Year Internal Audit Report for 2024/2025.**

- 57. To consider applications for Town Council grants.**

The Council considered three grant applications. Members agreed to award grants to SASBAH and St Peters and St James Hospice. Members raised concerns with the grant application from Bentswood Community Partnership (BCP), in particular: Around the budget for ‘volunteer’ staff, the fact that BCP currently holds funds and their status with Companies House/the Charities Commission.

Members **DELEGATED** to the Town Clerk to acquire further information regarding the grant application for Bentswood Community Partnership and to present this application at the next Full Council meeting on Monday 27th January.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

1. A grant of £500 to Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (SASBAH) to help with running costs
2. A grant of £500 to St Peter and St James Hospice to help with running costs.

- 58. To receive the 2025/2026 committee timetable.**

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the 2025/2026 committee timetable.

- 59. To consider the Government Standards consultation on ‘Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England’.**

Members welcomed the consultation and without any changes to the response tabled by the Town Clerk;

Members **RESOLVED** to **DELEGATE** to the Town Clerk to provide the suggested responses to the Local Government Standards consultation.

- 60. Urgent business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

ITEM 6

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk

Date: 24th March

Subject: Lists of payments and receipts for the period 1st September 2024 – 31st December 2024

Please see associated documents;

ITEM 6 - P and F 24/03/2025 - FINANCIAL REPORTS PACK – 01SEPT24 TO 31DEC24

ITEM 7

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk

Date: 24th March

Subject: Income and expenditure reports as at 31st December 2024

Please see associated documents;

ITEM 7 - P and F 24/03/2025 - FINANCIAL REPORTS PACK – 31st December 2024

ITEM 8

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk

Date: 24th March

Subject: To Confirm Bank Balances and the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31st December 2024

Please see financial pack for documents;

ITEM 8 - P and F 24/03/2025 - FINANCIAL REPORTS PACK – 31st December 2024

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Committee Clerk

Date: 24th March 2025

Subject: Grant Applications

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is to present for consideration grant applications made by third party organisations.

Summary:

2. Members will find attached four grant applications as laid out in Appendix 1-4 of this report.

Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to consider the recommendation for three grant applications, the summary of which is attached as Appendix 1-4 of this report and decide on the level of funding to allocate.

Background:

3. The Town Council allocates monies on an annual basis to enable the award of grants to third party organisations that endeavor to enhance the well-being of the local community.
4. The ethos of the grants provided by this Council is for 'pump priming' in the context of enabling the applicants to lever in monies from other organisations, grant-giving charities and national schemes.
5. The grant criteria provides for grants to be made for one off purchases and in some instances running costs. There is also funding for capital costs and new initiatives.
6. It is asked that Members note that grants are made using the free resource (S.137 Local Government Act 1972) which talks about benefitting the area or groups of individuals – not an individual. Therefore, there is no power to grant to an individual. The Clerk has noted that this has happened in the past and would suggest until another mechanism is found the Council do not grant to an individual in the future.

Financial Implications

7. The budget for Grants and Subsidies for the financial year 2024/25 is £17,000, of which £11,158 has been allocated or spent, leaving a balance of £5,842 to be allocated.

Legal Implications

8. Further to the section 137 legislation, the Town Council can make a grant under the General Power of Competence, which the Town Council meets the criteria of as exercised and resolved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council dated 13th May 2019 under minute 17.

Grant Applications

Organisation	Grant Requested	Amount	Reason
Haywards Heath Lions	£500		Running costs – Annual Swimathon
St Catherine's Hospice	£500		Running costs
The Grove Garden	£500		Running costs
Bolnore Village Community Partnership	£1000		Capital costs – replacement fire door
Total cost	£2500		

Grant Application**Appendix 1****Organisation:** Haywards Heath Lions**Total Project Cost:** £2000**Funding Category:** Running costs**Grant Requested:** £500**Purpose of Grant:** To assist with running costs for Haywards Heath Lions Club Good Friday Swimarathon 2025**Breakdown of costs:**

Item	Total cost	Amount requested
Pool hire	£750	
Medals and certificates	£600	
Promotional materials	£350	
Local giving	£300	
Total	£2000	£500

Information:

On Good Friday 18th April 2025, Haywards Heath Lions Club will be holding their annual Swimarathon at the Dolphin Leisure Centre. Teams consisting of six swimmers, swim as a relay team for 55 minutes, at any pace they want. The event is inclusive; swimmers of any age are welcome. Around 500 people take part each year, with 90% of these living in Haywards Heath. 2025 will be the 40th time the Lions have staged the event. This year the Lions have chosen Rockinghorse Children's Charity to be the main beneficiary. The Rockinghorse Children's Charity are raising money for several projects at the Sensory Friendly Ward at Chalkhill Hospital in Haywards Heath.

