
LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1st September 2004 at 7.30 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: R E Pearce (in the Chair)
C E Baggarley J Benjamin C C Pond
M W Wardle

Also in attendance:

Councillors: S M Harper
D J Wixley
Officers: L R Fuller (Town Clerk)
E K Walsh (Deputy Town Clerk)

1 member of the public

F1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor L Daniel.

F2 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th April 2004, amended at minute no. F269 from those circulated, were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F3 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were made.

F4 Matters for Report

F4.1 Strategy and Staff Group

The Committee NOTED the report from Strategy and Staff Group.

F5 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the end of year report for 2003-04 together with the current financial position for 2004-05 and that information had been issued showing current bank balances.

F6 Council Accounts 2003-04

6.1 Internal Control

The Committee recorded a vote of thanks to former councillor, Les Harris, for his work in carrying out regular inspections of the financial records of the Council during the last four-year term.

The Committee AGREED that Councillor Baggarley be appointed for a trial period to undertake checks on a regular basis as a way of retaining a member interest in the financial affairs and an additional level of assurance.

6.2 Accounts for 2003/04

The Committee APPROVED the Accounts for 2003/04.

F7 Reference from Environment, Heritage and Leisure Committee

In response to a formal request from the Environment, Heritage and Leisure Committee, the Committee AGREED to take £15,000 from General Reserves this financial year and place it in the Earmarked Reserve for the new cemetery.

F8 Members' Expenses

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Council that the scheme for payment of members' expenses should be amended so that the amount payable for mileage would be the lower of either 1) the amounts agreed by Epping Forest District Council for payment to its members, or 2) the maximum amount considered by the Inland Revenue to be non-profit making and therefore tax-free.

F9 Annual Report

The format for the publication of the Annual Report of the Council was considered. The Committee requested that a report giving a preferred option and any additional costs incurred be made to the next meeting.

The Committee AGREED that the Annual Report should include a record of members' attendance at meetings.

F10 Accounts for payment

The following accounts for payment were APPROVED.

Cheque no.	Payee	Purpose	VAT	Gross Amount
2213	G.B. Sport & Leisure	RV Rec Tennis Court Nets	15.00	100.72
2214	LWC Engineering	Drinking fountain repairs	29.84	200.34
2215	Queensbury Shelters Ltd	Bus shelter repairs, Jessel Drive	64.93	435.93
2216	Select Business Equipment	Stationery	11.76	78.96
2217	A to Z Supplies	Stationery	14.48	97.22
2218	Epping Forest District Council	Grounds Maintenance Contract 2003/04	18,188.50	122,122.79
2219	Essex County Council	WRPF grounds maintenance (July 2004)	120.20	807.03
2220	British Telecommunications Plc	Buck Court & Cemetery	81.25	545.57
2221	Epping Forest District Council	Rates; RVRec Ch Rms, K Hall, WRPF Ch Rms, Buck Crt		1,203.00
2222	D.B.J. (Woodford) Ltd	Annual boiler service, K Hall	11.33	76.08
2223	Public Works Loans Account	Land in North Loughton		5,525.00
2224	Whizzywig Ltd	Newsletter	82.69	555.19
2225	LWC Engineering	Playground repairs	39.20	263.20
2226	Tim Moya Tree Services	Roding Valley Rec	66.50	446.50
2227	Arwin Services	Buck Court cleaning	46.38	311.38
2228	D.W. FitzSamuel-Nicholls	Binding minutes		590.00
2229	Tim Moya Tree Services	RVRec Gd	62.13	417.13
2230	D.B.J. (Woodford) Ltd	Maintenance at WRPF & RVRec Ch Rms & K Hall	236.81	1589.98

2231	Mannings Fairview Co Ltd	Roding Valley Rec, refund of booking fees	1,485.00
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F11 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following item contained confidential information relating to the Council's staffing matters.

F12 Pay Agreement

The Committee NOTED that a three-year agreement had been reached by the national negotiating bodies. The increase was 2.75% from 1st April 2004, 2.95% from 1st April 2005 and 2.95% from 1st April 2006, although this last figure may be adjusted in the light of the increase in the RPI at October 2005.

