



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Agenda Item. 7 (a)**

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**Title:** Committee Terms of Reference,  
Objectives and Work Plan

**Purpose of the Report:** To provide an overview of the operation of the Committee and relevant service areas.

**Contact Officer:** Mark Saccoccio (Town Clerk)  
Clare Cummins (Finance Officer)  
Sarah Sandiford (Head of Democratic and Central Services)

<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	<b>LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 1</b> (to consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council).	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>		To provide an overview of operational procedures relating to the areas of responsibility of the Committee.
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>		To ensure statutory obligations are met in terms of finance, audit and risk management.
<b>Human Resources</b>		FT staff: 3 PT staff: 5 (fixed term: 1)
<b>Financial</b>		Annual budget: £688,845 (Salaries, central admin, White House, democratic representation, grants, highways & community safety)  Headline costs for core Town Council operations: <b>£48.71</b> per household per year, or <b>£0.94</b> per household per week.

## **1. RECOMMENDATION/S**

**Should members be minded, the proposals are:**

**1.1 To note the report.**

**1.2 To consider approval of the work streams listed at 2.6 for inclusion in the Committee work plan for 2017-2018 onwards.**

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members are aware, a report was provided to the Committee in August 2016 setting out the Terms of Reference and operations within the remit of the Committee. The report set out standards of operation in terms of finance, audit, risk management, democratic matters and other areas of Committee responsibility. The original report is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The Policy and Finance Committee has met on 5 occasions since 1 August 2016 and at each meeting, the work plan and objectives have been reviewed.
- 2.3 Of the **10** objectives from the Town Council's Three Year Plan which are within the specific remit of this Committee, **7** have been completed, **2** are underway and **1** is ongoing (dialogue with residents and community engagement).
- 2.4 In addition to those objectives, work streams have included the following projects/activities:

### Democratic and Central Services

- i. Creation of operational procedures for Mayoral fundraising events and civic events
- ii. Recruitment of a Committee Officer (to start 3 July)
- iii. Recruitment of temporary Administration support for maternity leave cover
- iv. Recruitment of a temporary Administration officer (to include Mayoral support) (to start mid-late July)
- v. Creation of a service area summary (see **Appendix B**)
- vi. Revision of Business Continuity Plan for the White House
- vii. Review of risk management across the organisation
- viii. Training provision for appraisals, equality & diversity and data protection across the organisation
- ix. First phase of dealing with archived storage records completed
- x. Creation of a Town Council "App"
- xi. Replacement of telephone system and photocopiers/printers
- xii. Creation of ongoing I.T. workplan

### Finance & Audit

- i. Creation of five year financial plan
- ii. Visual representation of Town Council expenditure created
- iii. Town Council credit card account opened & procedures created
- iv. Auto enrolment of all employees in pension scheme
- v. Review of earmarked reserves
- vi. Reviewing of investments
- vii. Thorough and detailed review of budget requirements, resulting in a reduction of £46,023 for 2017/18 compared with previous year.
- viii. Card payment processes established
- ix. Implementation of electronic invoicing
- x. Introduction of quarterly budget monitoring narrative for committee
- xi. Pro-active transfer of payments from cheque to BACS

2.5 All work streams have been achieved within statutory or agreed deadlines and within agreed budgets. Changes in staffing required to meet operational needs have been achieved within budget.

2.6 In reviewing the 3 ongoing/outstanding objectives as well as additional work streams, it is proposed that the following be included within the work plan for the next year and thereafter:

A	<b>Website</b> (i) short term initial improvements to include new pages for sport, town twinning (ii) creation of data dashboard to enable monitoring (iii) medium term strategy and review of providers prior to contract review in February 2018 (iv) development plan for further website enhancements
B	<b>Communications Strategy</b> – to develop and implement a clear strategy to inform Town Council communications
C	<b>Paperless Meetings</b> – to research and implement a system by the end of 2017-18, allowing a year to resolve any teething issues ahead of the 2019 election.
D	<b>Online payments</b> – to clearly identify requirements and implement a system accordingly
E	<b>Online bookings</b> – to clearly identify requirement and implement a system accordingly. This may vary for different bookings (e.g. events, facilities)
F	<b>Social media</b> development – to create an Instagram channel, to launch and monitor success of the LLTC app, to develop more robust mechanisms for monitoring and management
G	<b>I.T. infrastructure</b> – to develop clear timescales for essential hardware and software upgrades (workstations, server replacement, cloud based email, cloud based storage, licencing)
H	<b>Policies</b> – review/update existing where required and develop: (i) Home working protocol (ii) Business Continuity plans for Astral Park and TACTIC (iii) Community Emergency Plan
I	<b>Data protection:</b> work towards compliance with General Data Protection Regulation by May 2018
I	<b>Budget process</b> – to consider zero based budgeting principles in development of the 2018-2019 budget
J	<b>Community safety</b> – review effectiveness of current expenditure and options for alternative measures
K	<b>Financial Regulations</b> – review in respect of cash handling procedures
L	<b>Asset Register</b> – complete overhaul and transfer of data onto new system

- 2.7 Draft timescales for some of the objectives outlined above are included in the I.T./Communications project work plan attached at **Appendix C**.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 In addition to meeting statutory and other deadlines throughout the year and achieving 70% completion of agreed objectives for 2015-2018, a significant amount of work has taken place across core Town Council operational areas to drive forward improvements, ensure value for money and efficiency, to take advantage of new technologies and to ensure best practice.
- 3.2 More detailed planning has taken place to establish proposed timescales for progressing previously agreed projects, particularly those which are I.T. related and dependant on liaison with a number of key partners.
- 3.3 All matters within the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee may be considered and any queries raised by Committee members at any of the scheduled ordinary meetings held regularly throughout each municipal year.

End.



**Agenda Item No. 9**

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016

**Title:** Policy & Finance Committee: Terms of Reference

**Purpose of the Report:** To provide an overview of the operation of the Committee and relevant service areas.

**Contact Officer:** Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk  
Clare Cummins, Finance Officer  
Sarah Sandiford, Corporate Governance Manager - interim

<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 1 (to consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council).	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	√	To provide an overview of operational procedures relating to the areas of responsibility of the Committee.
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	√	To ensure statutory obligations are met in terms of finance, audit and risk management.

**1. RECOMMENDATION/S**

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

**1.1 To note the report.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Policy and Finance Committee is a long-established standing Committee of the Town Council. Its remit includes all matters relating to finance, budgeting, audit, corporate governance, data management, I.T., Town Council accommodation, capital expenditure, insurance, democratic services and Town Council staffing. Terms of Reference are attached at **Appendix A**.

2.2 The Policy and Finance Committee will usually meet on 7 occasions per municipal year, to include a meeting prior to each ordinary Council meeting. Additional meetings may be convened, if deemed necessary.

2.3 Following the resolution to amend the Committee structure in June 2016, the Policy and Finance Committee now has four Sub-Committees under its umbrella:

**Personnel** (meeting on a quarterly basis, unless additional meetings required)

**Police Liaison** (meeting on a quarterly basis)

**Grants & Awards** (meeting twice per year)

**Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals** (only convened as required).

2.4 As Members are aware, a process of organisational change was initiated in 2013, resulting in the creation of distinct service areas within the Town Council. The services areas reporting in to the Policy and Finance Committee are Finance and Corporate Governance. Some areas of responsibility sit directly with the Town Clerk, including liaison with Bedfordshire Police and staffing matters.

<b>Service area/responsible officer</b>	<b>Areas of responsibility</b>
Town Clerk	Employment and staffing matters Police liaison Capital projects Five year financial plan Corporate objectives
Corporate Governance	Policy review Democratic and Mayoral services Annual report Risk management Publicity & communications
Finance	Financial regulations & system of control Investment policy Level of reserves Internal & external audit Insurance
All services and Committees	Budget setting process

2.5 A work plan is developed each municipal year for the Policy and Finance Committee. Many items are driven by statutory requirements (e.g. precept setting and annual return) or by Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (e.g. monitoring of expenditure and approval of capital expenditure).

