

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
STANDING ORDERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP
MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2021 AT 1500 HOURS

Present: Councillors K Cursons
S Jones
M Freeman
S Owen

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic & Central Services)

Members of the Public: 0

06/SO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor F Kharawala.

07/SO DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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. No declarations were made.

08/SO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

09/SO MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Task and Finish Group received the draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2020. A minor addition was agreed to the wording on 05/SO under point ii).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standing Orders Task and Finish group meeting held on 26 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and would be signed at a later date, when safe to do so.

10/SO OTHER TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The Task and Finish Group received a report regarding the review of Standing Orders for eight other large Town Councils. Although there was some variation in format, all Standing Orders were based on the Model issued by the National Association of Local Councils. Several of the Standing Orders contained details not in the current Leighton-Linslade document and the Task and Finish group reviewed the Weymouth Standing Orders as an example of changes which could be made in several areas.

Public Questions (s 3.26)

This was agreed to be broadly what was required but needed further parameters to be set, for example the question should relate to the meeting agenda content.

Ordinary Council Meetings (5.11)

It was agreed that this needed to be included but that the points should reflect practice at LLTC. It was agreed that 5.12 was not required and 5.13 was already included.

Delegation to Clerk (15.17)

It was agreed, in principle, that this should be included. The unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic had evidenced the need for measures to be in place to ensure continuity of Council operations if an appropriate meeting could not be convened. If possible an extraordinary meeting should be convened. Checks and balances needed to be factored in to any delegation of authority (as per the decision taken by Council on 20 March 2020 in respect of Coronavirus).

Staff matters (19.2)

It was agreed that the undertaking of the Town Clerk's annual appraisal by 3 Councillors should be included in Standing Orders.

Urgent matters (26)

It was agreed that the preference would usually be for an extraordinary meeting to be convened, as long as the matter was of sufficient urgency and importance. Members consulted should include at least one Member not of the majority political group. It was suggested that emergency delegation similar to that taken during Covid-19, whereby email approval was sought from Members, would be preferable.

The Leader of the Council and Political Groups (27)

The Leader protocol was a separate document and did not need to be included in Standing Orders. It was agreed to include the additional two points and to add that the Proper Officer should ensure adequate communication channels with different political groups.

Questions/statements from Councillors (29)

As meetings took place at different times, it was agreed this should state "X hours before the meeting" rather than a specific time. It was felt that this should not be too restrictive.

The Advisory Group (27)

This was similar to the councillor/officer forum at LLTC which was an informal group with its own terms of reference. The Task and Finish Group was undecided whether this should be included in Standing Orders but it was potentially not necessary unless all terms of reference were to be included.

It was noted that some other town councils appended their committee terms of reference and scheme of delegation to their Standing Orders and this could be given further consideration but was not felt to be essential.

Overall, it was agreed that Standing Orders provided a necessary framework but should facilitate operations rather than inhibiting them.

11/SO DATE OF NEXT MEETING/NEXT STEPS

Some discussion took place regarding how “user friendly” Standing Orders were and whether Councillors might have questions which they could not easily find the answers to within the document. It was suggested that the political groups look at this to see whether there was any input from other councillors which should be considered during this review process.

It was agreed that a next meeting be held towards the end of February, at which suggested amendments to the Town Council’s Standing Orders could be given detailed consideration, but that draft wording for specific items could perhaps be circulated in advance before then.

The meeting closed at 1626 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2021.

Chair

26 FEBRUARY 2021