Signed.....
Date 10th November 2004

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10th November 2004 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: R E Pearce (in the Chair)
 K E Angold-Stephens C E Baggarley J Benjamin
 L Daniel M W Wardle
 C P Pond (as substitute for C C Pond)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: S M Harper D J Wixley J L Woods

Officers: L R Fuller (Town Clerk)
 E K Walsh (Deputy Town Clerk)

F13 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor C C Pond. Councillor Pearce reported that Councillor C P Pond had been nominated as Councillor C C Pond's substitute for this meeting.

F14 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1st September 2004 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F15 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Woods declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, an application for financial assistance from the Roding Valley University of the Third Age as she is a member of the organisation.

Councillor C P Pond declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 14, grants to the Citizens' Advice Bureau due to her position as Epping Forest District Council portfolio holder for Community Wellbeing.

F16 Matters for Report

There were no matters for report.

F17 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial position for 2004-05 and that information had been issued showing current bank balances.

Councillor Woods withdrew from the meeting.

F18 Financial Assistance

The Committee considered an application for financial assistance from the Roding Valley University of the Third Age and AGREED to give a grant of £400 under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Baggarley requested that her vote against the motion be recorded.

Councillor Woods rejoined the meeting.

F19 Annual Report – Min. no. F.9

The Committee considered various options for the format and printing of the Annual Report and AGREED to include a coloured pull-out insert stapled into the centre of the Summer 2005 edition of “Think Loughton”. This separate report will include additional information about the council, as well as edited chairmen’s reports from the Annual Town Meeting.

F20 Credit Card

The Committee AGREED to obtain a business credit card from the NatWest Bank with its use restricted to the Town Clerk or on her authority. Payments are to be made monthly by direct debit from the Current Account. The limit on the card is to be £1,000 and its use will be monitored with a review undertaken after a year.

F21 Scheme of Members’ Allowances**21.1 Amendments**

The Chairman reported on the implications of the various proposals put forward at the Council meeting on 15th September 2004 to further amend the Scheme.

The Committee AGREED to RECOMMEND to the Council that that the scheme for payment of members’ expenses should be amended as follows:

- i The Parish Basic Allowance, unless renounced, will be paid automatically without requiring a claim for payment to be made.
- ii Claims for expenses should be made quarterly.
- iii Claims for expenses must not be submitted more than one month after the end of the quarter in which the expenses had been incurred; they will not be paid if the time limit is breached except on the specific authorisation of the Chairman of Finance and General Policy Committee (or if he/she is on long term absence, the Vice Chairman).
- iv There is no limit on the number of passengers for which additional mileage allowance may be claimed.

It was AGREED that the deadline for submitting claims to ensure payment within the same month would be retained as 5 days.

21.2 Parish Basic Allowance

The Committee undertook its annual review of the amount of the Parish Basic Allowance and AGREED to RECOMMEND to the Council that there be no increase this year.

F22 Officer Code of Conduct

The Chairman gave a brief verbal synopsis of the response to this consultation as drafted by the Clerk in discussion with the Chairman. The Committee AGREED that it should form the council’s response to the consultation.

F23 Town Meeting

The Committee AGREED to continue with the same format as in previous years for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for 26th April 2005 and requested that Shona Pollock, Town Centre Manager for Epping Forest District Council, be invited to attend as guest speaker.

F24 Committee and Council Priorities**24.1 Committee Priorities**

The Committee reviewed its priorities and AGREED on the list shown below:

Current Priority	Revised Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
On-going activities			
	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 Court	
	High	Personnel matters, staff management	
	High	IT and office equipment	
	High	Publicity	
	High	Civic matters	
	High	New legislative requirements	
	High	Responding to consultations	
	High	Any other matters within the committee's terms of reference	
Existing list			
1		Data Protection/Freedom of Information Acts	FOI Publication Scheme done; further work to comply with Jan 05 requirements. Data Protection no action
1		Purchase of new computers	Some research carried out
2		Staffing – employment and Health and Safety policies and procedures; employee handbook	H&S policy and most employment policies have been completed; handbook not commenced
3		Spirit of Best Value	No specific work but general principles espoused
4		Investigate bank alternatives	Deposit account improved but no further action on current account

24.2 Council-wide Priorities

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

Committee	Activity
Community	Community and Youth Centre
Environment, Heritage and Leisure	New cemetery (Lady Whitaker's Mead)
	Skateboard facility
Finance & General Policy	Data Protection/Freedom of Information Acts
	Purchase of new computers

F25 Risk Assessment and Management

The Committee APPROVED the risk assessment and management arrangements as presented together with the additional report issued at the meeting. The Committee thanked the Town Clerk for her work to prepare this report.

