

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council



71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1SP - Tel: 01702 716288
council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Chairman: Cllr Valerie Morgan
Vice Chairman: Cllr Jill Healey
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons

Members are hereby summoned to attend a full council meeting of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council on **Tuesday 19th March 2019** at Leigh Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea commencing at **7.30pm**

Tea and coffee will be available from 7.00 pm, with a short presentation at 7.15 pm from Blade Education, followed by prayers from Rev. Andrew Cowley prior to the opening of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For Councillors to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any items on the Agenda

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING 22ND JANUARY 2019
5. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS
6. SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL (SBC)

This is an agenda item inviting Southend Borough Councillors representing Leigh Town Council areas to report matters and issues either in person or by correspondence to Leigh Town Council relevant to the Town Council's area.

7. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (for which written notice has been received)
8. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ([Appendix 1](#)) page 10

COMMITTEES

9. COMMITTEES
To receive the minutes of Committees for 2018/19 and report 2712/I&E
 - a) Planning Committee - To receive minutes of [29th January](#), [12th February](#), [26th February](#) and [12th March 2019](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- b) Staffing Committee – To receive minutes of [29th January 2019](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- c) Community Facilities Committee – To receive minutes of [5th February 2019](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL –

- d) Environment & Leisure - To receive minutes of [19th February 2019](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL –

Minute 86 – Allotments Non-Residents Levy ([Appendix 2](#)) page 15

- e) Policy & Resources - To receive minutes of [5th March 2019](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL –

- **Minute 78** – Risk Management Strategy ([Appendix 3](#)) page 17
RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the revised policy N.B. the Committee previously included an amendment under 5.1 ‘multiplied’ not added but ‘added’ is correct as it is Impact and Likelihood final scores being added together, whilst the scores in each section are arrived at by multiplication.
- **Minute 79** – Review of Risk Register ([Appendix 4](#)) page 22
RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the amended document
- **Minute 84** – Skate Park
RECOMMENDED that the Capital Reserve budget £30,000 (set aside for this project) be confirmed to undertake the preferred concrete works. The professional project designer is donating their time for free and a community project will pay for the cost of ramp materials. Project management will be undertaken in the most efficient and cost effective way. Any unused budget on completion will be returned to General Reserves and grant funding will be sought for all or part of the project works. The project is subject to landlords approval and planning consent being granted.
- **Minute 85** – Earmarked Reserves of E&L and CFC ([Appendix 5](#)) page 32
RECOMMENDED that Council approve the movement to Earmarked Reserves at the year-end
- **Minute 88** – P&R Earmarked Reserves ([Appendix 5](#)) page 32
RECOMMENDED that Council approve the movement to Earmarked Reserves at the year-end. N.B. The Election Earmarked reserve has been removed as Southend Borough Council have now submitted their invoice for the Leigh Road October 2018 By-Election being £2,600
- **Minute 91** - To Approve Expenditure
RECOMMENDED that the Council note the account transfers and approve the expenditure in Report 2712/I&E ([Appendix 6](#)) page 33

DECISION ITEMS

10. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ([Appendix 7](#)) page 37

To comply with year-end audit requirements, it is **RECOMMENDED** that Council consider each of the 8 statements of assurance and that the annual governance statement, together with each accounting statement be adopted.

11. PASTORAL CHAPLAIN

Over the past few of years, both staff and Councillors at times have experienced difficult personal situations and the Town Clerk would like to ask Council as to whether they would consider appointing a pastoral chaplain. The role does not need to be clerical but it does need to be a confidential, professional listener who can bring clarity to a situation. It should be recognised that they would sit outside of all council structures and are there to support the Councillors and staff. The matter of Council prayers could be separated from the role. An area for private conversations might need to be identified but there would be no need for prayer space or chaplain’s office – just somewhere quiet to chat.

12. LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

All Councillors were invited to attend a working group meeting to formulate the Council's response to this first consultation stage of the Local Plan. The outcome of the 3 hour meeting will be presented at Council prior to submission to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

13. STRATEGIC PLAN

The revised document will be presented to Council for review and adoption if acceptable.

FOR NOTING

14. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2019/20 ([Appendix 8](#)) page 45

To assist with potential members' diary planning, the proposed timetable is attached. This will be recommended at the Annual Council Meeting in May.

15. GDPR FOR MEMBERS

In accordance with GDPR, members are requested to review all Council correspondence on personal devices and ensure any personal data is deleted. This needs to be an annual action. Any member who will not be a part of the new Council administration in May must delete all Council related business from their records immediately upon retiring.

16. RECORDING OF A COMPLAINT

A formal complaint was received regarding a decision made by the Allotments Disputes Working Party (ratified by E&L). Although in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure, dissatisfaction of a decision of the Council is not deemed to be a complaint, the Allotments Disputes Procedure adopted in 2009 states that in the event that an allotment holder is dissatisfied with the Committee decision, they can invoke the Council's Complaints Procedure. The present Council's Complaints Procedure was adopted as part of the Staff Handbook in 2015. The complaint was dealt with in accordance with this procedure with both a Complaints Committee Meeting and Appeal Panel being held. Only one of the complainants was present at the Complaints Committee meeting but both were present at the Appeal Panel and addressed the members on both occasions. The Panel investigated the whole complaint again and were satisfied that the correct procedures had been followed by both the Allotments Dispute Working Party and the Complaints Committee. Having considered all the documentation and the representation at length, the Panel decided that it was not possible to rescind the decision made by the Allotments Dispute Working Party. The key reasons in reaching this conclusion was the Panel's concern that no new evidence had been presented to give grounds to overturn the original decision. The decision of the Appeal Panel is a final decision, there being no further right of appeal. The complainant has been advised of the decision.

17. INTERIM AUDIT REPORT ([Appendix 9](#)) page 46

The second interim day took place recently and the report is attached. The Town Clerk would like Council to note the commendation for the Assistant RFO (misquoted as Finance Assistant) in the overall conclusion as the VAT registration was a complicated process and she has dealt with all of the problems this raised.

FINANCIAL

18. COPY OF FINAL COUNCIL BUDGET 2019/20

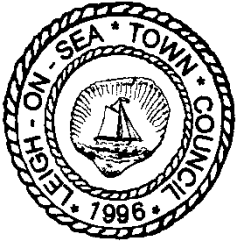
As per Financial Regulation 3.4, a copy of the resolved budget will be provided at the meeting for members.

Helen Symmons

Town Clerk
14th March 2019

Any member who is unable to attend the meeting should send their apologies before the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 14th May 2019



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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 22ND JANUARY 2019
LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71-73 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

Present: Cllrs: Valerie Morgan (Chairman), John Duprey, Keith Evans, Anita Forde, Gerry Glover, Jill Healey, Fr. Clive Hillman, Ron Owen, Caroline Parker (until minute 98) and Vivien Rosier.

Also in attendance: Helen Symmons (Town Clerk), Rev. Andrew Cowley (Leigh Road Baptist Church), Cllr Bernard Arscott (Southend Borough Council), representative from Stibbards and Morgan Academy of Performing Arts.

Prior to the meeting, PierTalk gave an informative presentation on their group which is seeking to combat loneliness and isolation. The group has grown from 10 members to 87 in a short space of time and is starting to meet in Leigh on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 1 p.m. onwards at the Sarah Moore pub.

Following the presentation and prior to the meeting prayers were said by Rev. Andrew Cowley, the Chairman's Chaplain.

The meeting opened 7.30 p.m.

83. THE CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS INCLUDING HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all, made the appropriate housekeeping announcements and reminded Councillors of her forthcoming Quiz Night 8th February to raise money for her charity, the Southend YMCA. A presentation was then made by the Chairman and Stibbards to the Leigh Lights Parade winners, Morgan Academy of Performing Arts. Stibbards had kindly sponsored the competition, the winners receiving £150 for their charity and runners-up St. Pierre School £100, again for their chosen charity.

The representative from Stibbards and Morgan Academy left the meeting

84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: Jill Adair, Mark Bromfield, Patrick Fox, Paul Gilson, Carole Mulroney and Declan Mulroney.

85. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None declared.

86. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 20th November were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

87. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

The Town Clerk was asked to recommend that the Southend Borough Council Bus Working Party be contacted in the matter. Leigh Town Council are happy to support the introduction of any additional transportation network within the Town Council area and promote any service if instigated.

88. SOUTHEND BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Arcscott to the meeting and invited him to speak. Council were advised that SBC are half way through the CCTV installation, the Library is having some refurbishment work and there will be the resurfacing of some further roads in due course. Questions were asked on the following:

Marine Parade traffic calming – Cllr Arcscott confirmed that the consultation period had concluded. He spoke of the proposed measures but these will now be reviewed by SBC in consideration of any consultation comments.

Broadway area parking permit scheme – Cllr Arcscott confirmed that this was going to consultation imminently and extensively.

Speed concerns – Cllr Arcscott gave advice that SBC Traffic department and/or SBC Ward Councillors should be contacted with concerns. Only through reports can a picture be built up of issues. Unless national policy changes, the speed limit will remain at 30 mph.

89. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (for which written notice has been received)

Questions from Cllr Gilson

Question 1

What are we to do about the fact that we have voted for something that has no support from SBC and does not exist as a scheme?

