



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 Jill Healey
Vice Chairman: Cllr Vivien Rosier
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons *PSLCC*

In accordance with Paragraphs 7 & 10(2) (b) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, you are hereby summoned to a meeting of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, to be held online on **Tuesday 30th June 2020** commencing at 7.00pm when it is hoped to transact the following business.

All participants are requested to enter the waiting room between 6.45 and 6.55 pm, ready for the meeting to commence at 7 pm.

To join the meeting:

Either click on this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2840165282?pwd=MVhpYnVNODBzSXk5U1hqUjFkZkZkZDZzOj09>

or use the Zoom App on your device and input:

Meeting ID: 284 016 5282
Password: 1996

Or you can phone dial into the meeting audio using one of the phone numbers:

One tap mobile
+442034815237,,2840165282#,,,,0#,,1996# United Kingdom
+442034815240,,2840165282#,,,,0#,,1996# United Kingdom

Dial by your location
+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom
+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom
+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom
+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 284 016 5282
Password: 1996

Members of Council and members of the public are reminded that the meeting may be recorded by the Town Clerk in both audio and video to assist with the recording of Council minutes.

AGENDA

1. THE CHAIRMAN'S OPENING MEETING PROTOCOL ANNOUNCEMENT
2. VIRTUAL MEETINGS POLICY ([Appendix 1](#)) page 4 **DECISION ITEM**

To cover the enabling of remote meetings of Council it is **RECOMMENDED** that Council adopt the Virtual Meetings Policy

3. APPENDIX TO STANDING ORDERS ([Appendix 2](#)) page 6 **DECISION ITEM**

To cover the enabling of remote meetings of Council it is **RECOMMENDED** that Council adopt Standing Orders Appendix 2

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
5. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
6. APPROVAL OF [COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING 17TH MARCH 2020](#)
7. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION
8. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ([Appendix 3](#)) page 9

DECISION ITEMS

9. ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

By law a parish council must hold an annual meeting in May however due to the current pandemic, temporary legislation was passed on 4th April 2020 and regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 disapplies paragraph 7 of Schedule 12 to the 1972 Act meaning there is no requirement for a parish council to hold its annual meeting although a council may do so if they so choose. Therefore, the Council need not hold an annual council meeting until May 2021. If that is decided, then all current appointments continue until the next annual meeting.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Council decide on this matter.

10. TO NOTE INTERNAL ACCOUNT TRANSFERS AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE ([Appendix 4](#)) page 12

Council are asked to **NOTE** the account transfers and **RESOLVE** the expenditure

11. CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR FOR HERSHELL WARD

The co-option procedure will be followed as per the [policy](#) resolved July 2018. Prior to the next Council meeting, the successful candidate will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office on the doorstep of their home witnessed by the Town Clerk adhering to social distance. The successful candidate will then be able to lawfully take part in meetings. For the remainder of this Council meeting, they will be invited to remain in the meeting but cannot take part in Council business.

Interest for the Casual Vacancy has been received from (in alphabetical order)

Antoinette Adams
Tina Benn
Joe Cresswell
Dr. David Bowry
Keith Fletcher
Jackie Jackson-Smith
Declan Lynn
John O'Connor
Michael Peat
James Preston
Stuart Routledge
Philip Stanbridge
David Stansfield
Dr. Marimuthu Velmurugan

FOR NOTING

12. DELEGATED AND COUNCIL DECISIONS MADE DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ([Appendix 5](#)) page 18
13. REPORTING ITEMS DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ([Appendix 6](#)) page 25
14. INTERNAL AUDIT FINAL REPORT 2019/20 ([Appendix 7](#)) page 27

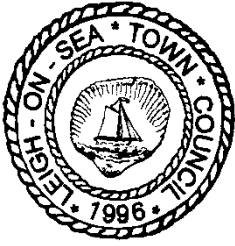
To receive the report from Audit Solutions Ltd

Helen Symmons

Town Clerk
23rd June 2020

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

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBA



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council



Remote Meeting Policy

2020

1. Introduction

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council recognises the opportunities offered by meeting virtually in times that a physical meeting is not appropriate and has developed this policy to assist Chairmen, councillors and members of the public and press to understand how these meetings differ from a physical meeting and to assist people to engage in debate and decision making. The policy is to be delivered within 'The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020' and that are currently enacted for meeting on and up to 7 May 2021.

2. Publishing the agenda and providing documents

Councillors are to be summonsed as per regulations with the agenda and documents being placed on the Council's website. No agendas will be published on physical noticeboards. Any person unable to access the Council's website must contact the Council and request an electronic copy of the agenda and documents to be forwarded as appropriate. In cases that documents originate from a third-party, electronic links will be provided where available.

3. Virtual Meeting 'platform'

Leigh Town Council will utilise Zoom Pro to provide video communications. Zoom Pro enables video and audio conferencing for persons using mobile devices, desktops, and fixed room systems.

In preparation for the meeting the Clerk to the Council will publish via the summons:

- The meeting link
- Meeting ID
- Meeting passcode

4. Standing Orders

Standing Orders have been amended with an appendix to take into account the current change in legislation to allow for remote meetings of the Council. The Standing Orders and the appendix will be used in the same manner as normal to guide the meeting.

5. Specific Virtual Meeting Arrangements

a. Discussions

This section applies if members are experiencing good connectivity. In the case of poor connectivity see 5c.

During the meeting all persons other than the Chairman will be muted. During the public participation period members of the public will be required to 'enable video' in order for them to be visible to the Chairman and will raise their hand to indicate that they wish to speak. Their microphone will then be unmuted and they can address the meeting. Following the conclusion of their address the microphone will be muted.

During the meeting members and officers will raise their hand to indicate to the Chairman that they wish to speak on an agenda item. The Chairman has the discretion to operate a roll call for Councillor views on individual agenda items as an alternative to this, if more appropriate to the matter under discussion.