F26 Suspension of Standing Orders

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4. and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.45 p.m.

F27 Draft Budgets for 2005/06

Councillor Woods declared a personal and prejudicial interest due to her position as the Council's representative on the Citizens' Advice Bureau Management Committee. Councillors C P Pond and Woods withdrew from the meeting during discussions on the level of budget to allow for a possible grant to the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

27.1 Income

The Committee AGREED to increase fees and charges as follows:

1. hiring out Buckingham Court by 3.1%
2. copying of information for members of the public to 55p a sheet.

27.2 Draft Budget 2005/06

The draft budget for 2005/06 was AGREED as below:

	Income	Expenditure	Transfer from earmarked reserves
Salaries and on-costs		172,000	
Communications		6,400	
Office expenses		5,100	
Press and advertising		2,500	
Subscriptions		2,000	
Buckingham Court		53,500	
Audit & Accounts		10,000	
Insurance		2,400	
Staff travel		1,000	
Members' expenses/allowances		3,000	
Training		2,000	
Legal		500	
Town Mayor's expenses		500	
Grants		5,000	
CAB special payment		4,000	
Election expenses		3,000	
Contingency		2,000	
Service Recharge to other cttees	TBC		
Total	0	274,900	0

F28 Accounts for payment

The following accounts for payment were APPROVED:

Cheque no.	Payee	Purpose	VAT	Gross Amount
2305	Roger Pearce	Members' allowances/expenses		23.97
2306	Janas Joinery	Buck Crt maintenance	189.53	1,272.53
2307	Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership	Christmas lights grant		900.00
2308	Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership	Christmas lights grant		900.00
2309	Royal British Legion (Loughton Branch)	Remembrance wreath		50.00
2310	British Gas Trading Ltd	Kingsley Hall	0.52	10.92
2311	SLCC	Training fees		30.00
2312	EALC	Training fees		280.00
2313	A to Z Supplies	Equipment	2.61	17.51
2314	Mrs B Holder, Mrs M E O'Connell and Mr T J O'Connell	Refund of interment fee		102.00
2315	Essex County Council	Hire of Debden Library, Community Centre Consultation		60.00
2316	London Energy plc	Cemetery	1.61	33.89
2317	Arwin Services	Cleaning at Kingsley Hall	63.00	423.00
2318	Cash	Reimburse petty cash	5.96	84.87
2319	TBS Hygiene	Bin emptying Felstead Rd	7.96	53.46
2320	Homebase Limited	Cemetery supplies	1.94	12.99
2321	Greenside Landscapes	Grounds clearance at the former URC site	87.50	587.50
2322	Cash	Reimburse petty cash	2.98	87.98
2323	Klick Photopoint	Christmas competition certificate frames	4.68	31.41

Signed.....
Date 24th November 2004

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 24th November 2004 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: L Daniel (in the Chair)
 K E Angold-Stephens C E Baggarley J Benjamin
 C C Pond M W Wardle
 S M Harper (as substitute for R E Pearce)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: J Benjamin, D J Wixley and J L Woods

Officers: L R Fuller (Town Clerk)
 E K Walsh (Deputy Town Clerk)

F29 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Pearce. Councillor Daniel reported that Councillor Harper had been nominated as Councillor Pearce's substitute for this meeting.

F30 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th November 2004 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F31 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

F32 Estimates for 2005/06

The report was noted and in particular the adjustments to the estimates for the Community and Environment, Heritage and Leisure Committees. The Committee AGREED to transfer £3,715 of the contingency sum in the Environment, Heritage and Leisure Committee to its Street Furniture and Lighting estimate and refer the matter to the next meeting of that committee for discussion.

