



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Keith Evans | **Vice Chairman:** Cllr Dr. David Bowry
Town Clerk: Helen Symmons PSLCC



MINUTES OF A MEETING
FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 7th March 2023
Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre

Present Cllrs: David Bowry, Vinice Cowell, Doug Cracknell, Keith Evans, Anita Forde and Jill Healey

Absent: Cllr: Carole Mulroney, Paul Gilson and Andy Wilkins

In Attendance: Helen Symmons (Town Clerk), Ingmar Lindberg-Jones (Administration Assistant) and Cllr Craig Watt

The meeting opened at 7.31pm

46. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS INCLUDING HOUSEKEEPING

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting:

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr: Mulroney and Wilkins

48. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllrs Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Southend City Councillor for any agenda item where the City Council were mentioned.

49. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting 1st November 2022 were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

50. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

None

51. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Committee **NOTED** the report

POLICY DECISIONS

52. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE **Agenda item 7**

The committee **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** and subject to approval from the Monitoring Officer, the following wording to amend the Staff handbook to cover online harassment and bullying.

LTC Staff Handbook - Section 8.4 Harassment - page 54 - at para.4 add:

A definition of bullying is given in the next section of this policy, but harassment and bullying are closely linked *and may occur face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including electronic communication such as email or on social media, by telephone, or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.*

LTC Staff Handbook - Section 8.5 Bullying - page 56 - after para.1 add:

Consequences

For Members who the council reasonably believe have been bullying or harassing another person(s), the range of options available to the council are limited and must be reasonable, proportionate and not intended to be punitive. In some cases, counselling or training in appropriate skill areas e.g. interpersonal communication, assertiveness, chairmanship etc. may be more appropriate than a penalty.

Options may include: admonishment, request to issue an apology or giving an undertaking not to repeat the behaviour, removal of further opportunities to harass/bully such as removal from a committee(s) where direct contact with the employee or decision making about that employee will take place, removing the right to representation on any outside bodies where there will be contact with the employee who has raised the complaint, or censure of the member.

In addition, the council must ensure it is able to operate its duty of care towards the employee and provide a safe working environment.

A referral under the Code of Conduct to the Monitoring Officer may be an appropriate step and there may be further sanctions as a result of the reviewing of evidence under the Code in place at the time. Parish/Town Councils do not have the power to increase penalties imposed arising from a complaint under the Code.

A complaint to the Police under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 may also be warranted.

This list is not exhaustive.

53. COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL **Agenda item 8**

The Committee **RESOLVED to recommend to Council** the reviewed policy.

54. GRANT AID POLICY **Agenda item 9**

The Committee **RESOLVED to recommend to Council** the reviewed policy.

55. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW **Agenda item 10**

The Committee **RESOLVED to recommend to Council** the reviewed documents.

RESOURCES DECISIONS

56. COUNCILLOR COMMUNICATION **Agenda item 11**

Cllr Cowell requested a recorded vote at the start of discussions.

RECORDED VOTE:

For: David Bowry, Doug Cracknell, Keith Evans and Anita Forde

Against: Vinice Cowell and Jill Healey

The committee **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** that tablet screens are provided to Councillors from the new administration for access to their Councillor emails

FINANCIAL

57. COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE 2022/23

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

58. TO NOTE INTERNAL ACCOUNT TRANSFERS AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING **Agenda item 13**

The Committee **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** the expenditure.

59. QUARTERLY FINANCE CHECKS

The Committee **NOTED** the report. Cllr Evans completed the checks on 7th March 2023.

60. BANK RECONCILIATION CHECKS

The Committee **NOTED** the report. The Committee wished to thank the Assistant RFO for her thorough and well presented work.

61. BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES AS AT 27TH FEBRUARY 2023

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

62. RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE **Agenda item 17**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to earmark 2022/23 budget underspends as per the agenda recommendation.

63. RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMITTEE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE **Agenda item 18**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to earmark 2022/23 budget underspends as per the agenda recommendation

64. TO CONSIDER ANY UNDERSPENDS IN THE 2022/23 BUDGET THAT THE COMMITTEE WISH TO EARMARK AS A RESERVE **Agenda item 19**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to earmark 2022/23 underspends as per the agenda recommendation with the exception of the Elections movement as the Town Clerk had received advice that an invoice was being sent from Southend City Council relating to the contested By-election in 2022.

The meeting closed at 20:02 pm