At the Council meeting 20th November, the vote was a democratic vote. Council were provided with a report from the Town Clerk, the project information being provided by Southend Borough Council (SBC) and prior to the vote discussion took place between members. Clearly there is a scheme, one which is subject to a professional survey. If the results of this survey show that further restoration of the viewing platform is not viable then it will be the decision of SBC not to proceed and Leigh Town Council (LTC) will retain the CIL money for other valid CIL projects. The partnership suggestion for restoration of a viewing platform came from Borough officers following demolition of the toilet block under the old viewing platform. This was work under the remit of the Estate Management department at the Borough Council. It is not for Leigh Town Council to know or comment on the internal workings of SBC. However support for the scheme from SBC is evident in that the Town Clerk sent an email 21st November to SBC advising of Council's decision and on 18th December the Town Clerk then received an email from a SBC Officer, at the request of the Director of Culture, Tourism and Property at the Borough for a copy of her report submitted to Leigh Town Council. The reason given by the Borough Officer was so that SBC could formulate their funding bid based on said report. The Town Clerk is aware that Cllr C Mulroney in her capacity as a Borough Councillor sent an email to Cllr Lesley Salter 27th November advising of the Council's decision. Cllr Salter acknowledged the email the same day. Cllr Salter is the Cabinet member at the Borough for Healthy Communities and Welfare.

Question 2

Why or how did it get this far without some kind of scrutiny of the scheme?

The matter was first reported to P&R. This Committee resolved it as a viable project for CIL expenditure and recommended it to Council. Both agenda items were accompanied by a full report from the Town Clerk. SBC demolished the toilet area under the viewing platform which was deemed unsafe. In undertaking this work, it exposed the coping stones. In her capacity as a Southend Borough Cllr, Cllr Carole Mulroney approached the Borough Council to highlight their historic significance.

The demolition of the toilets and making good the area following was a decision by SBC and a budget already existed under Estate Management at the Borough. Estate Management decided to keep and replace the stones effecting a viewing platform at a lower level as a seating area. However at that point the funding for the works ran out and an approach was made to Leigh Town Council by SBC officers to work in partnership to restore the area. The Town Clerk presented it to P&R Committee as it met the criteria for Community Infrastructure Levy receipts. No funding would be from Leigh Town Council precept. The remainder of the budget would be from grant funding which SBC would source. No funding would be from SBC council tax either. Two site visits were undertaken between SBC & LTC officers with agreement that the whole project was subject to a professional survey. Only the results of the survey would establish whether the project was viable.

Question 3

Where is the money now?

If Cllr Gilson is referring to the £15,000 that Leigh Town Council has resolved to provide towards the project from CIL receipts, then this remains in the bank account of Leigh Town Council. As the project is subject to a professional survey to ascertain viability and to SBC obtaining grant funding, the money will remain in this Council's bank account until confirmed by Borough Officers that the project is moving forward.

Rev. Cowley left the meeting

90. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

COMMITTEES

91. COMMITTEES

To receive the Minutes of Committees for 2018/19 and report 2708/I&E

f) Planning Committee – Cllr Healey presented the minutes of [27th November](#) and [11th December](#) 2018 and [15th January 2019](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

g) Community Facilities Committee – Cllr Owen presented the minutes of [4th December 2018](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL –

h) Environment & Leisure – Cllr Morgan presented the minutes of [18th December 2018](#)

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- i) Policy & Resources – In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Morgan presented the minutes of [8th January 2019](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL –

- **Minute 62** – Grant Aid Award Policy - **RESOLVED**
- **Minute 68** - To Approve Expenditure - **RESOLVED**

DECISION ITEMS

92. COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2019/20

The Council **RESOLVED** the budget pack for 2019/20.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the precept for 2019/20 be £47.70 for Tax Band D electors and that the total precept that Leigh Town Council will receive is £421,625.

93. SALARY BUDGET

The review of the Salary budget was signed by the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Council.

94. COUNCIL SIGNATORIES

The Council **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Healey and Rosier become signatories on the bank account along with the Town Clerk who would just be a signatory for emergency purposes only.

95. STRATEGIC PLAN AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

Cllr Rosier presented the document to Council which was discussed in detail. Various amendments were suggested by Councillors which the Town Clerk will undertake and present the revised document to Council in March. Cllr Rosier was thanked for her hard work.

FOR NOTING

96. ELECTION TIMETABLE

Council **NOTED** the report

97. MAGAZINE TIMELINE

The Town Clerk highlighted that the Marketing & Profile Officer had written over 8,000 words at present in compiling the next edition of the magazine. Cllr Rosier made a final call for articles and there was a brief discussion on what difference the magazine makes in the community. Cllr Rosier felt that better recording of this should happen but recognised it was difficult to quantify. Council recognised the fantastic job that the Officer undertakes in the magazine preparation. Cllr Rosier mentioned that in due course that she would like support.

Cllr Parker left the meeting

98. RECORDING OF A COMPLAINT

The Council **NOTED** the report

99. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Council **NOTED** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL

100. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC – The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded and instructed to withdraw – SO 3(d) other special reason

Cllr Arscott left the meeting

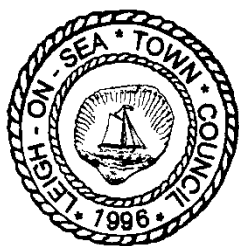
101. VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

The Council **RESOLVED** the item.

102. GOOD FOR LEIGH AWARDS

Following a proposal (Cllr Fr. Hillman, seconded Cllr Healey) Council **RESOLVED** that 5 awards will be made at the Annual Town Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm



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REPORT 2713/HS

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT MARCH 2019

TRAINING

Staff

Staff have attended the following training:

- First Aid
- Annual Town Meeting
- SLCC Practitioners
- NALC Spring Conference
- Annual Pension workshop

The Assistant Proper Officer has now completed her CiLCA training and will now be submitting modules of work to the Assessor. Dementia Awareness training will be undertaken in the next two weeks.

Councillor

The following training has been undertaken by Councillors since the last meeting:

Cllr Gilson – Councillor training days 1 and 2

New Councillor training has been arranged for Saturday 11th May. This will be a two hour short course training session covering:

- Introduction to Local Councils
- Powers & Duties
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Finance
- Code of Conduct

Whilst not mandatory, all newly elected Councillors will be expected to attend.

TOWN CLERK'S DIARY

SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Essex Branch Executive Committee

A planning session for the forthcoming AGM Conference Day was held with the Committee also discussing Branch finances and new Clerks training. Subsequently the AGM Conference Day planned for March was postponed till June and so another Exec Committee meeting was held but due to work commitments I was unable to attend.

NALC Spring Conference

It was a full day's agenda with a mixture of plenary and workshop sessions:

Strategic Direction of NALC – this was an update with NALC continuing to focus on the fact that people trust local institutions and bringing people together to make things happen in their communities and giving them a voice.

Standards in the local council sector – This was a session presented by Jane Ramsey, member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. She spoke about the recent published review on Standards in Public Life and how the current codes do not address bullying and harassment effectively. Only a small minority do not adhere to the high standards in public life but the current sanctions are insufficient. Some of the recommendations within the review will require legislation and more thinking needs to be undertaken about how Councillor training can take place more without being mandatory.

Local councils and rural isolation - Tracey Crouch, MP, Chatham had been the 1st Minister for Loneliness but recently having resigned, she was able to give a frank view of the work being undertaken. It was recognised that Parish & Town Councils are already at the heart of trying to combat loneliness and that it was not just the elderly that are affected. Loneliness is subjective and affects physical and medical health. The Government are now looking at a cross Government strategy along with social prescribing i.e. activities as opposed to medication. However the Government cannot tackle it alone and the focus is shifting to recognise the work that Parish & Town Councils are doing to reduce the stigma and often the shame of feeling lonely from young mothers, to older youth, from parents whose children are off to university to the over 65s. Tracey highlighted that it was important for all to use their voice and important for MPs to engage in their communities. As always there was a useful exchange of ideas which the Town Clerk has taken onboard.

Resilient Audit – This session looked at the 2017/18 audit and the changes that occurred to the process. Leigh Town Council had no issues but plenty of councils had complaints or did not comply quite correctly. There has been plenty of learning points all round and the auditors have been reviewed along with their performance targets. The session also looked at some of the changes that will be made to the processes in forthcoming years.

How we can improve engagement with young people – This was a workshop session in the main listening to Yate Town Council and how they worked in partnership with younger residents. There was some useful exchange of ideas recognising that parish and town councils have the freedom not to have to follow a youth curriculum like principal authorities have to follow. Councils need to let go of control when working with young people, thinking more about building partnerships and engagement along with listening. It is important as well to remember that traditional council timescales are not fast enough by youth standards in delivering their agenda. Yate Town Council were able to develop a ‘hang out café’ and also a mobile vehicle, essentially a youth centre on wheels for more rural areas.

Super Councils’ Network – Whilst Leigh are not classified as a ‘super council’ as we do not have a precept more than £1million, I chose to sit in on this workshop with other larger councils as there were tips on health and wellbeing agendas, affordable housing and devolution. Interestingly they spoke about the Future High Street Fund which bids could be placed only through principal authorities. NALC were asked to lobby that Town Councils can be considered to bid. As Council is aware, Southend Borough Council contacted the Town Clerk 5th March in this respect giving the Council and Leigh Partnership group the opportunity to work on a bid for Leigh Town Centre.

Working together to support communities – The final session of the day was a panel session. The general consensus was that primary authorities still are sceptical of parish and town councils, although it was recognised that some partnerships are working well in the country. It was felt that this may need to be more of a local solution in the future to meet the services that communities want especially in view of the pressures being placed on the budgets of primary authorities. It was suggested that having spheres of local government rather than tiers would break down the boundaries in recognising what parish and town councils can provide for their communities. There was lots of interesting discussion as to whether the UK are the most overly centrally governed country in the world and again the topic of town councils having the opportunities with regard to their high streets was raised.

SLCC Practitioners Conference

Clerks from all over the country attended this two-day conference which delivered the opportunity to learn, develop and open up new ideas and avenues in our professional lives.

How to (almost) Achieve a Paperless Council – This recognised that there is no such thing as a paperless Council but that like Leigh Town Council, it is possible to achieve a ‘paperlite’ Council. The

session reinforced that the steps we have taken so far are proving effective i.e. councillors embracing technology, changing our committee structure, reviewing the process of providing planning information. Having a paperlite Council, assists to comply with GDPR as well.