Costs have been calculated from the previous year's events. Invoices can be produced when available.

Website Link: <https://www.hhlionsswim.co.uk>**Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:**

Year of application	Grant awarded	Purpose of grant
2023	£250	Running costs
2024	£500	Running costs for Swimarathon

Other funding sought: Sponsorship from The Orchards.**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

Grant Application

Appendix 2

Organisation: St Catherine's Hospice

Total Project Cost: £12,837,000

Funding Category: Running Costs

Grant Requested: £500

Purpose of Grant: Running costs of local hospice services

Information:

St Catherine's Hospice provides care for adults with life-limiting conditions who have complex palliative or end of life care needs in West Sussex and East Surrey. Formed 45 years ago, they first opened to patients in 1983 and their care is now rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. Alongside clinical, therapeutic and personal care, they offer spiritual guidance, welfare advice, social work and bereavement support. Their services are free to anyone who is referred by their GP or healthcare provider. Their experts specialise in different types of palliative care and help manage symptoms including nausea, pain and shortness of breath, as well as offering emotional support. Alongside their staff, over 940 volunteers support the work they do, including 27 from Haywards Heath. In the last financial year, St Catherine's Hospice cared for 2,581 patients and families in the community and 254 people on their wards.

The grant application is for a contribution to the Hospice's running costs. Last financial year their expenditure was £12,837,000. The statutory funding the Hospice receives has only increased by 3% in the past 10 years, which does not keep up with the rising costs of care and equipment. They receive less than a third of their income from the NHS and rely on community fundraising. The hospice has to raise £7.5million every year to fund their services.

Website Link: www.stch.org.uk

Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:

Year of application	Grant awarded	Purpose of grant
2024	£750	One off cost – New bed

Other funding sought:

Alongside their 13 charity shops, St Catherine's Hospice apply to Trusts, Foundations and other local town and Parish councils on a regular basis. Between 01/04/24 – 31/01/25 they submitted 70 applications and in the same period received 68 grant donations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

Grant Application

Appendix 3

Organisation: The Grove Garden Charitable Trust

Total Project Cost: £6500

Funding Category: Running Costs

Grant Requested: £500

Purpose of Grant: Cover costs for a part time garden manager for two months

Breakdown of costs:

Item	Total cost	Amount requested
Manager's wages 12x £250	£3000 p/a	£500
Sundries (Refreshments etc)	£500 p/a	
Supplies and equipment	£2000 p/a	
Expenses (Website, insurance etc)	£500 p/a	
Marketing	£500 p/a	
Total	£6500	£500

Information:

The Grove Garden Charitable Trust, set up in 2015, aims to offer an inclusive resource that allows the senior community to engage in arts, culture, wellbeing activities and events in the safe, secure, open-air environment of the Grove Garden. Located in central Haywards Heath, the garden provides an urban oasis which is accessible to the over 50s and their families. Around 65 people are involved in the running of the garden, all of which live in Haywards Heath and the surrounding areas. Many people who live alone, have illnesses or are retired benefit from the social activities, company and the outdoor garden itself. The helps tackle loneliness and promote wellbeing. The garden, which is open February – November each year runs a busy schedule of events and classes including; Tai Chi classes, craft sessions, nature watches and chat meetings.

The Trust are seeking grant assistance for running costs to pay a part time manager for the garden for two months, at a cost of £250 p/m. They have applied for additional funding elsewhere to cover costs of the manager after these two months have passed.

Website Link: <https://www.grovegarden.uk>

Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:

Year of application	Grant awarded	Purpose of grant
2021	£500	Installation of a shed

Other funding sought:

They have previously applied to and received funding from the Sussex Community Foundation and Lindfield and Cuckfield Rotary. They fundraise independently via an annual summer open day, a plant shop and donations received at events. They are currently preparing a crowdfunder campaign to raise funds for ongoing costs and the cost of a wooden hut.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

Grant Application

Appendix 4

Organisation: Bolnore Village Community Partnership

Total Project Cost: £2,640

Funding Category: Capital Costs

Grant Requested: £1,000

Purpose of Grant: To fund a replacement fire door

Breakdown of costs:

Item	Total cost	Amount requested
Metal fire door	£2640	£1000
Total	£2640	£1000

Information:

Bolnore Village Community Partnership (BVCP), set up in 2013, manages Woodside Community Centre in Bolnore Village to provide a safe, secure community building for residents of Haywards Heath. The Woodside centre, opened in 2014, has a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities and is used by a multitude of groups including: sports teams, fitness groups, pre-school activity groups and community groups. The booking schedule shows the centre as being well-used with bookings from regular groups and private bookings.

