

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 11 APRIL 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors S Jones (Chair)
 A Dodwell (Vice-Chair)
 C Palmer
 R Berry
 G Perham
 M Freeman
 D Scott
 R Goodchild left at 2135 hours
 S Owen left at 2135 hours

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services
 S Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk
 M Jahn, Committee Officer

Members of the public: 0
Members of the press 0

329/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Morris.

330/PF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Owen declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Payments) as this included a petty cash payment to an employee who was a family member.

No pecuniary interests were declared and no dispensations were requested.

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

There were no questions from the public.

332/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Committee received the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting held on 28 February 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 28 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

(b) Updates in respect of the previous meeting:

Minute reference 310/PF Minutes of Previous Meeting – negotiations should continue with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding ownership of the surface level car parks within the town.

Minute reference 325/PF Building Management System for Astral Park – it was hoped this would be installed at the beginning of next week.

Minute reference 327/PF Land at Vandyke Road – it was confirmed the Contract of Sale had been received today and would be signed by the Town Mayor on behalf of the Council.

333/PF **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS & WORKING PARTIES**

(a) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Health Services Task and Finish group meeting held on 4 March 2022.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Health Services Task and Finish Group meeting held on 4 March 2022.

Queries were raised regarding the wording of a section of item 33/HS and it was confirmed that some minor amendments to the wording could be undertaken prior to minute approval at the next meeting of the Health Services Task and Finish Group. A request was made for a further meeting to be held before the next full meeting of the Task and Finish Group to discuss new information received. Members suggested this meeting should include councillors, Andrew Selous MP and Dr Henderson and a full meeting should be held in June/July with representatives from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group invited to attend.

(b) The Committee received the draft minutes of the South Side Working Party meeting held on 7 March 2022.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the South Side Working Party meeting held on 7 March 2022.

Minute reference 18/SSWP (Stakeholders): a correction was requested to the second paragraph of this section to remove the first sentence and replace “advise” with “discuss” in the last line. These changes would be taken to the next meeting of the South Side Working Party on 21 April 2022.

(c) The Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety

Sub-Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022.

RECOMMENDED to Council to endorse the proposed Operation Dodford Section 92 grant agreement with Bedfordshire Police for the period for 2022-2023.

RECOMMENDED to Council that any underspend from the 2021-2022 Community Safety revenue budget be transferred to the Community Safety earmarked reserve.

Minute reference 103/CS Community Safety Budget – a question was raised regarding the underspend from the Operation Dodford budget and whether this could be used towards funding for the anticipated Policing Contact Hub which the Police Crime Commissioner was committed to delivering. Legal powers would need to be checked.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022.

334/PF **DELEGATED DECISIONS**

The Committee received a record of the decisions taken during March 2022 on behalf of both the Policy and Finance Committee and the Personnel Sub-Committee, in accordance with the scheme of delegation agreed by Council, with email approval by a majority of committee members.

Members were informed the projects discussed at Planning and Transport Committee had been approved and submitted for Rural Match Funding.

RESOLVED to note the decisions.

335/PF **PAYMENTS**

The Committee received schedules of payments for February 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. Due to the timing of Easter, March invoices paid in April would come to the next meeting.

The schedule for February 2022 dated 15 February 2022 included BACS payments amounting to £159,049.07 (page numbers 3011 - 3023), including petty cash payments to TACTIC of £38.75 and Town Council of £153.49. A cash book report for February 2022, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

RESOLVED to receive the schedules of payments for February 2022 which had been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and two councillor signatories.

336/PF **2021-22 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Committee received an interim internal audit report for 2021-22 and noted that no issues had been identified and it was hoped the next report would be undertaken on-site at the Council offices.

RESOLVED to note the report.

337/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

(a) The Committee received the Committee work plan and objectives for 2021-2022. It was noted that the Procurement and tendering documentation, Draft Annual Report 2021-22 and Annual review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Investment Policy & System of Internal Control had been deferred until the June meeting due to lack of time to undertake this work.

