Strategy and Resources Meeting
Tuesday 10th February 2026
The Trinity Centre
7:00pm

Present:

Cllrs S Ward (Chairman), Cooper, Pears, Perks, Puri, Raut and Wood.

In Attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Steve Hollingworth – Head of Open Spaces & Environment and Mary Kidner – Head of Finance & Governance.

There were 15 members of the public and one member of the press present.

A resident referred to a petition submitted to the Town Council, calling for a pedestrian crossing to be installed on the King's Arms Junction, and asked if the Town Council agree that road safety should be paramount to plans for the Sutton Gateway Scheme.

Cllr Ward responded that the petition would be considered by the Planning and Highways Committee and that safe pedestrian travel and active travel is at the core of the Gateway Scheme.

Cllr Pears gave examples of planning developments that could generate developer contributions to mitigate the impact on communities and that the sums generated are often insufficient to fund crossings which are very expensive to install. He said that he had several sites that were on his 'shopping list' for road safety improvements, including one at the Kings Arms junction and that Birmingham City Council (BCC) has a set criterion that needs to be met to fund a new crossing. Cllr Pears said when looking at road improvements that don't fulfil the BCC criteria for funding, and as the Town Council only has some restrictive reserves, other sources of funding are needed. This means that while in support of crossings, it is impossible to say if and when they would be completed.

A resident asked what progress had been made on restoring a library in Sutton Coldfield Town Centre.

Cllr Ward responded that the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Library was closed by Birmingham City Council (BCC). The Town Council had invested over £1.2m to keep the doors open, but BCC had closed it and replaced with a visit from a mobile library. The Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan includes scope for a Civic Centre, it is hoped that this could also include a town centre library, but it will take time to achieve. Cllr Ward said that the BCC library closures had disproportionally affected Sutton Coldfield when compared to other closures across the City, with four of the seven proposed closures being in Sutton Coldfield.

A resident said that small traders from the indoor market had been evicted by the property owner and asked what the Council is doing to help rehouse these traders in nearby vacant commercial units.

Cllr Ward noted that the Town Council leads the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership and has a relationship with the Gracechurch Centre owners. Cllr Ward, alongside Cllr Pears and Sir Andrew Mitchell

MP, were working closely with the Gracechurch Centre to do their best to relocate traders that are looking for alternative town centre accommodation. Cllr Ward reported that he had spoken to John Southall of BPG (owners of the Gracechurch Centre) and that he was pleased to report that three traders had already been relocated; there are meetings scheduled with a further two traders and discussions taking place with more.

There were several residents of Windsor Mews in attendance, who spoke about the issues they were experiencing with Sanctuary. Sanctuary own the leasehold for the retirement housing complex and residents reported concerns around pest control, tree roots, drains, black mould, damp, guttering and lengthy delays for repairs.

Cllr Ward thanked residents for attending the meeting and highlighting their concerns. Cllr Ward said hearing their experiences had been heartrending and beyond disgraceful. He said he would write to the Chairman at Sanctuary Housing and demand that someone comes to speak to the residents and will also raise with Sir Andrew Mitchell, who will do his best to help.

62 Apologies for Absence

The CEO reported apologies from Cllr Cairns, Mackey and Parkin. The CEO advised that under Town Council Standing Orders 4v, Cllr Wood is substituting, with voting rights, for Cllr Mackey.

Resolved to accept the apologies received.

63 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pears declared an interest in agenda item 71 as a Trustee of Royal Sutton Coldfield Community Town Hall Trust. The CEO reported that Cllr Pears had been granted a dispensation to speak during the agenda item.

64 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of item 79 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3.

65 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 8th December 2025.

66 Minutes of the Town Centre Regeneration Meeting

Resolved to note the minutes of the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership meeting held on 30th January 2026.

67 Matters Arising

No matters arsing was reported.

68 Questions from Members

Cllr Wood asked for an update on progress on the transfer of assets from Birmingham City Council to the Town Council.

The CEO responded that there is a further delay in the transfer of Vesey Gardens, and that this is being dealt with by the Town Council's and the Church solicitors. Updates on other asset transfers are included in the Strategic Plan Monitoring report.

69 Royal Sutton Coldfield Libraries and Community Centres

Cllr Ward said there was encouraging statistical performance data in the report and that the service had been very well received. Cllr Wood commented that a difference has been made already in the first three months of operation and how important it is that the Town Council continues to make improvements.

In response to a question from Cllr Cooper, Steve Hollingworth confirmed that the cost of works at Walmley Community Centre included a full refurbishment of the toilets and could be carried out in the months following Full Council approval.