All members attending the meeting must mute their microphones after they have finished speaking, this is necessary to negate interference with the meeting from background noise.

b. Voting

All voting will be undertaken by a show of hands or the Town Clerk asking each councillor in turn for their individual vote.

c. Poor connectivity

In the case of poor connectivity the Chairman will decide whether to continue with the meeting or to reconvene.

In the case of video not being available for some or all of members attending, the Chairman can choose to continue but to operate on a roll call for councillor views on individual agenda items.

d. Attendance

If a member is believed to have 'dropped out' this will be minuted. If 'drop outs' result in the meeting becoming inquorate members will endeavour to rejoin for a period of 15 minutes. After 15 minutes if the meeting is still inquorate the Chairman will suspend the meeting and reconvene at a later time and date subject to the statutory days of notice. Members will be telephoned to advise of the suspension.

e. Telephone attendance

Persons wishing to attend by telephone are advised to contact the Clerk in advance in order that processes can be put in place to enable appropriate engagement.

6. Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Normal Standing Orders apply with regard to Conduct at Meetings and all attendees are expected to be mindful of the difficulties people experience with regard to the operation of technology.

Behaviour that is contrary to the intended outcomes of the meeting will be dealt with at the discretion of the Chairman. For a member of the public or press this may result in them being dismissed from the remote meeting.

7. Declaration of Interests

A councillor that has declared an interest that requires them to leave the meeting will be placed in the waiting room. On conclusion of the item for which the declaration is made the councillor will be returned to the meeting

8. Public Participation

The Clerk will read any pre-submitted addresses from the press and public.

9. Confidential Matters

Confidential matters will be dealt with through a separate remote meeting that is available to members only. On conclusion of the non-confidential matters on an agenda the meeting will be suspended for members to rejoin using the confidential meeting link that will have been provided to members only.

10. Recording

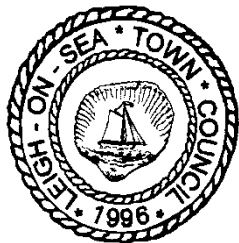
Meetings may be recorded by the Clerk for the purposes of aiding the Clerk to produce accurate minutes of decisions made.

11. Information

The chat view box on the meeting will be disabled as at a minimum, members have to be heard by all attending.

Policy adopted 2020

For further information see The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made/Agenda>



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council



Appendix - Amendment to the Standing Orders during the COVID-19 Lockdown as per

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS
(CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

ITEM 3 - MEETINGS GENERALLY

NEW STANDING ORDER - Meetings shall take place at a time and date as the Council shall determine. LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 4(a)

NEW STANDING ORDER – The Council may alter the frequency, move or cancel such meetings. LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 4(a)

NEW STANDING ORDER - A meeting of a local authority is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.
LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 5 (1)

NEW STANDING ORDER – Members (including members of the public) in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time if all of the conditions in subsection are satisfied:

- (a)** to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,
- (b)** to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
- (c)** to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 5 (2) (3) & (4)

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 3 D - Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public’s exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public’s exclusion.
Member and public access to documents and remote access of public and press to a local authority meeting to enable them to attend or participate in that meeting by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming. LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 6(b) (c)

NEW STANDING ORDER - A meeting being “open to the public” includes access to the meeting through remote means including (but not limited to) video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming and where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person;
LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 13(a)

NEW STANDING ORDER - Being “present” at a meeting includes access through remote means mentioned in paragraph (a) above.”
LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 13(b)

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 3 i – A person shall notify the meeting when requesting to speak by means of electronically raising a hand.

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 3 S - Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a decision shall be by an electronic raising of hands or by the Town Clerk asking Members to verbally announce their vote each in turn.
LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 2 Reg 6(a)

At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

ITEM 5 – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 5B – Notice of a PDG is to be given to ALL Councillors preferably one week in advance of the proposed meeting date. Meetings will be held through remote means. Members in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time if the following condition is satisfied:

(a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance.

ITEM 6 - ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 6 B - In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.
This no longer applies until May 2021
LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 6 (c)

ITEM 15 – DRAFT MINUTES

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 15 C - The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the Council at the next available meeting of the Council in person and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 15 D - If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect, at the next available meeting of the Council in person

“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”

ITEM 18 – PROPER OFFICER

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 18 Ci, BULLET POINT 2 - Publish on the website of the Council, the public notice of the time, place and agenda. LAPCP Regulations 2020 Part 1 Reg 13 (a)

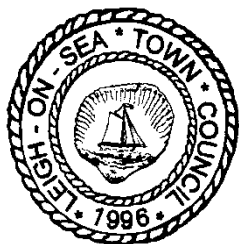
ITEM 20 - ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

REVISED STANDING ORDER ITEM 20 E - The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 3 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 31 August.

Reviewed: 2020

Next Review: As soon as the legislation changes

[Agenda](#)



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REPORT 2744/HS

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT JUNE 2020

TRAINING

Staff

Staff have been using the time during the lock down period to undertake online courses concentrating on personal development. These are free.

Additionally, the Town Clerk sent to both staff and Councillors information on Able Futures a Dept for Works and Pensions mental health programme.

TOWN CLERK'S DIARY

EALC Executive Committee

At the March meeting of the Executive Committee, a whole series of resolutions were made to enable working to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. The July meeting of the Executive Committee will take place remotely.

Leigh Partnership Group

Remote meetings have continued to assist both progression of the wayfinding signage project and safe opening of businesses in the Borough with the Town Clerk being part of operational and strategic group working with the Borough and various partners.

SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks)

Although no meetings have taken place, the Committee continue to stay in contact and assist members with support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Southend Reactivation Stakeholder Group

I have attended weekly remote meetings of this partnership group as well as an operational retail group to represent Leigh through the Leigh Partnership Group. I have been able to highlight issues specific to Leigh and from traders. Posters encouraging safer working and shopping have been available from the lobby of the Community Centre for traders to collect.

Developing a High Level Transport Strategy for Southend Workshop

The Borough Council have held online workshops for various stakeholders within the Borough and being held remotely proved an effective method for a workshop. The results from the workshops will be fed into a Borough Council consultation which is expected in the Autumn and which will be presented to Council for consideration.