Charting your way through dispute – The SLCC National Legal Adviser ran this session. He had been one of the lead investigators in the recent Ledbury case and highlighted the many areas of potential dispute. With reference to legal cases, certain areas were highlighted:

Moores V Bude Stratton Town Council (2000) – single councillor is a quasi-employer, the council are responsible for the actions of councillors and there is an implied duty of all councillors as the employer to provide a reasonable working environment.

Heesom V Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (2014) – need to balance a councillor's right of expression against the protection of officers.

R(Taylor) V Honiton Town Council (2016) – this was a pre-cursor to the Ledbury case in that councils cannot add to principal authority sanctions although other lawful and proportionate sanctions are possible.

R(Harvey) V Ledbury Town Council – the Town Council did not follow the correct grievance procedure and imposed restrictions which was an error on their part.

Leigh Town Council have implemented many of the preventative measures which helps avoid any complications e.g. Dignity at work policy, member-officer protocol, induction of new members, staffing committee. The session then went on to provide top tips for dealing with disturbances at public meetings and resilience points for Clerks recognising the signs of conflict and mitigating risks along with measures.

Combatting Rough Sleeping – Developing a Night Shelter – Weston-super-Mare Town Council provided an amazing insight into problems they had in their area and how the council set aside £25,000 for an achievable solution. The Town Clerk and lead Councillor on the project showed how with community support, great structure and resourceful funding, they now have a facility combatting the problem.

I also attended more practical sessions on Managing Local Council Elections and GDPR to ensure Leigh Town Council are compliant in those procedures and processes and there was another session from Jane Ramsey regarding the Local Government Ethical Standards which was more reflective from a Clerk's point of view than the recent NALC session which was more for councillors.

Southend 2050 workshop

This was a workshop session with many community groups and stakeholders within Southend. It considered the five themes and 23 outcomes for 2023. Various points were raised at our table which will be fed back in to the Borough consultancy on this work.

New Councillor Open Evening

Whilst the Town Clerk has had interest from 10 residents with regard to the forthcoming Council Election, only 6 were able to attend the evening. An informal presentation was given on the key points of being a councillor and information provided about Leigh Town Council. Several current councillors attended and were very helpful in providing information from their perspective.

Local Larger Councils Forum

Interesting talks were provided by RNLI and Adnams. The RNLI highlighted that Essex is the second highest risk area on the water behind the Thames. Much is being done in terms of education with regard to cold water shock and water safety. The future of the RNLI is a new boat 'The Shannon' which looks amazing. We also learnt that they provide a lifeguard service to Councils where Councils pay the wages of the lifeguards only. Adnams presentation was all about gin! Obviously it was very popular. In addition to the talks, updates were provided by the NALC representative, EALC and SLCC Essex Branch.

LEIGH PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Progress is being made with regard to additional signposting signage both in the Old Town and the Town Centre. The Group is working alongside Southend Borough Council in this respect. CCTV is now implemented at 3 points along the shopping area. A further camera is to be installed in Leigh Old Town but at present there are siting issues. We are currently working in partnership with Southend Borough Council to improve some directional signage within the Town. The Town Clerk is currently working with the Group to submit an Future High Streets Funding bid to Southend Borough Council by 20th March.

SPATIAL PLAN

This is progressing well with a stakeholder workshop taking place and a meeting with Borough Officers. There has been plenty of input and lots of discussion and the final plan should be produced in April.

TOWN COUNCIL INVITATIONS/ATTENDANCE

The following engagements have been attended by the Chairman and Councillors:

Community Police Meeting
Friends of Library Gardens (Chairman only)
Airport Consultative Committee (Chairman only)
Essex High Sheriff's Awards (Chairman and Vice Chairman)
YMCA quiz evening
Veolia Community Liaison Group (Chairman only)

[Agenda](#)

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS FOLLOW UP RECORDS 2018/19

Committee	Minute No. and Subject	Completion status	Completion Date	Outcome	Forward Action Required	Responsible
COUNCIL 18-07-17	49. CIL	RESOLVED to contact SBC with regard to S106 agreements in Leigh		Still awaiting SBC response. TC will continue to actively pursue a written response although verbally advised with regard to affordable housing and education by an Officer.	TC will continue to monitor for a full response.	TC
COUNCIL 20-11-18	74e Policy & Resources	RESOLVED to allocate £15k for viewing platform from CIL receipts		Survey undertaken. Awaiting results to see if project viable.		TC
COUNCIL 20-11-18	82 Request to Council	RESOLVED to have a board in recognition of Town Clerks who serve the Council		Board is being made		TC
COUNCIL 22-01-19	91d Policy & Resources	RESOLVED Grant Aid Award Policy RESOLVED expenditure	22-01-19	Both documents published on website	NFA	
COUNCIL 22-01-19	92 Council Budget & Precept	RESOLVED budget pack RESOLVED precept	22-01-19	SBC advised and C/T leaflet wording sent.	NFA under this minute	
COUNCIL 22-01-19	94 Council signatories	RESOLVED Cllrs Healey, Rosier and TC (emergencies only)	22-01-19	Actioned	NFA under this minute	
COUNCIL 22-01-19	101 Volunteer of the Year	RESOLVED	22-01-19	TC will arrange for presentation at ATM	NFA under this minute	
COUNCIL 22-01-19	102 Good for Leigh Awards	RESOLVED 5 awards	22-01-19	TC will arrange for presentation at ATM	NFA under this minute	

[Agenda](#)



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Allotment Non-Residents Levy Report 2711b/AC

Report

E&L Recommendation

At its meeting 19th February 2019, the Committee **RESOLVED to recommend to Council** that a non-resident allotment levy of £20 be applied to allotment tenants with effect from September 2020.

This decision was made following discussion in great detail with questions raised. It was highlighted that the allotments are legally for our own residents i.e. those living within the Town Council boundaries, but were not like the Council facility of the Community Centre where anyone can enjoy the facility. This preferred option was chosen to be recommended on the basis that a percentage levy would be difficult to administer and that as this time to only have plot holders from within the town Council boundary was not feasible.

The evidence for the decision was based on the following:

Background

Under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 S.23 'If the council of any parish are of opinion that there is a demand for allotments in the parish the council shall provide a sufficient number of allotments, and shall let such allotments to persons resident in the Parish and desiring to take the same'.

Upon undertaking a review of staffing costs for Town Council services, it was ascertained recently that a considerable number of allotment holders do not live within the LTC parish. Whilst these plot holders pay an annual allotment rent, they are not liable to pay the Town Council precept.

The total precept being received for 2018/19 is £411,692, with Band D equivalent Leigh Town Council tax payers paying £46.89. Next financial year, this increases to £47.70. Leigh Town Council electorate with an allotment plot pay the precept in addition to their allotment plot rental.

In 2016/17, the allotment deficit was £8,534.89

In 2017/18, the allotment deficit was £6,914.38

The budgeted allotment deficit for 2018/19 is £8,772.00

Staff costs for allotment administration and site management in the present financial year will cost the Council £21 per plot. The forecast for the coming year is £33 as more and more time is being spent on allotment matters by staff members.

The Council **RESOLVED** in July 2017 that with effect from October 2018 an annual percentage increase of 4% to the nearest 50p be applied year on year as standard to allotment rents until the allotment budget breaks even.

Current Position

We currently have 405 allotment plots occupied across the 3 sites. 39% of allotment plot holders live outside the Leigh Town Council boundary. The non-residents split is per the table below.

	Reside within the LTC boundary	Reside outside the LTC boundary	Total number of plots	% That reside outside the boundary
MDAS	160	95	255	37.25%
Leigh Site	63	61	124	49.2%
MCAA	24	2	26	7.69%
Total	247	158	405	39%

Some research has been carried out looking at other Parish Councils and it appears a number of other councils do impose an additional charge for non-residents. This varies from a set amount e.g. an additional £20 per plot, to a percentage (50% additional rental) to even completely doubling the rent. Many parishes just do not let plots to non-residents. It could be questioned given the number of non-residents whether there is sufficient allotment plot demand from Leigh Town Council residents.

Waiting Lists

Although no formal decision can be found, the Town Clerk believes the allotments were opened to non-residents at a time when there was no waiting list. We currently hold a waiting list for the Marshall Close and the Leigh Site. MDAS hold their own waiting list. With the current waiting list, residents that live within the Leigh Town Council boundary are now given priority.

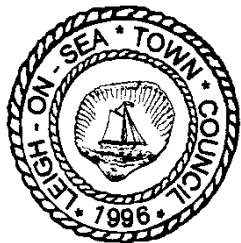
Marshall Close have a waiting list of 16 people. 15 of those are within the Leigh Town Council boundary. The Leigh Site have a waiting list of 14 people. 7 of those are within the boundary.

(Allotment Rental)	Starter Plot	Half Plot	Full Plot
Current Rental 2018/19	£19.00	£28.00	£55.00
Concessionary Rental 2018/19 (retired)	£9.50	£14.00	£28.00

- A non-resident allotment levy per plot e.g. £20 per plot (no concessions apply) – potentially this could increase allotment income by £3180

No concessions apply with regard to precept payments for the LTC electorate.

[Agenda](#)



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

71-73 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1SP - Tel: 01702 716288
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Chairman: Cllr Carole Mulrone
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Introduction

1.1. This document forms the Council's Risk Management Strategy. It sets out:

- What is risk management
- Why the Council needs a risk management strategy
- What the Council's philosophy is on risk management
- The risk management process
- How risk management feeds into the Council's existing policies
- Roles and responsibilities
- Future monitoring

1.2. The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Council
- Integrate risk management into the culture of the organisation
- Embed risk management through the ownership and management of risk as part of all decision-making processes
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice

2. What is Risk Management?

2.1. *'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standard of conduct and service delivery arrangements'* Audit Commission, **Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government** (2001:5)

2.2. Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety, but applies to all aspects of the Council's work.

