

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2016 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens
J Mahoney (until Min No RG7.1)
A Omer
M Dalton
S Murray (from Min No RG7.6)
J Jennings

Also in attendance:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
S Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Murray.

RG2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

RG3 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2016 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG4 Public Representations

None were received.

RG5 Matters for Report

5.1 Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth – Min no RG233.7

The Committee CONFIRMED that the Town Council would again take part in next year's celebrations to mark Commonwealth Day on Monday 13 March 2017.

The Town Clerk reported that a year four class of children from St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School had recently taken part in a mock council meeting in which they had RESOLVED to write to their head teacher to encourage the school to participate in the celebrations.

5.2 Strategy and Staff Group

The Committee NOTED that the Strategy and Staff Group had met on 6 June 2016. The topics discussed at that informal meeting included staffing, office accommodation, councillor attendance at events, Standing Orders and Christmas lights.

5.3 Website – Min no RG289.2

The Committee praised the new Town Council website, which had been published online in April 2016. It was NOTED that the annual hosting, warranty and support fee amounted to £235 net of VAT, with a further £1,500 left in the budget to cover staff training and further development of the site.

It was proposed to add a new consultation page to encourage and assist residents in responding to local issues.

5.4 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG289.3

The Committee NOTED that since the renewal and following the exclusion of tree felling under the Employers Liability Section, an additional premium of £39.51 including IPT (@ 9.5%) had been applied to ensure Town Council staff were covered for low level tree pruning work.

Building Valuations

It was also NOTED that, as part of the renewal process, a free building reinstatement cost valuation had been carried out on Council properties by Barrett Corp & Harrington Ltd.

The Committee AGREED to apply the revised valuations shown below, noting that this would result in a pro rata refund of £479.19 on the annual premium.

Material damage – buildings & subsidence	Current sum insured £	Revised valuation £
Buckingham Court	505,813	507,000
Cemetery buildings	229,303	159,000
Kingsley Hall	404,651	330,000
Willingale Road Changing Room	134,884	95,000
Community Centre	2,554,362	2,122,000
Drinking fountain	47,209	22,000
RVRG changing rooms	479,690	368,000
LAC buildings	281,818	216,000
War Memorial	142,767	64,000
Willingale Road Allotments	8,402	92,000

5.5 Election Costs

It was NOTED that the net costs of the May 2016 Town Council elections paid to Epping Forest District Council were £21,359.66. This was lower than anticipated following the uncontested election in the Fairmead ward.

5.6 Emergency Plan – co-ordinators

The Committee carried out its annual review of the Town Council’s Emergency Plan and appointed Cllrs Angold Stephens and Omer as deputy co-ordinators.

The Town Clerk reported that she would be attending a workshop organised by the District Council at the end of September/early October regarding community resilience.

RG6 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the internal auditor’s report of his final inspection for 2015/16. This had confirmed that no significant issues had arisen during this period.

The next visit by the auditor was anticipated in September 2016.

RG7 Finance

7.1 Fidelity Guarantee Insurance Cover

The Committee reviewed the end of year balances and AGREED that the level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover, currently set at £1.4 million, was adequate for its needs.

Cllr Mahoney left the meeting.

7.2 Investments

i) Nationwide Business Instant Saver

It was NOTED that the interest rate on this account would reduce from 0.95% gross to 0.75% gross with effect from 21 July 2016. This account paid a variable rate of interest and provided instant access.

ii) Santander 180 Day Notice Account

The Committee NOTED that in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee, the balance of funds in this account had been rolled over for a further 180 days with a new maturity date of 8 December 2016. On maturity, the Council could withdraw or reinvest the funds. The interest rate of 1.15% gross would continue as a fixed rate for the lifetime of this account.

7.3 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to continue with the practice of appointing a councillor to carry out random checks on the Council's financial records. Members thanked Cllr Mahoney for his work during the past years and appointed Cllr Omer to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions during 2016/17.

7.4 Training

It was NOTED that the Essex Association of Local Councils was offering a training session on Budget and Precept at its offices in Great Dunmow on Thursday 14 July 2016 at a cost of £50. Any members wishing to attend this course were invited to contact the Town Council Office.

7.5 Salary Payments

The Committee AGREED to transfer the responsibility for the monthly BACS payments of staff salaries and the members' parish basic allowances and expenses where claimed, to its current payroll service provider, Acumen Wages Service, at a monthly net fee of £20.

Cllr Murray joined the meeting during the next item.

7.6 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the end of year financial report together with details of the Committee's earmarked reserves.

A note of the Council's current bank balances and most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

It was also noted that the first instalment of the Precept together with the full LCTS grant was received on 29 April 2016.

7.7 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £353,983.80 as detailed on payments schedules nos 207 – 213 had been made since the report to the meeting on 6 April 2016. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

It was also noted that details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were provided on the Council's website.

RG8 Council Policies

The Committed NOTED the list of the main Council policies and that the documents would be subject to a rolling review.

RG9 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee AGREED to undertake a review of the Council's financial strategy and reserves policy; the Town Clerk would prepare a report for future discussion initially by the Strategy and Staff Group.

Signed.....
Date: 5 October 2016

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5 October 2016 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jennings
J Mahoney S Murray (from Min no RG5.3)
A Omer

Also in attendance:

Councillors: P Beales D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
S Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG10 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

RG11 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

RG12 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2016 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG13 Public Representations

None were received.

RG14 Matters for Report

14.1 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG5.4

The Committee NOTED that, further to the decision taken at the last meeting, the revised valuations had been applied to the Council's properties and a refund of £401.48 received from WPS Insurance Brokers. A low claims bonus rebate of £108.84 had also been received for the financial year 2015/16.

14.2 Salary Payments – Min no RG7.5

The Committee NOTED that, in view of the £200 fee to be levied by NatWest Bank in order to provide the specific account reference number for the transfer of the autopay, no further action had been taken.

Cllr Murray joined the meeting.

14.3 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee NOTED that the 2017 Annual Town Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 15 March 2017 commencing at 8pm in the Murray Hall. Whilst this was not a council meeting, all town councillors were expected to attend.

The Committee AGREED to continue with the usual format for the meeting by inviting local organisations and voluntary groups, particularly those in receipt of Financial Assistance from the Council, to mount displays at the event to attract more public interest. The organisations successful in their grant applications for 2017/18 would also be presented with a certificate by the Town Mayor.

