



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Caroline Parker
Vice Chairman: Cllr Paul Lawrence
Town Clerk: Paul Beckerson

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2013 AT THE LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71-73 ELM ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA

Present Cllrs: Patsy Ryan (Chairman) (from Min 99), Mark Bromfield, Donald Fraser, Richard Herbert, Pat Holden, Paul Lawrence, Carole Mulroney, and Caroline Parker (from Min 99 until Min 106)

In Attendance: Paul Beckerson (Town Clerk)

The meeting opened at 7.32pm

95. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Vice Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Syrie Cox and Cliff Passmore

97. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

98. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 5th NOVEMBER 2013

The minutes of the meeting of 5th November 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Cllrs Patsy Ryan and Caroline Parker joined the meeting

99. MOTIONS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS

a) Legal Advice to Council.

That when legal advice is presented to a Committee by either the Town Clerk or an individual Councillor as being legal advice to the Council, rather than private advice to an individual Councillor and that advice is likely or intended to influence the decisions of that Committee then that advice must be presented in writing, with provenance on the agenda or as a confidential appendix if necessary.

Proposed Cllr Richard Herbert, Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney

The following amendment was put: add commas after 'provenance,' and 'appendix,' also addition after 'Council' 'from a third party'.

Proposed Cllr Carole Mulroney, Seconded Cllr Mark Bromfield

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the amendments; the amended motion was then put to the vote:

That when legal advice is presented to a Committee by either the Town Clerk or an individual Councillor as being legal advice to the Council from a third party, rather than private advice to an individual Councillor and that advice is likely or intended to influence the decisions of that Committee then that advice must be presented in writing, with provenance, on the agenda or as a confidential appendix, if necessary.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the motion to Council.

b) Questions to Chairman.

That standing order 8 (Questions), which is not a mandatory standing order, be rescinded.

Proposed Cllr Richard Herbert, Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney

Standing Order 8 - Questions

- a A Councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 5 clear days' notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.*
- b Questions not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.*
- c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.*

Report:

Councillors have the right to ask questions on any agenda item and can put motions or request any matter to be placed on an agenda. 'Questions to the Chairman' from Councillors as a separate agenda item is an unnecessary duplication.

(At present both question and answer are the personal opinion of the questioner and the chairman but could be misinterpreted as referring to Council policy. Neither councillors nor staff have the right of comment or reply so it is of no value in assisting the Council in its deliberations. There is also the danger that the phraseology of a question could lead the chairman, unwittingly, into being deemed to have predetermined their position on an issue which has yet to be considered.)

The mover **withdrew the motion** as he had not intended to suggest that the whole Standing Order be rescinded.

c) Agenda items, motions and reports.

- 1) That all agenda items be accompanied by an officer report with sufficient information so that committee members can adequately prepare for meetings, with recommendations if appropriate.

(This solves the problem of one line agenda items that then lead to only vaguely connected decisions. It resolves the problem with standing orders of notice of motions, as Officer's reports can be debated. Councillors requesting an item to be put on the agenda can of course suggest the content of the report but the report itself should be the work of Officers.)

- 2) That all motions are accompanied by a discussion document with sufficient information that members can adequately prepare for meetings. If the motion or discussion paper contains errors of fact the Town Clerk should give a correcting report.

(Motions are clearly identified as coming from individual councillors and as being their personal opinions.)

Proposed Cllr Richard Herbert, Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney

The parts of the motion were taken separately:

An amendment was put to delete the words 'an officer report', and replace with 'a short report (up to one side of A4)' and change word order from 'adequately prepare' to 'prepare adequately'

Proposed Cllr Carole Mulroney, Seconded Cllr Donald Fraser

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the amendment; the amended motion was then put to the vote.

- 1) That all agenda items be accompanied by a short report (up to one page of A4) with sufficient information so that committee members can prepare adequately for meetings, with recommendations if appropriate.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the motion to Council.

Part 2 of the motion was similarly amended in line with part 1.

- 2) That all motions are accompanied by a short (up to one page of A4) discussion document with sufficient information that members can prepare adequately for meetings. If the motion or discussion paper contains errors of fact the Town Clerk should give a correcting report.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the motion to Council.