TOWN COUNCIL INVITATIONS/ATTENDANCE

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, civic engagements are all cancelled.

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS FOLLOW UP RECORDS 2019/20

Committee	Minute No. and Subject	Completion status	Completion Date	Outcome	Forward Action Required	Responsible
COUNCIL 20-11-18	82 Request to Council	RESOLVED to have a board in recognition of Town Clerks who serve the Council		Board is in progress. Maker has had surgery and recuperating		TC
COUNCIL 17-09-19	77. Defibrillator	RESOLVED to accept offer from Leigh Lions		Defibrillator ordered and arrived. Installation will be prior to Easter with appropriate promotion	Due to COVID-19 pandemic installation delayed	TC
COUNCIL 17-09-19	78. Execution of Legal Deed	RESOLVED		Still to be executed. TC chases solicitors frequently		TC
COUNCIL 19-11-19	92. Committees	RESOLVED new partnership working proposal with SBC subject to proposal cost terms being agreed		Meeting held with SBC. Site visit awaited and further details from SBC so a business case can be submitted	TC has chased several times on this but nothing further heard from SBC	TC
COUNCIL 19-11-19	94. CIL PDG	RESOLVED in principle subject to research		Nothing further heard despite frequent requests for information	No planting included in project at present. Revisit once structure rebuilt	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	125. Apologies for Absence	RESOLVED to accept Cllr Hart's apologies	17-03-20		NFA	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	126. Public Representation	RESOLVED COVID-19 risk assessment	17-03-20		NFA	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	126. Public Representation	RESOLVED COVID-19 continuity plan	17-03-20	Measures put in to effect	NFA	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	130. Committees	RESOLVED minutes 43,45,46,47,48, 51,52,54 and 58	17-03-20	Administration put in to effect to complete each minute	NFA	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	134. Social Isolation Projects	RESOLVED Social isolation projects budget £5,000 from 1 st April from Volunteer EMR		PDG meeting held 19-03-20 re COVID-19 community resilience plan Further PDG to be held re other projects	PDG delayed due to COVID-19 lockdown	TC

Committee	Minute No. and Subject	Completion status	Completion Date	Outcome	Forward Action Required	Responsible
COUNCIL 17-03-20	133. Councillor motion	Wished PDG to be held for Council position on airport formulated to represent the community		PDG meeting to be held with Cllr O'Boyle in the Chair	PDG delayed due to COVID-19 lockdown	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	135. Spatial Plan PDG	RESOLVED further PDGs for each vision project to be held			PDG delayed due to COVID-19 lockdown	
COUNCIL 17-03-20	140. Volunteer of the Year	Deferred Volunteer of the Year voting		Voting took place by email during COVID-19 lockdown as required for Annual report	NFA	

[Agenda](#)



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Payments List 20th Feb 2020 – 17th June 2020 Report 2745/ Expenditure incurred under the General Power of Competence

Cheque	Expenditure	Payee	Purpose
		Expenditure - Cheques	
103003	£150.00	Cash	Top up petty cash
103004	£25.00	Leigh Road Baptist Church	Donation for talk at LTC Social Club
103005	£28.80	Quantum Services	Lift repairs
103006	£214.79	Essex Supplies (UK) Ltd	Cleaning materials
103007	£232.65	Staff member	Reimburse expenses
103008	£55.93	Mark One Hire	Acrow prop hire
103009	£35.40	Allen Bros Electrical (Factors) Ltd	Light bulbs
103010	£50.40	EALC	Staff training
103011	£62.44	Viking Direct	Stationery
BK TRS	£139.20	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£270.00	Hanson Roofing	Roof repairs LCC
BK TRS	£59.78	Mark One Hire Ltd	Acrow prop hire
BK TRS	£41280.54	Gowlain Building Group	Extension and alterations Community Centre
BK TRS	£278.40	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£2726.70	Southend BC	Commercial Ins premium
BK TRS	£5187.60	Nicholas James Fire & Security	Balance due for Fire Alarm installation LCC
BK TRS	£3161.14	EALC	Various training courses
BK TRS	£45.00	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£25.00	Plot holder	Refund plot and key deposit
BK TRS	£354.00	Albany Environmental Services	Deep clean pigeon fouling at LCC
BK TRS	£20000.00	Payroll	May payroll

BK TRS	£96.00	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£1893.45	EALC	Affiliation fees 20/21 NALC and EALC
BK TRS	£288.00	Phuse Media Ltd	Website hosting LTC and LCC
BK TRS	£17.00	NALC	LCR subscription
BK TRS	£57.85	Mark One Hire Ltd	Acrow prop hire
BK TRS	£139.20	Room Hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£456.76	Firefighters Aid for Children	Distribution of collection at Leigh Lights
BK TRS	£119.40	Royal Mail Group Ltd	Response services licence
BK TRS	£125.00	Marshall Close Allotments	ASA agreement
BK TRS	£400.00	LOSAS	ASA agreement
BK TRS	£750.00	MDAS	ASA agreement
BK TRS	£110.51	MDAS	Retained deposits and reimburse for repairs
BK TRS	£714.00	Tindle Newspapers	Magazine distribution and LTC advert
BK TRS	£44431.50	Gowlain Building Group	Extension, alterations and repairs Community Centre
BK TRS	£23000.00	Payroll	April payroll
BK TRS	£59.85	Mark One Hire Ltd	Acrow prop hire
BK TRS	£4712.00	Icicle Graphic Design	LTC magazine
BK TRS	£495.64	Secom plc	Intruder alarm contract
BK TRS	£97.20	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£33573.00	Gowlain Building Group	Extension and alterations Community Centre
BK TRS	£50.04	Solopress	Banner
BK TRS	£289.26	James Todd & Co Ltd	Payroll processing
BK TRS	£13.90	Leigh Partnership member	Reimburse LPG expenditure
BK TRS	£169.71	Essex Supplies (UK) Ltd	Cleaning materials
BK TRS	£350.00	Veolia Environmental Services (UK)	Garden waste sacks
BK TRS	£100.00	The Art Ministry	Donation
BK TRS	£139.20	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£43.80	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£21.60	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£187.40	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£58.50	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£96.00	Room hirer	Room hire refund