The Committee AGREED to invite the principal from Epping Forest College as the guest speaker and to provide Epping Forest Museum with the opportunity to mount a display to promote its service to local residents.

14.4 Remembrance Service

The Committee AGREED to make a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion in support of the Poppy Appeal and towards the cost of the wreath to be laid by the Town Mayor at the Remembrance Service on 13 November 2016. Payment was approved under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

14.5 Binding of Minutes

The Committee NOTED that arrangements were in hand for the binding of the 2012-16 council and committee minutes at a net cost of £480. The volumes would be bound in burgundy leather with gold embossed details, the same style as that used previously.

14.6 Christmas & New Year Opening Times

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council offices would close on Friday 23 December at 12 noon, reopening as normal from 9am on Wednesday 28 December until Friday 30 December at 4pm; then close on Monday 2 January 2017 with normal opening hours resumed on Tuesday 3 January 2017.

RG15 Financial Assistance

It was NOTED that a balance of £548 remained in the 2016/17 Financial Assistance budget.

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount requested £	Item	Power
Broadway Town Centre Partnership	170.00	Brochure printing	LGA 1972, S144
Spark*	296.40	Signage	LGA 1972, S137

*Noting that the accounts provided by Spark were for the national charity, Worth, the Committee AGREED that, in future, non-local specific accounts would only be acceptable under exceptional circumstances.

RG16 Finance and Audit

16.1 Accounts and Audit 2015/16 – Min no 285 (Council, 21 April 2016)

The Committee NOTED that confirmation has been received from PKF Littlejohn, the Council's external auditors, that they had completed the audit of the Annual Return for Loughton Town Council for the year ended 31

March 2016. Under the regulations this would, however, need to be reported to full Council at its meeting on 19 October 2016.

It was reported that the notice of conclusion of audit and the audited accounts were available to view on the Council's website. The notice had also been displayed on the noticeboards around the town as required by the legislation.

The audit certificate confirmed that, in their opinion, "*the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met*".

However, members' attention was drawn to a comment made by the external auditor which read:

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the smaller authority:

- As a result of incorrect information supplied to the Council by the precepting authority, Section 1, Box 2, the annual precept, does not agree to the figure notified to us by the precepting authority. The figures in Boxes 2 and 3 should read £586,599 and £200,102 respectively. Please ensure that the correct figures are used in next year's Annual Return when completing the comparatives. (NB: As notified in our letter of 14 March 2016, all the precept figures published by the precepting authorities each year are available for checking on our website prior to completion of the Annual Return).

There was no doubt that the full amount of precept demanded by and paid to the Town Council by the District Council was £587,100, as stated on the Annual Return. However, following a late change in the tax base, the District Council had chosen to finance the shortfall in the precept through an internal grant from the District Development Fund. Unfortunately, it had not taken the necessary steps to notify the Town Council and the ten other affected parish and town councils in the district of that decision resulting in a comment on the audit certificate. This matter was likely to be raised at the next Local Councils' Liaison Committee meeting on 14 November 2016.

16.2 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the next visit by the internal auditor was booked for Monday 17 October 2016.

16.3 Internal Financial Check

The Committee thanked Cllr Omer for undertaking a financial check on 20 September 2016.

Cllr Omer reported that everything was satisfactory with all audited items correct and that the staff were very helpful.

16.4 Investments

The Committee NOTED the changes in interest rates. As the funds in the Santander 180-Day Notice Account would be available for reinvestment on 8 December 2016, a report on alternative options would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

16.5 Reserves Policy Review

The Committee considered the report and the impact of the proposed amendment. It was AGREED to amend the Council's reserves policy to read as follows:

1. The amount of money held in General and Earmarked Reserves shall be identified at the end of each financial year and reported to Resources and General Services Committee at the same time as the statutory Statements of Accounts. Where Earmarked Reserves include Capital Reserves and Unspent Loans, they will be specifically identified.
2. Earmarked Reserves
The Council will keep such sums in earmarked reserves as shall be considered necessary to support future expenditure on specific projects or as funds built up towards significant future revenue expenditure or to meet anticipated liabilities.
3. General Reserves
 - 3.1 The Council shall maintain a prudent level of general reserves sufficient to ensure it can meet its on-going commitments, respond to any need for emergency or unplanned expenditure, and overcome any cash flow difficulty which might arise.
 - 3.2 The Council will normally aim to maintain general reserves at around 65%, within the range 60 to 70%, of net budgeted annual running costs, excluding growth items and items on which expenditure will be met by use of earmarked reserves.

“Net budgeted annual running costs” means the expenditure which each committee has estimated it will spend on its on-going services in the following year, less the income it expects to receive, after any adjustments to the budgets have been made by the Resources and General Services Committee for any reason.

“Growth items” are additional discretionary items specifically identified by spending committees.

16.6 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation 2017/18

The Government’s proposals to introduce capping to some or all parish and town councils were discussed.

The Committee OBJECTED to the proposals and AGREED to make the following response:

- This Council urges the Department for Communities and Local Government to reconsider its proposals to cap the revenue raising ability of local councils as this could significantly damage local service provision and undermine the role of local councils and councillors.
- Noting that local councils receive no government funding and are accountable to their residents, not least through the ballot box, under the Localism agenda the level of precept should continue to be decided at parish level and not by the Government.
- If capping was introduced, even where the local community had been fully consulted and supported an increase to improve services, residents would be forced to pay for the additional costs of an automatic referendum. The cost of such a referendum in Epping Forest District would be approximately £5,000 per ward; £35,000 in

Loughton. This would be an added and unnecessary burden on local tax payers.

- Should the Government enforce its proposals, the Committee AGREED:
 - i. it would be more appropriate to base the referendum threshold on a three-year average of no more than 2% and £5 rises. This would then exempt local councils requiring a one-off increase to meet service innovations but prevent councils from repeatedly applying larger increases.
 - ii. the approach should also take account of the transfer of responsibilities (assets and services) to town and parish councils.

16.7 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 29 September 2016 was NOTED together with details of the Committee's earmarked reserves. Confirmation was received that the second instalment of the 2016/17 precept, £297,300, had been paid by Epping Forest District Council on 30 September 2016.

A note of the Council's current bank balances and most recent reconciliations was circulated at the meeting.