The estimates for 2005/06 were AGREED as follows:

Planning Committee	Expenditure		
		11,700	
Finance & General Policy Committee	Income	Expenditure	Transfer from earmarked reserves
Salaries and on-costs		172,000	
Communications		6,400	
Office expenses		5,100	
Press and advertising		2,500	
Subscriptions		2,000	
Buckingham Court		53,500	
Audit & Accounts		10,000	
Insurance		2,400	

Staff travel		1,000	
Members' expenses/allowances		3,000	
Training		2,000	
Legal		500	
Town Mayor's expenses		500	
Grants		5,000	
CAB special payment		4,000	
Election expenses		3,000	
Contingency		2,000	
Service Recharge to other cttees	149,700		
Total	149,700	274,900	0

Environment, Heritage and Leisure Committee

	Income	Expenditure	Transfer from earmarked reserves
Street Furniture & Lighting		13,715	4,715
Allotments	120	11,000	
Roding Valley Rec. Gd.	5,100	115,000	6,000
Playgrounds		43,000	8,000
Open Spaces		13,000	
Cemetery	14,000	44,000	2,000
Skateboarding facility - Capital costs		32,000	27,000
Skateboarding facility - Revenue costs		1,000	
Land Purchase & Loan		11,000	
Willingale Road Playing Field	4,600	59,000	40,000
Lady Whitaker's Mead/new cemetery		50,000	
Vehicle/replacement		1,000	
General Expenses		500	
Contingencies		2,000	
Service Charge		80,000	
Total	23,820	476,215	87,715

Community Committee

	Income	Expenditure	Transfer from earmarked reserves
Forum		200	
Newsletter		8,900	
Millennium		600	
Christmas competitions		600	
Kingsley Hall	13,500	15,000	
Comm Centre Capital		642,000	597,000
Comm Centre Revenue		74,000	
General Expenses		200	
Contingency		2,000	
Service Charge		58,000	
Total	13,500	801,500	597,000

The Chairman circulated a paper showing an alternative method of considering the figures. The projected level of General Reserves at the end of 2004/05 was considered and concerns raised about the long-term viability of continuing to utilise General Reserves towards the running costs of the council. However, it was AGREED to take £114,440 from General Reserves. The summarised position would be:

Committee	Income	Expenditure
Democratic Services		37,000
Finance and General Policy	149,700	237,900
Environment, Heritage and Leisure	23,820	476,215
Community	13,500	801,500
Planning		11,700
Total	187,020	1,564,315

Use from earmarked reserves:

Environment, Heritage and Leisure	87,715
Community	597,000
Interest	45,000
General reserves	114,440
Net requirement	533,140

AGREED that the precept to be recommended to the Council would be £533,140.

F33 Accounts for payment

The following accounts were APPROVED for payment:

Cheque no.	Payee	Purpose	VAT	Gross Amount
DD	Compuserve	Subscription (Oct)		16.42
2324	Roding Valley U3A	Grant		400.00
Tfr	No2 a/c (Nov 04)	Reimburse imprest		16,323.76
2325	Essex County Council	Occupational health fees		79.88
2326	Acumen Wages Service	Payroll (November)	2.54	17.04
2327	Whizzywig Ltd	Newsletter design	82.69	555.19
2328	Environtec Ltd	Asbestos survey former URC site	245.00	1645.00
2329	Public Works Loan Acc	Community Centre		17,849.90
2330	Vaughtons	New bar for Town Mayor badge	7.40	49.70
2331	Signs of the Times Ltd	Heritage Plaque (Thomas Willingale)	30.97	207.97
2332	Select Business Equipment Ltd	Photocopying service charge	17.28	116.03
2333	Essex County Council	WRPF	151.70	1018.53
2334	W.H. Smith Ltd	Gift vouchers for Christmas card competition winners		100.00
2335	W Fayers & Sons	Cemetery supplies	5.69	38.19
2336	A to Z Supplies Ltd	Stationery, and supplies for warden, cemetery and WRPF	12.25	82.24
2337	EFDC	Rates; RVRec Ch Rms, K Hall, WRPF Ch Rms, Buck Crt		1203.00
2338	G Vinning	Christmas lights at Kings Green		235.00
2339	TBS Hygiene	Litter bin repairs at RVRec	28.52	191.52
2340	Cash	Reimburse petty cash	1.40	37.84

Signed.....
Date 9th February 2005

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9th February 2005 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: R E Pearce (in the Chair)
 C E Baggarley J Benjamin M W Wardle
 S M Harper (as substitute for K E Angold-Stephens)
 J L Woods (as substitute for C C Pond)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: D J Wixley P S Sheen

Officers: L R Fuller (Town Clerk)
 E K Walsh (Deputy Town Clerk)

3 members of the public

1 member of the press

F34 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors K E Angold-Stephens, L Daniel and C C Pond. Councillor Pearce reported that for this meeting the nominated substitutes were Councillor Harper for Councillor Angold-Stephens and Councillor J L Woods for Councillor C C Pond.