BK TRS	£46.80	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£91.20	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£108.67	Essex Supplies (UK) Ltd	Cleaning materials
BK TRS	£174.00	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£72.00	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£49.80	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£328.48	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£60.00	Greenworks	Replace damaged washroom unit
BK TRS	£226.20	Room hirer	Room hire refund
BK TRS	£1808.14	Secom plc	Works relating to security alarm
BK TRS	£683.52	Edge IT Systems Ltd	Allotments software and training, data migration
BK TRS	£6122.94	Gowlain Building Group	Refurbishment Community Centre
BK TRS	£204.00	Meyer Fire Protection Company	Fire extinguisher service
BK TRS	£150.00	Crucis Designs	Site visit
BK TRS	£22000.00	Payroll	March payroll
BK TRS	£534.00	Auditing Solutions Ltd	Internal audit fee
BK TRS	£1300.00	Enovert	Skate Park Grant third party donation
BK TRS	£972.00	Phuse Media	Website accessibility
BK TRS	£41522.22	Gowlain Building Group	Refurbishment Community Centre
BK TRS	£22000.00	Payroll	February payroll
		Expenditure – Imprest Items	
	£6.99	Halfords	Paint
	£32.28	Battery Trader	Battery PA system
	£30.00	Commodius	Online training course
	£6.99	Halfords	Paint
	£2.65	Amazon	Jack plug for PA system
	£30.00	Homemade Bakery	Cakes for Coffee with Councillors
	£3.50	Grouts	Refreshments LCC
	£14.39	Zoom Video Communications	Subscription Zoom Pro
		Expenditure – Direct Debits	

	£793.94	SSE	Gas Community Centre
	£25.51	SSE	Strand Wharf electricity
	£783.15	SSE	Electricity Community Centre
	£90.68	Biffa Environmental	Recycling Community Centre
	£105.76	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Community Centre
	£100.34	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Skate Park
	£12.00	Retail Funding Ltd	Card machine fee
	£201.24	British Telecom	Broadband
	£12.00	British Telecom	Mobile broadband
	£241.38	DOTS	IT Support & photocopying
	£27.99	Global Payments	Card processing
	£17.40	Global Payments	Card processing
	£6.00	Paynetworkx	Virtual Terminal fee
	£714.51	SSE	Gas Community Centre
	£24.85	SSE	Electricity Strand Wharf
	£794.53	SSE	Electricity Community Centre
	£107.11	Biffa Environmental	Recycling Community Centre
	£117.19	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Community Centre
	£110.22	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Skate Park
	£96.00	FP Mailing	Franking machine lease
	£12.00	British Telecom	Mobile broadband
	£12.00	Retail Funding Ltd	Card machine fee
	£138.53	Wessex Leasing	Hand drier lease
	£6.00	Paynetworkx	Virtual Terminal fee
	£545.52	DOTS	IT Support including remote access & photocopying
	£30.52	Global Payments	Card processing

	£17.40	Global Payments	Card processing
	£1022.64	British Telecom	Phone lines and usage including alarm line, office phones and public wifi.
	£22.95	SSE	Electricity Strand Wharf
	£572.50	SSE	Gas Community Centre
	£62.77	SSE	Electricity Skate Park
	£599.59	SSE	Electricity Community Centre
	£316.80	CF Corporate Finance	Dokoni Software lease
	£490.80	CF Corporate Finance	Photocopier lease
	£107.64	Biffa Environmental	Recycling Community Centre
	£104.04	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Community Centre
	£110.22	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Skate Park
	£789.13	Wave	Water & sewerage Community Centre
	£12.00	British Telecom	Mobile broadband
	£12.00	Retail Funding Ltd	Card machine fee
	£290.14	DOTS	IT Support & photocopying
	£6.00	Paynetworx	Virtual Terminal fee
	£558.35	Wave	Water rates Leigh Site allotments
	£26.40	Global Payments	Card processing
	£17.40	Global Payments	Card processing
	£260.50	Edenred	Childcare Vouchers
	£224.54	SSE	Gas LCC
	£16.35	SSE	Electricity Strand Wharf
	£292.00	SSE	Electricity LCC
	£49.42	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Community Centre
	£61.85	Biffa Environmental	Bin collection Skate Park
	£203.88	British Telecom	Broadband

	£12.00	British Telecom	Mobile broadband
	£163.61	Wave	Allotments water rates
	£12.00	Retail Funding Ltd	Card machine fee
	£289.00	DOTS	IT Support & photocopying
	£6.00	Paynetworx	Virtual Terminal fee
	£27.40	Global Payments	Card processing
	£17.40	Global Payments	Card processing

[Agenda](#)

Council Governance during Coronavirus lockdown

Under the Scheme of Delegation to the Town Clerk (see details in Terms of Reference), the following decisions were made and are now reported to Council:

1. Furloughing Community Centre caretakers under the Government Job Retention Scheme as their salaries are paid by hire income (decision taken in consultation with the Staffing Committee)

Four members of staff agreed to be furloughed as they could not be re-deployed and the community centre was closed to hirers in accordance with Government guidance. Caretaker salaries are paid from hire income. All received 100% of their salaries.

2. Instructing Wellers Hedley Solicitors regarding a claim of a prescriptive right of way to allotment land (decision taken in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and all other Committee Chairmen). Legal Fees budget

A letter was received from Paul Robinson Solicitors on behalf of a resident claiming a prescriptive right of way on to Council allotment land. This is denied although the Council has stated several times to the complainant that they have a right of access to attend to boundary line repairs. The Council's solicitor in this matter is in correspondence but the matter has not concluded. A cost of £850 was agreed. The Town Clerk contacted the Council's insurer but legal fees insurance is not covered for claim of rights over land.

