

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5 July 2017 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
M Dalton J Jennings J Mahoney (until Min no RG69.5)
A Omer T Downing (as substitute for Cllr Angold-Stephens)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
L Gibson (Town and Community Development Officer)

RG63 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Angold-Stephens and Murray. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Downing had been nominated as substitute for Cllr Angold-Stephens for this meeting.

RG64 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mahoney declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6.1, Financial Assistance Applications, as an employee at the Lopping Hall.

Cllr Pewsey declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6.1, Financial Assistance Applications, as the Council's nominated representative on the board of the Lopping Endowment. However, as he considered this interest to be significant, Cllr Pewsey informed the Committee he would leave the meeting for this item.

The Committee AGREED that Cllr Omer would take the chair for Agenda item 6.1 only.

RG65 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2017 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG66 Public Representations

None were received.

RG67 Matters for Report

67.1 Data Protection

The Committee NOTED that the Data Protection law would change significantly on 25 May 2018 when the 2016 EU Directive, also known as General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR"), took effect. Further information would be provided to members as and when it became clear how this would affect the responsibilities of parish and town councils.

67.2 Strategy and Staff Group

The Committee NOTED that the Strategy and Staff Group had met on Wednesday 21 June 2017 and held informal discussions on topics including staffing, allotment management, office accommodation, the Oakwood Hill

Community Centre and town centre partnerships. It was reported that the two local town centre partnerships were considering their future. Depending on the outcome, the Council may be asked to consider reviving the Community Forum meetings so as not to lose the involvement and commitment of the active members of those two groups.

67.3 Office Accommodation

The Committee NOTED the expenditure report relating to the forthcoming move to Loughton Library and that the provisional date for the move to the new offices on the first floor the Library was 20/21 July 2017. However, this was still subject to the satisfactory installation of the broadband and IT services.

Cllrs Mahoney and Pewsey left the meeting for the next item and Cllr Omer took the chair.

RG68 Financial Assistance

68.1 General Applications 2017/18

The Committee considered the application and expressed its support for the Lopping Endowment's project to replace the hall chairs. However, members raised the following concerns:

- i. The accounts provided with the application were for the year ended December 2015. Members considered that those for the following year should have been available for this meeting; and
- ii. this could not be classed as an emergency applications as, even if successful, the applicant would still have a considerable shortfall in the funds to fully finance the project.

The Committee invited the Lopping Endowment to resubmit its application by 31 December 2017 together with more up to date accounts, for reconsideration as part of the annual grant scheme for 2018/19.

Cllrs Mahoney and Pewsey re-joined the meeting and Cllr Pewsey retook the chair.

RG69 Finance

69.1 Precept – Min no RG38

The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the 2017/18 Precept (£317,400) together with the Local Council Tax Support grant (£27,016) had been received from Epping Forest District Council into the Santander account on 28 April 2017.

69.2 Banking and Investments

The Committee NOTED the information provided regarding the Town Council's bank accounts.

It was AGREED that an amount, which left instant access to sufficient working capital to meet the Council's needs as identified by the Responsible Financial Officer, was to be invested in the Nationwide Business 6-month Fixed Rate Saver Account which currently offered 0.55% interest.

69.3 Fidelity Guarantee Insurance Cover

The Committee carried out the annual risk-based review of the level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover as required by the audit process and AGREED:

- 1) that the Council's current level of fidelity cover set at £1.4 million was sufficient; and
- 2) that a review this level would be included in the annual insurance review process at the February 2018 meeting.

69.4 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to continue with the appointment of a councillor to undertake internal financial checks during the year and accepted Cllr Omer's offer to continue in this role for 2017/18. Cllr Omer was thanked for his work in this regard during 2016/17.

69.5 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the end of year financial report for 2016/17 together with details of the transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

The Committee AGREED to transfer the £700 identified in earmarked reserves for an honours board to general reserves.

A copy of the most recent bank reconciliations would be circulated to all members.

Cllr Mahoney left the meeting.

69.6 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £318,239.25 as detailed on payments schedules nos 235 – 239 had been made since the report to the meeting on 5 April 2017. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG70 Staffing

70.1 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

70.2 Recruitment

The Committee AGREED with the recommendation from the Strategy and Staff Group to replace the vacant Deputy Town Clerk's post with a new post to include the duties of the Responsible Financial Officer and an assistant clerk. It was further AGREED that:

- 1) the new job title was to be "Assistant Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer" with the person specification to include a requirement for the successful applicant to hold a recognised accountancy qualification;
- 2) the salary scale would be LC3, SCP35 - 39 plus inner fringe London Weighting Allowance; and
- 3) a detailed job description would be drawn up by the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman, and that this post would also include responsibilities for Health and Safety and Data Protection.

70.3 Salary Award

The Committee AGREED to award an additional increment to a staff member who had taken on additional responsibilities for the day to day management of the Willingale Road Allotments. This award was to be backdated to 1 May 2017.

RG71 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed
Date: 11 October 2017