F35 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th November 2004 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F36 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Benjamin, Harper, Pearce, Wardle, Wixley and Woods declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8.1, the application for financial assistance for the Samaritans, because of their personal acquaintance with the applicant.

Councillor Harper declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8.1, the applications for financial assistance for Kidzone, because of her family connection with the Vineyard Church.

Councillor Woods declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8.1, the application for financial assistance for the Roding Valley Branch of the U3A because of her membership of the group. She also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 8.2, because of her position as the Council's representative on the Citizens' Advice Bureau Management Committee.

F37 Matters for Report

37.1 Town Meeting

It was noted that Shona Pollock had accepted the invitation to address the Town Meeting.

37.2 Strategy and Staff Group

The report was noted.

37.3 Business Credit Card

Further to the previous decision that a business credit card be obtained for use by the Town Clerk, the Committee AGREED that an additional card may be obtained for use by the Parks and Amenities Warden, primarily to purchase fuel for the council van, with the limit on the card to be £500.

F38 Current Financial Position

The Committee noted the current financial position for 2004/05 and that information had been issued showing current bank balances.

F39 Programme of meetings 2005/06

The Committee AGREED the programme of meetings.

F40 Audit**40.1 External Audit for 2002/03 and 2003/04**

The Committee noted the report.

40.2 External Audit – future appointment

The Committee noted that the present arrangements for external audit would continue for 2004/05 and 2005/06.

40.3 Internal Audit

The Committee noted the report of the internal auditor and AGREED the responses to the recommendations.

40.4 Councillor check

Councillor Baggarley's report on her first check of the finances was noted.

F41 Applications for Financial Assistance**41.1 General Applications**

Councillor Woods withdrew from the meeting during discussions on the application from the U3A Roding Valley Branch.

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

Name of organisation	Amount £	Statutory Power
Alzheimer's Society Epping Forest Branch	500	LGA 1972 S137
Epping Forest Community Church Youth Group	500	LGA 1972 S145
Epping Forest Youth for Christ	750	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Kidzone (1 st application for equipment)	400	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Loughton & Epping WEA	125	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Loughton Fencing Club	100	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Oakwood Senior Citizens Club	550	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
OY (Operation Youth)	370	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Roding House (Rethink)	300	LGA 1972 S137
Samaritans of Redbridge	300	LGA 1972 S137
U3A Roding Valley Branch	250	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19
Vitalise (Winged Fellowship Trust)	350	LG(Mis Prov)A 1976 S19

Applications from Action in Mental Health, Kidzone (2nd application), Lincoln Almshouses Charity and Roding Valley ICT & Heritage Group were unsuccessful in receiving a grant.

41.2 Loughton and District Citizens Advice Bureau

Councillor Woods withdrew from the meeting.

The Committee received further information regarding the level of funding proposed by Epping Forest District Council for 2005/06 and AGREED that a grant of £4,000 be given to the Loughton & District Citizens Advice Bureau to assist with the funding shortfall.

Councillor Woods rejoined the meeting.

F42 Honorarium for Webmaster

The Clerk declared a personal interest in this item.

The Committee AGREED that the honorarium for the Webmaster be increased to £1,000 per annum from 1st April 2005.

F43 I.T. and Office Equipment/Quality Parish Investment Fund

43.1 Quality Parish Investment Fund

The Committee welcomed the award of £5,000 from the Countryside Agency, which had resulted from the Council's application to the Quality Parish Investment Fund.

43.2 New Equipment

The Committee AGREED to make up to £16,000 available to fund the items detailed in the Quality Parish Investment Fund application, with the exception of the laptop and projector already purchased, and with the accounts software required. This would be funded from the remaining equipment budget, the contingency budget and the underspend in the salaries budget in addition to the Investment Fund award detailed in 43.1.