100. CONSIDERATION OF QUOTATIONS FOR REPLACEMENT SERVER

This item was deferred until either the next meeting or Council if the 3rd quotation is received in time.

101. EMPLOYMENT OF A WORK EXPERIENCE PERSON TO ASSIST IN THE OFFICE

Cllr Caroline Parker declared a non-pecuniary interest as the applicant was related to her and left the meeting

102. 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.1(c)) - (staffing)

Start of confidential business

The Committee **RESOLVED** to engage the applicant for a period of one month subject to interview by the Town Clerk indicating suitability and to request that Personnel Sub-Committee look into the policy issues relating to the engagement of people for work experience and possible internships.

Proposed Cllr Paul Lawrence; Seconded Cllr Carole Mulroney.

End of confidential business

Cllr Caroline Parker re-joined the meeting

103. CHRISTMAS CLOSURE 2013

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the closure between 24th December 2013 and 2nd January 2014. Councillors can cover the reception during this period if a Caretaker is already on duty to cover a booking at the Community Centre.

104. SOCIAL MEDIA, INTERNET AND EMAIL POLICY - Report 2293/TC (Appendix 1 to the agenda)

The Committee added the words 'who are using the Council's computers or network' in the fourth paragraph after 'Members'

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the policy to Council for adoption.

105. GENERAL PURPOSES BUDGET

General Purposes Budget Report 2290/GP as at 27th November 2013 (Appendix 2 to the agenda)
The report was **noted**

106. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Leisure, Foreshore and Environment 21st November 2013 – Minute 53

A number of issues regarding the Leigh Lights had arisen causing an over spend. The expenditure is listed below:

- To replace 300 defective LED B/C 230v static golf ball lamps in cool white @ £2.75 each. £825 (Not included in the request for funding)
- To provide catenary wires for festoon lights and realign to prevent ingress of water £200.
- To refurbish 20 light displays with new infill lights costing £1,900 against a budget of £1100
- To provide 25 additional string displays for concrete columns as for safety reasons we weren't permitted to install the normal displays on them costing £3,000 not budgeted for.
- Structural testing of 78 lampposts which is valid for 30 months and cost £3,920. This was against a budget of £800 being the annual cost charged by the previous company who went into liquidation just prior to the testing period. In future budgets, a third of the test cost will be allocated to an earmarked reserve each year.
- The security cost £2,533.25 against a budget of £2,000 due to extra hours worked at the end of the event to assist in clearing the roads..
- £1,000 has already been added to the Capital Renewals Budget from General Purposes Renewals Fund.
- £1,028 has been vired by LF&EC to the Capital Renewals Budget.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Council that £5,625 be taken from reserves to cover this overspend and requested that the convenor of the Leigh Lights Working Party produce a report to the next F&GP meeting to recommend actions to be taken to prevent an overspend on this budget line next year.

Cllr Caroline Parker left the meeting

107. OFFICE AND COMMITTEE BUDGETS

- Office Budget Report 2291/FGP as at 27th November 2013 (Appendix 3 to the agenda)
The report was **noted**.
- Committee Income and Expenditure Report 2292/FGP as at 27th November 2013 (Appendix 4 to the agenda)

108. DRAFT BUDGET 2014/15 (Appendix 5 to the agenda)

The Committee considered the draft budget and resolved to refer back to the appropriate Committee the following:

Transport and Highways to reconsider the budget heads School Crossing Patrols and Highways

Infrastructure

Leisure, Foreshore and Environment to reconsider Leigh Lights expenditure

Planning to reconsider carry forward for Neighbourhood Plan

Leigh Community Centre to reconsider the Community Centre's maintenance costs. The Committee also agreed to delete the last two lines from the budget report for clarity of presentation of costs.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to increase the General Purposes Renewals Budget by £1,000 to £5,000 to take account of the virement of £1,000 in November to LF&EC.

109. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SINCE THE LAST MEETING

See report 2294/I&E 27th November 2013 (Appendix 6 to the agenda)

Members **approved** the expenditure and **noted** the income.

110. BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES as at 27th November 2013 were **noted**.

The meeting closed at 9.54pm