BCVP have applied for grant assistance to cover the cost of a replacement fire door. Due to incurring massive daily use and wear and tear, a wooden fire door in the southern corner of the building has now deteriorated beyond further repair and is no longer fit for purpose. This worn out door represents a serious safety and security issue for the building. BCVP have approached J Fire Safety Services for a quotation for a replacement fire door. It has been suggested that a replacement metal door would be better than a replacement wood door as it would last a lot longer. The quotation shows this door would cost £2,640 (inc VAT). BCVP have also acquired a quotation from Sussex Door Company, which shows a cost of £2,483.10 (inc VAT) for a metal door.

Website Link: www.bolnorewoodside.org.uk

Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:

No previous grant applications listed.

Other funding sought:

HHTC are the Partnership's first port of call for this funding. They fundraise through hire of their facilities and donations at events. No other current funding was specified.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk
Date: 24th March 2025
Subject: Financial Risk Assessment and General Risk Assessment Policies

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider policy documents.

Summary:

2. As per the request of the Internal Auditor the Town Council must consider its adopted General Risk assessment and Financial Risk Assessment on annual basis. The last time this was undertaken was in the last financial year at the September 2024 meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee, when the matter was deferred for further work.

Members are recommended to consider then adopt the Town Council's General Risk Assessment and Financial Risk Assessment for 2024/2025.

Background:

3. Members will find attached a general Risk Management Policy in Appendix 1 and in as separate attached to the agenda email document the Town Council's Financial Risk Assessment for the adoption. These documents has been reviewed by the Internal Auditor with no issue being raised and reflects what is required in the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners' Guide (GALCP).
4. Furthermore, the Town Clerk has reviewed the document and has made amendments;
 - The risk to hiring income relating to the return to normal working after Covid 19 being removed.
 - A line has been added to reflect the recent investment of Town Council fund with CCLA.
 - There is an extra column which outlines mitigation measures that are in place.
5. No other specific or cumulative risk has changed since the last review of the document in January 2023.
6. Member's views are still welcomed, as this is the first time the new administration has considered the risk assessment, on the banding of risk and are able to make suggestions for any lawful and meaningful changes, if they so wish. General Risk Assessment is attached as Appendix 1 and **the Financial Risk Assessment as appendix 2.**

Financial Implications – None.

Legal Implications – Statutory Legal Requirement for Internal Audit Purpose. **Town Clerk**

Haywards Heath Town Council

Risk Management Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Councils Risk Management Policy. It identifies:

- What is risk management?
- Why does the Council need a risk management policy?
- What is the Councils philosophy on risk management?
- What is the risk management process?
- How will risk management feed into the Councils existing policies?
- Roles and responsibilities
- Future monitoring.

1.2 The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Council.
- Integrate risk management into the culture of the organisation,
- Embed risk management through the ownership and management of risk as part of all decision-making processes.
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice.

2. What is Risk Management?

2.1 "Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance, together with community focus; structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements." Audit Commission, Worth the Risk – Improving Risk Management in Local Government (2001: 5)

2.2 Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety but applies to all aspects of the Council's work.

2.3 Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive.

Strategic Risk - long term adverse impacts from poor decision making or poor implementation. Risks damage to the reputation of the Council, loss of public confidence, in a worst-case scenario, Government intervention.

Compliance Risk - failure to comply with legislation, or laid down procedures or the lack of documentation to prove compliance. Risks exposure to prosecution, judicial review, employment tribunals, inability to enforce contracts.

Financial Risk - fraud and corruption, waste, excess demand for services, bad debts. Risk of additional audit investigation, objection to accounts, reduced service delivery, dramatically increased Council Tax levels/impact on Council reserves.

Operating Risk - failure to deliver effectively, malfunctioning equipment, hazards to service users, the general public or staff, damage to property. Risk of insurance claims, higher insurance premiums, lengthy recovery processes.

2.4 Not all these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost-effective. Even where insurance is available, a monetary consideration may not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

2.5 Risk is not restricted to potential threats but can be connected with opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive responses. Measures to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

3 Why does the Council need a Risk Management Policy?

3.1 Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided.

3.2 The Risk Management Policy will help to ensure that the Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance,

3.3 There is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/533) to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk.

4 What is the Council's Philosophy on Risk Management?

4.1 Risk Management Policy Statement

Haywards Heath Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses and to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals. The Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a policy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk. Risk management is an integral part of the Council's management processes.

5 What is the Risk Management Process?

5.1 Implementation

Risk Identification - Identifying and understanding the hazards and risks facing the Council is crucial if informed decisions are to be made. The risks associated with these decisions can then be effectively managed.

Risk Analysis - Once risks have been identified they need to be systematically and accurately assessed using proven techniques. Analysis should make full use of any available data on the potential frequency of events and their consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable, then steps need to be taken to control or respond to the risk.