16.8 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £252,397.66, as detailed on payments schedules nos 214 – 222, had been made since the report to the meeting on 6 July 2016. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG17 Staffing

17.1 CiLCA

The Committee congratulated the Planning Clerk, Vivienne Messenger, on achieving a Certificate in Local Council Administration. The Town Mayor had presented the certificate to Vivienne at the Planning and Licensing Committee meeting on Monday 3 October 2016.

17.2 Jury Service

The Committee NOTED that the Town Clerk had refunded to the Council the loss of earnings payment received from the Court Service for the period of her jury service in July 2016 in the sum of £584.55.

RG18 Office Accommodation

The Committee NOTED the report regarding progress on the lease with Essex County Council and that the appointment of a contractor would be delayed until the lease had been signed.

Once the lease had been signed, it was AGREED to engage the Architect in a project management role to oversee the necessary building works at a cost of £1,950 plus VAT and travelling expenses.

RG19 Legal Matters

19.1 Illegal Encampment on Hillyfields

The Town Clerk reported that a possession order had been served on the travellers late on Friday 30 September and that they had vacated the site on Sunday 2 October 2016, moving to Jessel Green, land owned by Epping Forest District Council. Arrangements were in hand to ensure the prompt removal of the associated fly tipping from Hillyfields.

The Committee NOTED that the legal costs associated with obtaining a possession order from the Court were likely to be in the region of £5,000 and were to be met from General Reserves.

The District Council had been asked to consider whether a Public Spaces Protection Order for the wider district would be appropriate and achievable.

The Town Clerk recorded her thanks to Richard Gardiner, Environment & Neighbourhood Manager at the District Council, who had provided advice and support on handling the legal process.

19.2 Insurance Claim

19.2.1 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the next item only under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as it contained confidential information relating to legal proceedings.

19.2.2 Defence Statement

The Committee AUTHORISED the Town Clerk to sign the Council's defence statement regarding an incident alleged to have occurred on Jessel Green on 31 July 2013.

RG20 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised

Signed.....

Date: 7 December 2016

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Mahoney
P Beales (as substitute for Cllr Jennings)
D Wixley (as substitute for Cllr Omer)

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
S Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG21 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jennings, Omer and Murray. The Town Clerk reported that Cllrs Beales and Wixley had been nominated as substitutes for Cllrs Jennings and Omer for this meeting.

RG22 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

RG23 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2016 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG24 Public Representations

None were received.

RG25 Matters for Report

25.1 Christmas Card Competition

The Committee NOTED the report of the 2016 competition and AGREED to maintain the current age categories for competition entries.

25.2 Annual Town Meeting – Min no RG14.3

The Committee NOTED that the new Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Epping Forest College, Saboohi Famili, had accepted the invitation to speak at the 2017 Annual Town Meeting.

25.3 Binding of Minutes

It was NOTED that the binding of minutes for the 2012-16 council and committee meetings had now been completed at a net cost of £580.

The Committee confirmed that arrangements should be made to archive all the bound volumes of minutes dating back to 1996 at the Essex Record Office together with back copies of the Think Loughton newsletter.

25.4 Extraordinary Council Meeting

The Committee NOTED that the hire of a professional sound system for the meeting held in the Murray Hall on 29 November 2016 had been at a net cost of £651.

25.5 Code of Conduct

A copy of the Report of the Standards Committee had been circulated to all members under separate cover. As a member of the Joint Standards Committee, it was strongly recommended that this Council adopted the revised Code and this would be proposed at the Council meeting on 14 December 2016.

25.6 Standing Orders

It was NOTED that at the meeting on 14 December 2016, the Council would be asked to review the Standing Orders. A copy of these had been provided to all members following their election in May 2016 and could also be found on the Council's website.

25.7 Staff Handbook

The Committee NOTED that a number of minor amendments to the Handbook have been recommended by the Council's HR advisor, Peninsula, to meet recent changes in legislation. Once staff had been consulted on these, a further report would be made to this Committee.

RG26 Finance and Audit

26.1 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the first interim inspection by the Council's internal auditor had been undertaken on Monday 17 October 2016 and a copy of their report circulated to all councillors. No matters of concern had been raised by the auditor.

26.2 Internal Financial Check

The Committee NOTED that Cllr Omer had undertaken a financial check on 24 November 2016 with his work covering a review of the bank accounts, the Precept receipts, chip and pin payments and a VAT return. He reported that everything was satisfactory with officers very helpful in providing all the requested information and explaining his queries.

Cllr Omer was thanked for his work in this regard.

26.3 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 7 December 2016 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

26.4 Investments

26.4.1 Investment Strategy and Policy

The Committee considered the draft policy and RECOMMENDED its adoption to the Council.

26.4.2 Investments Review

It was reported that the funds invested in the Santander 180-day Notice Account would be available for reinvestment on 8 December 2016.

The Committee RESOLVED to reinvest the balance in the Santander 180-day Notice Account.

26.4.3 Accounts Paid

Payments totalling £139,070.00 as detailed on payments schedules nos 223 – 226 had been made since the report to the meeting on 5 October 2016. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG27 Members' Remuneration Scheme

The existing remuneration scheme was reviewed and members considered it met the Council's needs.

The Committee RECOMMENDED to the Council that the Parish Basic Allowance should be maintained at £108 per annum for 2017-18.

RG28 Subscriptions Review

The Committee reviewed the current list of organisations of which it is a member and AGREED to continue to support those listed in the agenda without amendment.

RG29 Committee Priorities

29.1 As part of its overall plan and to complement the budget-making process, the Committee reviewed its priority list for 2017/18 and AGREED on the following:

Resources and General Services		
Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
Current activities		
High	New council accommodation	Arrangements were in hand for the proposed move to offices in Loughton Library
High	Seeking external funding sources	Targeted action
Low	Honours Board	On hold, awaiting a suitable display position
Low	Council structure	Continuing reviews
On-going activities		
Medium	Banking arrangements and investments	Kept under review
High	Running the Committee	
High	Admin for whole council	
High	Council and committee agendas and minutes	
High	All council finances, end of year accounts, audit etc.	
High	Management of Buckingham Crt	
High	Personnel and employment matters, staff management	Staff Handbook reviews as required
High	IT and office equipment	
High	Civic matters	Civic Service incl Citizenship Awards
High	Annual Report	Preparation and printing
High	Newsletter	Editorial, printing and distribution
High	Noticeboards	Maintenance and installation
High	Publicity and website	

High	Annual Town Meeting	Arrangements and admin
High	Christmas card competition	Arrangements and admin
High	Emergency Plan	Amendments and circulation
High	Financial Assistance Scheme	Admin and finance
High	New legislative requirements	
High	Policy reviews	On-going
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Contract reviews	On-going
High	Training Strategy	Annual review
High	Any other matters within the committee's terms of reference	
Low	Community Forum	Arrangements and admin

29.2 The Committee AGREED the following item for consideration by the Planning and Licensing Committee, as being suitable for a developer's Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy contribution should the opportunity arise.

