

Performance Management of the Town Council

Leighton-Linslade Town Council strives to ensure continuous improvements are made in the way we operate and deliver services to the community. The performance of the Town Council as a corporate body is monitored through a number of mechanisms.

The Town Council's objectives for 2019-2024 are outlined in our Five Year Plan, published in January 2019 following a face-to-face survey with 500 residents in the Autumn of 2018. On an ongoing basis, progress is monitored by the responsible Committee through its annual work plan, which is a standing item on each meeting agenda.

Financial performance is managed not only by the Policy and Finance Committee, but also by both an internal auditor and an external auditor, who check to ensure that Town Council Financial Regulations and other policies are being adhered to. Our accountant works with our Finance Officer on a monthly basis, with all expenditure reported to the Policy and Finance Committee. Performance compared to budget is monitored by each of the standing Committees, which receive a breakdown of income and expenditure compared to budget on a quarterly basis. Year-end accounts are available for public inspection to ensure accountability to electors.

Town Council meetings are, as required by law, open to the public to attend. Members of the public are also given the opportunity to speak on agenda items. This provides a mechanism for residents to question and hold the Council to account. At each meeting of Full Council, the minutes of previous Committee meetings are received and reviewed. In this way, the Council as a body can review and monitor performance.

The Town Council is a responsible employer and promotes an environment in which individuals receive ongoing training and support. Each employee is given an annual performance appraisal which identifies areas of strength, areas for improvement and any specific training needs. An annual training budget is provided, for general use and for specific service areas including Grounds, Cemeteries and Markets. In addition, the Town Council endeavours to provide company-wide training when appropriate. During 2020 this has included renewed Data Protection and Equality & Diversity training, through an online forum which can be accessed by staff at whichever time and from whichever location is most convenient for them. Other training currently being undertaken by staff includes health and safety, cemetery procedures, accountancy, community governance, Excel, social media and horticulture.

The Council also recognises the importance of offering training opportunities to our 21 volunteer Town Councillors. Following election in May 2019, Councillors were offered induction training sessions to familiarise themselves with the powers and duties of the Council, as well as information on Town Council owned assets such as the parks, pavilions and cemeteries, the street market and the Teenage Advice and Information Centre. In 2020, this has been followed up with the provision of remote meetings and Chairmanship Skills training, both provided by officers of the Council, as well as



workshops with Central Bedfordshire Council officers in respect of Section 106 developer contributions. It is hoped that the local authority will be able to offer Code of Conduct training in the near future. Councillors also receive information on a regular basis on the training opportunities available through the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils and the National Association of Local Councils.