3. Instructing a contractor to undertake a tree survey at the allotments (decision taken in consultation with the Chairman of Community & Culture Committee following receipt of quotations). Allotments budget

The work has now concluded by Underhill Tree Consultancy at a cost of £1,450 and the report awaited

4. Planning and Licensing Applications (decisions taken in consultation with Chairman of Planning, Licensing & Highways Committee following receipt of any Councillor comments)

Response to the Planning Authority for every application reviewed during the Council office closure is published on the Council's website.

Council Decisions during Coronavirus lockdown

The Council made the following decisions during lockdown by email prior to a remote meeting system being put in place:

1. Emergency Community Fund motion and substantive motion submitted by Councillors (recorded email/telephone vote by each member of Council)

Original Motion

MOTION

Proposed by Cllr Mulroney

Seconded by Cllr Wells

1. That this Council allocates a sum of £10,000 from the Volunteer EMR to a Coronavirus Emergency Community Fund for the purposes of supporting bona fide external efforts working to assist residents in the current pandemic. Grants of up to £250 will be available subject to the application process referred to in 2 below.
2. That in view of the current emergency a short form application form be devised along the lines of the Council's current award scheme for potential applicants, giving full details of their exact endeavours and the need for funds.
3. In view of the current emergency, a panel for assessing the applications submitted under 2 above be appointed to consider and decide on applications. Such panel to comprise of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chairman of Finance and Governance and two other members, such decisions to be taken having considered the content of the application and the advice of the Town Clerk.
4. That in view of the current emergency, decisions be taken via email between the Panel and the Town Clerk.
5. That all decisions of the Panel be reported to the next available meeting of the Council for official recording purposes.

Substantive Motion submitted once Councillors had seen this motion

Proposed by Cllr Gilson

Seconded by Cllr Bromfield

- To transfer £10,000 to the emergency Funding account with the proviso that a further £10,000 is available if a second tranche is needed.
- To set a maximum of £1,000 and minimum £250 limit on grants to applicants for funding from the Emergency Community Funding Account that would be of benefit to the residents of Leigh.
- To allow multiple claims if receipts can be produced or provided as evidence to where or what the money has been spent on.

VOTING on substantive motion:

Cllr Bromfield	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Cowell	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Cracknell	YES	YES	NO
Cllr Evans	NO	NO	NO
Cllr Forde	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Gilson	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Hart	YES	NO	YES
Cllr Healey	NO	NO	NO
Cllr Mulroney	NO	NO	NO
Cllr O’Boyle	did not vote		
Cllr Parker	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Smith	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Rosier	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Wells	YES	YES	YES
Cllr Wilkins	YES	YES	YES

All the substantive motions passed

Original Motion with resolved amendments

ORIGINAL MOTION **with resolved amendments**

1. That this Council allocates a sum of £10,000 from the Volunteer EMR to a Coronavirus Emergency Community Fund **with the proviso that a further £10,000 is available if a second tranche is needed** for the purposes of supporting bona fide external efforts working to assist residents in the current pandemic.
2. **That** Grants of up to **a maximum of £1,000 and a minimum of £250 that would be of benefit to the residents of Leigh** will be available subject to the application process referred to in 2 below.
3. **That multiple claims be allowed if receipts can be produced or provided as evidence to where or what the money has been spent on.**
4. That in view of the current emergency a short form application form be devised along the lines of the Council’s current award scheme for potential applicants, giving full details of their exact endeavours and the need for funds.
5. In view of the current emergency, a panel for assessing the applications submitted under 2 above be appointed to consider and decide on applications. Such panel to comprise of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chairman of Finance and Governance and two other members, such decisions to be taken having considered the content of the application and the advice of the Town Clerk.
6. That in view of the current emergency, decisions be taken via email between the Panel and the Town Clerk.
7. That all decisions of the Panel be reported to the next available meeting of the Council for official recording purposes.

Red sections are the substantive motions agreed and incorporated in to the original motion

VOTING on original motion with amendments:

All Councillors voted in favour apart from Cllr Healey. Cllr Parker did not take part in the vote.

All the motions passed.

2. Volunteer of the Year (recorded email/telephone vote by each member of Council)

Three nominations were forthcoming which were circulated to Council. Christine Daniels received the most votes.

3. Grant Aid Award Applications (recorded email vote by each member of F&G Committee)

The Committee voted as follows:

- West Leigh Baptist Church – Parish Nurse Project - £500 requested. Town and Parish Councils by law are not able to donate to churches. However, the application stated that the project will benefit the local community by helping to combat loneliness and also delay dementia and will help people to form friendship groups. Therefore whilst WLBC were advised that the Council could not fund the scheme through a grant, they would like to arrange to discuss the project as a partnership arrangement as it could be worthy of including in the new Social Isolation Projects (Council resolution 17th March with 5k budget) so the Council could directly be involved and thus be able to fund/support the project in some way.
- Southend Area Bus User Group – Room hire - £201.60 **RESOLVED**
- South East and Centre Essex Mind – Room hire - £500 **RESOLVED £278.40**
- Royal British Legion – Room Hire - £132 **RESOLVED**
- Lions Club of Leigh on Sea – Leigh Regatta £500 **RESOLVED IN PRINCIPLE ONLY IF THE EVENT PROCEEDS IN 2020**

4. Emergency Community Fund Policy and Application

A Policy and Application was prepared by the Town Clerk in consultation with Council and subsequently **RESOLVED**. The Policy is available on the Council's website.

Emergency Community Fund Panel

Cllrs Cracknell, Gilson, Hart and Wells were nominated to be two additional councillors on the Panel. Cllrs Cracknell and Wells received the most votes and joined Cllrs Bromfield, Healey and Rosier as panel members

Panel Decisions on Emergency Community Fund applications (Panel record vote by email)

The Panel declined an application for £1,000 from an individual as it did not meet the policy criteria.

5. Remote Meetings motions submitted by Councillors (recorded email/telephone vote by each member of Council)

Original Motion

Motions proposed by Cllr Bromfield
Seconded by Cllr Gilson.