2.3. Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive:

Strategic Risk – long-term adverse impacts from poor decision-making or poor implementation. Risks - damage to the reputation of the Council, loss of public confidence or in a worst-case scenario Government intervention.

Compliance Risk – failure to comply with legislation or laid down procedures or the lack of documentation to prove compliance. Risks – exposure to prosecution, judicial review, employment tribunals and inability to enforce contracts.

Financial Risk – fraud and corruption, waste, excess demand for services, bad debts. Risk of additional audit investigation, objection to accounts, reduced service delivery, dramatically increased Council Tax levels/impact on Council reserves.

Operating Risk – failure to deliver services effectively, malfunctioning equipment, hazards to service users, the general public or staff, damage to property. Risk of insurance claims, higher insurance premiums, lengthy recover processes.

2.4. Not all these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost effective. Even where insurance is available, a monetary consideration may not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk before costs steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

2.5 Risk is not restricted to potential threat but can be connected with opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive responses. Measure to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

3. Why the Council needs a Risk Management Strategy

3.1. Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Council to achieve its objective and enhance the value of services provided.

3.2. The Risk Management Strategy will help to ensure that all Committees across the Council have an understanding of risk and that the Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance.

3.3. There is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/533) to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk. Risks and their control will be collated in a Risk Register.

4. The Council's philosophy on Risk Management

4.1. Risk Management Policy Statement

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.

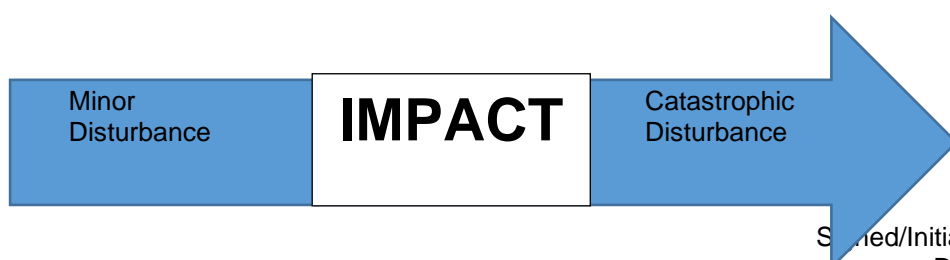
The Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.

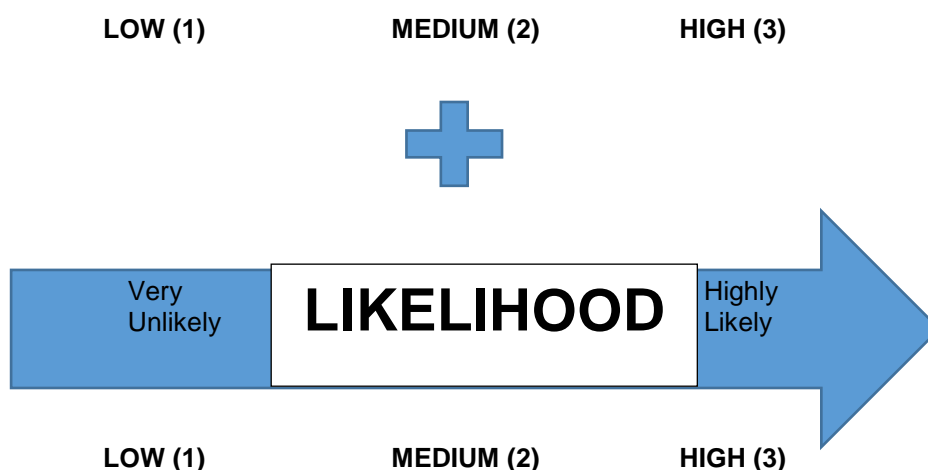
Risk management is an integral part of the Council's management processes.

5. The Risk Management Process

5.1. Implementing the Strategy

- **Risk Identification** – identifying and understanding the hazards and risks facing the Council is crucial if informed decisions are to be made about policies or service delivery methods. The risks associated with these decisions can then be effectively managed. All risks identified will be recorded in the Council's Risk Register.
- **Risk Analysis** – once risks have been identified they need to be systematically and accurately assessed using proven techniques. Analysis should make full use of any available data on the potential frequency of events and their consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable, then steps need to be taken to control or respond to the risk.
- **Risk Prioritisation** – an assessment should be undertaken of the impact and likelihood of risks occurring, with impact and likelihood being scored Low (1), Medium (2) and High (3).





The scores for impact and likelihood are added together. Risks scoring 4 and above will be subject to detailed consideration and preparation of a contingency/action plan to appropriately control the risk.

5.2. Risk Control

Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures but in exceptional cases more drastic action will be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Options for control include:

- **Elimination** – the circumstances from which the risk arises are removed so that the risk no longer exists
- **Reduction** – loss control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/likelihood of the risk occurring
- **Transfer** – the financial impact is passed to other e.g. by revising contractual terms
- **Sharing** – the risk is shared with another party
- **Insuring** – insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact
- **Acceptance** – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Council accepts or tolerates risk

5.3. Risk Monitoring

The risk management process does not finish with putting any risk control procedures in place. Their effectiveness in controlling risk must be monitored and reviewed. It is also important to assess whether the nature of any risk has changed over time.

The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or minimised in the future. It will also inform judgements on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

6. How Risk Management feeds into the Council's existing policies

6.1. The identification of Risks will be achieved by Councillors, the Town Clerk and Officers compiling a list of the risks in their service area(s) which will be integrated into a comprehensive Risk Register.

6.2. **Projects and Service changes** – Councillors, the Town Clerk and Officers developing projects or recommending changes to services will ensure that risks are identified and the measures to eliminate or control risks are documented and considered by the Council and its Committees.

6.3. **Partnership Working** – where the Council enters into partnerships with organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, part of the process will be to ensure that all relevant risks are identified and that appropriate control mechanisms are built into the management arrangements for the partnership.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1. It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance management process of the Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively right across the Council and its operations and that responsibility for risk is located in the right place. Those who best know the risks to a particular service are those responsible for it. The process must be driven from the top but must also involve staff throughout the organisation.

7.2. **Elected Members** – risk management is seen as a key part of the elected Member's stewardship role and there is an expectation that elected Members will lead and monitor the approach adopted. This will include:

- Approval of the Risk Management Strategy
- Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects and services undertaken are adequately risk managed
- Consideration and if appropriate, endorsement of the annual Statement of Internal Control
- Assessment of risks whilst budget setting, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues

7.3. **Town Clerk** – will act as the Lead Officer on Risk Management and be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the detail of the Risk Management Strategy. The Town Clerk will:

- Provide advice as to the legality of policy and service delivery choices
- Provide advice on the implications for service areas/actions of the Council's corporate aims, objectives and best value targets
- Update the Council on the implications of new or revised legislation
- Assist in handling any litigation claims
- Provide advice on any human resource issues relating to strategic policy options or the risks associated with operation decisions and assist in handling cases of work related illness or injury
- Advice on any health and safety implications of the chosen or proposed arrangements for service delivery
- Report progress to Council via the relevant Committee
- Ensure that Risk Management is an integral part of all best value reviews including recommendations for risk control in service review reports

7.4. **Responsible Finance Officer** – the Town Clerk or Assistant RFO will:

- Assess and implement the Council's insurance requirements
- Assess the financial implications of strategic policy options
- Provide assistance and advice on budgetary planning and control
- Ensure that the Financial Information System allows effective budgetary controls
- Effectively manage the Council's investment and loan portfolio

7.5. **Employees** – will undertake their job within risk management guidelines ensuring that their skills and knowledge are used effectively. All employees will maintain an awareness for the impact and costs of risks and how to feed data into the formal process. They will work to control risks or threats within their jobs, monitor progress and report on job related risks to their line manager or the Town Clerk.

- 7.6. **Role of Internal Audit** – Internal audit provides an important scrutiny role by carrying out audits to provide independent assurance to the Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively.

Internal Audit assists the Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist the Council in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud.

Internal Audit reports and any recommendations contained within will help to shape the annual Statement of Internal Control.

- 7.7. **Policy & Resources Committee (Finance & Governance Committee from May 2019)** – reviews and future development of the Risk Management Strategy and compilation of the Risk Register will be overseen by the Committee.

- 7.8. **Training** – Risk Management training will be provided to elected Members, officers and key staff through a variety of mediums. The aim will be to ensure that all have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control the risks associated with the services they provide.

