

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

19 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 1930 HOURS

Present Councillors: S Cotter
S Jones
C Palmer
G Perham
E Wallace – in the Chair
A Dodwell
K Ferguson
F Kharawala
R Berry
J M Freeman
B Spurr (substituting for K Cursons)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic and Central Services)
C Cummins (Finance Officer)
I Haynes (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services)
M Jahn (Committee Officer)

Members of the public: 1

411/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Cursons (substituted by Councillor B Spurr) and S Ward.

412/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 9 (Payments) as the list of payments included a payment relating to Leighton-Linslade in Bloom, of which his wife was a committee member.

Councillors R Berry and A Dodwell declared an interest in agenda item 5c (Grants and Awards Sub Committee minutes) as Leighton-Linslade Town Council representatives for the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway.

413/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A representative from Leighton Linslade Narrow Gauge Railway spoke regarding their application for a grant presented to the Grants & Awards Sub Committee meeting on the 5 November 2018. The amount requested had exceeded the usual limit for General Grants. The purpose of the grant was to help celebrate the centenary of the railway in 2019.

414/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 September 2018 for consideration.

Minute reference 397/PF (Land East of Leighton Linslade): the Town Clerk confirmed an informal meeting would be taking place with representatives of Eggington Parish Council on 20 November 2018.

Minute reference 397/PF (remaining grant funding of £2,500 for Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom): it was advised that the remaining funding was expected to be received before Christmas 2018.

Minute reference 398/PF (Committee Objectives and Workplan): it was confirmed the External Auditor's report had been received on 24 September 2018 with a satisfactory outcome.

Minute reference 406/PF (Standing Orders): it was confirmed a Task and Finish Group had been formed to discuss the revised NALC model Standing Orders. The group consisted of Councillors E Wallace, C Palmer, S Jones, R Berry and J M Freeman.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

415/PF SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee held on the 15 October 2018.

Minute reference 15/CS (CCTV & Re-Deployable Cameras): it was advised a meeting had been set up with Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss the upgrading to a digital system.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee held on the 15 October 2018.

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 22 October 2018.

Minute reference 154/PR (Staffing Matters): it was noted that this item would be addressed at agenda item 19.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 22 October 2018.

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Grants & Awards Sub-Committee held on 5 November 2018.

Minute reference 067/G 2018-2019 (General Grant Applications): the Committee was asked to consider the recommendation to award the Narrow Gauge Railway additional funds beyond the £500 already approved. It was noted that £3,258.45 remained in the budget for General Grants and the Committee agreed £1,500 should be made available to the Leighton Linlade Narrow Gauge Railway for their 100 year Centenary celebrations in 2019.

RESOLVED to award additional grant funding of £1,500 to the Leighton Linlade Narrow Gauge Railway in respect of their centenary celebrations for 2019, from the General Grants budget (4353/102).

The Committee was advised of a late application made by Reclaim Life for a General Grant of £500. The Committee agreed to add to the agenda for the next meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee on 21 January 2019.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Grants & Awards Sub Committee held on 5 November 2018.

416/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received a report summarising the key responsibilities of the Committee, as well as the objectives within the Town Council's Three Year Plan 2015-2018 which fell within the remit of the Committee.

It was noted that a meeting had been scheduled for 26 November 2018 to review current Standing Orders as compared to the newly issued Model Standing Orders from the National Association of Local Councils.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Work Plan and Objectives for 2018-2019.

417/PF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Committee received a report regarding the annual review of the Health and Safety Policy. As there had been no changes in legislation, it remained fit for purpose and therefore no changes were required to the previously endorsed policy.

RESOLVED to re-endorse the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy, which remained unchanged following its annual review.

418/PF 2018-2019 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee received the first interim internal audit report for 2018-2019 and noted that no issues had been identified. It was recognised that the Council was continuing to operate a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation. The Committee expressed thanks to officers for another excellent report.

RESOLVED to note the report.

419/PF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 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. No written questions had been received prior to the meeting.

The schedule for September dated 19 September 2018, included BACS payments amounting to £143,101.37 (page numbers 2431, 2433 – 2445) and cheque payments amounting to £784.52 (cheque numbers 17279-17284), including White House petty cash amounting to £123.16, Astral Park £104.37 and TACTIC £17.24.

The monthly salaries listing for September 2018 amounting to £94,119.83 gross was received. A cash book report for September 2018, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

The schedule for October dated 31 October 2018, included BACS payments amounting to £149,388.36 (page numbers 2449 -2461) and cheque payments amounting to £5,184.00 (cheque numbers 17285 -17298), including White House petty cash amounting to £123.13, Astral Park £155.64 and TACTIC £84.28.

The monthly salaries listing for October 2018 amounting to £93,642.74 gross was received. A cash book report for September 2018, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

It was noted that a new gate/barrier had been installed at Astral Park to discourage illegal encampments on the site.