Risk Review - A Risk Register listing all the areas of potential risks and controls in place to minimise the likelihood or impact of the risk needs to be maintained and reviewed by the Policy and Finance Committee regularly.

5.2 Risk Control

Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures, but in exceptional cases more drastic action will be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Options for control include:

Elimination - the circumstances from which the risk arises are removed so that the risk no longer exists.

Reduction - loss control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/likelihood of the risk occurring.

- Transfer - the financial impact is passed to others e.g. by revising contractual terms.
- Sharing - the risk is shared with another party.
- Insuring - insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact.
- Acceptance - documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Council accepts or tolerates risk.

5.3 Risk Monitoring

The risk management process does not finish with putting any risk control procedures in place. Their effectiveness in controlling risk must be monitored and reviewed. It is also important to assess whether the nature of any risk has changed over time.

The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or minimised in the future. It will also inform judgements on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance management process of the Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively.

6.2 Members - Risk management is seen as a key part of the Members role and there is an expectation that Members will lead and monitor the approach adopted. This will include:

- Approval of the Risk Management Policy.
- Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects undertaken are adequately risk managed.
- Consideration, and if appropriate, endorsement of the annual Review of Internal Control.
- Assessment of risks whilst setting the precept, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues.

6.3 Town Clerk- will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the detail of the Risk Management Policy. The Town Clerk will:

- provide advice as to the legality of policy choices;
- update the Council and sections on the implications of new or revised legislation;
- assist in handling any litigation claims;
- advise on any health and safety implications of the chosen or proposed arrangements for project delivery.

6.4 Responsible Finance Officer - the RFO will:

- advise on the Councils insurance requirements.
- assess the financial implications of strategic policy options;
- provide assistance and advice on budgetary planning and control;
- ensure that the Financial System allows effective budgetary control.

6.5 Role of Internal Audit — internal Audit provides an important scrutiny role by carrying out audits to provide independent assurance that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively. Internal Audit assists the Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist the Council in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud.

6.6 Training— Risk Management training to be provided to Members, and Officers. The aim will be to ensure that both Members and officers have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control the risks associated with the services they provide.

7 Future Monitoring

7.1 Review of Risk Management Policy - This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Ends

Financial Risk Assessment:24th April 2025 - Item 10 Policy and Finance

(Review March 2026)

Scoring Rationale				Overall
Description	Financial	Strategical and Reputational	Operational Term	
	over £100k	Significant	Long	High
	£50k - £100k	Moderate	Medium	Medium
	Under £20k	Minor	Short	Low

Service Area	Risk	Internal Control	Mitigation	Risk Categories		Likelihood	Overall Rating
				Financial	Strategical and Reputational	Operational Terms	
Insurance	Public Liability (statutory) Inadequate cover or over insurance increasing costs unnecessarily. Areas not covered.	Continue existing cover (£10m). Review of insurance every 3 years. Insurance approved by Policy and Finance Committee and Council. Annual update of asset values	That the Town Clerk and RFO go out to the market to find the most competitive offer that meets the operations needs for all insurance cover.				
	Employers Liability Inadequate cover or over insurance increasing costs unnecessarily. Areas not covered. Policy lapsed	Continue existing cover (£10m). Review of insurance every 3 years. Insurance approved by Policy and finance Committee and Council. Annual update of asset values	As above.				

	No Fidelity Guarantee	Annual cover in line with the formula Total Balances plus 50% Precept. The Audit Commission has recommended that Members be added to this cover.	As above.						
	No Property Insurance.	Continue with existing cover for Town Hall.	As above.						
	Loss of revenue.	Business Interruption cover.	As above.						
	Officials Indemnity.	Continue with existing cover (£250K)	As above.						
	Libel & Slander	Continue with existing cover (£250K)	As above.						
	Personal Accident.	Continue existing cover (Scale benefits).	As above.						
Payroll	Loss of data on PC due to system fault.	The Council computer system is remotely backed up on a daily basis by South East Business Systems.	That all Town Council IT equipment is replaced/updated on a rolling basis and ensure that computer programmes and firewalls are up to date.						
	Loss of services of employee.	Immediately advertise any vacancy (if permanent loss) and request help from remaining employees to cover temporary loss.	To ensure that all staff have the opportunity to be trained and that their personal development is monitored year on year. Training staff to cover in periods when officers are away and in the interim between resignation and appointment.						