8. Future Monitoring

- 8.1. **Review of Risk Management Strategy** – this strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the Council's continuing review of its policy documents, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

- 8.2. **Review of Risk Register** – the Register will be reviewed at least annually and updated as new risks emerge and need to be controlled. Feedback from Internal and External Audit can identify areas for improvement as can the sharing of best practice via professional bodies, NALC and relevant council forums.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. The adoption of a sound risk management approach should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuous service improvement and effective corporate governance.
- 9.2. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's website www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk and copies of the document and the Risk Register will be available

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Table: Risk Register - Level and Control (L = Likelihood, I = Impact, R = Risk – Low (1-2) Medium (3-4) High (6-9))

Area:	Risk:	Level:	Control System:	Monitoring and Review Method:	Responsibility:
A. Assets	A.1. Failure to protect physical assets	L:1	Building and Property: Assets register in place. Items insured, with value increased in line with RPI annually. Skate Park: Funds set aside annually towards maintenance costs.	A.1.1. Asset Register: Document to be updated annually each March. Also on each occasion that any changes are made to the Council's asset base. A.1.2. Insurances: Insurance levels reviewed annually. Cover obtained for new items, as necessary during the year. A.1.3. Skate Park Equipment: Funding for repairs to be provided in budget and covered by insurance.	Clerk/P&RC Clerk/P&RC Clerk/P&RC
		I: 3			
		R: Medium (3)			
	A.2. Inadequate security of buildings & safe custody of equipment etc.	L:1	Leigh Community Centre The Centre operates a 24hr CCTV surveillance system, and alarm system when building not in use, to protect against unauthorised access Allotment Buildings Secure Lock Xmas Lights Stored in third party warehouse and fully insured by contractor	A.2.1. Leigh Community Centre: Review security arrangements – at least annually. A.2.2. Other Buildings: Designated key holders. Buildings not alarmed – limit risk by only using for low value storage. A.2.3. Xmas Lights: Stored in third party warehouse and fully insured by contractor	Clerk/Facilities Manager Facilities Manager E&L Cttee
		I: 2			
		R: Low (2)			
	A.3. Failure to	L:1 I: 3	Assets generally maintained on an ad hoc basis.	A.3.1. Maintenance Programme: A prepared maintenance programme	CF Cttee

Review
March
2019

	maintain buildings etc.	R: Medium (3)	LCC Lease repair conditions. General maintenance programme is in place. Dilapidations programme in place over life of the lease	established for each site. LCC Maintenance budget allocation regularly reviewed and monitored by Committee. Programme is reviewed annually or where necessary	
B. Finance	B.1. Failure to bank and care for funds	L. 1 I: 1 R: Low (2)	Funds not required immediately held on deposit CCLA & HSBC. Financial Regulations updated annually	B.1.1. Funds: Funds deposited in interest bearing accounts. Level of deposit reviewed two monthly, prior to P&RC meeting.	Clerk/P&RC Clerk/P&RC ARFO/Chairman or Vice Chairman P&RC
				B.1.2 Financial Regulations: Financial Regulations reviewed annually each February/March.	

	<p>B.2. Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty</p>	<p>L:1 I: 2 R:Low (2)</p>	<p>Cash held overnight in safe. Petty Cash reimbursed by Assistant Responsible Finance Officer (ARFO) on presentation of documentary evidence of expenditure.</p> <p>Petty Cash Account reconciled in accordance with Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Petty cash drawings limited to £200</p> <p>Other income banked regularly and at least weekly.</p>	<p>B.2.1. Petty Cash: Chairman or Vice Chairman of P&RC carries out random checks on petty cash transactions and balances quarterly.</p> <p>Monthly reconciliations of all bank accounts carried out in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2</p> <p>Internal Audit checks on income.</p>	<p>Nominated Councillor other than the Chairman</p>
	<p>B.3. Failure to protect expenditure</p>	<p>L:1 I: 2 R:Low (2)</p>	<p>Cheque payments and electronic transfers approved and signed by 2 Councillors and approved two monthly by Council. Payment procedures compliant with Financial Regulations and in accordance with accounting control procedures determined by the RFO to ensure best practice.</p>	<p>B.3.1. Payments: Chairman or Vice Chairman of P&RC selects at random four months per year and verifies that two Councillors have evidenced their approval for each item of expenditure Internal Audit checks on occurrence, valuation and regularity of payments.</p>	<p>ARFO/ Clerk/P&RC</p>
	<p>B.4. Failure to protect income</p>	<p>L:1 I: 2 R:Low (2)</p>	<p>A receipt or an invoice supports each item of income received. Monthly reconciliation of each bank or petty cash account. Debtors monitored in</p>	<p>B.4.1. Income: Internal Audit checks for completeness of income brought to account and that all income is banked promptly. Internal Audit review of bank reconciliations. Debtor reports produced to action if required</p>	<p>ARFO</p>

Area:	Risk:	Level:	Control System:	Monitoring and Review Method:	Responsibility:
			accordance with Debtor Policy & if required reported for action to Council	and deposits taken.	
	B.5. Failure to comply with HMRC (VAT) Regulations	L:1 I: 1 R:Low(1)	VAT claims prepared biannually in accordance with HMRC requirements by ARFO. In conjunction with HMRC Guidelines VAT Partial Exemption calculated by Accountants.	B.5.1. VAT Claims: Periodic inspection of claims by HMRC and response to queries. Claims subject to check by Internal Auditor.	ARFO
	B.5. Failure to determine an Annual Budget	L:1 I: 1 R:Low (1)	Having regard to planned levels of expenditure, anticipated income and balances needed to be carried forward for contingencies and future levels of expenditure. Policy & Resources oversees budget compilation, during the autumn. Detailed two monthly reports of income and expenditure against budget. System of approved delegated limits of expenditure A submission for all new projects costing in excess of £5000 to be considered and approved by the appropriate Committee for	B.5.1. Annual Budget: Budget preparation to commence each autumn. Detailed Committee budgets, with breakdown to be submitted by November. Precept figure considered in November, confirmed as soon as possible after confirmation of grant funding and tax base from the Primary Authority but no later than the end of February. B.5.2. Monthly Reporting: Bi - monthly review of reports to Committees and Council of outturn against budget. B.5.3. Compliance Checks: By Internal Auditor and Chairman or Vice Chairman of P&RC. The findings to be reported to P&RC, three times per annum.	Clerk/P&RC

			recommendation to Council		
	B.6. Failure to ensure Business Continuity	L:1	Ensure Council evaluates risks and minimises occurrences of interruption by Budget planning and robust legal agreements	B.6.1. Business Continuity: Two Monthly review of budgets and changes to action plan reviewed and evaluated by appropriate Committee Council at least annually. B.6.2. Sufficient Reserves Reserves maintained at a level to allow for fluctuations in income and expenditure.	Clerk/Appropriate Committee/P&RC
I: 3					
R:Medium (3)		Robust Business Continuity Plan is in progress.			
C. General Liabilities	C.1. Failure to comply with Legal Requirements	L:1	Expertise and Training of Town Clerk with external guidance. Reference to Council Solicitor, SBC Solicitor or Administrators.	C.1.1. Legal Advice: Town Clerk – CiLCA qualified & Continuing Professional Development and Networking C.1.2. External Review: Prior to change of Council at an election to review policies required by law. C.1.3. Members of Professional Bodies: Town Clerk and Council members of appropriate bodies.	Clerk/P&RC
I: 2					
R:Low (2)		Regular updates from EALC, NALC & SLCC Guidance and briefings to Councillors. Induction Training for Councillors and Staff. Specific training as required.			

	C.2. Failure to protect Third Parties, Property, or Individuals	L:2-1	Insurances in place.	C.2.1. Third Party Risks: Insurance cover in place – reviewed annually, or as needed. Record of inspections maintained and review of follow-up work undertaken following inspection report. Visual Inspection and Health and Safety Training undertaken by Cllrs and Staff. Maintenance programmes instituted on all Council property/equipment. Risk assessment produced for each event along with an Event Management Plan.	Clerk/Staff/P&RC E&LC/CFC
	Events	I: 2-3	Regular inspection of spaces subject to Council ownership /control, as scheduled in the Asset Register.		
		R:Medium/High (4) In accordance with Risk Management Strategy, Operational risk measures in place plus event risk assessments	Health and Safety Policy in place and detailed individual risk assessments completed as required. Risk assessments prepared for each event in order to identify and minimise risk. Training provided for staff and volunteers.		
Area:	Risk:	Level:	Control System:	Monitoring and Review Method:	Responsibility:
	C.3. Failure to comply with legal responsibilities as a consequence of asset ownership (e.g. Skate Park)	L:1	Insurances in place. Inspection regime in place.	C.3.1. Insurances: Regime of inspection required for asset ownership areas, to insure insurance cover is retained.	Facilities Manager/Clerk
		I: 3			
		R:Medium (3)			

D. Employer Liability	D.1. Compliance with Employment Law	L:1	Regular Information updates – EALC, SLCC etc. H&SE and Working Method policies Guidance from external HR advisors & ACAS	D.1.1. Employment Legislation: Receive regular information and update from EALC, SLCC etc. H&SE Policies reviewed annually or as events require.	Clerk/P&RC
		I: 2			
		R:Low (2)			
	D.2. Failure to comply with HMRC PAYE requirements	L:1	Salary Administration contracted out to competent contractor.	D.2.1. HMRC: Changes and updates implemented by competent contractor. Internal Audit checks on payroll.	Payroll provider/ARFO
		I: 2			
		R:Low (2)			
Area:	Risk:	Level:	Control System:	Monitoring and Review Method:	Responsibility:
	D.3. Failure to have	L:1	Identified sources of staff-cover for senior staff absence.	D.3.1. Support Staff: Review staff training through the appraisal	Clerk/P&RC

	sufficient resources for unexpected staff absences	I: 3 2 R:Low (2)	<p>Specific operational tasks are being documented.</p> <p>Operational Manuals for specialist systems kept up to date.</p> <p>Reserves kept at a level to enable acting staff to be engaged.</p> <p>Succession Planning and additional staff training to provide absence cover.</p>	<p>system.</p> <p>General Reserves maintained at correct levels.</p>	
E. Legal Liability	E.1. Failure to ensure activities are within legal constraints	L:1 I: 1 R:Low (2)	<p>Expertise and training of Town Clerk</p> <p>Clerk to clarify any legal issue raised, seeking legal advice as necessary.</p> <p>Elected members kept up-to-date with legislation</p>	<p>E.1.1. Legal Requirements: Clerk to clarify any legal points raised, after seeking legal advice as necessary.</p> <p>Clerk circulates appropriate training courses and monitors attendance.</p>	Clerk/P&RC
	E.2. Failure to keep proper and Timely Reporting via the Minutes	L:1 I: 1 R:Low (1)	<p>All minutes published in draft form as soon as they are produced and published on website.</p> <p>Minutes altered as a consequence of any amendments immediately after signing.</p>	<p>E.2.1. Minutes: Minutes published on web site as well as being made available to the Press and Public.</p>	Clerk