- i) Noticeboards

RG30 Estimates for 2017/18

The Committee considered the estimates of income and expenditure for 2017/18.

30.1 Income

The Committee AGREED to:

- i. increase the fees and charges for the hire of the Council Chamber at Buckingham Court by 2%;
- ii. maintain the current rate of 60p per sheet of A4 for items included in the Publication Scheme.

30.2 The Committee's Rolling Programme

The Committee AGREED to the Rolling Programme as presented in the Agenda.

30.3 Expenditure

The estimates for 2017/18 as presented in the Agenda were AGREED such that the net figures were as follows:

Recourses and General Services Committee	£
Total budget expenditure (including committee recharge)**	217,150
Income	<u>28,500</u>
Net expenditure	188,650
Less income from earmarked reserves*	2,000
Total net expenditure	£186,650
*Details of transfers from earmarked reserves:	
<i>Noticeboards</i>	2,000

**** NB:** The total budget expenditure shown above currently includes a service recharge of -£251,000 (the 2016/17 figure). The 2017/18 figure would be confirmed by this Committee at its next meeting and a revised budget provided if appropriate.

RG31 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee AGREED to consider the following items:

- i. The use of external consultants to provide Health and Safety support;
- ii. A social media policy.

The Town Clerk would prepare reports in this regard.

Signed
Date: 11 January 2017

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 January at 7pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jennings
S Murray A Omer

Also in attendance:

Councillors: P Beales C C Pond C P Pond
M Stubbings (from Min no RG38) D J Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RG32 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

RG33 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

RG34 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG35 Public Representations

None were received.

RG36 Matters for Report

36.1 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation 2017/18 – Min no RG16.6

The Committee NOTED that the Government had not extended Council tax referendum principles to parish and town councils in 2017/18 but would keep the level of precepts set by town and parish councils under review.

36.2 Investments Review – Min no RG26.4.2

The Committee NOTED that:

- i) the balance in the Santander 180-day Notice Account had been reinvested and notice served such that the funds would be released on 6 June 2017; and
- ii) the interest rate for the Nationwide Business Saver account had decreased from 0.50% to 0.35% with effect from 23 December 2016.

RG37 Council-wide Priorities

The Committee reviewed the lists of priorities from the spending committees and AGREED that the Council-wide high priority list should be as shown below:

Ranking	Committee	Activity
1	Resources & General Services	Council accommodation
2	Environment and Heritage / Planning and Licensing	Neighbourhood and Local Plans
3	Recreation	Playgrounds
4	Recreation	Roding Valley Recreation Ground improvements

Cllr Stubbings joined the meeting during the next item.

RG38 Estimates for 2017/18

The Committee considered the report and NOTED:

- a. the increase in the tax base from the 2016/17 figure of 12,090.4 to 12294.8.
- b. that the Local Council Tax Support Grant had been confirmed as £27,016 (a reduction of £13,509 on that for 2016/17).

After considering the estimates, the Committee AGREED that £72,000 could be taken from General Reserves to reduce the net requirement whilst leaving the General Reserves at 62.8% of the net running costs to meet the Reserves Policy.

The Committee also AGREED to the proposed budget revisions which provided total savings of £84,900.

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Council that the precept for 2017/18 be set at £634,800 with the budget details as follows:

Committee	Income		Expenditure	Including re-charges
	£	£	£	£
Resources and General Services	28,500		458,850	205,850
Environment and Heritage	24,466		117,875	204,875
Recreation	113,385		519,845	654,845
Planning and Licensing	0		35,500	66,500
Misc expenditure items TBC**			3,297	3,297
		166,351	1,135,367	1,135,367
Interest		10,000		
Use from earmarked reserves				
Resources & General Services	2,000			
Environment & Heritage	36,500			
Recreation	161,700			
Planning and Licensing	25,000			
		225,200		
Local Council Tax Support Grant		27,016		
Use of General Reserves		72,000		
Total income		500,567		
Net requirement		634,800		

**The Chairman and Vice Chairman were asked to identify priority items of new expenditure from the committees' rolling programmes amounting to £3,297 to propose to Council.

The Committee thanked the Town Clerk and her staff for their work to prepare the budget.

RG39 Meetings Schedule

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for 2017/18.

2017	May	17	Wednesday	Annual Council
		22	Monday	Planning and Licensing
June		5	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		14	Wednesday	Recreation
		19	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		21	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
July		3	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		5	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
		17	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		19	Wednesday	Council
		31	Monday	Planning and Licensing
August		21	Monday	Planning and Licensing
September		6	Wednesday	Recreation
		11	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		20	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
		25	Monday	Planning and Licensing
October		9	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		11	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
		18	Wednesday	Council
		23	Monday	Planning and Licensing
November		1	Wednesday	Recreation
		6	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		15	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
		20	Monday	Planning and Licensing
December		4	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		6	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
		13	Wednesday	Council
		18	Monday	Planning and Licensing
2018	January	10	Wednesday) Resources and General Services (Budgets) (7pm)) Recreation
		15	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		17	Wednesday) Council (7pm)) Environment and Heritage
		29	Monday	Planning and Licensing
February		12	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		14	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
		26	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		28	Wednesday	Council
March		12	Monday	Planning and Licensing
		14	Wednesday	Annual Town Meeting, The Murray Hall, Borders Lane at 8pm
		26	Monday	Planning and Licensing
April		4	Wednesday	Recreation
		9	Monday	Planning and Licensing

Resources and General Services Committee 2016-17

	11	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	23	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	25	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
May	9	Wednesday	Council (approval of accounts)
	14	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	23	Wednesday	Annual Council

All meetings would be held in the Council Chamber at 7.45pm unless otherwise shown or advised at a later date.

