



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Bernard Arscott | **Vice Chairman:** Cllr Sandra McCurdy

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons *PSLCC*



MINUTES of the
FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

held on
on Wednesday, 8th November 2023, commencing at 7:30 pm.
at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road, SS9 1SP

Committee Membership Cllrs: Cllr Bernard Arscott* - Chairman, Cllr Rosemary Arscott, Cllr Owen Cartey, Cllr Jonathan Garston, Cllr Carol Lambert, Cllr John Lloyd, Cllr Sandra McCurdy* - Vice Chairman, Cllr Dr. Anne Robinson, Cllr Judith Suttling.

1. HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllrs R Arscott, Robinson and Cartey. Proposed Cllr Arscott and carried unanimously.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS.

There were no declarations

Public questions

Comments – 15% underspend on communities, will this cover the expense of Christmas? What will the year end position be. What will be the consequence of the 2.5% cut?

Questions from Cate.

Audit cost £1,080.

Duty of care support for staff.

Will the councillor who made the allegation resign and will he apologise to staff

4. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSAL.

Chairman's speech.

5. TO CONSIDER INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT.

The council noted the report and is pleased to record that it found no evidence for the potential for fraud and wishes to make it clear that the audit was intended to test the system and not investigate the honesty of any staff or councillors. On behalf of the council, the chairman apologises for any distress or uncertainty caused.

6. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC – PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 -- That in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded and instructed to withdraw (SOs 3(d), and 24(a) – Staffing) Proposed Cllr Arscott seconded Cllr McCurdy and carried unanimously.

7. MOTION TO APPOINT ALTERNATIVE LOCUM TOWN CLERK.

A discussion about the governance on the clerk's suspension concluded with an agreement to provide the legal advice on which the decision was based. Cllr McCurdy will provide by Monday.

The Committee noted the proposals to appoint Gina Lopes as locum town clerk at the staffing committee. It was confirmed that the appointment would be for four days a week at a day rate of £400 for a 7.5 hour day plus the cost of commuting.

The cost will be taken from the reserve. The Committee noted the cost and reflected on the need for speedy resolution of the staffing issues.

8. GRANT CONSIDERATIONS.

Defer to full council. Proposed Cllr Arscott and carried unanimously.

The meeting was reopened at 20.38.

Grant Application safe space for homework – support for children as advertised in the application.

Cllr Arscott gave a short summary of the appointment of a locum clerk dependent on the resolution of the Clerk's employment.