Area:	Risk:	Level:	Control System:	Monitoring and Review Method:	Responsibility:
			Minutes also made available to Press and Public		
	E.3. Failure to keep proper control of documents	L:1	Legal documents kept in office along with legal documents in 'fire proof' cabinet.	E.3.1. Documents: Originals of leases and legal documents held in Council Office in fire-proof cabinet or at Council Solicitors I.T. support contractor provides a back-up test service Accounts provider bound by Service Level Agreement reviewed as appropriate by Policy & Resources Committee	Clerk/Staff P&RC / Clerk
I: 2		All computer documents backed up daily and copy kept off site.			
R:Low (2)		Financial records held on remote server as well as reports backed up locally with copy kept off-site.			
F. Councillor Propriety	F.1. Failure to register of interests & Gifts / Hospitality	L:1	Register of Interest completed & published on Web-Site.	F.1.1. Register of Interests: All Cllrs required to complete a declaration of interest – updated as necessary and requested to be reviewed annually Declarations called at each meeting Register of Interest published on website and subject to public scrutiny.	Cllrs
		I: 1	Declarations of interest called at each meeting		
		R:Low (1)			
	F.2. Failure to have a Code of Conduct	L:1	Council / Cllrs adopted Code of Conduct 2017	F.2.1. Code of Conduct: Council adopted SBC Code of Conduct Code of Conduct reviewed and updated if legislation changes	Clerk/Cllrs
I: 1					
R:Low (1)					

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[Agenda](#)

CFC Committee 05-02-19**Minute 71**

The Committee **RESOLVED** the Earmarked Reserves for recommendation to P&R and Council as follows:

EMR	Proposed increase/creation	2018/19 Closing balance
Skate Park (£4,902.25)	£1,000	£5,902.25
CFC other (£1,831.03)	-	£1,831.03
CC General (£20,594.88)	£10,000	£30,594.88
LCC Staffing	£10,000	£10,000.00
Paddling Pool (£2,159.70)	£500	£2,659.70
Strand Wharf Planters (£3,041.67)	-	£3,041.67

N.B. Community Centre Refurb & Equipment (£69,576.68), a resolution was passed by Council in March 2018 that moved this earmarked reserve to a Capital project. This was undertaken 1st April 2018.

E&L Committee 19-02-19**Minute 93**

The Committee **RESOLVED** the Earmarked Reserves for recommendation to P&R and Council as follows:

EMR	Proposed increase/creation	2017/18 Closing Balance
Allotments Infrastructure (£6,256.76)	-£5,096.45	£1,160.28
E&L Allotments (£2,620.19)	£1,000	£3,620.19
E&L General Services (£5,900)	-	£5,900.00
E&L General Events (£6,086.30)	-	£6,086.30
Leigh Lights (£10,159.00)	-	£10,159.00
Community Transport	£800	£800.00

P&R Committee 05-03-19**Minute 88**

The Committee **RESOLVED** the Earmarked Reserves for recommendation to Council as follows:

EMR	Proposed increase/creation	2018/19 Closing balance
Elections (£19,344.77)	£3,000	£22,344.77
Renewals Fund (£16,086.02)	£5,000	£21,086.02
Grant Aid (£3,971.18)	£1,500	£5,471.18
Volunteer Programme (£19,504.40)	£1,000	£20,504.40
Community Specials	£5,000	£5,000.00
Legal Costs (£3,475.00)	£1,500	£4,975.00
Old Town Spatial Plan (£2,000)	-£2,000	£0.00
Furniture & Equipment	£3,500	£3,500.00
Office Admin (£4,750.00)	-	£4,750.00
I.T.	£10,000	£10,000.00
Training (£1,500.00)	£500	£2,000.00
Salaries (£16,079.00)	-	£16,079.00

See note with recommendation – no change now to this Earmarked Reserve



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk



Chairman: Cllr Valerie Morgan
 Vice Chairman: Jill Healey
 Town Clerk: Helen Symmons

Payments List 3rd Jan 2019 – 22 Feb 2019 Report 2712/ Expenditure incurred under the General Power of Competence

Cheque	Expenditure	Payee	Purpose
		Expenditure - Cheques	
102722	£126.00	Miskos Ltd	Server monitoring and spam filtering
102723	£70.20	James Todd & Co Ltd	Payroll processing
102724	£4512.30	Aylesford Electrical Contractors Ltd	Additional lighting added to Christmas lights in 2018
102725	£10.00	Plot-holder	Refund key deposit
102726	£776.78	Jumbalance Trust	Distribution of collection at Leigh Lights
102727	£20.00	Plot-holder	Refund plot deposit
102728	£275.00	Southend Carnival CIC	Donation re Leigh Lights
102729	£55.43	Allen Bros Electrical (Factors) Ltd	Light bulbs and switches at Community Centre
102730	£300.00	Leigh Times Series Ltd	LTC Newsletter in January edition
102731	£2,865.00	Aylesford Electrical Contracts Ltd	Christmas lighting contract
102732	£19,140.00	Quantum Services	Supply & install of lift
102733	£1,164.00	Tree Fella PLC	Completion of allotment works
102734	£250.00	Entertainer	Children's events at Community Centre
102735	£31.17	Viking Direct	Stationery
102736	£30.00	Plot-holder	Refund plot deposit
102737	£32.30	Staff member	Refund travel expenses
102738	£1607.21	Johnson Gillies Ltd	Contract management roof repairs
102739	£574.80	Martin Electrics Ltd t/a GPM Electrics	Lighting upgrade on outside display boxes at Community Centre
102740	£150.00	Cash	Top up petty cash
102741	£156.40	Essex Supplies UK Ltd	Cleaning materials
102742	£20.38	Viking Direct	Stationery

102743	£261.60	Tormax United Kingdom Ltd	Door repairs
102744	£120.00	Secom plc	Alarm callout
102745	£1656.00	Event Communications Ltd	Radio hire Leigh Lights
102746	£70.20	James Todd & Co Ltd	Payroll processing
102747	£126.00	Miskos Ltd	Spam filtering & server monitoring
102748	£220.80	FP Mailing	Franking machine ink
102749	£48.72	Allen Bros. Electrical (Factors) Ltd	Light bulbs
102750	£19.18	Viking Direct	Stationery
102751	£312.00	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Staff training
102752	£19.26	Recognition Express Essex	Badges
102753	£183.48	Essex Supplies (UK) Ltd	Cleaning materials
102754	£50.00	EALC	Staff training
102755	£250.00	Entertainer	Children's events at Community Centre
102756	£35.10	Volunteer	Refund expenses
102757	£35.54	Staff member	Travel expenses
102758	£30.00	Staff member	Travel expenses
102759	£117.00	Staff member	Travel expenses
Bk Trs	£23000.00	Payroll	February payroll
Bk Trs	£7200.00	Allies and Morrison LLP	Leigh Old Town Spatial plan 1 st phase
Bk Trs	£2155.00	Paul Robinson Solicitors	Legal fees re Strand Wharf lease completion
Bk Trs	£22000.00	Payroll	January Payroll
Bk Trs	£7200.00	Allies and Morrison LLP	Leigh Old Town Spatial plan 2 nd phase
Bk Trs	£70.00	Manchester Drive Allotment Society	Retained deposits
		Expenditure – Imprest Items	
	£96.00	Heart Internet Ltd	Renewal of domain name
	£36.00	Mark One Hire	Tool hire
	£23.83	Southend Timber Ltd	Timber – Strand Wharf re bench repair
	£55.68	Picture Hanging System Ltd	Hooks for Art Wall
	£117.60	Kaizen Print Belfast	Presentation cheques
	£60.00	British Heart Foundation	Donation

	£60.00	Essex Salt	Rock salt
	£163.90	Amazon	Pigeon spikes
	£19.20	The Heating Centre	Minor maintenance Community Centre
		Expenditure – Direct Debits	
	£12.00	Annecto UK	Chip & pin terminal services
	£792.00	Southend Borough Council	Business Rates
	£57.96	DOTS	Photocopying costs
	£138.53	Wessex Products (Leasing) Ltd	Hand drier lease
	£6.00	Annecto UK	Virtual terminal charge
	£144.00	GO CARDLESS (Verde Coffee)	Coffee order costs recoverable by LTC
	£58.86	GO CARDLESS (Verde Coffee)	Coffee order costs recoverable by LTC
	£66.66	GO CARDLESS (Verde Coffee)	Coffee order costs recoverable by LTC
	£7.65	Global Payments	Card processing fees
	£15.33	Global Payments	Card processing fees
	£32.39	The Calls Warehouse	Call charges 477248
	£931.20	British Telecom	Line rental and broadband charges
	£25.53	SSE	Electricity Strand Wharf
	£571.75	SSE	Electricity Community Centre
	£0.50	SSE	Electricity CC new contract
	£442.80	CF Corporate Finance Ltd	Photocopier lease
	£49.81	SSE	Skate park electricity
	£92.15	Biffa Environmental	Skate Park bin collection
	£58.23	Biffa Environmental	Community Centre recycling
	£74.17	Biffa Environmental	Community Centre bin collection
	£12.00	Annecto UK	Chip & pin terminal services
	£6.00	Annecto UK	Virtual terminal services

	£74.05	DOTS	Photocopying
	£7.61	Global Payments	Card processing fees
	£16.02	Global Payments	Card processing fees
	£200.00	FP Mailing	Postage – Community Centre

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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT FOR COUNCIL

Last Reviewed and Resolved at Council 20th March 2018 (Minute 127)

Introduction

Corporate governance is defined as "a system of law and sound approaches by which corporations are directed and controlled focusing on the internal and external corporate structures with the intention of monitoring the actions of management and directors and thereby mitigating agency risks which may stem from the misdeeds of corporate officers"

Corporate governance is about doing the right things in the right way. It's about demonstrating accountability and transparency in our actions and decisions. It affects us all.