Cllr Perks asked if there was a five-year plan for the modernisation of Walmley Library in addition to remedial works. Cllr Ward responded that it is important that the building be transferred from Birmingham City Council to the Town Council so the Town Council can move forward and reinvest in the Library.

Cllr Ward summed up that despite misinformation, the Town Council is the client, it holds a contract and will hold the provider to the service level agreement.

Resolved to note the first three months' performance of the Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council Libraries and Community Centres.

Resolved to establish a Sutton Coldfield Libraries and Community Centres Earmarked Reserve of £150,000 to cover the cost of improvement works at Sutton Coldfield Libraries and Community Centres.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council approval of a range of improvements to the libraries and community centres at Mere Green, Walmley and the library at Boldmere as outlined in the report including painting and decorating, new floor coverings and cleaning, the refurbishment of the toilets and a new external shutter at a total cost of £65,489.56. Subject to approval, these improvements would be delivered by Acivico, Birmingham City Council`s (BCC) building maintenance company.

70 The UK Town of Culture

Cllr Ward noted that the Town of Culture for 2028 fits nicely within the context of the Quincentenary celebration in 2028.

Cllrs Pears and Wood spoke in support of submitting an Expression on Interest.

Resolved to instruct officers to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), to the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS), for the UK Town of Culture 2028.

71 Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall Loan

Cllr Wood said that the update report detailed an ongoing need for grants and sponsorship and he was pleased to hear that Harvey Norman had been announced as a sponsor for the Town Hall.

Cllr Pears reported that the Town Hall is hoping to breakeven in January and was on track to breakeven at the end of the financial year. He said that Harvey Norman wants to work with the community and help it to grow.

Resolved to note the update.

72 Cycle Hire

The CEO updated Committee that the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme is now fully commercially led by Lime and no further financial contributions were required from the Town Council. The scheme would transfer to the new provider, and they will review the scheme including any opportunities to expand. There is a greater emphasis on electric bikes, and it has been confirmed that there is no requirements for e-scooters within Sutton Coldfield.

Cllr Pears welcomed the news about e-scooters but gave a note of caution on the use of e-bikes within Sutton Park as it may conflict with bylaws.

73 Strategic Plan Monitoring Arrangements

The CEO confirmed that further progress would be reported back to Strategy and Resources Committee on all areas of the work of the Town Council.

Resolved to approve the proposed performance management arrangements as set out in the report and attached appendix, as a basis for monitoring the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities and notes the progress to date.

74 Performance to Date

Committee considered the earmarked reserves and discussed making further earmarked reserve provision for Heritage Restoration Works and Town Centre Regeneration.

The CEO advised that additional Health and Safety expertise was needed to provide annual reviews of allotments and areas transferred to the Town Council.

Resolved to approve budget virements of £7,000 to Civic Costs and Events and £5,000 to Subscriptions and Memberships from the Budget Contingency.

Resolved to approve spend and transfers to the Earmarked Reserves as detailed in section 5.4 of the report.

Resolved to approve the transfer of £100,000 into the Heritage Restoration Works Earmarked Reserve and £250,000 into the Town Centre Regeneration Earmarked Reserve, at the end of the Financial year.

Resolved to approve that the CEO be delegated to make any further adjustments to the budget or reserves at the end of the year as needed, in conjunction with the Chair of the Committee, and that these be reported back to Committee at the next meeting in April 2026.

75 Draft Investment Strategy 2026/27

Resolved to recommend the Draft Investment Strategy to Full Council to approval.

76 Policies Review

Committee reviewed the following policies:

- Statement of Internal Control
- Corporate Governance Policy
- Risk Management
- Health & Safety
- Reserves Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Resolved to recommend the reviewed policies to Full Council for approval.

77 Bank Reconciliations

Resolved to note the bank reconciliations for November and December 2025

78 Date of the Next Meeting

The CEO advised that the next meeting of Full Council had been rescheduled from 24th March to 17th March 2026 due to the pre-election period.

The next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee is scheduled on 21st April 2026 at the Trinity Centre.

8:19pm the public session of the meeting ended.

79 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following agenda item, subject to agenda item 64 will most likely be heard with the Public and Press excluded.

a) Councillor Recognition Award
Resolved to recommend to Full Council that Cllrs Allan, Cairns, Griffin, Mackey and Mosson be presented with Councillor Recognition Awards.

The meeting ended at - 8:26pm.

Signed as a true record

21st April 2026