

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

19 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors: D Bowater
A Brandham
S Cotter
A Dodwell
K Ferguson
J M Freeman
S Jones
F Kharawala
T Morris (substituting for R Berry)
C Palmer
G Perham
E Wallace – in the Chair

Also in attendance: S Sandiford (Corporate Governance Manager – interim)
C Cummins (Finance Officer)
L Hall (Senior Administration Officer)
T Mabbott (Committee Officer – interim)

Members of the public: 0

167/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor R Berry (substituted by Councillor T Morris) and Councillor G Perham.

168/PF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor F Kharawala declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the Communications update (agenda item 10), as a company with which she was associated had provided a quote for the work to review the Town Council's website. No dispensation was requested as the Committee was not required to vote on this matter.

169/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

170/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meetings held on 1 August 2016 for consideration.

Minute reference 152/PF: It was noted that the appointment of appropriate consultants for the projects part funded through the Market Town Regeneration Fund was to demonstrate compliance with the terms and conditions of receiving this funding from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Minute reference 163/PF: Councillors were asked to contact the Town Clerk with any ideas for suitable locations for the two recently purchased redeployable CCTV cameras.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 1 August 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

171/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Committee objectives and work plan for 2016-17. It was agreed that completed objectives be moved to the end of the document.

RESOLVED that the work plan be received.

172/PF BEST BAR NONE UPDATE

The Committee received an update report regarding the Best Bar None initiative. It was reported that take up of the scheme was good, with 9 licensed premises in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade signing up to it. A public vote would be held during the Autumn, culminating in an awards evening to take place at the end of November.

A number of queries were raised regarding the measurement of the success of the scheme and the potential impact on local crime and antisocial behaviour. It was agreed that more detailed information would be circulated to Committee members after the meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

173/PF JULY PAYMENTS

The Committee received 6 schedules of payments dated 20 July 2016, 1 August 2016 and 12 August 2016), as approved for payment by the Town Clerk and counter-signed by two account signatories (see Appendix A).

The schedules included BACS payments amounting to £70,744.99 (page numbers 1963, 1965 and 1971-1982) and cheque payments amounting to £39,281.95 (cheque numbers 16815 - 16848), including White House petty

cash amounting to £167.29, Astral Park petty cash amounting to £248.61 and TACTIC petty cash amounting to £60.37.

The monthly salaries listing for July 2016, amounting to £99,724.38 gross was received. A cash book report for July 2016, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

Officers confirmed that payments made were within budget and that there were no specific matters requiring the attention of the Committee.

RESOLVED to note the schedules of accounts for July 2016.

174/PF QUALITY GOLD APPLICATION

The Committee received a report regarding the Town Council's objective to achieve accreditation at Gold level under the Local Council Award Scheme. Having already achieved Foundation and then Quality status, the next stage would require evidence of meeting criteria including community engagement, monitoring of the Town Council's performance and meeting statutory requirements on matters such as biodiversity and planning. Submission of an application would require Council approval and payment of fees amounting to £240.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To endorse the one page statement in support of the Town Council's obligations in terms of value for money, crime and disorder and monitoring the Council's performance;**
- (ii) To note that the one page statements in respect of the Town Council's obligations in terms of Planning and Biodiversity had been presented to and endorsed by the Planning and Transport Committee and the Grounds and Environmental Committee respectively;**

RECOMMENDED to Council to pass a resolution confirming that the Quality Gold criteria be met and that an application could be submitted.

175/PF REVIEW OF THE CIVIC ROLE OF TOWN MAYOR

The Committee received a report regarding the review of the civic role of Town Mayor arising from the Council's Three Year Plan and considered some proposed amendments to the existing Mayor and Deputy Mayor Protocol. A query was raised regarding the impartiality of the Mayor. It was agreed that the wording of the updated Protocol should be revised and brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Members noted that there was currently no specific budget heading for Mayor's twinning visits. This was currently covered within the limited annual

Members' Expenses budget. It was agreed that consideration should be given to creating a specific budget line for twinning visits during the budget setting process.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **To note the report;**
- (ii) **To note the proposed amendments to the existing Protocol for the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and bring revised proposals back to a future meeting for approval;**
- (iii) **To establish a specific line in the budget for Town Twinning Visits, and to consider setting a budget for this during the formal budget setting process.**

176/PF COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Committee received an update on communications. Members welcomed the report and noted that the Town Council's presence on social media continued to grow.

RESOLVED to receive the report.

177/PF PENSION AUTO-ENROLMENT

The Committee received a report and update regarding pension auto-enrolment. It was noted that this would be a significant additional cost for the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That, with effect from 1st April 2017 (Pensions Act 2008), to recognise the introduction of auto enrolment for those qualifying employees currently not within the Local Government Pension Scheme.**
- (ii) **That the increased financial obligation in meeting employer responsibilities be recognised within the budget setting process.**

178/PF EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 2015-2016

The Committee received a report from the external Auditor for 2015-16, and considered its recommendations.

RESOLVED that the external Auditor's report be noted.

The meeting closed at 2011 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2016.

Chair

21 NOVEMBER 2016