

**LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 29 JULY 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Councillors            S Jones (Chair)  
                                         D Bowater  
                                         C Palmer  
                                         R Berry  
                                         T Morris  
                                         G Perham  
                                         D Scott  
                                         M Freeman  
                                         R Goodchild  
                                         S Owen  
                                         S Hemmings

Also in attendance:            M Saccoccio, Town Clerk  
                                         S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central  
                                         Services  
                                         Cllr K Cursons  
                                         Cllr V Harvey

Members of the public:        0  
Members of the press         0

**23/PF    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Dodwell, substituted by Councillor S Hemmings.

**24/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 C Palmer declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Payments) as the list of payments included a payment relating to Leighton-Linslade in Bloom, of which his wife was a committee member. This interest would continue to apply at future committee meetings until further notice.

**25/PF    QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)**

There were no questions from the public.

**26/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 June 2019 for consideration. No questions were asked.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.**

**27/PF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 1 July 2019.

Minute reference 7/PR – a question was asked regarding whether outcomes from the Town Clerk's appraisal would come back to the Committee. Whilst all employee appraisal content was confidential, overall outcomes would be reported back to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 1 July 2019.**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub Committee held on 15 July 2019.

Discussion took place regarding the potential national increase in the number of police officers and whether this represented an opportunity to seek additional policing locally. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting with a view to potentially making a recommendation to Council.

The Committee was asked to consider a request to use up to £500 from the Community Safety budget for a youth engagement project to take place over the summer holidays.

**RESOLVED to endorse the use of up to £500 from the Community Safety budget for a youth engagement project to take place over the summer holidays.**

**RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub Committee held on 15 July 2019.**

**28/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the Work Plan and Objectives for 2019-2020. It was noted that the Information Technology item planned for September had been brought forward at the recommendation of the Council's I.T. support provider. The Volunteer Strategy item scheduled for September was more likely to be brought forward at the November meeting.

**RESOLVED to note the Committee Work Plan and Objectives for 2019-**

**2020.**

**29/PF JULY PAYMENTS**

The Committee received a schedule of payments which had previously been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and countersigned by two account signatories. Written questions received prior to the meeting had been answered. There were no anomalies or matters of concern to draw to the attention of the Committee.

The schedule for July dated 13 June 2019, included BACS payments amounting to £166,253.38 (page numbers 2574-2589) and cheque payments amounting to £7,832.73 (cheque numbers 17401-17420), including White House petty cash amounting to £43.78, Astral Park £172.00 and TACTIC £26.30

The monthly salaries listing for July 2019 amounting to £98,686.36 gross was received. A cash book report for July 2019, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

**RESOLVED to note the schedule of accounts for July 2019.**

**30/PF FIRST QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a budget monitoring report for April to June 2019. A number of minor questions were asked and answered. The Committee was advised that a couple of adjustments had been made within the Democratic Services budget to reflect a more accurate figure.

In respect of the spending on General Grants, the Committee was asked to consider a request from grant recipient Mencap. Correspondence from Mencap advised that their original intention to hold a 50th anniversary concert would sadly not now go ahead, but permission was sought to use the grant funding to support a number of smaller events. No objections were raised by the Committee.

**RESOLVED to note the report and to support the use of the General Grant awarded to Mencap for a number of smaller 50th anniversary events rather than one large event.**

**31/PF INSURANCE CLAIMS**

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Committee received a report outlining insurance claims for the period July 2018 – June 2019.

A query was asked regarding the adverse weather policy for the street market. This had been discussed with the new insurer and it was anticipated that a draft policy would be reviewed at the Market Sub-Committee on 29 August.

**RESOLVED to note the report regarding the Town Council insurance Policy and claims for 2018-19.**

**32/PF ASSET REGISTER**

The Committee received the asset register for consideration, including land and buildings, infrastructure assets, community assets and equipment.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**33/PF COMMITTEE PAPERS**

The Committee received a report outlining an overview of the first year of “paperless” committee meetings. In addition to significant cost savings on paper, envelopes, printing and postage, the change had saved in excess of 22,000 sheets of paper and allowed for faster, more effective working, resulting in the team having been able to absorb additional workload and for resulting salary savings to be put towards the creation of a new post.

Councillors were encouraged to contact officers with any queries or issues with accessing documents electronically and reminded that paper copies were still available on request.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**34/PF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE**

The Committee received a report regarding recommended replacement of ageing computer hardware and the resultant move to monthly software licensing which would have an ongoing impact on the revenue budget. Having considered a number of options, the Committee agreed it would be most effective to replace all 22 computers at the same time. It was suggested that given the expected lifespan of five years, an extended warranty be sought to cover this period.

A question was asked about any likely additional costs such as staff training. Any training requirements would be met from the training budget.