Signed
Date: **15 February 2017**

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 15 February at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
M Dalton J Jennings J Mahoney
S Murray

Also in attendance:

Councillors: R Brookes (until Min no RG50) D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
Shirley Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

2 members of the public

RG40 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Angold-Stephens and Omer.

RG41 Declarations of Interest

With regard to Agenda item 6.1, Financial Assistance, Councillors made the following declarations:

Cllr Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for the Loughton Methodist Church and Music@LMC, but as this was significant, would leave the meeting during the discussions on these items.

Cllr Dalton declared a pecuniary interest in the application for the Loughton Festival as he had previously entered into a financial contract with one of the organisers, and would leave the meeting during the discussion. He also declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application for the Roding Road Allotments and Leisure Gardens as he was acquainted with one of the allotment tenants.

Cllr Jennings declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for the Loughton Festival and the Yes Partnership as she knew the organisers, and the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau as she was the representative for Epping Forest District Council.

Cllr Mahoney declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for the 7th Epping Forest Scouting Group, 41st Globetrotters Explorer Scout Group, Loughton Arts Centre, Loughton Festival, Loughton Youth Project, New Vistas, Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for the 7th Epping Forest Scouting Group, 41st Globetrotters Explorer Scout Group, Loughton Methodist Church, Music@LMC, New Vistas and the Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit, but as these were significant would not take part in the discussions and would leave the room should detailed conversations took place.

Cllr Murray also declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for GROW Community Garden, Loughton Festival, Loughton Youth Project, Love Loughton, Restore Community Centre, Restore Youth Activities, Noah's Ark Toddler Group, Roding Road Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association and Spark as he was acquainted with members of these groups.

Cllr Pewsey declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for the Loughton Arts Centre, Loughton Festival, Love Loughton, St Mary's Church Hope Centre Building Fund and Ignite, but as these were significant would take no part in the discussions or voting.

Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application for the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau as a member of that organisation.

RG42 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG43 Public Representations

Representatives from the GROW Community Garden and the Loughton Youth Project addressed the Committee in support of their financial assistance applications.

The Committee AGREED to bring forward the following item as members of the public were interested in their applications.

RG44 Financial Assistance

44.1 General Applications 2017/18

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power	Purpose of grant
Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre	240.00	LGA 1972 s145	Forest Family Activity in May 2017
Cruse Bereavement Care Essex Area Epping Forest Client Services Committee	220.00	LGA 1972 s137	Running costs
7 th Epping Forest Scouting Group (1)	0.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19	Box Trailer
41 st Globetrotters Explorer Scout Group (2)	250.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19	Purchase equipment for DofE scheme
GROW Community Garden (3)	4,000.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19	First year running cost
Loughton Arts Centre*	250.00	LGA 1972 s145	Prizes – young artist competition
Loughton Festival * / ***	2,000.00	LGA 1972 s145	Festival costs
Loughton Methodist Church **	500.00	LGA 1972 s145	Items for Creative Space Project
Loughton Youth Project	4,000.00	LGA 1972 s145	Running costs for "The Space"
Love Loughton *	450.00	LGA 1972 s145	Event costs

Resources and General Services Committee 2016-17

Music@LMC ** (4)	0.00	LGA 1972 s145	Music festival costs
New Vistas	250.00	LGA 1972 s145	Speakers and hall rental
Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit (5)	300.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19	Subsidised camps and equipment
Restore Community Centre	4,000.00	LGA 1972 s133	Towards Centre running costs
Restore CC - Loughton Youth Activities	900.00	LGA 1972 s145	Friday night open youth club
Restore CC – Noah’s Ark Toddler Group	600.00	LGA 1972 s145	Craft material, toys and special events
Revitalise Respite Holidays	500.00	LGA 1972 s145	Respite breaks
Roding Road Allotment and Leisure Gardens	250.00	Allot & Small Holdings Act 1908	To provide drinking water taps
Samaritans of Redbridge	300.00	LGA 1972 s137	Running costs
Spark (6)	0.00	LGA 1972 s137 LGA 1972 S145	Running costs an youth Club
St Mary’s Church Loughton – Hope Centre Building Fund *	800.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19	100 upholstered chairs
St Mary’s Church Loughton – Ignite (youth and children) *	450.00	LGA 1972 s145	MacBook Air & table tennis table
Voluntary Action Epping Forest	500.00	LGA 1972 s145	Supported volunteering – transport costs
YES Partnership	450.00	LGA 1972 s137	Work training conference for young people
	21,210.00		

* Cllr Jennings chaired the meeting for these five applications.

** Cllr Brookes left the meeting for the applications for the Loughton Methodist Church and Music@LMC.

*** Cllr Dalton left the meeting for the application for the Loughton Festival.

Notes:

- (1) In view of the amount of grant support provided by the Town Council to this group in recent years, they were encouraged to share equipment and facilities with similar organisations. As they would be looking at other funds raising options, if and when they neared their target they were invited to reapply to the town council for assistance with any shortfall.
- (2) This organisation is encouraged to share equipment and facilities, which should be readily available for the DofE scheme from similar local groups.
- (3) Members were very supportive of this project, recognising its benefits to the community, but were unable to fund the whole amount requested owing to the budget constraints.
- (4) It was unclear whether funding was requested for the music event to be held in March 2017. If so, the remaining budget for 2016/17 amounted to £81.60. Clarification would be requested and reported back to this Committee at its meeting on 12 April 2017.
- (5) As with the other scout groups, this unit was encouraged to look at sharing equipment and facilities in an effort to save resources and reduce costs.

- (6) As a duplicate application had been made to the PCC Fund, members were not able to grant any funds before the outcome of this application was known. A further report would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 12 April 2017.

44.2 Citizens Advice Bureau

The Committee RESOLVED to grant £8,000 to the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau under the Local Government Act 1972 s142.

The Committee thanked Cllrs Angold-Stephens, Murray and Pewsey for their careful consideration of the applications at the meeting of the working group held on 31 January 2017.

Members also commented on the quality of this year's applications, recognising the important difference the organisations made to residents in Loughton.