Motion for the resources needed for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to hold Council / Committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council using a budget of up to £1,000 from the I.T. EMR purchase the equipment and software needed so as to enable and hold Council meetings and other meetings such as committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings virtually, in line with government guidelines on holding virtual meetings.

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council use Zoom Pro for the meetings.

Background information provided by Cllr Bromfield - gives access up to 100 people per meeting, with no worries on a time limit. The pro version when you host / call a meeting has various settings for more control than the free version. Security settings include as default a 'waiting room' that allows the host to click people into the meeting. About £14.50 per month cost. I have zoom on my tablet, mobile, and laptop. All easy to use.

Motion for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to hold virtual Council meetings

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council holds remote (Virtual) Council meeting/s to discuss and plan the business of the Council, for openness and oversight of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council in line with government guidelines on holding virtual Council and other such meetings

Motion for all Committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings to be held virtually

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council holds virtual Council Committee meetings, and when needed Project Development Group meetings, in line with government guidelines on holding virtual meetings.

Substantive motion submitted once Councillors had received this motion

Proposed Cllr Healey

Seconded Cllr Mulroney

That Leigh on Sea Town Council use a remote meeting platform that is acceptable to ALL members and does not compromise the I.T security of the Council

VOTING on substantive motion:

Cllr Bromfield	NO
Cllr Cowell	YES
Cllr Cracknell	NO
Cllr Evans	YES
Cllr Forde	YES
Cllr Gilson	NO
Cllr Hart	YES
Cllr Healey	YES
Cllr Mulroney	YES
Cllr O'Boyle	did not vote
Cllr Parker	unavailable to vote
Cllr Smith	YES
Cllr Rosier	NO
Cllr Wells	YES
Cllr Wilkins	YES

The substantive motion passed

Original Motion with resolved amendments

1. Motion for the resources needed for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to hold Council / Committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings

- a. That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council using a budget of up to £1,000 from the I.T. EMR purchase the equipment and software needed so as to enable and hold Council meetings and other meetings such as committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings virtually, in line with government guidelines on holding virtual meetings.
- b. That Leigh on Sea Town Council use a remote meeting platform that is acceptable to ALL members and does not compromise the I.T security of the Council

2. Motion for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to hold virtual Council meetings

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council holds remote (Virtual) Council meeting/s to discuss and plan the business of the Council, for openness and oversight of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council in line with government guidelines on holding virtual Council and other such meetings

3. Motion for all Committee meetings and Project Development Group meetings to be held virtually

That Leigh-on-Sea Town Council holds virtual Council Committee meetings, and when needed Project Development Group meetings, in line with government guidelines on holding virtual meetings.

Red section is the substantive motion agreed and incorporated in to the original motion

VOTING on original motion with amendment:

Cllr Bromfield	NO
Cllr Cowell	YES
Cllr Cracknell	YES
Cllr Evans	YES
Cllr Forde	YES
Cllr Gilson	NO
Cllr Hart	YES
Cllr Healey	YES
Cllr Mulroney	YES
Cllr O'Boyle	YES
Cllr Parker	unavailable to vote
Cllr Smith	YES
Cllr Rosier	YES
Cllr Wells	YES
Cllr Wilkins	YES

The motion passed

4. Special Motion submitted under Standing Order 8 by Cllrs Cracknell, Forde, Gilson, O'Boyle, Rosier and Wilkins (recorded email/telephone vote)

In accordance with Standing Order 8 on 'previous resolutions', we would like to propose a special motion to reverse the recently resolved motion on remote meetings. The existing motion requires ALL to agree on the choice of a remote platform from which to run our formal meetings and PDGs. We have been unable to reach a unanimous decision. This means that it

is not possible to move forward with agreed PDG actions, hold any kind of Full Council or Committee meetings and we are also unable to identify/agree priorities for the future.

The identification of an appropriate remote platform is within the remit of the role of the Town Clerk. However, this should be informed by informal consultation with Councillors and follow the NALC guidance.

Therefore, the proposed special motion is:

‘To reverse the resolution on remote meetings’

The Town Clerk highlighted to Councillors that if the motion was passed by a majority, the reversal of the motion does not negate the Council from being able to have remote meetings as legislation is in place that permits this. The budget that had been set aside from IT EMR will be reversed if the motion passes, but under Financial Regulations, the Town Clerk has the authority to buy the web cams and speakers under an alternative budget heading. The Councillors did ask in the first instance whether one portion of the resolution could be reversed i.e. reverse the ‘All Councillors’ but as it would have been necessary to seek advice from EALC who in turn were planning on seeking it from NALC, this process would have taken up to 22 days. Councillors therefore chose to submit a Special motion seeking to reverse the whole resolution.

Priorities and oversight of Council were agreed via the Strategic Plan and subsequently the Action Plan for 2019-2023. It should be the Council’s focus as resolved by Council for the next coming years to work on those objectives within the Strategic Plan. Work towards the Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 will commence in 2022.

VOTING on motion:

Cllr Bromfield	YES
Cllr Cowell	YES
Cllr Cracknell	YES
Cllr Evans	YES
Cllr Forde	YES
Cllr Gilson	NO RESPONSE
Cllr Hart	ABSTAIN
Cllr Healey	YES
Cllr Mulroney	YES
Cllr O’Boyle	NO RESPONSE
Cllr Parker	unavailable to vote
Cllr Smith	YES
Cllr Rosier	YES
Cllr Wells	YES
Cllr Wilkins	NO RESPONSE

The motion passed

Council Governance during Coronavirus lockdown

Items to report to Council:

1. F&G Committee made the decision 3rd March 2020 (minute 55) to transfer £100k to the CCLA property fund. Before this could be undertaken, the fund was closed to new investors. When this fund re-opens, the Town Clerk will monitor whether this investment is appropriate due to the changes in the Council's financial circumstances during the Coronavirus lockdown.
2. Annually the Borough Council supply 88 hanging baskets and a watering service. The Town Clerk was advised early in lockdown that the Borough had deemed this non-essential and therefore would be unable to provide the service this year. Four hanging baskets were later supplied to the Community Centre as the Facilities Manager was able to accommodate watering these.
3. A Government Grant of £25,000 was received having applied for the Retail Hospitality & Leisure Grant Fund.
4. The membership invoice was received for membership of EALC (£631) and NALC (£1262.45). The Town Clerk had established through NALC that it was not possible to be a member of NALC without being a member of EALC. However, since becoming Town Clerk, it was noticeable that many of the services provided by EALC are not available to Leigh Town Council as we are a lone parish council under a unitary authority in the county rather than coming under Essex County Council. Many of the services EALC provide are done on behalf of ECC. The Town Clerk therefore wrote to the Chief Executive of EALC asking that as a lone parish in a unitary authority that gets minimal benefit from EALC, could a discount be considered
A prompt response was received as follows:

'I am sorry to hear that your Council are having to question your membership with the EALC and its value for money, with a request for a reduction in membership by 50%. We have always had a positive response from your Councillors when attending training. The fees for the training course are discounted for our members to ensure we are providing the best value for money. For non-members who wish to attend our training courses, they are charged at plus 200% of the cost of the course, therefore encouraging membership to the Association. The benefits of affiliation to both the EALC and NALC to members are clearly laid out in our Chairman's letter and County Update (please see attached) which was sent to all Town and Parish Councils on the March 23rd 2020.

The affiliation fee is calculated by a fee per the number of electorate in residence in Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, therefore it is not possible to provide a reduction in the membership fee. As you are already aware all Parish and Town Councils are required to be a member of the County Association to have access to NALC. The NALC figure is capped at £1840, your invoice shows a NALC fee of £1262.45 and EALC fee of £631.00.

I note that you have contacted the NALC directly to raise this question as to whether Leigh-on-Sea could have direct access to the NALC. This of course is not possible without membership to the County Association.

Partnership working is more important now than ever to ensure we continue to provide support in our communities. The EALC has always encouraged working in partnership with members of the Local Authority, but also with Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, Essex Rural Partnership, SLCC, Rural Crime Forum and Safer Essex. Working closely with Essex County Council ensures that the EALC can assist in providing grant funding within the communities of Essex, and during 2019-20 the ECC awarded over £240,000 in CIF, £30,000 in Emergency CIF and £50,000 in Micro-Grants to Town/Parish Councils and local associations in Essex through the EALC. Since the COVID-19 pandemic the ECC through the EALC have also, through crowd funding, issued £16,500 worth of food grants to 32 most needy foodbanks and this is ongoing.'

I highlighted to EALC that unfortunately the paragraph above highlighted the very reason for the request as we are not able to access any of that. Additionally, the Clerk and Councillor forums EALC set up made no mention of including Southend District. I therefore highlighted that once again we had been completely overlooked which made me question our sense of membership to EALC. I received no response but a week later the forums were altered to include Southend District.

Included in her original response to me, the Chief Executive drew my attention to unpaid training fees of £2,627.90 + VAT going back to April – October 2019. This was the first time that it had been raised by EALC and we had no record of ever having received said invoices.

EALC sent over copies of the invoices but did not confirm when they were sent and a full search of our records (including a check made by IT support) indicates that nothing was ever received. I chased EALC again that they forward the original emails with invoices and statements attached but none have been forthcoming and they have advised that following a replacement of their server and full IT upgrade in March all emails prior to this are now not held. I am disappointed that EALC's debtor policy does not include picking up the phone after a set time to see if there is an issue as then this matter would have come to light far sooner and been corrected far sooner. I can confirm that even if the odd email has not made it to the correct recipient, it still remains in the Council's server which our IT support can trace. IT support can trace no emails having been received with invoices or statements attached between April 2019 and October 2019. Certainly, if the invoices had been received, they would have been paid in a timely manner as our records to other suppliers prove. The outstanding amount has been checked and settled.



Leigh-On-Sea Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2019-20 (Final 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.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have undertaken our review for the year remotely: we wish to thank the Clerk and the Assistant Responsible Financial Officer for assisting in the process, providing all necessary documentation in electronic format to facilitate completion of our review for the year and sign off of the Internal Audit Certificate in the year's AGAR. We may have, in the circumstances, reduced the volume of transactions examined, whilst still ensuring governance and financial controls remain effective.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2019-20 financial year, during the course of our two interim visits to the Council, which took place on 27th November 2019 and 19th February 2020 and of the work done in our office on 12th June 2020.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our review for the year, 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. As mentioned in our previous reports, 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 during our two visits to date this year, the Council has once 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 Assistant Responsible Financial Officer and thank them both for their assistance, which has again ensured the smooth progress of our review process.

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. The Council operates four bank accounts with HSBC Bank and also holds an account with the Public Sector Deposit Fund. We have: -

- As mentioned in our previous reports, checked and agreed the opening balance detail for 2019-20 to the closing Trial Balance and certified AGAR for 2018-19;
- Also ensured that the cost centre and nominal ledger income and expenditure coding structure remains appropriate for purpose;
- Completed 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 accounts for the months of July and October 2019 and for the months of February and March 2020 with the HSBC Current, Payroll and Imprest accounts bank statements;
- Similarly, completed 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 July and October 2019 and for the months of January and March 2020 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 months of July and October 2019 and for the months of January and March 2020;
- 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 July and 31st October 2019 and as at 31st January and 31st March 2020 on all five accounts with no matters arising; and,
- Ensured that no long outstanding unrepresented cheques or other anomalous entries exist.

We are pleased to note that regular back-ups of the system are made offsite by the Council's IT provider. We again suggest that consideration be given to effecting a "restore" in the near future.

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 have ensured 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: -

- Completed our review of the the minutes of meetings of the Full Council and its Standing Committees (except Planning), where available, to the end of March 2020 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 following the Local Authority elections in May 2019 the Council re-adopted the General Power of Competence at their meeting on 14th May 2019 (minute 18 refers); and
- Also noted that both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee on 30th April 2019 and subsequently ratified by Council at their meeting on 14th May 2019 (minute 13.e refers). We remind the Clerk and Members that NALC have recently issued new model Financial Regulations and understand that the Clerk intended to review both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in May 2020. Unfortunately, and due to the situation as mentioned above, this did not happen.

