

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