Admin	Payment arrangements	Continue with requirement to report all payments to Policy and Finance Committee and Council for approval.	That there is the ability within the staff to process this requirement in the absence of the RFO.						
		Continue with requirement for two authorised signatories to sign and to initial cheque stubs and invoices/documentation for electronic payment.	That the Clerk/RFO monitor the signatories and Full Council has oversight on the signatories.						
	Failed Bank Reconciliation	Continue with bank reconciliation checks to be carried out on the receipt of each statement.	That the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor have oversight of the bank reconciliation and the work of officers and signatories.						
	No Agency advice	Continue with memberships of NALC, SALC and SLCC.	Membership of all membership bodies included in annual budget. Council must resolve to join NALC and SALC annually.						
	Cyber Crime	Ensure adequate insurance is in place.	That the Town Clerk and RFO go out to the market to find the most competitive offer that meets the operations for all insurance cover,						
Allotments	Increase in net expenditure.	Review allotment rents annually.	Ensure that a review is tabled to Policy and Finance Committee with options of levels of increase and the rationale behind recommended rise.						

	Constant annual increase in expenditure. Need for more allotments	Investigate new site(s) and transfer those and existing sites to Societies and/or Associations.	Hurst Farm pending and both America Lane and Oathall ploholders have the chance to raise the issue at the annual allotment holders meeting.						
	Loss of service of contractor.	Advertise vacancy immediately.	To be undertaken In line with Financial Regulations						
	Loss of adequate space.	Pending problem. The Council continues to pursue land off Hurstwood Lane.	Stopping of pre-purchase of cemetery plots.						
Cemetery	Memorial Safety resulting in accidents.	Continue with existing policy to approve all new applications.	All headstones are placed by professional contractors.						
	Increase in net expenditure	Review fees annually.	Ensure that review is tabled to Policy and Finance Committee with options of levels of increase and the rationale behind recommended rise.						
Precept	Annual precept not the result of proper detailed consideration.	Continue to present budgets to committees and Full Council before the 31st January meeting annually.	Ensure suitable budget setting process is in place, which involves Members wishes and professional advice from the RFO.						
Open Space	Accident and Injury.	Adequate public liability insurance.	That the Town Clerk and RFO go out to the market to find the most competitive offer that meets the operations for all insurance cover,						

	Travellers on Council Land	Liaison with MSDC emergency planning and the Police.	Ensure security at all sites are maintained adequately and allotments sites are locked accordingly.						
	Accidents at Town Council Events.	Full Risk Assessment for all events.	Review of risk assessment leading up to each event.						
Town Council Depot	Loss of equipment or machinery.	Day to day checking of the Depot and surveillance from neighbouring properties.	Relevant insurances are in place and assets register kept up to date.						
Street Furniture	Insurance Claims against unsafe furniture and/or injury to third parties.	Monthly check on the condition of equipment and logging of defects through to a resolution to the problem. Adequate insurance cover.	Relevant insurances are in place and assets register kept up to date.						
	Illegal expenditure.	Continue to ensure that all expenditure is within legal powers.	Retain Power of Competence and Town Clerk present legal implication with each report tabled to Council/Committees.						
Accounting	Non-standard and/or non-compliant records kept.	Continue to require adequate, complete and statutory financial records and accounts	Seek advice from Internal Auditor and full review of all financial packages used by the Council in July 2025						
	Non-compliance with statutory deadlines for the completion/approval/submission of accounts and other financial returns.	Continue to ensure that all accounts and annual returns are completed and submitted by the deadlines.	Ensure that officers work to set timescale and that the Committee timetable is set to consider matters in a timely manner.						

	Management of Debtors	Seeking advice for progression to small claims court.							
	Non-compliance with internal audit requirements.	Appoint internal auditor and continue practice of appointing internal audit committee.	Enter into three-year contracts with preferred auditor to ensure continuity of service and review requirements given by the auditor in advance of visits to ensure the Council is adhering to what is required.						
Contracts	Ensure continued value for money coupled with continuity of work.	Approve the practice of seeking tenders for Town Council required services every three years by advertising in local press and issuing specifications and tender documents to contractors expressing an interest.	Tende sought In line with Financial Regulations						
		Tenders to be opened by the Leader and Clerk and reported to next available Council meeting.	That the Policy and Finance Committee have the right to call in tenders and that all contracts are issued with a cooling off period to allow for such process.						
Ensuring the Council acts within its legal powers	Ensuring the Council acts within its legal powers Ultra Vires Acts incurring financial liability	Town Clerk is CiLCA qualified use of manuals, advice from NALC/WSALC and SLCC	That the Town Clerk and Officers in relation to their post continue personal development through training and education.						

Investment	That the Town Council loses its investments due to the failure of the chused body. That the Council does not effect it reputation due to the actions of the chosen investment company.	Ensuring that the investment company is of sound nature and adhered to the ethical standards that the Council requires in terms of who it invests with.	Refer to the Town Council's investment policy and review the company(s) status and ethics annually.						
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Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk
Date: 24th March 2025
Subject: Investment Policy

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is to consider a policy of the Town Council.

