

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 at 7.30pm at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber, 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ.

Present:

Councillors: M Owen (in the Chair)
B Cohen S Fontenelle
N MacKinnon (as substitute for R M Stubbings
Brookes)

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk / RFO)

There were no members of the public present.

RG229 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brookes and Murray, due to an Epping Forest District Council meeting clash. Cllr Mackinnon had been nominated as substitute for Cllr Brookes.

RG230 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

RG231 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2023 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG232 Public Representations

There were no public representations.

RG233 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk and Chairman had nothing to report.

RG234 Training and Conferences

The Committee NOTED the update on staff and Councillor training.

RG235 Staffing

Members NOTED the Town Clerk's report on the accumulating levels of TOIL (time off in lieu) for office staff, which in many cases is difficult to reduce due to work volumes and numerous Town Council events. Members AGREED to delegate ongoing authority and discretion to the Town Clerk to selectively offer the option of salary where appropriate.

RG236 Staff Salaries 2023/24

The Committee NOTED the report.

RG237 Work Experience

The Committee NOTED the update on the sixth form student joining the office team to undertake work experience from Monday 17 July 2022 – Friday 21 July

2023, and expressed how pleased they were to be supporting a student again this year.

RG238 Finance

238.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the financial position and available funds in earmarked reserves as at the 30 April 2023.

238.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £895,558.79 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 372-377 have been made since the report to the meeting on 8 February 2023, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices.

RG239 Precept

The Committee NOTED the first instalment of the 2022/23 Precept, £452,150.00, was received into the Council's Santander bank account on 26 April 2023.

RG240 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to continue with the appointment of a Town Councillor to undertake internal financial checks during the year. Cllr Murray has undertaken this responsibility for 2021/22 and 2022/23, and members asked the office to consult and see if Cllr Murray would like to continue for 2023/24.

Cllr Owen offered to undertake this responsibility, if required.

RG241 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the clear Internal Audit Report received from the Internal Auditors, Healis & Lodge dated 12 May 2023, and congratulated the officers concerned.

RG242 Annual Governance and Accountability Return(AGAR) 2022/23

The Committee NOTED that the AGAR was submitted to the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP on 16 June 2023, and that the completed confirmation of dates for the provision of public rights form has been displayed on Town Council noticeboards and posted on the Town Council website.

RG243 Flag Flying

The Committee NOTED the report.

RG244 Christmas Card Competition 2023

Following discussion, members unanimously AGREED not to hold a Christmas Card competition in 2023 in its current format and recommended that Councillors and Staff produce a festive photo card to be circulated digitally and a donation to be made to charity.

AGREED to recommend this proposal to the next Town Council meeting.

RG245 Policies Review

245.1 Data Protection Policy

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Data Protection Policy, with next review June 2026.

245.2 Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, with next review June 2026.

RG246 Civic Service

Following discussion, the Committee AGREED that the Town Mayor hosts a Civic Service in 2024 and raises funds for the local foodbanks. The exact date will be determined in due course.

RG247 Town Council's Banking Arrangements

Members AGREED the recommendations made, and the transfer of the No 1 account to Unity Trust Bank

RG248 Loughton Town Council (LTC) email addresses

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Town Council that members should have separate LTC email addresses. The office would investigate any mandatory requirements; GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) implications; costs to implement; and report the findings to Town Council.

RG249 Think Loughton – Circulation

Following lengthy and detailed discussion, the Committee RECOMMENDED to Town Council that a “three-year plan” to phase out a paper version of “Think Loughton” is implemented. The Town Council would look at ways to improve engagement with residents via social media, resulting in both a cost and environmental benefit.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.07 pm.

Signed:

Date: 4 October 2023