2.6 In addition to tasks and projects which are required to be undertaken each municipal year, the work plan for the Committee will contain projects and objectives from the Town Council's Three Year Plan which fall within its areas of responsibility. Draft timescales for these projects will be set by officers and reviewed by Committee.

2.7 The work plan and objectives are reviewed at each ordinary meeting of the Committee, providing opportunity for Members to raise any queries or concerns, or for officers to provide updates if appropriate to do so.

### **3.0 FINANCE**

- 3.1 Day to day responsibility for financial matters sits with the Finance Officer, with support from the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.
- 3.2 The Town Council is supported by professional and sector-specific accountancy services.
- 3.3 In line with the scheme of delegation and Financial Regulations, all expenditure is authorised by the Town Clerk on a monthly basis, as well as two account signatories (Councillors). In the absence of the Town Clerk, authorisation will be given by the Corporate Governance Manager. Expenditure will be reported back to the Policy and Finance Committee at the next ordinary meeting after the close of each month.
- 3.4 The system of financial control will be reviewed routinely each year by Committee.
- 3.5 Any proposed amendments to Financial Regulations will be considered first by Policy and Finance Committee, prior to ratification by Council.
- 3.6 Any requests to write off unrecoverable amounts will be considered first by Policy and Finance Committee, prior to consideration by Council.
- 3.7 Quarterly monitoring reports for all budget headings within the remit of the Committee will be provided, at the next scheduled meeting after the close of each quarterly period.
- 3.8 Any request for capital expenditure or expenditure from Reserves (other than Earmarked Reserves) will be brought to the Policy and Finance Committee, as required.
- 3.9 The five year financial plan will be considered by the Committee on a regular basis.
- 3.10 All Town Council standing committees will receive and consider budget monitoring reports and the five year financial plan at regular intervals.
- 3.11 All Town Council standing committees will consider priority projects for inclusion in the next financial year's budget during the period September – December each year, with recommendations made to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

### **4 AUDIT, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**

- 4.1 Insurance claims are reviewed once per year by the Committee.
- 4.2 Internal audit reports are reviewed by Committee twice per year – an interim report, then a final report.

- 4.3 The external audit report is reviewed by Committee once per year
- 4.4 The annual Corporate Governance Statement must be approved each September, when the year end accounts for the previous financial year are also approved (by Committee and subsequently by Council).
- 4.5 The Town Council maintains a Risk Register which is reviewed by all Heads of Service throughout the year. The Corporate Governance Manager and the Head of Grounds & Environmental Services have primary responsibility for its maintenance and review.
- 4.6 A Risk Register Action Plan, derived from those service areas requiring actions to be undertaken due to a perceived higher than average risk, is presented to Committee for consideration each January and must subsequently be approved by Council.
- 4.7 Policies requiring amendment, usually following advice from a third party, will be brought to Committee for consideration as necessary, to be then ratified by Council.
- 4.8 The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services is responsible for Health and Safety. Recommendations will be brought to the Committee for endorsement as required.

## **5 DEMOCRATIC MATTERS**

- 5.1 The Committee will receive each June a copy of the Town Mayor's charity fundraising accounts for the previous municipal year.
- 5.2 Any other matters pertaining to Councillors or the civic role of Town Mayor will be brought to Committee for consideration as required.
- 5.3 Recommendations in respect of committee structure, calendar of meetings and proposed work plan for the following municipal year will be brought to Committee in the Spring of each year.
- 5.4 A review of committee structure, sub-committees, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation are automatically reviewed by Council at each Annual Meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders. Any recommendations for changes will usually be presented to Committee prior to the Annual Council Meeting.

## **6 OTHER AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

- 6.1 The Committee will review the draft Annual Report at the end of each municipal year (usually April).