Summary:

2. As Members are aware the Town Council has invested a substantial amount of money during the last eighteen months with a sector led investment company. The following report, which was deferred from the November meeting of the Committee, presents an Investment Policy for adoption that will underpin the current investment and any future investment that Town Council wishes to make.

Recommendation(s):

Members are recommended to comment upon and adopt an Investment Policy for Haywards Heath Town Council as presented in Appendix 1.

Background:

3. On the advice of the Internal Auditor, within his mid-year Audit 2023/2024, Members will find as per Appendix 1 a proposed Investment Policy for the Town Council. This document is designed to future proof the existing investment with CCLA Investment and any fixed term investments which the Town Council may wish to enter into in the future.

Financial Implications

4. None relating to the policy

Legal Implications

5. Audit requirement for Policy Development.

Town Clerk

Investment Policy

Introduction

1.1 This policy is created under guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003. The extant guidance was issued by MHCLG in 2018.

1.2 Haywards Heath Town Council acknowledges its responsibility to the community and the importance of prudently investing any monies held by the council.

Objectives

2.1 The general policy objective of the Council is prudent investment of its balances. The Council's investment priorities are:

1. Security of operating monies and reserves **and then**
2. Liquidity of investments

2.2 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

Investment Policy

3.1 The Town Council has the opportunity to invest its reserves between multiple relatively highly rated UK banks, building societies and financial institution with the sector. The Town Council shall only use specified investments as defined by MHCLG guidance.

3.2 A significant percentage of the Council's bulked reserves can be placed on interest bearing term/notice deposits.

3.3 To retain liquidity these shall be placed with phased end dates i.e. there will always be some maturing sooner than others.

3.4 No one fixed term investment shall be for a period longer than 24 months other than instant access accounts. This will be subject to 80% of the Council's assets being in short-term funds to manage capital risks and interest rate risks.

3.5 The Town Council shall only invest with banks/building societies which it defines as "High Credit Quality". This being those with a credit rating of A with Moody's Investors Service or BBB with Standard and Poor's or Fitch Ratings Ltd.

3.6 The Town Council may also invest in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit fund subject to it maintaining a credit rating as required in 3.5

3.7 Investments shall be decided and placed by the Responsible Financial Officer having used due diligence including as a minimum finance search engines and ratings agencies.

- This shall be under the oversight of the standing Policy and Finance Committee
- The actual movement of money shall be by the usual authorised signatories

3.8 The procedure for undertaking investments, considering the need for timely and speedy placing of deals shall be documented by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the Policy and Finance Committee before any investments are placed.

3.9 The Town Clerk and/or Responsible Financial Officer shall review credit ratings of organisations in which the Council holds investments on a quarterly basis. Should the credit rating of an organisation fall below that specified under 3.5, the Responsible Financial Officer shall consult the Policy and Finance Committee and take the appropriate action.

3.10 The Town Council considers that by only using specified investments, with defined risk parameters, that the officers and members involved in determining the placement of investments thereby have sufficient capability and skills.

Non-Financial Investments

4.1 The Council owns one property (40 Boltro Road) [\[1\]](#) which falls under the definition of an Investment Property under the International Accounting Standard 40. However, as it was acquired at no cost on the council's establishment, it will always pass the required fair value model assessment required by the MHCLG guidance. The Council will, however, regularly assess the asset's performance as an investment.

Investment of Current Year Funds

5.1 The Town Clerk may transfer a portion of current year funds into instant access interest bearing accounts and transfer funds from such interest-bearing accounts on a routine basis as required, subject to oversight from the Policy and Finance Committee.

5.2 The Town Clerk shall determine and routinely review the minimum balance to be held in the current account in consultation with the Policy and Finance Committee and shall ensure this is maintained.

5.3 The CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund shall usually be used for this purpose and the effectiveness of this shall be reviewed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Banking and Investments working group at least annually.

Revision

6.1 Any revisions to this policy shall be approved by the Policy and Finance Committee under its delegated authority from Full Council.

6.2 The Finance Committee shall review this policy annually and recommend any proposed changes to Full Council prior to the commencement of the new financial year. Where no changes are proposed, Full Council shall note the policy.

6.3 Notwithstanding 4.2 this policy shall be reviewed regularly and in the event the Bank of England increases its base rate above 3% or the Financial Services Compensation Scheme is extended to cover the Town Council.

[\[1\]](#) In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Parish Property as defined by the Local Government Act 1933.

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk
Date: 24th March 2025
Subject: General Data Protection Regulations Policies

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to review the Council's General Data Protection Regulations Policies.

Summary:

2. The Town Council's General Data Protection Regulation Policies regulates the actions of the Council as a corporate body, with regards to its use of people's personal information. Regulations introduced by the Information Commissioner Office in 2018 meant that the appended policies needed to be introduced by the Town Council, and were duly created by the Council's Data Protection Officer GDPR-Info in May 2018. These documents are now presented for annual review.