RG45 Matters for Report

45.1 Accounts and Audit

45.1.1 Accounts and Audit 2015/16 – Min no RG16.1

The Committee NOTED the apology received from the Director of Resources at Epping Forest District Council regarding the amendment made, without notification, to the Town Council's precept figure in February 2015, which impacted on the audit statement for that year.

45.1.2 External Audit

It was NOTED that PKF Littlejohn LLP would continue in their role as external auditor for the Town Council for the period up to 2022.

45.2 Staff Handbook

The Committee NOTED the minor amendments made to the Handbook required to meet recent changes in legislation and best practice.

RG46 Finance

46.1 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the Council's internal auditors, Auditing Solutions, had attended the Council Offices on 13 February 2017 for their second interim visit. No issues had arisen during their visit. A copy of their report would be circulated to all members in due course.

46.2 Payments Procedures

46.2.1 The Committee CONFIRMED the list of payments currently made by direct debit as follows:

Name	Gross Amount	Frequency	Due date	Purpose
Peninsula Business Services Ltd	£241.92	Monthly	4 th	HR services
Epping Forest District Council	£2,131.00	Monthly	20 th	Business rates for Buckingham Court, Kingsley & Murray Halls, RVRG & WRPf changing rooms
World Pay (formerly Streamline)	Various	Monthly	18 th	Hire of terminal for credit/debit card payments and associated fees/charges

Crown Gas & Power	Various	Quarterly	10 days after invoice date	Gas supply at Murray Hall, Kingsley Hall and Buckingham Court
Eon	Various	Monthly	Various	Electricity supply at Buckingham Court, RVRG, Cemetery, Murray Hall, Kingsley Hall, WRPf and Kings Green
Orange	Various	Monthly	30 th	Mobile phones for external staff
NatWest	Various	Monthly	27 th	Credit card purchases (in full, monthly)
Public Works Loan Board	£14,103.22	Half yearly	19 th Jan/July	Loan repayment Buckingham Court
Public Works Loan Board	£18,295.62	Half yearly	28 th Mar/Sept	Loan repayment Murray Hall (1)
Public Works Loan Board	£17,849.89	Half yearly	1 st June/Dec	Loan repayment Murray Hall (2)

46.2.2 The Committee CONFIRMED the list of authorised signatures for each account as follows:

No 1 CURRENT ACCOUNT (NatWest)

Position

Town Mayor
 Deputy Town Mayor
 Chairman of Resources & General Services
 Chairman of Environment & Heritage
 Chairman of Recreation
 Chairman of Planning & Licensing
 Additional Signatory see RGS Min 160.5

Current holder 16/17

As agreed at Annual Council meeting 18 May 2016

Carol Davies
 Philip Abraham
 Stephen Pewsey
 Christopher C Pond (not in conjunction with CPP)
 David Wixley
 Jill Angold-Stephens
 Caroline P Pond (not in conjunction with CCP)

No 2 PAYROLL ACCOUNT (NatWest)

As above plus

Town Clerk
 Deputy Town Clerk
 Officer
 Chairman of Resources & General Services
 Town Mayor
 Chairman of Environment & Heritage
 Chairman of Planning & Licensing

Enid K Walsh
 Shirley Haynes
 -
 Stephen Pewsey
 Carol Davies (not set up)
 Christopher C Pond
 Jill Angold-Stephens

No 5 For & on behalf of Loughton Town Council – Security Deposits (NatWest)

Town Clerk	Enid K Walsh
Deputy Town Clerk	Shirley Haynes
Officer	Paul Hoy

NatWest Business Reserve

The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Admin Officer (as on No 2 a/c), Town Mayor and Chairman of Resources Committee.

Santander Business Reserve Account

Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond (not in conjunction with CPP)
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens
Additional Signatory see RGS Min 160.5	Caroline P Pond (not in conjunction with CCP)
Operator	Enid K Walsh
Operator	Shirley Haynes

Santander 180 Day Notice Account

Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond (not in conjunction with CPP)
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens
Additional Signatory see RGS Min 160.5	Caroline P Pond (not in conjunction with CCP)
Operator	Enid K Walsh
Operator	Shirley Haynes

Nationwide Business Instant Saver

Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond (not in conjunction with CPP)
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens
Additional Signatory see RGS Min 160.5	Caroline P Pond (not in conjunction with CCP)
Operator	Enid K Walsh
Operator	Shirley Haynes

46.2.3 The Committee CONFIRMED the limits of authority for each account signatory as follows:

Account no	Limit
1	Member cheque signatories only - no limit; Working balance kept at around £20,000
2	Imprest account. Balance held at £35,000 to cover autopay, HMRC and pension payments. Other items subject to £150 cheque limit for officers.

3	Transfers only to no 1 Account
4	Transfers only to no 1 Account
5	Imprest account – balance held at £3,000. Security deposit refunds only - £500 cheque limit for officers.
6	Transfers only to no 1 Account
7	Transfers only to no 4 Account

46.3 Mileage allowances

The Committee CONFIRMED that, in view of the associated administration costs, it did not wish to introduce the recovery of VAT on the fuel element of this allowance at the current time. However, this would be kept under annual review by this Committee.

46.4 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 31 January 2017 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

Details of the Council's current bank balances and most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

46.5 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £174,137.38 as detailed on payments schedules nos 227 – 230 have been made since the report to the meeting on 7 December 2016.

The schedules and accompanying invoices were made available at the meeting for inspection.

It was also noted that details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

RG47 Financial Regulations

47.1 Annual Review

The Committee undertook the annual review of the Financial Regulations. It was AGREED to recommend to full Council that no amendments were required and that the document met the Council's needs at the present time.

47.2 Financial Limits

The Committee CONFIRMED the financial limits below and AGREED that they were adequate as follows:

Topic	Amount	Last reviewed	Last changed
Limit of imprest on no 2 a/c	35,000	Feb 2016	April 2010
Limit of officers signing cheques on no 2 a/c	150	Feb 2016	April 2010
Limit of imprest on Security Deposits a/c	3,000	Feb 2016	April 2006
Limit of cheques on Security Deposits a/c	none	Feb 2016	April 2006

Petty cash imprest	150	Feb 2016	-
Urgent repair work etc without budgetary provision (FR 3.4)	5,000	Feb 2016	April 2008
Additional audit work of external auditor (FR 12.1)	750	Feb 2016	May 2004
Tenders to be obtained (FR 12.3, 12.6 & 12.8)	over 50,000	Feb 2016	May 2004
3 quotes to be obtained (FR 12.8)	10,000 to 50,000	Feb 2016	May 2004
3 estimates to be obtained (FR 12.8)	2,000 to 10,000	Feb 2016	May 2004
Public Contracts Regulations 2015 apply	over £25,000	Feb 2016	Feb 2016
Bad debts may be written off by RFO	250	Feb 2016	Feb 2014
Credit card:			
No 1 Town Clerk	1,000	Feb 2016	Nov 2004
No 2 Services Manager	500	Feb 2016	Feb 2014

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.45pm.