F44 Committee Terms of Reference

In response to the report by the Strategy and Staff Group the Committee AGREED to make the following recommendations to the Council:

- i A Council Structure Review Working Group be set up at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11th May 2005.
- ii Changes be made to the Standing Orders as proposed by the Strategy and Staff Group to be effective from the Annual Meeting of the Council.
- iii Where there are budgets which follow functions which are to be transferred between committees this should be effected from the beginning of the financial year (1st April 2005).
- iv The Terms of Reference of the Finance of this Committee be re-ordered for a more logical sequence, and responsibility for civic assets and for publicity matters, including the Annual Report and the website, be included.
- v The Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee be amended to add the words shown in italics.
 - 1 To consider all applications received for planning consent within the Town, *other than those emanating from the Town Council itself*, and to submit comments

F45 Planning for the future of the Council and the Town

The Committee expressed support for the ideas put forward in the report from the Strategy and Staff Group regarding the preparation of interlinked plans to provide a framework for the future of the town and of the town council.

It was AGREED to set up the following ad hoc groups to examine what this would involve and the mechanisms required to progress the ideas:

- i A Town Future Group formed by Councillors Benjamin, Pearce, Pewsey, P Sheen and Woods together with a representative from the Conservative and Labour groups and the Town Clerk or her nominee.
- ii A Business Plan and Rolling Programme Working Group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee together with the Chairman of the Council, a representative from the Labour group and the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk. The membership of this group to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Confirmation of the representatives are to be provided to the Town Clerk within five days of this meeting.

The Committee further AGREED that

- i the groups should hold their initial meetings before the Annual Meeting of the Council to enable a progress report to be made.
- ii this matter should be given a high priority.
- iii the groups should establish their terms of reference.
- iv the Business Plan group should aim to complete proposals prior to the budget cycle of the Council
- v the groups should report back to this Committee with proposals to take the ideas forward

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4. and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.40 p.m.

F46 Officers' Travel Allowance

The Committee AGREED that a local agreement be implemented to the effect that the maximum travel allowance payable to officers will be the amount considered non-taxable by the Inland Revenue or the figure agreed by the National Joint Council, whichever is the lower.

F47 Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Committee noted the report on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the requirements and implications for the Council, as listed in paragraph 5 of the Agenda item, of the general right of access to information which came into force on 1st January 2005.

The Committee AGREED that if the Council needs to apply the "public interest" test to a request for information which may be subject to an exemption then the matter should be referred to the Town Clerk who after consultation with any two out of the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Finance and General Policy Committee should take a decision under delegated powers in accordance with that consultation.

A revised Publication Scheme was APPROVED by the Committee for submission to the Information Commissioner.

A Records and Information Management Policy and a Complaints Procedure will be drawn up by the officers and presented to the Committee for approval at a future meeting.

F48 Accounts for payment

The following accounts were APPROVED for payment:

Cheque no.	Payee	Purpose	VAT	Gross Amount
2404	Arwin Services	Cleaning at Buck Crt & K/Hall	109.38	734.38
2405	Essex County Council	WRPF grounds maintenance	120.20	807.03
2406	Select Business Equipment Ltd	Photocopying service charge	14.03	94.21
2407	Anglia Video Surveys Ltd	Drainage inspection at former URC site	63.00	423.00
2408	Eastern Soil Search Ltd	Soil investigation survey at former URC site	401.28	2,694.28
2409	WPP Architects	Loughton Community Centre	4,370.63	29,345.63
2410	Sports Courts UK Ltd	Resurfacing at Colebrook and Newmans Lane playgrounds	1,627.33	10,926.33
2411	Clearout Ltd	Disposal of flytipping at former URC site	260.63	1,750.00
2412	British Gas Trading Ltd	Buckingham Court	6.36	133.56
2413	AtoZ Supplies	Filing cabinets	31.33	210.33
2414	London Energy Plc	Cemetery, Kings Green and WRPF	10.59	222.58
2415	Foskett Marr Gadsby & Head	Traps Hill playground transfer legal fees	39.38	184.38

Signed.....
Date 6th April 2005

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6th April 2005 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: R E Pearce (in the Chair)
 C E Baggarley J Benjamin L Daniel
 C C Pond M W Wardle
 S M Harper (as substitute for K E Angold-Stephens)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: M L Daniel D J Wixley

Officers: L R Fuller (Town Clerk)
 E K Walsh (Deputy Town Clerk)

F49 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor K E Angold-Stephens. Councillor Pearce reported that Councillor Harper had been nominated as Councillor Angold-Stephens' substitute.

F50 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9th February 2005 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F51 Public Representations

None were received.