Members are recommended to review the Town Council's General Data Protection Regulations Policy and adopt them for the council year.

Background:

3. The Town Council's General Data Protection Regulations Policies needs to be reviewed and adopted annually on the advice of the Internal Auditor.
4. Members may wish to note that this is for good practice and the Policies presented have been produced by the Council's Data Protection Officer GDPR-Info, the Town Council's professional consultant who would act on the Council's behalf if there was an information breach.
5. The Data Protection Regulations Policies are attached for review, but the supporting documentation can be found on the Town Council's website on the Policies drop down under 'GDPR'. Please note that GDPR-Info have not informed the Town Council that any material changes are needed to the policies in line with and legislative changes.
6. The policies can be viewed at <https://www.haywardsheath.gov.uk/gdpr-and-staff>

Financial Implications

7. None.

Legal Implications

8. Statutory Legal Requirement for Internal Audit Purpose. **Town Clerk**

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance

Report of: Town Clerk
Date: 24th March 2025
Subject: Consultation on proposals for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton.

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is to consider a response to a third-party consultation.

Summary:

2. A consultation on proposals for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Sussex and Brighton is now open and everyone across the county is invited to have their say. The following report presents the Town Council's suggested response that has been formulated by the Town Clerk working with the Chair's Working Party.

Recommendation(s):

Members are recommended to comment upon, adopt and delegate the making of the response to a consultation regarding the proposed Combined Mayor Authority for Sussex and Brighton as presented in Appendix 1 of this report to the Town Clerk.

Background:

3. The government is running the consultation, which is specific to the Sussex and Brighton region, until Sunday 13 April 2025. All interested parties are welcome to have their say, including organisations as well as individuals who live and work in the region.
4. The consultation specifically asks about:
 - The proposed geography
 - Governance arrangements
 - Supporting the economy
 - Improving social outcomes
 - Local government services
 - Improving the local natural environment
 - Supporting the needs of local communities and reflect local identity
5. West Sussex County Council and neighbouring upper tier authorities in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove will be submitting their own responses to the questions.
6. Full details of the consultation can be found on the gov.uk website at: [Sussex and Brighton devolution - GOV.UK](#)
7. Further information is available in the government press notice here: [Devolution Priority Programme consultations launch - GOV.UK](#)
8. The bid to be on the government's devolution priority programme is deemed to be a positive opportunity to draw down more powers and funding for all areas from central government.

9. Ministers have agreed that a strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton, made up of an elected mayor, and two members of each constituent authority, offers the chance to give the people who live here more control and influence over the issues that affect them, from transport and housing to skills and employment, as well as a stronger voice in how national decisions affect them.
10. The decision whether or not to proceed with the proposal will be one for the government to take based on its assessment of the consultation responses. No formal steps towards setting up a combined authority for Sussex can be made until that decision is made.
11. Separate to this process, authorities across our region are discussing plans for local government reorganisation, with a proposal to government due to be submitted soon.

Financial Implications

12. None.

Legal Implications

13. None - Consultation.

Town Clerk

Appendix 1 – Item 13

Sussex and Brighton Devolution – Government consultation

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the proposed geography will deliver benefits to the area?

The geography of the Mayoral Combined County Authority seems sensible to cover the whole of the County as it sits currently.

However, the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority, bringing what is currently West Sussex and East Sussex into one high level authority with Brighton and Hove, will result in the Mayoral Combined County Authority having to deal with a diverse and challenging range of communities. This is in terms of the differing needs of the coastal strip, the rural north of the County and a number of distinctly different Towns across the County not forgetting a major airport and Brighton and Hove being one of most vibrant and diverse cities in the country.

Any division below the Mayoral Combined County Authority must be considered so to derive the benefits foreseen from a Mayoral Combined County Authority with thought about how any unitarities are split across West and East Sussex, taking into account these differing needs so the benefits that can be realised from re-organisation are in a cohesive manner. This should ensure that decisions will not be centralised and issues of land use against population being addressed, especially taking into account the South Downs National Park. There needs to be thought given to areas that are not parished being empowered to work in their community at a local level. It cannot be seen that local democracy is perceived to be further from the community than it is already. Town/Parish Councils are well placed to take on more powers and duties and new local Councils need to be formed to bridge gaps that will inevitably exist.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority?

A more streamlined approach to Local Government in Sussex must be welcomed but there needs to be assurances on how there will be continuity of services across the County with the new Local Government structure.

At the present time the County suffers from differences with regards to two/three tiers of authorities across Sussex. Parish and Town Councils are consistent in fully parished Districts so the creation of new Parish/Town Councils across the County where gaps will appear as a result of re-organisation must be considered.

