



# **RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Members of the Resources and General Services Committee  
are summoned to attend a Meeting at 7.45pm on  
**Wednesday 6 July 2016**  
at 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton  
to transact the business shown in the agenda.

**Enid K Walsh**  
**Town Clerk**  
29 June 2016

**Councillor S Pewsey (Chairman)**  
**Councillor J Angold-Stephens (Vice Chairman)**

Councillors

M Dalton  
S Murray

J Jennings  
A Omer

J Mahoney

Note to Councillors:  
If you are unable to attend the meeting,  
please phone your apologies to the office on 020 8508 4200.

## A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies**  
To RECEIVE any apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillors to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any items on the agenda.
- 3 Confirmation of Minutes**  
To CONFIRM the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2016.
- 4 Public Representations**  
To adjourn the meeting to hear any representations from members of the public who have registered a request to address the Committee in accordance with no 5, Appendix C, of the Standing Orders.
- 5 Matters for Report**  
To REPORT any further significant information on matters which have been previously discussed, in addition to those which may already be included on the agenda.
  - 5.1 Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth – Min no RG233.7**  
The pageant master, Bruno Peek has invited the Council to take part in the celebrations next year on Monday 13 March 2017.  
  
The Committee is asked to CONFIRM that the Town Council may again participate.  
  
The Council has also been asked to help promote the event to local schools and colleges in 2017.  
  
More information may be found at:  
<http://www.flyaflagforthecommonwealth.co.uk/>
  - 5.2 Strategy and Staff Group**  
The Strategy and Staff Group met on 6 June 2016. 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**  
For information, the new Town Council website, [www.loughton-tc.gov.uk](http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk) went live in April 2016 and has been well received. The annual hosting, warranty and support fee is £235 net.  
  
There is a further £1,500 in the budget for the company, Vision ICT, to undertake staff training and further development of the site. It is proposed to add a consultation page to encourage and assist residents in responding to local issues.
  - 5.4 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG289.3**  
The Council is currently insured by Aviva Insurance Limited, through WPS Insurance Brokers (specialists in local council insurance), under a three-year long term agreement which commenced on 1 April 2016.

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

### Building Valuations

As part of the renewal process the Council was offered a free insurance reinstatement cost valuation on its properties. This has now been carried out by Barrett Corp & Harrington Ltd, and their valuations are listed below:

Material damage – buildings & subsidence	Current sum insured £	Valuation £	Overall effect £
Buckingham Court	505,813	507,000	+1,187
Cemetery buildings	229,303	159,000	-70,303
Kingsley Hall	404,651	330,000	-74,651
Willingale Road Changing Room	134,884	95,000	-39,884
Community Centre	2,554,362	2,122,000	-432,362
Drinking fountain	47,209	22,000	-25,209
RVRG changing rooms	479,690	368,000	-111,690
LAC buildings	281,818	216,000	-65,818
War Memorial	142,767	64,000	-78,767
Willingale Road Allotments	8,402	92,000	+83,598

The Committee is asked to consider the following two options and decide whether it wishes to act on all or some of the revised valuations.

**Option 1** – if the sums insured were increased for Buckingham Court and the Willingale Road allotments buildings as detailed above, this would incur an additional annual premium of £83.94\* (inclusive of IPT).

**Option 2** – if all the revised valuations were acted upon, this would result in a refund from the annual premium of £479.19\* (inclusive of IPT).

\*Please note, the figures quoted are the annual amounts and there would be a pro rata adjustment from the date of instruction.

### 5.5 Election Costs

For information, the net costs of the May 2016 Town Council elections payable to Epping Forest District Council were £21,359.66. This was actually lower than anticipated owing to the uncontested election in the Fairmead ward.

### 5.6 Emergency Plan – co-ordinators

The District Council has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to plan for civil emergencies and major incidents. It also encourages all parish and town councils to have their own emergency plan.

A civil emergency (or major incident) may be defined as an emergency beyond the capacity and capability of any single agency to deal with. A civil emergency is widespread, potentially long term and resource intensive - the recent flooding incidents for example.

This Committee is responsible for an annual review of this Council's Emergency Plan and ensures the contact details in the plan are up to date. A copy of the plan has been circulated to members separately as it contains personal details and is therefore covered under the Data Protection Act.

The Committee is asked to suggest amendments and additions and also to appoint a deputy co-ordinator.

