



Strategy and Resources Meeting
Wednesday 16th September 2026
The Trinity Centre
7:00pm

Present:

Cllrs S Ward (Chairman), Cooper, Cook, Parkin, Pears, Perks, Puri, Raut and Auton (non-voting).

In Attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Mary Kidner – Head of Finance & Governance.

There were no members of the press or public present.

15 Apologies for Absence

No apologies received.

16 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Cook and Pears made declarations of interest in agenda item 26 as Trustees of the Royal Sutton Coldfield Community Town Hall Trust.

17 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 16th June 2026.

18 Matters Arising

The CEO reported that following the letter sent to the Combined Authority outlining some of the issues that had been reported since the introduction of Lime Bikes in Royal Sutton Coldfield, a meeting took place with senior officers from the Combined Authority and Lime along with site visits to locations with particular problems. A number of actions had been agreed with Lime with regards to age verification and restricting and/or reducing the speed and numbers of bikes in some areas. Cllr Pears asked if the Lime bikes would be removed from the Parade as they are causing significant anti-social behavior. The CEO said additional measures and controls were proposed in relation to Limes bikes on the Parade including investigating whether a physical docking station could be installed.

19 Questions from Members

Cllr Auton said that the Friends of Jones Wood were reviewing a proposal to transfer the Jones Wood and Fox Hollies Copse from Birmingham City Council (BCC) to the Town Council and asked for details of the proposed ongoing maintenance for the sites once transferred to the Town Council.



The CEO clarified that the wooded area known as Fox Hollies Copse was not on the list for transfer to the Town Council from BCC.

Cllr Ward responded that the Devo Deal is an ongoing process and consultation carried out by BCC with the Friends of Groups was a little early, as due diligence work is yet to be completed. Each of the sites has its own complexities and the Town Council will consult with the Friends of Groups directly, once more information has been obtained. The Town Council wants the sites to be transferred from BCC to deliver better for the town and while some high-level information was provided from BCC several years ago, more meaningful information is still needed to ensure the Town Council understands the detail of each site to best plan how to properly deliver maintenance and improvements.

Cllr Auton also asked what funding the Town Council has earmarked within its reserve fund for improvements at Town Gate play area.

Cllr Ward responded that the Town Council had significant reserves for Sutton Park and Play Improvement provision and that the Royal Sutton Coldfield Pride in Place also had sums available. He said that the reality is the entire Park needs significant work, but this will not be progressed until BCC agree to a different governance model as a Trust structure would attract investment and grants from other bodies. Cllr Ward confirmed that he had met with the Leader of BCC and the governance of Sutton Park is on the agenda for discussion with BCC's Executive Director of City Operations.

20 **Update from the Human Resources Sub-Committee**

Cllr Ward gave an update from the Human Resources Sub-Committee meeting and proposed the recommendation from Sub-Committee that consultants be engaged to continue providing services to the Council over the next 12 months.

Resolved to approve that Andrew Tucker, PJA, Clarity NS, Trevor Askew, ASkills and Gary Phelps continue to provide consultancy services to the Town Council, as needed, for the next 12 months.

21 **Minutes from the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership**

In response to a question from Cllr Parkin, the CEO confirmed that a meeting had been scheduled with the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Cabinet member for Transport to see if BCC would support the Town Council funding free car parking over the festive season this year. The CEO reported that the free bus travel offer previously provided via Transport for West Midlands in 2024 and 2025 is no longer available.

In regard to the public consultation for the Royal Sutton Coldfield Gateway Scheme, this CEO said this was likely to start in mid-October. Cllr Ward suggested that a briefing on the Gateway Scheme be scheduled for Councillors.

Resolved to note the minutes of the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership meeting held on 26th June 2026.

22 **Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council Libraries and Community Centres**

The CEO reported that there was high usage of the Royal Sutton Coldfield Libraries over the summer and excellent uptake of the Summer Reading Challenge.



There will be a report to Committee in October on the capital programme for improvements across all sites and discussions are ongoing with BCC on the transfer of the library and community centre buildings from BCC to the Town Council.

Cllr Ward commented that the one-year anniversary of the Town Council taking over the Sutton Coldfield Library and Communities Centre Service was approaching and asked that this be marked in some way.

23 Sutton Coldfield Allotment Rents

The CEO reported that the RPI published today was 3.2% and that an increase of allotment rents in line with this would increase the annual cost for each plot holder by between £1 to £5. This is the increase that BCC has applied to the 2027/28 allotment rents and will ensure consistency across all allotment sites in Sutton Coldfield, until the remaining five sites are legally transferred to the Town Council from BCC.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that Sutton Coldfield Allotment Rents and Fees charges for the Allotment Year 2027/2028 be increased in line with the published Retail Price Index (RPI) as of 1 August.

24 External Audit Report & Certificate 2025/26

The CEO reported that a pilot scheme last year saw some Council's submit their Annual Governance and Accountability return via a digital portal and that it was anticipated that the Town Council would be able to use this method from the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved to note the External Auditor report and Certificate for the financial year 2025/26.

25 Internal Audit Appointment 2026/27

Committee discussed options for the appointment of an internal auditor for the 2026/27 financial year. It was noted that Auditing Solutions had provided a service to the Council over the past 10 years and agreed that it would be good practice to rotate auditors. The CEO confirmed that all four references sought from Super Council's (Council's with a precept of over £1m) that used Mulberry LAS had now been received, and all were positive.

Mulberry charge per hour, it is anticipated that the costs of two visits could be funded from the existing audit budget, but this will be further reviewed after the first visit has taken place.

Resolved to appoint Mulberry LAS to provide the Town Council's internal audit for the 2026/27 financial year.

26 Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall Loan

7:45pm Cllrs Cook and Pears left the meeting during discussion of this agenda item.

The CEO reported that financial information provided by the Royal Sutton Coldfield Community Town Hall Trust had been circulated to Councillors and that all loan repayments were up to date.

Resolved to note the finance report from the Royal Sutton Coldfield Community Town Hall Trust.

7:53pm Cllrs Cook and Pears returned to the meeting.



27 Performance to Date

Resolved to note the performance to date report.

Resolved to approve virements from the Budget Contingency as outlined in 4.2 of the Performance to Date report.

28 Town Council Investments

The CEO gave details of upcoming cashflow and proposed investments over the next few months. All investments are in line with the approved 2026/27 Investment Strategy.

Resolved to note the Town Council Investments Update.

29 Budget Planning Timetable

Resolved to note the Budget Planning Timetable.

30 Use of Chief Executive Officer's Delegated Powers

The CEO reported use of delegated powers, in discussion with the Leader of the Town Council to approve:

- Renewal of the Town Council's annual insurance policy with Zurich at a cost of £3,456.
- Repair and maintenance of the Civic Regalia with Fattorinis at a cost of £5,451.
- Room hire at the Town Hall on 31st October 2026 at a cost of £2,350 for a Civic Remembrance Concert.

31 Bank Reconciliations

Resolved to note the bank reconciliations.

32 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20th October 2026 at the Trinity Centre.

The meeting ended at 8:02pm