**RESOLVED:**

**(i) To replace 22 computers on a comparable basis to existing machines but with the addition of Solid State Drives (costs to be met from the Future Projects earmarked reserve, the Tactic earmarked reserve and the remainder from General Reserves).**

**(ii) To accept a move to monthly software licensing for Microsoft Office products and to note that the revenue budget for IT in 2019-2020 would be exceeded as a result.**

**(iii) To approve a change in software licensing for Councillors from Microsoft Outlook only to Microsoft Office 365 Business Essentials at an additional cost of £0.80 per user per month.**

(iv) **To increase the IT revenue budget from 2020-2021 onwards by £2,500 per annum to meet the monthly Microsoft Office licensing costs for employees and councillors.**

**35/PF BUDGET PROCESS 2020-2021**

The Committee received a report outlining the proposed timescale for the 2020-2021 budget setting process.

**RESOLVED to note the proposed timetable for the 2020-2021 budget setting process.**

**36/PF BANDSTAND SIGNAGE**

The Committee received and considered a report regarding branded signage for the bandstand.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) **To note the report.**

(b) **That a maximum of £1,500 be drawn down from 9024/950 for the purposes of creating and installing 2 x Town Council branded signs for the Parson's Close bandstand.**

(c) **To endorse the following wording for the signs: 'Band concerts promoted by Leighton-Linslade Town Council'.**

**37/PF CONSULTANCY FEES**

The Committee considered a recommendation made by the Planning and Transport Committee on 24 July 2019 in respect of consultancy fees for a scoping opinion to be carried out on the potential merits or otherwise of creating a Town Council led policy document to guide future development in the town.

The Committee expressed support for taking independent advice in this respect and asked that the consultant advise the Council on the appropriateness, likely costs and scope of a Town Council led policy document. It was anticipated that the consultant would present findings to the September meeting of the Committee. It was noted that Central Bedfordshire Council representatives had been invited to present information to the September Council meeting in respect of the recent town centre survey and in respect of land south of the High Street.

**RESOLVED that a maximum of £3,000 be drawn down from the Professional Fees earmarked reserve (920/9035) for the purposes of obtaining a planning opinion in respect of the potential merits of creation of a document to help guide future development within the parish.**

**38/PF EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding the following items: Internal Auditor, Honours and Awards, Boundary Review and Town Council Objectives.

**39/PF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Committee received and considered a report detailing tenders received for renewal of the Internal Auditor for the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** that Auditing Solutions Ltd be awarded the contract to carry out the internal audit function on behalf of the Town Council for a five-year period from 2019-2020.

**40/PF HONOURS AND AWARDS**

The Committee received and considered a report regarding a change in legislation and to consider future options in respect of Honours and Awards.

**RESOLVED** to request that officers undertake further work on the options afforded by legislation and to bring a further report back to the September meeting of the Committee.

**41/PF BOUNDARY REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered a report in respects of the need to make formal representation to Central Bedfordshire Council to carry out a Community Governance Review.

The Committee expressed frustration with the process and the longstanding need to address the situation regarding the eastern urban extension. It was felt that despite the advice received from the Boundary Commission, it would be more logical to address parish boundaries first, before reviewing ward boundaries.

It was suggested that the Council use the opportunity afforded by the local authority electoral ward review to put forward its views on requirements for parish boundaries and was further suggested that advice be sought from relevant sector bodies on how to take the matter forward. It was further suggested that a representative from Central Bedfordshire Council be invited to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** that delegated powers be afforded to the Town Clerk in order that a formal representation be made to Central Bedfordshire Council in respects of the carrying out of a community governance

**boundary review.**

**42/PF TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

The Committee received and considered a report to prioritise projects to be included within the Five Year Plan for the period 2019-2024. Discussion took place regarding the 17 proposed objectives and a number of additional potential projects were agreed to be added. It was noted that the Five Year Plan was an iterative document and would continue to be added to and revised throughout its lifespan. Furthermore, that projects not directly deliverable by the Town Council would continue to be the subject of a “partnership project list”, to be raised in the appropriate forums and the subject of ongoing lobbying.

It was agreed that further scoping work would be done on the 21 proposed projects in terms of financing and resourcing requirements and overall feasibility. Objectives would be given further consideration at the next Committee meeting and recommendations put forward to Council.

The Committee was also urged to consider not only new projects but the ongoing maintenance and improvements of existing assets.

**RESOLVED to note the report and consider future objectives further at the next Committee meeting, at which a recommendation would be made to Council in respect of projects that the Committee would wish to prioritise for inclusion within the Five Year Plan for 2019-2024.**

The meeting closed at 9.36 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 29 JULY 2019.

Chair

16 SEPTEMBER 2019