RG48 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee CONFIRMED the level of cover as follows, noting that relevant items would be subject to review when the office relocation had been finalised:

1 Material damage – buildings & subsidence	16/17	17/18
Buckingham Court	507,000	519,823
Cemetery buildings	159,000	163,021
Kingsley Hall	330,000	338,346
Willingale Road Changing Room	95,000	97,403
Community Centre	2,122,000	2,175,668
Drinking fountain	22,000	22,556
RVRG changing rooms	368,000	377,307
LAC buildings	216,000	221,463
All-weather running track	41,422	42,417
War Memorial	64,000	65,619
Willingale Road Allotments	92,000	94,327
2 Business Interruption		
Additional expenditure	100,178	100,178
Loss of revenue	188,000	192,395
	16/17	17/18
3 Contents		
Buckingham Court	69,000	70,613
Kingsley Hall	2,900	2,968
Murray Hall	41,832	42,810
Cemetery office & outbuildings	500	5,000

4 Engineering		
Passenger lift	500,000	500,000
5 All risks		
Town Mayor's Badge of Office	2,580	2,593
Silver Gilt Chain of Office and case		
Best Allotment in Loughton Cup	1,260	1,267
Silver Plated Rose Bowl		
Noticeboard at Traps Hill	1,666	1,675
Garden Machinery (Cemetery)	4,500	1,500
Garden Machinery (Willingale Road Allotments)	3,500	3,518
Skate Ramps and Associated Equipment	20,500	21,016
6 Money		16/17 and 17/18
Loss of non-negotiable money		250,000
Estimated annual carryings		10,106
Loss of other money – in transit		1,000
in the private residence of authorised employee		500
on the premises during business hours		1,000
on the premises outside business hours		500
Personal injury (assault) benefits	Capital	10,000
	Weekly	100
7 Public Liability		10m
(incl Hirers' Liability of £2m and Environmental Statutory Clean Up Costs Cover of £1m)		
8 Employer's Liability		10m
(includes up to 60 salt and grit volunteers)		
9 Libel and Slander		500,000
10 Fidelity Guarantee (Employees & Members)*		1.4m
* This level to be reviewed when end of year balances were known		
11 Personal Accident (Employees, Members & Volunteers)		
Employees (Death)	Capital sum	5 x annual salary
Temp Total Disablement	Weekly sum	50% of weekly wage
Temp Partial Disablement	Weekly sum	25% of weekly wage
Members (up to age 80)*	Capital sum	50,000
Temp Total Disablement	Weekly sum	200
Temp Partial Disablement	Weekly sum	100
Volunteers (up to age 80)	Capital sum	10,000
Temp Total Disablement	Weekly sum	200
Temp Partial Disablement	Weekly sum	100
*specific arrangements were available for those aged over 81		

12 Legal Protection	
Employment Disputes, Compensation Awards, Legal Defence, Property and Personal Injury, Tax Protection, Contract Disputes, Statutory Licence Protection Management Liability automatically included	250,000
13 Business Travel – cover for all employees, council members and accompanying spouses included automatically for journeys made in connection with council business	
Medical	1m
Personal property	2,000
Money/cheques	1,000
Disruption/cancellation	2,000
Travel delay	500 max
Personal liability	2m
14 Vehicle – fully comprehensive, excess of £250 from 1.4.17	

RG49 Essex Pension Fund

The Committee NOTED that the employer's contribution rate for the Essex Pension Fund would be increased from 16.7% to 19.9% with effect from the 1 April 2017. However, this increase would be fully offset by inclusion of the separate cash deficit amount, currently £8,697 per annum, within this contribution rate.

Cllr Brookes left the meeting

RG50 Health and Safety Policy

The Committee reviewed the Health and Safety Policy and CONFIRMED that it met the Council's requirements.

RG51 Training Strategy

The Committee NOTED that in the current financial year, in addition to the induction training provided for all members in May 2016, five councillors had attended courses on topics including the Code of Conduct, Planning and enforcement, and general councillor training.

Eight members of staff had attended training on a wide range of topics including routine playground inspections, customer care, a cemetery workshop on creating a garden of remembrance, VAT for town and parish councils, social media, fire extinguisher training and basic legionella awareness.

The Committee reviewed the Training Strategy and AGREED that it met the needs of councillors and staff members at the current time.

RG52 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed

Date: 12 April 2017

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12 April at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jennings
J Mahoney S Murray

Also in attendance:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
Shirley Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG53 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Omer.

RG54 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

RG55 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2017 amended from those circulated at Min no RG41, Declarations of Interest, to read in the last sentence ".....should detailed conversations take place", were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG56 Public Representations

None were received.

RG57 Matters for Report

57.1 Annual Town Meeting – Min no RG25.2

The Committee NOTED that the draft minutes for the 2017 Annual Town Meeting held on 15 March 2017 had been circulated to members and that no issues had arisen that required further consideration by the Council.

57.2 Insurance – Min no RG48

The Committee NOTED that further to the report presented to the meeting on 15 February 2017, the total insurance premium for 2017/18 was £8,589.87 net of VAT, a reduction of £336.22 on the 2016/17 premium.

The vehicle insurance premium for the Council van had also been confirmed at £609.00, an increase on the 2016/17 premium of £68.40.

Enquiries to increase the excess figure on the vehicle insurance, currently £100, to reduce the premium had been unsuccessful as the insurance was under a specially negotiated group scheme for town councils. This was already benchmarked by the brokers to ensure that the terms remained competitive within the insurance market.

57.3 Essex Pension Fund – Min no RG49

It was NOTED that a copy of the 2016 valuation results report for town and parish councils had been circulated to all councillors on 23 March 2017.

