

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 1930 HOURS

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

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)
M Jahn (Committee Officer)
Cllr V Harvey

Members of the public: 0

407/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor R Berry substituted by Councillor D Bowater and from Councillor Kharawala.

408/PF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of the Friends of Leighton Linslade in Bloom, listed on the payments schedule.

409/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public

410/PF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 26 September and 24 October 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meetings held on 26 September and 24 October 21022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) Minutes dated 24 October 2022 minute reference 404/PF – it was confirmed notice had been given to our present IT provider with the planned migration to Cloudy IT likely to begin in February 2023. In terms of the

deferred decision regarding provision of devices for councillor use, it was agreed this would be revisited at the February meeting of the committee in order that any decision could be implemented in time for the new Council in May 2023.

411/PF PAYMENTS

The Committee received schedules of payments for September paid October 2022 and October paid November 2022 which had previously been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and countersigned by two signatories. There were no anomalies or matters of concern to draw to the attention of the Committee.

The schedule for September dated 22 September 2022 included BACS payments amounting to £130,509.29 (page numbers 3121 - 3134) including petty cash payments for Tactic £80.32 and £50.34 for the White House and salaries of £99,747.92.

The schedule for October 2022 dated 18 October 2022 included BACS payments amounting to £196,810.00 (page numbers 3135-3148) and salaries of £98,758.31

A cash book report for September and October 2022, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

RESOLVED to receive the schedules of payments for invoices received in September 2022 paid in October 2022 and invoices received in October and paid in November 2022.

412/PF SIX MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received the six-month budget monitoring report for the period April – September 2022. A couple of clarifications were given and a couple of queries were raised and answered regarding payments and committed expenditure.

RESOLVED to note the report.

413/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN

The Committee received the Committee Workplan and Objectives for 2022-2023. Members were informed the Asset register had been deferred to the January 2023 meeting to allow time to ensure it was up to date.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Work Plan and objectives for 2022-2023.

414/PF SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK & FINISH GROUPS

The Committee received the following draft minutes and considered any recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub Committee held on 17 October 2022.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the South Side working party held on 24 October 2022.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 31 October.

RESOLVED that any budgetary shortfall arising from the national pay award for 2022-2023 be met from general reserves, if necessary.

A question was raised regarding whether the creation of 2 x part time roles to support the allotment service would be adequate. Members agreed this should be brought to the next Grounds & Environmental Services Committee.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Grants & Awards Sub-Committee meeting held 7 November 2022.

Minute reference 57/GA Cost of Living Grants – a second application had been received and would be circulated to members of the Grants & Awards Sub Committee for consideration. In addition, discussions about the grant fund were ongoing with a number of organisations.

Minute reference 60/GA Nominations for 2023 Community Volunteer Awards – it was confirmed that consent to proceed would now be sought from the four nominees, prior to consideration by the committee in January.

415/PF DATA PROTECTION & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION UPDATE

The Committee received an update report regarding the Town Council's obligation to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Committee noted enquiries received since the last report and noted that a data protection audit had recently been undertaken. There had been a positive verbal response from the auditor but the full report with recommendations was awaited.

RESOLVED to note the report.

416/PF DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE PROTOCOL

The Committee received and considered proposed amendments to the Council's adopted protocol regarding the death of a senior national figure. It was noted that further amendments in future were likely, once revised national guidance was made available to councils.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To approve the revised Protocol regarding the death of a senior national figure and**
- (b) To delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk to amend the list of people to whom the protocol applied, upon receipt of any formal guidance.**

417/PF CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT & CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee received a report regarding the national Civility and Respect Project, led by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks. The Project had resulted in a number of workstreams including provision of training to councils and the recommendation that councils sign up to a pledge in support of civility and respect. In line with this, it was recommended that the Town Council adopt a revised Code of Conduct, which was based on a model provided by the Local Government Association and reflected that adopted by the local principal authority.

Concerns were raised about the lack of protection for councillors from online abuse.

RECOMMENDED to Council the adoption of the Civility and Respect Pledge.

RECOMMENDED to Council the adoption of a revised code of conduct which reflects the Local Government Association and local authority model.

418/PF CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Committee received a report and considered recommendations to reschedule two meetings in May 2023 due to local council elections.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To move the Planning & Transport Committee scheduled for 10 May 2023 to 17 May 2023.**
- (b) To move the Grants Sub-Committee scheduled for 8 May 2023 to 22 May 2023.**

419/PF CHRISTMAS CAR PARKING

The Committee considered whether to repeat last year's initiative regarding free car parking in Duncombe Drive and Hockliffe Street car parks on Saturdays through December 2022. Members agreed to fund free parking on Saturdays before Christmas and on New Year's Eve at Duncombe Drive and Hockliffe Street car parks. A request was made to publicise this on the electronic signage in the coming weeks.

RESOLVED to enable free parking in Duncombe Drive and Hockliffe Street car parks on 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st December 2022 for a fee not exceeding £5,000.

420/PF TOWN COUNCIL ENERGY CRISIS RESPONSE

The Committee received an update regarding the Energy Crisis and the three resolutions made by the committee at its previous meeting on 26 September 2022.

In terms of the Council's own buildings, work was being undertaken on a ten year maintenance plan and as part of this, consideration would be given to viable energy saving measures. The potential for solar installations as well as thermal insulation upgrades would be considered and a feasibility report with anticipated costs would be presented to this committee at a future meeting. Training had been undertaken in respect of identifying a baseline carbon footprint for the Town Council. This work would continue and it was anticipated that a report would be available by March/April 2023.

A new web page had been created in respect of the energy and cost of living crisis with information and signposting to a range of other sources of information and advice. Information was also included in the latest community newsletter.

Further to the agreement by Council to provide additional grant funding over the winter, the first grant had been approved to All Saints Church for their 'warm week' from 19-24 December where the church would be open and heated providing a welcoming space and the provision of hot drinks and a meal. Contact had been made with other local groups and organisations offering grant funding during these difficult times.

RESOLVED to note the report.

421/PF DRAFT BUDGET 2023-2024

The Committee received a first draft budget for financial year 2023-24. Members agreed the budget should be looked at carefully with all options considered to make up any shortfall.

Several queries were raised and any committee members who wished to do so, were invited to come in and go through the figures in more detail with officers.

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the report.

(b) 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 23 January 2023 for its further consideration.

422/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:

423/PF LEGAL MATTERS

The Committee received two reports on Legal Matters, one regarding the Governance Review and the second damage to council property.

Regarding the damage to property, queries were raised including on the potential cost of any legal proceedings and it was suggested a second opinion might be sought. Members agreed to await the result of police prosecution before any decisions could be made on how to move forward.

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 14 NOVEMBER 2022.

CHAIR

23 JANUARY 2023