F52 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

F53 Matters for Report

53.1 Strategy and Staff Group

The report of the group's meeting with Councillor Knapman, Leader of Epping Forest District Council, was received. The Committee noted with regret that, despite Councillor Knapman's optimism, the lease for the transfer of the Willingale Road Allotments to this council had not been completed by 1st April 2005.

53.2 Funds from Essex County Council

The Committee welcomed the new funding by Essex County Council for local councils in 2005/06.

53.3 Internal Audit

It was reported that the interim audit report for 2004/05 had been received and that there were no issues on which the auditor required a response at this time.

F54 Current Financial Position

The Committee noted the current financial position and that this was not the end of year report. Information had been issued showing current bank balances.

F55 Reference from Planning Committee

In response to the reference from the Planning Committee the Committee AGREED to make the following recommendation of a change to Standing Orders to the Council:

- i Persons wishing to address meetings of the standing committees of the Council must give notice to the Town Council by 3 p.m. on the day of the meeting.
- ii Written representations from members of the public must also be received by this deadline.
- iii This arrangement is to be reviewed before the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2006.

F56 Risk Assessment and Management**F56.1 Risk Control Schedule**

The Committee AGREED not to make any alterations to the existing schedule approved in November 2004 and noted that the next review would be held in Spring 2006.

F65.2 Financial Regulations

With the exception of the reference to the level of reserves that would be dealt with in Agenda item 11, it was confirmed that the current Financial Regulations meet the council's requirements.

It was noted that the insurance review would be dealt with under Agenda item 15.

F57 Councillors' Code of Conduct

It was AGREED that all councillors should be invited to send written comments to the office by 20th May 2005, to enable the Town Clerk to collate a response to this consultation document.

F58 Application for Financial Assistance

The Committee RESOLVED to make a grant of £500 to the Loughton Town Centre Partnership under the LGA 1972 S145, to assist with the cost of Debden Day.

F59 Business Plan Working Group and Town Future Group**F59.1 Business Plan and Rolling Programme Working Group**

The report of the meeting held on 22nd March 2005 was noted. The Committee RESOLVED to make the following recommendation to the Council regarding Financial Regulation no. 9.6:

Financial Regulation no. 9.6 is to be amended to read "The council shall maintain such level of general reserves as it considers prudent for the conduct of its business".

A more formal reserves policy, to be held separately to the Financial Regulations, is to be prepared by the working group for consideration by this Committee.

F59.2 Town Future Group

The report of the meeting of the Town Future Group held on 29th March 2005 was noted.

F60 Accounts for payment

The following accounts were APPROVED for payment:

Cheque no.	Payee	Purpose	VAT	Gross Amount
2468	NALC	DIS Subscription 05/06		100.00
2469	Epping Forest District Council	Rates; RVRec, K Hall, WRPf, Buck Crt		1337.61
2470	Alzheimer's Society Epping Forest Branch	Grant 05/06		500.00
2471	Epping Forest Community Church Youth Group	Grant 05/06		500.00
2472	Epping Forest Youth for Christ	Grant 05/06		750.00
2473	Kidzone	Grant 05/06		400.00
2474	WEA Loughton & Epping Branch	Grant 05/06		125.00
2475	Loughton Fencing Club	Grant 05/06		100.00
2476	Oakwood Senior Citizens Club	Grant 05/06		550.00
2477	Loughton Union Church	Grant 05/06		370.00
2478	Rethink (Roding House)	Grant 05/06		300.00
2479	Samaritans of Redbridge	Grant 05/06		300.00
2480	U3A Roding Valley Branch	Grant 05/06		250.00
2481	Vitalise	Grant 05/06		350.00
2482	Loughton & District Citizens Advice Bureau	Grant 05/06		4,000.00
2483	J T Wheeldon	Webmaster honorarium		1,000.00
2484	Printing Supplies	Stationery	2.27	15.22

F61 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following items contain confidential information relating to staffing and to the council's property affairs.

F62 Staffing

The Committee AGREED to accept the recommendations of the Strategy and Staff Group.

The Committee requested that the Strategy and Staff Group consider the implications of the new agreement between the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks and make a report to the next meeting of this Committee. It was AGREED that any changes adopted should be effective from 1st April 2005.

F63 Insurance review

The details of the Council's insurance cover were discussed and the Committee asked the Town Clerk to investigate several items on the schedule. It was AGREED to increase the level of Fidelity Guarantee to £300,000.

Signed.....

Date 29th June 2005