The Audit Commission has defined corporate governance in the public services as *"the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives". It therefore requires "robust systems and processes, effective leadership and high standards of behaviour, a culture based on openness and honesty and an external focus on the needs of service users and the public".*

Responsibility for Financial Management

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council must conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. This review must be considered by the Council and they must approve an annual governance statement prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control and accompanied by the Accounting Statements.

Governance and Accountability

It is the responsibility of small bodies (the Council) to put in place proper arrangements to ensure the proper conduct of their financial affairs, and to monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements in practice. Small bodies are required to maintain proper accounting records and control systems and to maintain an adequate system of internal audit of those accounting records and control systems.

Small bodies meet their responsibilities by preparing and publishing, and providing the auditor with, the accounts prepared for the financial year, together with such additional information and explanation as is necessary to provide sufficient evidence that they have maintained

adequate systems of internal control and internal audit throughout the financial year. With the relaxation of the two signature rule, such proper arrangements to ensure proper conduct of financial affairs is even more crucial.

The Council maintains and regularly reviews its Corporate Governance, Financial and Physical Risk Assessment, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Annual Return

The Council must submit an Annual Return in accordance with proper accounting practices. The Annual Return:

- Reports the annual statement of accounts as approved by the Council
- Certifies that the Council has discharged its statutory duties in relation to its financial affairs
- Records that the external auditor has fulfilled their statutory responsibility
- Informs the local taxpayer and elector about how their council has operated during the last financial year
- Informs government and other stakeholders about the activity of local councils

Annual Governance Statement and Financial Risk Register

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council has the responsibility to adhere to the guidelines. Specifically the Town Council has to consider the 8 statements below and to consider how it manages them (see the tables supporting each statement).

1. The Council have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements with the specific control measures outlined below.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Budgeting	<p>Budget prepared and set in a timely manner before setting the precept prior to the commencement of the financial year.</p> <p>Actual performance against budget is monitored bi-monthly during the year</p> <p>A financial appraisal undertaken before commencement of any significant project or long term commitment.</p>	Corrective action taken where necessary
Accounting records & supporting documents	<p>RFO appointed has determined a system of financial controls and discharged their duties under Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <p>RFO appointed has put in place effective procedures to accurately and promptly record all financial transactions and maintain up to date accounting records throughout the year</p>	

	together with all necessary supporting information.	
Bank Reconciliation	Statements reconciling each bank account with its accounting record are prepared on a regular basis, including at the financial year end and reviewed by members of the P&R Committee.	
Investments	The Council's funds are managed properly and any amounts surplus to requirements are invested appropriately. An Investment Strategy is in place in accordance with DCLG guidance March 2018	
Statement of Accounts	Arrangements are in place to enable preparation of accurate and timely accounts in compliance with statutory obligations and proper practices.	

2. The Council has maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness with the specific control measures outlined below.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Standing Orders & Financial Regulations	<p>Standing Orders & Financial Regulations are in place governing the operation of Council.</p> <p>Financial Regulations incorporate provisions for securing competition and regulating the manner in which tenders are invited.</p> <p>Standing Orders are reviewed regularly, are fit for purpose and adhered to.</p>	Further review May 2019
Safe and Efficient Arrangements to Safeguard Public Money	<p>Practical and resilient arrangements exist covering how the Council orders goods and services, incurs liabilities, manages debtors, makes payments and handles receipts.</p> <p>The RFO has formal responsibility and</p>	<p>Internal dual controls procedures continually reviewed.</p> <p>Appropriate training is undertaken as necessary</p>

	<p>arranges the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.</p> <p>Controls over money are embedded in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with a 'two member signature' control.</p> <p>The Risk Register and internal controls focus on the safety of the Council's assets.</p>	Appropriate training is undertaken as necessary
Employment	<p>The remuneration payable to all employees is approved in advance.</p> <p>A robust payroll arrangement is in place to cover the accuracy and legitimacy of payments of salaries and associated liabilities.</p> <p>Duties under employment legislation and pension obligations are complied with</p>	
VAT	Robust arrangements are in place for handling VAT responsibilities. The Council is now VAT registered, Opting to Tax the Community Centre	The Council is to review its VAT arrangement annually
Fixed Assets and Equipment	<p>Assets are secured, properly maintained and efficiently managed.</p> <p>Appropriate procedures are followed for asset disposal</p>	
Review of effectiveness	The internal auditor undertakes a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control with reports made direct to Council.	

3. The Council took all reasonable steps to assure itself that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Acting within its	The Council hold the General Power of	GPC to be reviewed and resolved May 2019

powers	Competence and is exercised in accordance with the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.	
Regulations and proper practices	<p>The Town Clerk is CiLCA qualified and proper practices are regularly reviewed and new requirements or changes to existing ones are reported to members and applied.</p> <p>The Council has not taken any decision during the year or authorised any action that exceeds its powers or contravenes any laws, regulations or proper practices.</p>	<p>GDPR changes to be continued to be reported with training of members as necessary annual audit undertaken February 2019</p>

4. The Council has provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Exercise of public rights	<p>The Council provided for the exercise of public rights set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.</p> <p>The RFO published Sections 1 and 2 of the annual return; a declaration that the status of the statements of accounts is ‘unaudited’ and a statement that set out the details of how public rights can be exercised.</p>	
External Auditor’s Review	A notice of the conclusion of the external auditor’s limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information was published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015	

5. The Council has carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance where required. Internal controls listed below.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Identifying and assessing risks	Financial Risk Assessment Register – Reviewed March 2019 Risk Management Strategy reviewed March 2019	
Addressing risks	Operational risk registers are in place and reviewed annually with appropriate use of insurance cover.	

6. The Council maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems. Controls listed below.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Internal Audit	The Council have undertaken an effective internal audit to evaluate risk management, control and governance processes.	
Provision of information	The Council have taken all necessary steps to facilitate the work of the internal auditors, making available all relevant documents and records and supplying any information or explanations required.	

7. The Council took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
	No matters were brought to the attention of Council by its external auditor and internal audit	Should this occur the Council will take corrective action as appropriate.

8. The Council has considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a financial impact on the council and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.

Effective Processes	Action Taken	Further Actions Required
Significant events	No such events are identified.	Should this occur the Council will determine whether the financial consequences need to be reflected in the statements of accounts..

The internal audit

The internal audit plan demonstrates how the audit work will provide assurance for the Council's Annual Governance Statement. Internal audit maintains awareness of the Council's corporate governance arrangement

Conclusion

The Council has updated its budget procedure to enable it to have more control and awareness of spending. Other risks are controlled through review of insurances, training, internal audit and review of this, and consideration of assets and reserves.

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Leigh-on-Sea Town Council - Meetings timetable New Structure															
Meeting	Time	Regular Date	May 2019	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 2020	Feb	Mar	April	May 2020
Council	7.30	3rd Tuesday Month 1	14th		16th		17th		19th		21st		17th		19th
Finance & Governance	7.30	4 meetings a year	*				3rd		5th				3rd		5th
Planning & Licensing	7.30	2nd & 4th Tuesday (except)	21st	11th 25th	9th 23rd	13th 27th	10th 24th	8th 22nd	12th 26th	10th	14th 28th	11th 25th	10th 24th	14th 28th	12th 26th
Community	7.30	3rd Tuesday Month 2		18th		20th		15th		17th		18th		21st	
Staffing	7.30	At least once a year						29th				4th			
AALG	2.00	1st Tuesday Quarterly			2nd			1st			7th			7th	
									Annual Town Electors Meeting		Friday 24th April 2020				
* in a non election year a F&G meeting would take place in May exceptions															

[Agenda](#)

Leigh-On-Sea Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2018-19 (Interim Update)

Prepared by John Watson

***For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Limited***

Background and Scope

The Accounts and Audit Regulations introduced from 1st April 2001 require all Town and Parish Councils to implement an independent internal audit examination of their Accounts and accounting processes annually. The Council complied accordingly, in terms of independence from the Council decision making process, appointing a local practice to provide the service for the Council from the outset. Subsequently, we at Auditing Solutions Limited, were appointed to provide the function to the Council for 2010-2011 and subsequent years.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2018-19 financial year, during the course of our two interim visit to the Council, which took place on 4th November 2018 and on 19th February 2019.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our reviews for the year to date, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrecording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts (AGAR). Our programme of cover has again been designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

We have concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work undertaken to date this year, the Council has again maintained more than adequate and effective internal control arrangements. We are pleased to again acknowledge the quality of records maintained by the Clerk and the Finance Assistant and thank them both for their assistance, which has again ensured the smooth progress of our review process. We particularly commend the Finance Assistant for continuing to keep the Council's affairs in order whilst also dealing with the problems created by the Council's VAT Registration.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely on, for any reason whatsoever, this report, its content or conclusions.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounts and Accounting Arrangements

Our objective has been to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. We have: -