## 6 Internal Audit

*Good governance, accountability and transparency are essential to local councils and a cornerstone of the government's approach to improving public services\*\*.*

To meet high standards in this regard, the Council is required to appoint an internal auditor, ensuring they are independent and competent to carry out the role. Auditing Solutions were appointed on a five-year contract from April 2016.

The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the council whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

- \* **The Committee is asked to NOTE the end of year report for 2015/16 on page 6.**

The next visit by the auditor is expected in September 2016.

\*\*Extract from Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) – <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/803-governance-and-accountability-with-appendix/file>

## 7 Finance

### 7.1 Fidelity Guarantee Insurance Cover

Fidelity guarantee insurance is designed to indemnify the Council for the loss of money or property sustained as a direct result of acts of fraud, theft or dishonesty by an employee or councillor.

The Committee is asked to undertake the annual review of the level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover as required by the audit process.

There is no legal requirement for the value of such cover, but the advice previously issued by the Audit Commission before its demise was that it should in general be equal to the level of cash balances plus half of the annual precept.

	£
Cash balances as at 31 March 2016	1,005,125
Half of the 2016/17 precept	297,300
Local Council Tax Support Grant	<u>40,525</u>
Total	1,342,950

The Council's current level of fidelity cover is set at £1.4 million with an annual premium of £780.28 including IPT.

**The Committee is asked to review the level of cover and make a risk-based decision on whether this level of cover should be amended.**

## 7.2 Investments

- i) **Nationwide Business Instant Saver** – notification has been received that the interest rate will reduce from 0.95% gross to 0.75% gross with effect from 21 July 2016. This account pays a variable rate of interest and provides instant access.

Other notice and fixed term accounts paying slightly higher interest rates (up to 1.10% gross) are available with this building society. However, it is recommended the Council continue with this instant access account as none of the other notice and fixed term accounts offered match the interest rate paid by the Santander 180 Day Notice Account.

- ii) **Santander 180 Day Notice Account** – in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee, the balance of these funds has been rolled over for a further 180 days with a new maturity date of 8 December 2016. On maturity, the Council can withdraw or reinvest the funds; the interest rate of 1.15% gross will continue as a fixed rate for the lifetime of this account.

## 7.3 Internal Financial Check

The Committee is asked to confirm if it wishes to continue the best practice of appointing a councillor to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions and, if so, to make an appointment. Cllr Mahoney undertook this responsibility during 2015/16.

## 7.4 Training

The Essex Association of Local Councils is offering a training session on Budget and Precept at its offices in Great Dunmow on Thursday 14 July 2016 at a cost of £50. Members wishing to attend this course should contact the Town Council Office.

## 7.5 Salary Payments

For several years, the Council has employed NatWest Autopay to make the monthly payments to employees direct to their bank accounts. Monthly fees of £10 are incurred.

The Council's payroll service provider, Acumen Wages Service, is now offering a BACS service to its customers with monthly fees of £20. Once the payroll is agreed by the Responsible Financial Officer (the Town Clerk), Acumen will action the payments to employees, thus saving on staff time and costs for the Council. It would also be possible to include parish basic allowance and expense payments to councillors in those transactions at no extra cost.

The Committee is asked if it wishes to take advantage of this service.

## 7.6 Financial Position

- \* The end of year financial report is attached together with details of the movements in the Committee's earmarked reserves (see pages 6 – 7).

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

For information, the first instalment of the Precept together with the full LCTS grant was received on 29 April 2016.

**7.7 Accounts Paid**

Payments totalling £353,983.80 as detailed on payments schedules nos 207 – 213 have been made since the report to the meeting on 6 April 2016. The schedules and accompanying invoices will be available at the meeting for inspection.

For information, details of all Council payments in excess of £250 are provided on the Council's website on the Finance and Transparency page.

**8 Council Policies**

- \* A list of the main Council policies is provided on page 8 for information. This is by no means an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the types of policies already in place and the period of review.

**9 Future Work of the Committee**

The opportunity for members to suggest topics to be considered by the Committee at a future meeting, subject to the Committee's agreement.

Note: No substantive discussion may take place under this item as the required statutory notice of the topics will not have been given.