RESOLVED to note the committee work plan and objectives for 2021-22.

(b) The Committee received the draft Committee work plan and objectives for 2022-2023. The format of the draft workplan had been changed as requested with the completed objectives shaded in green. It was noted that whilst many items had fixed deadlines, other anticipated discussion items would be dependent upon capacity and therefore subject to change.

A question was raised regarding the environmental ambitions and the climate emergency resolution passed unanimously by Council in 2021. This would be discussed further at the June meeting of the Grounds & Environmental Services Committee. At present it was proving difficult to find a reputable provider to undertake baseline carbon calculations which were needed as a first step.

RESOLVED to note the draft committee work plan and objectives for 2022-2023.

338/PF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Committee received a report regarding the annual review of the Health and Safety Policy. It was felt that the policy remained fit for purpose given that legislation was fundamentally unchanged.

RESOLVED to note the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council to endorse the Health and Safety Policy which had been the subject of its annual review.

339/PF ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES AND BODIES

The Committee received a report outlining existing arrangements with local authorities including Bedfordshire Police, Central Bedfordshire Council and

the Citizens' Advice Bureau, as set out as a requirement in standing orders.

RESOLVED to note the annual review of arrangements with local authorities.

340/PF **EXPENDITURE FROM EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Committee received a report regarding clarifying delegated authority to appropriate committees to spend from earmarked reserves. The Committee agreed that clarity was needed to expedite expenditure on agreed projects, activities and services and to limit the need for committees to make recommendations to other committees for spending approval.

RESOLVED to note the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council to approve that changes be made to appropriate documents including the Terms of Reference for standing committees and the Scheme of Delegation, to reflect authority to approve expenditure from earmarked reserves appropriate to that committee's responsibilities, for activities and projects for which there was specific Council/committee resolution, subject to any legal restrictions.

341/PF **FIVE YEAR PLAN AND OBJECTIVES**

The Committee received a report in respect of the review of the Five Year Plan and Objectives which had been agreed by Council in November 2021, following previous discussion regarding the document and objectives in 2019, 2020 and July 2021.

In March 2022, three of the standing committees had reviewed and put forward recommendations for minor amendments to objectives 11-48 and the Committee was asked to consider these, as well as considering objectives 1-10 which were largely within its remit.

The report and introduction set out a reminder of how the document had been developed and that other projects requiring third party involvement were set out in the Partnership Project List.

Councillor Owen introduced the discussion document put forward by the Liberal Democrat group and reiterated his view that the Plan should be shortened, with fewer but higher priority objectives and that councillors who had not joined the Council until after adoption of the Plan should have the opportunity to influence it.

Discussion took place and views were expressed. It was acknowledged that the plan had been in the public domain since its adoption in early 2019 and that it was designed to be a five year plan. It was felt that objectives should

not be deleted during the lifespan of the plan but it was not necessarily the case that new ones could not be added with Council support and subject to legal powers and availability of finance and resources.

Looking ahead to the future, it was suggested that any proposal for development of plans beyond 2024 be given consideration first by committee to determine the process and timing to be followed.

Following some debate, Councillors Owen and Goodchild left the meeting at 21:35 hours as they felt there was no need to prolong the discussions as no changes were being agreed to the present format of the 5-year plan.

Remaining committee members voted unanimously as below.

RESOLVED to recommend that no changes be made to objectives 1-10 of the Town Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives, other than to include further detail where possible and appropriate.

RECOMMENDED to Council to endorse the proposed amendments to the Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives 2019-2024 as put forward by the four standing committees.

342/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: Mobile Phone Contract.

343/PF **MOBILE PHONE CONTRACT (to follow)**

The Committee received a report in respect of the mobile phone contract and considered the quotes provided.

RESOLVED to award a two-year mobile phone contract to provider D (Daisy Communications) for the reasons set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 11 APRIL 2022.

Chair

20 JUNE 2022