- Checked and agreed the opening balance detail for 2018-19 to the closing Trial Balance and certified AGAR for 2017-18;
- Ensured that the cost centre and nominal ledger income and expenditure coding structure remains appropriate for purpose;
- Commenced checking and testing of detail in the cashbooks as produced by the Edge accounting system software, verifying all payment and receipt transactions for the HSBC Bank for the months of May and August 2018 and for the month of December 2018 with the HSBC Current, Payroll and Imprest accounts bank statements;
- Similarly, commenced checking and testing of detail in the cashbooks as produced by the Edge accounting system software, verifying all payment and receipt transactions for the HSBC Bank for the months of May and August 2018 and for the month of December 2018 with the HSBC Savings account bank statements;
- Also checked and agreed transactions on the CCLA Public Sector deposit account from cashbooks to statements for the nine months to 31st December 2018;
- Verified that regular, monthly bank reconciliations continue to be undertaken on all bank accounts, noting that appropriate hard copies are retained on file and that members are regularly provided with same. We have checked and agreed the bank reconciliations as at 31st May and 30th September 2018 and as at 31st December 2018 on all five accounts with no matters arising; and,
- Ensured that no long outstanding unrepresented cheques or other anomalous entries exist

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall review the closing month's transactions at our final visit ensuring the accurate disclosure of year-end balances in the Statement of Accounts and AGAR.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance documentation and processes in place, and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings) all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no

actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We have: -

- Reviewed the minutes of meetings of the Full Council and its Standing Committees (except Planning), where available, to the end of January 2019 to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability either in the short, medium or long term exist, also that no other issues are in existence whereby the Council may potentially be considering or have taken decisions that might result in ultra vires expenditure being incurred with no such issues apparent;
- Previously noted that the Council properly adopted the General Power of Competence at the Full Council meeting in May 2015: subsequently, we note that re-adoption was not required in subsequent year in the absence of Council elections in these years. We understand that the next elections are in 2019; and
- Also noted that both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee and subsequently ratified by Council at their meeting on 15th May 2018 (minute 11,2 refers).

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to Governance at our final visit.

Review of Purchasing and Payment Procedures

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- Invoices are supported by an official order, where appropriate;
- Alternatively, invoices are supported by quotations and / or a formal tender process, where applicable under the terms of the Council's Financial Regulations;
- Members are provided with, and subsequently authorise, all supplier payments and that appropriate details are recorded in the Council minutes;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- And VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have continued testing in this area, examining a sample of all those payments individually in excess of £2,000, together with a more random sample of approximately every 30th cashbook transaction irrespective of value, for the ten months to 31st January 2019. Our sample comprised 55 items, totalling £279,717 and representing 80.00% of all non-salary expenditure to that date. We point out that the high percentage of items tested is due to the expenditure on the Community Centre roof.

We note that the Council holds a debit card which is available for urgent goods, services and internet purchases. We have checked transactions in respect of the debit card as part of the testing process as mentioned above.

We have confirmed that VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery. We note that the Council has registered for VAT this registration being backdated to 1st October 2016. We also note that the Council opted to tax the income from the Community Centre but that, due to a discrepancy in the submission of the appropriate forms to HMR&C, whilst the Council understood that it should charge VAT on hire fees from 18th September 2018, the actual date from which it could charge VAT on hire fees was 20th November 2018. We understand that an arrangement has been reached with HMR&C regarding the VAT charged for the period 18th September 2018 to 20th November 2018. We further understand that there may be an issue regarding certain input tax claimed in that period and will review this matter at our final visit.

Finally, we are pleased to note that the Finance Assistant has prepared and submitted to HMR&C the VAT Return for the period to 31st December 2018.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall extend our test sample for the remainder of the financial year at our final visit, also verifying the accuracy of the VAT Returns submitted by reference to the Edge accounting system.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition. We have: -

- Previously noted that an appropriate review of the risk assessment register for all principal areas of the Council's activities was undertaken and that a formal Strategy and detailed risk registers were re-adopted by the Full Council at its meetings in March 2018. We understand that the Register will be reviewed again in March 2019. We remind the Clerk and Members of the Governance and Accountability Manual - Practitioners Guide (2014 edition)" mandatory requirement that risk assessments are reviewed and re-adopted formally by the Council each year;

- Examined the current year's insurance policy schedules to 18th August 2019, cover continuing to be provided by Aviva, noting that both Employer's and Public Liability remain at £10 million; that Fidelity Guarantee cover remains at £450,000 and that Loss of Revenue cover stands at £250,000. We note that the Town Hall insurance is provided by Southend Borough Council; and,
- Noted that the Council's skatepark is inspected on a weekly basis by in house staff, records being kept of these inspections and the appropriate action being taken if any issues arise. We also note that an annual inspection is carried out by a RoSPA accredited independent contractor.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to risk management at future visits and take this opportunity to remind the clerk and Members of the now mandatory requirement (Governance and Accountability Manual – 2014 edition refers) for risk assessments to be subjected to annual review and formal adoption by the full Council.

Budgetary Control and Reserves

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and level of precept to be drawn down from the District Council: also, that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also aim to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

We are pleased to note at our second visit that a detailed budget exercise was undertaken and approved by Council at its meeting on 22nd January 2019 and have further noted that the precept has been agreed by Council at the same meeting at £421,625 (Minute 92 refers).

We are also pleased to note that members continue to be provided with sound, periodic and comprehensive management accounting information in order to provide an appropriate means for monitoring budgetary performance during the current year.

We further note that Earmarked Reserves were agreed at the previous year end and that no Earmarked Reserves have been moved to General Reserves in the year to date. We do note however that it is intended to transfer £5,860 from the Allotment Infrastructure Earmarked Reserves to cover the cost of tree works on the allotments (Council minute 11b refers) and it is also intended to transfer £3,064 from the Salaries Earmarked Reserves to cover the extra cost incurred through the National Pay Awards (Council minute 11d refers).

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation; we consider that appropriate resources are in place to finance the ongoing revenue spending and future development aspirations of the Council.

Review of Income

In this review area, we aim to ensure that the Council has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that all income due is identified, invoiced (where appropriate), recovered and banked in a timely manner.

In addition to the Precept, the Council's principal source of income is the Town Hall Community Centre, supplemented by allotment rentals, monthly farmers' market pitch fees, community transport ticket sales and activities such as Christmas Lights and other events.

Consequently: -

- We have noted that, at their meeting on 27th June 2017, The Environmental and Leisure Committee recommended that an annual percentage increase of 4% be applied year on year as standard until the allotment budget breaks even (minute 11 refers). This was subsequently approved by Council and would take effect from 1st October 2018. It was further agreed that only the water charges would need to be reviewed on an annual basis;
- We have further noted that Council agreed at their meeting on 17th July 2018 (minute 46 refers) that hire charges in respect of the Town Hall Community Centre are not increased except for 3 categories in 2019/20 and remain the same for 2020/21 but that VAT should be passed on to hirers with immediate effect from becoming VAT registered. We have previously noted in this report the situation regarding VAT;
- We also note that the bookings and receipting processes for the Town Hall Community Centre continues to utilise the bespoke Edge software; we have at our first visit tested a sample of sales ledger invoices for the Town Hall Community Centre bookings by reference to a sample of the bookings diary, being approximately 85 items in the week commencing 3rd September 2018, to ensure that each entry had been invoiced, that the fees charged were in accord with the approved scale of fees and that payments had been received in a timely manner; and,
- We have also at our first visit tested a sample of the Finance Officer's banking control sheets in September 2017 to cashbook postings and bank statement entries; we are pleased to note that funds are deposited with the bank in a timely manner.
- We have, at our second visit checked the allotment income for the year commencing 1st October 2018 with the record of allotment holders with no issues arising

We are pleased to note that allotment tenancies are reviewed on a regular basis with available allotments being offered to prospective tenants on the waiting list.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation; time allowing, we shall undertake further testing as considered necessary at our final visit.

Petty Cash Account and Debit Card Usage

The Council operates a limited petty cash account which is periodically topped up as and when required; at the time of this interim visit just one re-imburement cheque in the amount of £120 had been required in the first six months of the year.

Payment transactions are entered into the Edge Expenditure reports in the same manner as other supplier cheque and direct debit payments with full details of the payee and goods with VAT separately recorded for periodic recovery where applicable.

We have tested a sample of payment transactions for the month of September 2018 and are pleased to report that all expenditure items were properly supported by till receipts or supplier invoices and correctly entered in the ledgers.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme as regards employee contribution bandings. To meet that objective, we have:

- Ensured that the Council reviews and approves pay scales for staff annually and has duly implemented the NJC award for 2018-19;
- Noted that a payroll bureau provider, James Todd, was engaged to provide the service in the year under review;
- Agreed the amounts paid to employees by reference to the approved pay scales on the NJC annual schedules, examining a sample of all those salary payments made in September 2018;
- Ensured that Tax and National Insurance deductions for all employees have been made applying the appropriate PAYE code and NIC Table;
- Checked that the correct superannuation percentage deductions, as amended from 1st April 2018, are being applied where applicable;
- Checked and agreed the net payments to staff from copy payslips to the Bacs summary reports and resultant cashbook entries; and
- Similarly checked and agreed the payment over of deductions to HMR&C and Essex Pension Fund from copy payroll reports to cashbooks and have, as part of the supplier payments testing noted earlier, summarised the month by month total payments with explanations obtained for any variances arising therein.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Asset Registers

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all Councils to maintain a record of all assets owned.

We have noted that the Clerk continues to maintain an asset register and that this will be updated at the year end.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation; we shall review this area at our final visit ensuring that the correct figure of Fixed Assets is reported in the AGAR.

Investments and Loans

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is “investing” surplus funds, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis in appropriate banking and investment institutions, that an appropriate investment policy is in place, that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on any such investments made, that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records and that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with appropriate loan agreements.

The Council currently has one CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account in place and, as noted earlier in this report, we have checked and agreed all movement on this account for the nine months to 31st December 2018 and also verified the Edge cashbook balance to their statements as at the same date.

We are pleased to note that that, following a recommendation from the Resources and Policy Committee, Council approved an Investment Policy at their meeting on 15th May 2018 (minute 11.d refers).

The Council has no loans either repayable by, or to, it.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have been identified in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Agenda