**Enid K Walsh**  
**TOWN CLERK**  
29 June 2016

## Summary Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2016

Month No: 12

## Resources &amp; General Services Committee Report

		Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Budget	Variance Annual Total	Funds Available	% of Budget
<b><u>Resources and General Services</u></b>							
Communication	Expenditure	17,432	20,174	20,400	226	226	98.9 %
Office Expenses	Expenditure	11,394	10,261	12,250	1,989	1,989	83.8 %
	Income	259	31	0	31		0.0 %
Audit	Expenditure	2,830	2,830	2,900	70	70	97.6 %
Central Personnel	Expenditure	272,181	278,869	288,800	9,931	9,931	96.6 %
Council Expenses	Expenditure	9,405	11,676	11,600	-76	-76	100.7 %
	Income	0	200	0	200		0.0 %
Other Services (1)	Expenditure	854	3,274	11,950	8,676	8,676	27.4 %
Members' Expenses	Expenditure	2,060	2,072	2,900	828	828	71.5 %
Buckingham Court (2)	Expenditure	51,827	54,399	53,800	-599	-599	101.1 %
	Income	7,873	8,199	6,000	2,199		136.6 %
Service Re-charge	Expenditure	-241,400	-241,400	-241,400	0	0	100.0 %
Grants	Expenditure	28,100	36,886	38,000	1,115	1,115	97.1 %
<b><u>INCOME - EXPENDITURE TOTALS</u></b>							
	Expenditure	154,683	<b>179,042</b>	<b>201,200</b>	<b>22,158</b>	<b>22,158</b>	<b>89.0 %</b>
	Income	8,132	<b>8,430</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>2,430</b>		<b>140.5 %</b>
	Net Expenditure over Income	<b>146,551</b>	<b>170,612</b>	<b>195,200</b>	<b>24,588</b>		

**Notes**

- (1) The 'Other Services' budget includes £9,000 for election expenses, £1,000 for contingency, £250 for the Civic Service, £700 for the Honours board and £1,000 for the Citizenship awards. The expenditure includes an amount of £2,198 for costs relating to the office move.
- (2) Buckingham Court expenditure is slightly over budget following the lift repairs previously reported to the Committee. Income relates to the hire of the Council Chamber as a training venue.

**Agenda item 7.6**

**Earmarked Reserves:**

A summary of the Committee's reserves showing the end of year transfers and the amounts available from reserves in this current financial year is provided below:

	<b>1.4.15</b>	<b>Net transfers to/from reserves</b>	<b>31.3.16</b>
<b>Resources and General Services Committee</b>			
Elections	22,000	9,000	31,000
Noticeboards	2,400	-400	2,000
Office expenses	6,120	-2,550	3,570
Communication	1,000	-1,000	0
Council expenses	2,907	-1,000	1,907
Accommodation	15,000	-1,550	13,450
Buckingham Court maintenance fund	4,000	-2,000	2,000
Honours board	700		700
Staff costs	6,000	-6,000	0
Grants	3,081	-3,081	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,208</b>	<b>-8,581</b>	<b>54,627</b>



**Agenda item 8**  
**Council Policies**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Cttee</b>	<b>Period of review</b>
Allotments Management Policy / Tenancy Agreement	EH	Annually
Bad debts	RGS	5 years
Cemetery rules and regulations	EH	10 years
Code of conduct / complaints procedure	Council	Legislative changes
Community Engagement Strategy	RGS	2 years
Community gain from major developments	PL	Annually
Council complaints procedure	RGS	5 years
Crime and disorder	RGS	Legislative changes
Criteria for granting Heritage Plaques	EH	5 years
Environment & sustainability policy	EH	2 years
Equal opportunities policy	RGS	2 years
Financial Regulations	RGS	Annually
Freedom of Information (Publication Scheme)	RGS	2 years
Health & Safety policy	RGS	2 years
Investment strategy & policy	RGS	2 years
Lone worker	RGS	2 years
Members' Remuneration Scheme	Council	Annually
Reserves	RGS	2 years
Retention of documents	RGS	5 years
Safeguarding	RGS	2 years
Scheme for granting financial assistance	RGS	Annually
Staff establishment, filling of vacancies & recruitment policy inc employment of ex-offenders & security policy	RGS	5 years
Staff Handbook (inc Disciplinary and Grievance)	RGS	Annually
Standing Orders	Council	Annually
Training (for councillors and staff)	RGS	Annually
Tree safety management	RC/EH	5 years