Conclusions

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

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, where appropriate, are supported by an official order;
- 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,
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have completed 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 twelve months to 31st

March 2020. Our sample comprised 84 items, totalling £203,462 and representing 66.4% of all non-salary expenditure to that date with no issues arising.

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 have previously noted that the Council has registered the Town Hall for VAT this registration being backdated to 1st October 2016. We are pleased to note that VAT Returns have been submitted for the quarters to 30th June, 30th September and 31st December 2019 and for the quarter to 31st March 2020. We have previously noted however that the accounting software suppliers had not completed their update of the system to comply with the requirements of “making VAT Digital” and had to provide a bridge between their system and HMR&C to enable the VAT Return for the quarter to 30th September and 31st December 2019 to be submitted. We understood at our second visit that they were continuing to work on updating their system.

Conclusions

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

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 2019. We are further pleased to note that Council approved the risk assessment for the year under review at their meeting on 17th March 2020 (minute 132 d) refers);
- Examined the current year’s insurance policy schedules to 18th August 2020, cover being provided by Zurich Insurance, noting that Employer’s and Public Liability cover stands at £10 million and £15 million respectively and that Fidelity Guarantee cover stands at £1 million. Loss of Revenue cover stands at £255,000. We also note that the Town Hall insurance is provided by Southend Borough Council; and,
- Noted that the Council’s skatepark continues to be 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.

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 were pleased to note at our second visit that a detailed budget exercise was undertaken and approved by Council at its meeting on 21st January 2020 and have further noted that the precept has been agreed by Council at the same meeting at £447,392.24 (Minute 112 refers).

We are further 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 have, at this final review, considered the appropriateness of the level of General Reserves to meet the Council's ongoing revenue spending requirements noting that Total Reserves at the year-end total £541,303 of which Earmarked Reserves total £248,207. The balance of General Reserves at £293,096 equates to just over six months average revenue expenditure which is slightly above the generally accepted guideline of between three and six months average revenue expenditure.

Finally, we have reviewed the year-end budget outturn for any significant unexplained variances with none in evidence.

Conclusions

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

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 18th June 2019, the Community and Culture Committee approved allotment fees for the ensuing year (minute 11 refers);
- We have further noted that Council agreed at their meeting on 17th July 2018 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 (minute 46 refers);
- We also note that the bookings and receipting processes for the Town Hall Community Centre continues to utilise the bespoke Edge software; we have tested a sample of sales ledger invoices for the Town Hall Community Centre bookings by reference to a sample of the bookings diary for the week commencing 5th August 2019, 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;
- We have also tested a sample of the Finance Officer's banking control sheets in September 2019 to cashbook postings and bank statement entries; we are pleased to note that funds are deposited with the bank in a timely manner; and
- We have at our second visit reviewed the allotment income for the allotment year commencing 1st October 2019 checking the issue of invoices against monies received and banked for over 20% of the allotment plots with no issues arising.

We have previously noted that the Manchester Drive Allotment Society collect all rents from the allotment holders on that side of their site at Manchester Drive allotments and then send the appropriate funds to the Council after deducting a commission. We understand that this commission is currently £900.00 per annum. Although we have not included this in our periodic reports we have been concerned that there has not been an audit trail for us to follow in respect of this income from a Council Asset.

We have further noted that the contracts in respect of this site are between the allotment holders and the Council and are concerned at the lack of control that the Council have in respect of allotments for which they are legally responsible.

We previously noted that the Council intended to install the Edge Allotment Software which will be integrated with the Edge Accounting System and this being the case we strongly recommended at our last visit that collection of income in respect of the allotment site currently administered by the Manchester Drive Allotment Society revert to the control of the Council as from 1st October 2020. We are pleased to note that, at their meeting in March 2020, Council agreed that this should be put into effect.

Finally, and due to the circumstances as mentioned above, no further work was carried out on income during this final review.

Conclusions

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

Petty Cash Account and Debit Card Usage

The Council operates a limited petty cash account which is periodically topped up as and when required.

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, at our first visit, tested a sample of payment transactions for the month of August 2019 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. We shall review this area again at our final visit.

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 2019 - 2020;
- 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 August 2019;
- 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 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 the cashbooks.

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.

We also noted at our first visit that the Facilities Manager was undertaking a review of all Assets held by the Council and it was intended that the findings of this review would be incorporated in the year end Asset Register. We now understand that this review has been completed and the Assistant Responsible Financial Officer has updated this information.

We understand that, currently, the Council does not have a “de minimus” figure in respect of the value of assets to be added to the Register. We again suggest that Council should give consideration to this and possibly introduce a “de minimus” level of £500

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 have ensured that the correct figure of Fixed Assets has been 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 movement on this account for the months of July and October 2019 and for the months of January and March 2020 also verifying 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). We understand that this Investment Policy will be formally reviewed in May 2022. We also understand that the Clerk continues to keep a watching brief on statutory and economic factors and prepared an interim report in March 2020. Finally, we understand that the Clerk is investigating the CCLA Property Fund.

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.

Statement of Accounts and AGAR

The 1996 Accounts and Audit Regulations required all Councils to prepare annually a detailed Statement of Accounts, together with supporting statements identifying other aspects of the Council's financial affairs.

We have reviewed the AGAR detail prepared by the Assistant Responsible Financial Officer, as generated from the Edge accounting software with no obvious errors or anomalies in the detailed content

Conclusions

No issues have been identified in relation to the verification of detail in the Statement of Accounts and AGAR this year.

On the basis of our detailed work during the course of the year on the Council's systems of financial control and content of the detailed Statement of Accounts and that summarised detail set out in the AGAR, we have signed off the Internal Audit Report of the AGAR assigning positive assurances in each relevant area.