57.4 Section 137

It was NOTED that the Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that the maximum amount per head of relevant population the Council may spend in 2017/18 under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, was £7.57.

The relevant population referred to the total number of electors in the town on 1 April 2017.

57.5 Staffing Matters

The Committee NOTED that the recruitment process for the post of Administrative Assistant / Planning Committee Clerk had commenced with a closing date for receipt of applications of midday on 20 April 2017.

57.6 Training and Conferences

The Committee APPROVED the attendance of councillors at the forthcoming Epping Forest District Council training sessions for the purposes of paying travel expenses as follows:

23 May, 10am – 12.30pm, Code of Conduct, Cllrs Cochrane & Murphy
 30 June, 9.15am – 4.15pm, Planning, Cllrs Abraham, Cochrane & Murphy

RG58 Financial Assistance

58.1 General Applications 2017/18

Cllrs Angold-Stephens and Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest as they were acquainted with members of Spark.

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contribution from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Item	Power
Spark (a branch of Worth Unlimited)	1,500.00	Salary for youth club worker	LGA 1972, S137

RG59 Finance

59.1 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that a copy of the internal auditor's report on their second interim visit on 13 February 2017 had been circulated to all members on 21 February 2017. This confirmed that no significant issues had arisen. The Town Clerk and her staff were congratulated for their work in this regard. It was also noted that the final visit for the financial year 2016/17 was scheduled for 2 May 2017.

59.2 Banking and Investments

It was NOTED that the interest rate on the Santander 180 day notice account was reducing from 0.90% to 0.55% from 1 June 2017. As notice had already been given to withdraw all funds on 6 June 2017, officers would consider alternative investment options in line with the Council's investment policy and report back to the next meeting.

59.3 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial report together with details of the Committee's earmarked reserves. It was also NOTED that this was not an end of year report as the transfers to and from earmarked reserves had not yet been completed in the accounts.

A note of the Council's current bank balances and most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

59.4 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £143,937.06 as detailed on payments schedules nos 231 – 234 had been made since the report to the meeting on 15 February 2017. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

It was also NOTED that details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

RG60 Asset Register – Annual review

The Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 March 2017 was reviewed and AGREED as presented in the Agenda.

The Asset Register Policy was also CONFIRMED as follows:

ASSET REGISTER POLICY

- 1 The Town Council recognises its responsibilities to maintain a register of fixed assets to ensure they are appropriately safeguarded.
- 2 In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are to be included in the asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired:
 - i. land and buildings held freehold or on a long-term lease in the name of the Council
 - ii. community assets
 - iii. vehicles, plant and machinery
 - iv. assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
 - v. other assets estimated or known to have a purchase or resale value in excess of £1,000. Items with a value of less than this amount are not recorded in the main asset register but detailed in the inventories for each facility.
 - vi. long-term investments, shares and loans made by the Council
 - vii. assets held on trust or on behalf of others
- 3 The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'total fixed assets' section of the Annual Return with the exception of any assets held on trust.
- 4 The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:
 - i. land and buildings held on short term lease or rented
 - ii. land and buildings maintained or serviced, but not owned by the Council
 - iii. assets rented by or loaned to the Council
 - iv. stock items intended for resale
 - v. stationery and other consumable items
 - vi. boundaries of land owned (e.g. fences, hedges and gates)
 - vii. floor or land surfaces and drainage
 - viii. plants and trees

- ix. assets with a purchase or resale value of less than £1,000 (other than items listed as for inclusion in the asset register)
 - x. repairs
 - xi. cash, short term investments and other current assets
 - xii. intangible assets (e.g. trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
 - xiii. 'negative' assets (e.g. provisions, borrowings, creditors and contingent liabilities)
- 5 A section of the asset register will contain a schedule of disposals.
 - 6 Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets will not usually change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local councils (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England) 2014, para. 3.69).
 - 7 The value of assets must be based on the information available, usually the purchase price (net of VAT), unless the item is to be shown as a community asset.
 - 8 It is the custom and practice of Loughton Town Council to show community assets at a nil value.
 - 9 Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price of the asset, the insurance valuation should be applied.
 - 10 There is no requirement to have land or buildings professionally re-valued on a regular basis as consistency is required to ensure that any variations in the total value declared, whether through acquisition or disposal, are easily identifiable.
 - 11 The key information to be held in the asset register is:
 - i. Date and method of acquisition
 - ii. The owner if not the Town Council
 - iii. The nature of the Town Council's interest (owner, freehold, leasehold, etc)
 - iv. Costs of acquisition
 - v. Current value and the basis of the valuation
 - vi. Insurance value
 - vii. Date and method of disposal

RG61 Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Policy was considered and revisions AGREED as follows:

Safeguarding Policy

Loughton Town Council believes that it is always unacceptable for a child* or vulnerable adult** to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults.

1. The Council believes that children and vulnerable adults must be protected from harm at all times and that they should be valued, safe and happy.
2. We want to make sure that the children and vulnerable adults we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
3. We want children and vulnerable adults who use or have contact with the Council to enjoy our facilities in safety.

4. We want parents and carers who use or attend our playgrounds, recreation grounds and council events to be supported to care for their children and vulnerable adults in a way that promotes their health and well-being and keeps them safe.
5. We will achieve this by following national and local guidance.
6. If we discover or suspect a child or vulnerable adult is suffering harm we will notify the safeguarding officers at Epping Forest District Council in order that they can be protected if necessary. In the case of an emergency situation, the police should be contacted in the first instant, and the safeguarding officers notified thereafter.
7. This child protection policy applies to all councillors, staff and volunteers at Loughton Town Council and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.
8. This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years to make sure it is still relevant and effective.

For the purpose of this policy

** a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).*

*** An adult at risk is defined by the Department of Health in the No Secrets Guidance (2000), as 'a person aged 18 years or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.*

Abuse can be physical, sexual, neglect, psychological/emotional, financial/material, abuse of individual's rights/discriminatory/racial, professional, institutional or domestic abuse.

Agreed 3 December 2014

Revised 12 April 2017

Members were reminded of the training opportunity on Safeguarding offered by the District Council on Thursday 8 June 2017, from 6pm – 8pm in the Civic Offices, Epping.

RG62 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

The Committee thanked Mrs Haynes for her work for the Council and wished her well in the future.

Signed

Date: 5 July 2017