It was noted that all payments had been made within the budget and that there were no irregularities to be drawn to the attention of the Committee.

RESOLVED to note the schedule of accounts for September and October 2018.

420/PF SIX MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a six month budgeting report for the period April – September 2018. An accompanying report highlighted areas of interest and a verbal update was provided in respect of these.

The Committee was advised that it was anticipated that a Task and Finish group would be formed by the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee to review matters relating to Astral Park, including the setting of more realistic income targets. Income targets for the market were also discussed and these would be considered further by the relevant sub-committees/committees.

RESOLVED to receive the report.

421/PF 2019-2020 FIRST DRAFT BUDGET

The Committee received the first iteration of the overall draft budget for the financial year 2019-2020. The draft budget would now be presented to each standing committee for detailed consideration, prior to a final draft coming to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED –

- 1.1 to note the report**
- 1.2 that each standing committee with budgetary responsibility be presented with its own draft budget for consideration and thereafter, for the draft budget to be returned to this committee on 21 January 2019 for its further consideration.**

422/PF FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The Committee received and considered a report which outlined the most recent position in respect of the 5 Year Financial Plan and the proposed projects which would be included in it.

The Committee noted that a protocol for Earmarked Reserves would be drawn up and taken to the next meeting on 21 January 2019.

RESOLVED to –

- 1.1 note the report**
- 1.2 note the most recent iteration of the 5 Year Financial Plan for the purposes of informing budget setting for the coming Financial Year 2019-2020.**

423/PF PARSON'S CLOSE REFRESHMENT CONCESSION

The Committee received a verbal update regarding the refreshment concession at Parson's Close. Community Action Bedfordshire had won the tender and agreed to a five year contract. In the first year there would be no return, due to the initial investment in fitting out the building and any equipment needed. They would be open 52 weeks of the year with varying opening hours depending on the season.

RESOLVED to note the update.

424/PF TOWN COUNCIL RESIDENTS' SURVEY AND FIVE YEAR PLAN

The Committee received and considered a report regarding the key findings of the residents' survey which had been undertaken at various locations within the town between September and November 2018.

Generally the report findings were very positive in respect of the Town Council and its services. The Committee noted the main areas of concern raised by residents were fear of crime, highways related issues and lack of facilities for young people and 55+ age group.

The survey indicated clear agreement with the four overarching themes which were proposed to form the basis of the next five year plan. Subject to consideration by each of the standing Committees, work would continue in terms of outlining more detailed objectives within each theme. This would help inform the creation of the next iteration of the 5 Year Plan and Objectives, which it was anticipated would be presented to Full Council in January 2019.

Once created, the plan would guide the work streams for the standing committees over the next term of the Council. The detail of the objectives and how to progress these would be the subject of consideration by the relevant standing Committee over the next four to five years.

RESOLVED to note the key findings from the resident's survey carried out between August and November 2018, in order to help inform the emerging Five Year Plan for the period 2019-2024.

425/PF INVESTMENTS

The Committee received and considered an update report regarding an overview in respect of investments and also considered the operational arrangements regarding day to day banking to maximise return on monies invested.

RESOLVED to reinvest the existing monies held in the Nationwide One Year Saver Account into Nat West Treasury One Year Fixed, currently offering 0.92% Gross AER.

426/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:

427/PF WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND SUPPORT PROVIDER

The Committee received and considered a report in respect of the redesign of the website and renewal of the contract for the support provider for 2018-2021.

RESOLVED

- 1.1 to approve the proposal for website refresh of all websites to include consolidation of three of the sites onto one CMS system and the renewal of the support contract for the period 2019-2022.**
- 1.2 to approve the transfer of the resulting cost saving of £1,000 per year from the Website budget line to the IT support budget line, to support the rising costs of support, software and licensing.**

428/PF IT SUPPORT PROVIDER

The Committee received and considered a report to recommend renewal of the existing IT support contract for a further three year term.

RESOLVED to renew the existing I.T. support contact with Virtual IT for a further three years as per the attached proposal.

429/PF STAFFING

The Committee received and considered a report which proposed new potential management arrangements for a new post of Grounds and Environmental Services Supervisor within the Grounds and Environmental Services structure.

RESOLVED

- 1.1 to note the report.**
- 1.2 to approve and endorse the creation of the post of Grounds and Environmental Services Supervisor.**
- 1.3 that for budgetary purposes the new post be considered at a salary grade of SCP 30-34.**

430/PF LEGAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on the legal proceedings and it was noted that Leighton-Linslade Town Council had submitted their evidence and the other party should submit their response by 22 November 2018. Members would be notified of any further updates when required.

RESOLVED to note the information.

The meeting closed at 2134 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2018.

Chair

21 JANUARY 2019