



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 a Meeting of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**  
of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council  
on Wednesday, 8th November, commencing at 7:30 pm.

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.

**AGENDA / BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED**

1. HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS.
2. THOSE PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Chair Cllr Arscott

Councillors Cllrs Arscott Robinson and Carty. P Arscott and carried

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS.

There were no declarations

Public questions

A resident noted that the council reported a 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?

A resident asked if the audit report could be considered in public session, The Chairman agreed.

It was confirmed the audit cost £1,080.

Councillors were reminded that they Duty of care support for staff.

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

4. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSAL.

1. The Council, in line with promises made at the Election in May, proposes to reduce the Precept by 2.5%, from £462,506 to £450, 525.
2. At present we have developed at top-level Indicative Budget which shows significant increases in both Capital & Strategic Projects and the amount transferred to reserves. The transfer will shore up the already strong financial position of the Council and provide flexibility for additional strategic projects which may arise during the year.
3. These increases are to be funded by reduced expenditure elsewhere, in particular in Community Facilities, by far the largest item in the Budget. This item is overbudgeted in the current year, so the 15.6% cut proposed for this item will have little practical impact.
4. Another objective of this Budget is to make sure that value is delivered to LTC area residents, so we are considering differential pricing for some services depending on residency (inside or outside the LTC area).
5. The Council is considering plans to restructure the way it pays for its physical premises, which, if successfully completed, will pave the way for further Precept reductions in future years.
6. We are not in a position to answer any more detailed questions at this stage, but hope to have the first complete iteration of the Budget completed by 30th November, when such questions can and will be addressed.

#### 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 apologies 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)

#### 7. MOTION TO APPOINT ALTERNATIVE LOCUM TOWN CLERK.

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 three days a week at a day rate of £400 for a 7.5 hour day plus the cost of commuting to a maximum of £1600 per week.

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.

These will be deferred to a later meeting