One concern is how the tax payer, in line with the proposed plans, will be affected on the grounds that the formation of the Mayoral Combined County Authority will inevitably mean that for a period of time there will be three/four tiers of local authority while those existing authorities are re-organised. There is concern that the tax payer will take the burden and brings into question, during the interim period after the formation of the Mayoral Combined County Authority, how the Local Government structure will work to meet the needs of the local community.

On another matter there is a concern that there could be democratic deficits in local communities due to the reduction in local representation, this must be addressed during the creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority. This is where the devolution of services to Parish/Town Councils is so important so they can focus on the local services that residents see on a day-to-day basis.

Subsequently, Parish/Town Councils must be empowered now by the Government and existing principal authorities to allow them to provide devolved services within their communities as a result of the re-organisation. Larger Town Councils can act as hubs for the area whilst clustering with those Parishes who may not have the necessary infrastructure. Good examples of this already exist across the County.

The cost savings that should be realised from what would be a removal of a tier of Local Government must be reinvested into the community so to benefit the area in terms of improved services, to avoid any reduction in such, and the savings being lost to Central Government. Indeed, there should be efficiency, improvement and new services provided.

It is envisaged there will be long term funding plans which should provide assurances on local services, which should see added value when negotiating larger contracts for core services on a long-term basis.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the economy of the area?

With re-organisation promising long term funding plans there should be thought and assurances given, through the creation of Mayoral Combined County Authority, that the economy is to be supported. This should translate into opportunities for inward investment into business communities so to grow the economy and stimulate job creation. Focusing on Business Improvement Districts, working with business parks/association/chambers of commerce and colleges and universities is essential to creating a vibrant economy. Mid Sussex is well placed with strong further education establishments located within and its location on the main Brighton to London railway line and sitting against the A23 corridor.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve social outcomes in the area?

The aforementioned statement should be based on thought being given to the geographical makeup of the County and the needs of Brighton and Hove, Adur, Arun and Worthing are very different to Mid Sussex, Crawley, Chichester and Horsham within West Sussex. It is therefore a grouping that meets mutual needs of each authority, which can be met alongside their neighbouring authorities. Diversity in the proposed area must be at the forefront of organisational thinking with huge combination of rural/urban challenges bringing those areas together successfully. Therefore, local community is enhanced as we need to be near our community and know their needs.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve local government services in the area?

As long as funding supports the proposed creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority to maintain and enhance services, it is agreeable that services should improve. Obviously, the services provided at the current time and their volume will not change, but there is opportunity to add value for money through larger contracts with savings enhancing the value and capacity of the services.

There is also need for devolvement of services that can be offered at a local level. Town/Parish Councils have the unique ability to raise their precept to accommodate the transfer of services. Funding is expected to support any transfer but long-term ambitions can be funded and driven by communities. The loss or reduction of services must be non-negotiable. During the re-organisation services must be secured or devolved down. Money raised should be commuted to Towns and Parish and Town Councils where it is deemed to be necessary in the interest of the community - a pound better spent at a local level can do more than paying for centralised services. This would in terms of a quicker response time, local knowledge and less travel time means that services are more cost effectively delivered at a local level.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve the local natural environment and overall national environment?

The risk with this matter is the loss of the ruralness of Sussex, which needs to be protected. Where housing is needed there needs to be a balance against the Government's drive for increased housing numbers and the protection of the local natural environment. The changes in the Local Government should not allow for an open season of building on the Green Belt and not be a trigger for rural areas to meet the unmet housing need of urban authorities.

Notwithstanding the need for houses the natural environment must be protected and any form of housing delivery in line with revised NPPF in December 2024 must allow the retention of the Town/Village characteristics including natural landscapes and settings. The South East and indeed Sussex must only take its fair share of new housing numbers. This is paramount in the Mid Sussex area of the District. This all must be taken into account in areas that are not protected by the South Down National Park. This would tie in with thought being given to revised Parish/Town boundaries and the fact that Haywards Heath sits on the main commuter belt from Brighton to London taking in Gatwick Airport.

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities?

The main concern is that the creation Mayoral Combined County Authority will take decision making further away from communities. It will also be hard for the authority at the Combined level to know what is needed in communities across such a large area.

Therefore, it is essential that Town/Parish Councils are empowered to take on services and provision from the District Council. The Devolution Bill does not make clear the Government's thinking on how Town/Parish Councils fit into any new arrangements. It does not recognise them as local authorities, which they indeed are.

The proposed Geography will work if there is empowerment and formal process for Town and Parish Councils to feed up the needs and interests of local residents and indeed the Town Council. This whilst they continue to provide local services and should be given the opportunity to provide services that could be lost or not seen as a priority by the Mayoral Combined County Authority, as it deals with Government directives and major infrastructure needs.

Ends