- 6.2 The Committee will receive a six-monthly update report in respect of publicity and communications, including website and social media activity.
- 6.3 The Committee will receive an annual update, usually in November, in respect of The White House (repairs and maintenance). Any other matters relating to accommodation will be brought to Committee as required.
- 6.4 Community safety and policing matters will be reviewed by Committee through the minutes of the Police Liaison Sub-Committee, including consideration of any recommendations. Information and advice are provided by Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council (CCTV control room).
- 6.5 Staffing and employment matters will be reviewed by Committee through the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee, including consideration of any recommendations. Information and advice are provided by the Town Council's retained Human Resources provider and Employee Assistance Programme provider.
- 6.6 Information regarding consultations, or any other matters for which another standing Committee is not specifically responsible, will be brought to the Committee as required.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 Robust systems are in place, led by statutory requirements, for monitoring of the areas of responsibility of the Policy and Finance Committee. In addition, expert advice and guidance is sought from a number of specialist partners.
- 7.2 Clear guidelines are in place to determine responsibility for different functions, with back-up arrangements in place to ensure continuity in the absence of any one officer.
- 7.3 A suite of procedures and policies exist to ensure that the Town Council meets its statutory and other obligations.
- 7.4 All matters within the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee may be considered and any queries raised by Committee members at any of the scheduled ordinary meetings held regularly throughout each municipal year.

End.

# Service Summary for Finance and Central & Democratic Services

## 2016-2017

Hen 7(a)  
APPENDIX 'B'

The service aim: *To consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council.*

### Grants

#### General Grants up to £500:

Annual budget £10k. 8 awarded in 2016-2017 & 2 start-up grants of £250.

#### Guaranteed Grants over £500:

Annual budget £20,500 (RPI increase to £20,705 for 2017-18). 12 recipients – Cllr reps appointed – annual reports to be received

Citizens Advice: Annual grant of £20k from 2017-18 to protect services.

Leighton-Linslade Music Centre: Annual grant of £8k plus RPI.

### Bookings

Administration of bookings, liaison with hirers.

Currently 18 regular hirers for Pages & Mentmore Pavilions – a further 80 individual hirers since January 2016. Over 1500 hours of exercise classes – over 1500 hours of charitable use – over 500 hours of parties/functions.

Fixtures – 10 regular football clubs and 7 regular cricket clubs.

White House – 13 hirers, 10 of which external – in addition to Council usage.

### Websites & Social Media

Primary responsibility for content management & monitoring of main LLTC website, TACTIC & Astral Park minisites, Facebook & Twitter. New initiatives: Streetlife, LLTC App, Instagram. Communications strategy to be developed.

### Honorary Burgess

Nominations open June-Oct each year. 7+ years of voluntary service required, to the benefit of the town. Up to 3 recipients per year (2 in 2016 and 2 in 2017).

Annual presentation by the Mavor.

### Democratic Services

General support to all Councillors & matters relating to elections.

Mayoral support: diary management, event organisation, charity fundraising, civic service, remembrance service, Battle of Britain service, liaison with community, advice on civic protocols.

Support of Town Twinning Forum and organisation of Mayoral visits to/by twin towns.

### Committees

Responsible for agendas, work plans, minutes, meeting calendar, appointments to outside bodies, statutory responsibilities, ensuring accordance with Standing Orders.

Over 55 annual meetings of Council & Committees

Support at additional, ad-hoc meetings & external bodies (e.g. P3, Town Twinning, Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group).

### Central Services

Primary point of contact for all enquiries from the public.

I.T. systems, Telephones & mobiles, office equipment, stationery, hospitality, data protection, office repairs & maintenance, printing & copying.

Staff: HR support contract, Employee assistance programme, health screening, recruitment.

Governance, policies & procedures, statutory requirements, information management, strategic plans, Annual Report, communications.

Administrative support to the Town Clerk.

### Finance

Sales ledger invoices: 562 raised in 2016/17 (compared to 185 in 2013/14); Preparation of orders: 967 raised in 2016/17 (compared to 747 in 2013/14); credit control; processing electronic and cash payments; annual budget setting; year end reconciliation and close down; liaison with budget holders to monitor expenditure; monitoring of utilities; processing of purchase invoices; credit card reconciliation; payroll; pension administration; HR support





