

## LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2023

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**PRESENT:** Councillors Chowns, Hughes, l'Anson (Chair), and Morris

**ALSO PRESENT:** Angela Price – Town Clerk

R29. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bradford.

R30. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

R31. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2023**

Councillor Hughes raised concerns in respect of the accuracy of minute no. R27. He did not believe it was a fair representation of what had been discussed and agreed. He stated that it was his recollection that the committee had discussed the need for a policy for measures to protect council staff and that such a document would be brought forward for adoption in due course.

Councillor Hughes believed that what had been said at the meeting had been that there was a need for a policy and a clearly written document outlining what would be required and that that would have to be approved by Council. He stated that it had been resolved that the Clerk would draft a Distancing Policy designed to protect staff from unwelcome, persistent communications from both Councillors and members of the public. He stated that this was absolutely right and that he remembered this to be the case and that the Clerk had provided this on the agenda for consideration.

He recalled that there had been discussion as to why this matter had been raised and as something that needed to be in place currently, and it was his view that the context of that was that there was an urgency about the need because of a specific example that had been raised to the Mayor about the behaviour of one councillor and that in the context of that it would be taken forward that "should" it be found Prima Facie that a Councillor was indeed behaving in such a way in the context of a policy of this council, that a particular Councillor had been in breach of that policy, then in order to protect Council staff, the policy would then be brought into effect to protect staff.

Councillor Hughes noted that the committee had discussed what would happen in the event of a Member being found in breach of a policy adopted by the Council and at that point it included a number of those present saying that a senior Councillor would be asked to take on the particular role. It was at that point that several of those present had stated that they did not want to do this in a particular context that was being discussed and that Councillor Hughes agreed that should there be a policy in place, and should there be evidence of a breach that he would be willing to act as a single point of contact. He agreed that it was clear that a certain person had been named at that meeting but that it made it sound as if the council were acting three or four steps ahead of where they were. There was no policy in place, no-one had been found in breach of that policy and yet it was being said that Councillor Hughes would be the single point of contact, as he had agreed to be in the event of a single point of contact.

He noted that these minutes were draft and had been to full council and he expressed his concern and disagreement with the whole sense of how minute no. R27 had been framed and asked that consideration be given to this minute being reframed and that it be noted that this needs to be reframed, which he proposed, and that then is reported to full council, as it had already been reported to full council, and then it comes back to the Committee to be reframed and in that context he stated that he would not be able to vote the minutes through as a correct record of the meeting.

Councillor Hughes clarified that without a policy in place action to put a single point of contact in place at this time cannot take place.

Councillor Chowns advised that his recollection of the discussion was that the suggestion of a single point of contact at this time was not conditional on there being a policy in place, he believed that it was a temporary acute measure in the circumstances, and he stated that if that was his misunderstanding then he can only apologise. He added that as the minute involves Councillor Hughes he is perfectly willing to accept his interpretation of what he understood of that conversation and accepted that in that context the minute does need to be redrafted. However, he added that at the time he thought the offer was in the acute situation that a member of staff had been put in a difficult position, but reiterated that he accepted Councillor Hughes' recollection, as he understood what he was offering.

Councillor Hughes reiterated that the minute was not his recollection of what had happened, as without a policy how could this be implemented, as the policy would state that the person who was going to the single point of contact would be the person who would contact a councillor to advise them that they would be the single point of contact. All Members acknowledged that this was not discussed.

As no proposal had been made at this point that the minutes be accepted as a true record Councillor l'Anson asked if Councillor Hughes had listened to the recording and suggested that it would be sensible for all Members to listen to the recording of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 and that the approval of the minutes be deferred until such time all Members of the committee were able to review the recording.

It was noted that the minutes had only been received and noted at Full Council and therefore it was possible to defer any decision on the approval of the minutes.

**RESOLVED:**

**That approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 be deferred until such time as all Members present could review the recording of the meeting.**

R32. **ACTON SHEET**

**RESOLVED:**

That the action sheet be received and noted.

R33. **SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report on sickness absence statistics be received and noted.**

R34. **ACCIDENTS REPORTED JAN – DECEMBER 2023**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report on accidents from Jan – Dec 2023 be received and noted.**

R35. **POLICIES FOR RECOMMENDATION TO FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

i. **Draft Training Policy & Succession Planning Documentation**

Members raised concern in respect of the repayment of training costs, should a member of staff leave the employ of the Council within a set time of receiving the training. It was proposed that the first paragraph should be removed.

ii. Draft Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Section headed "Harassment"

It was felt that the paragraph following the list of harassment examples should be brought forward to the start of this section, as this provides clarification on the definition of harassment.

That the following two paragraphs should be amended to read as follows:

Harassment is unwanted **repetitive** conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (an area covered by discrimination legislation) which has the purpose of effect of violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for them.

Harassment will also occur where a colleague is **repeatedly** treated less favourably because they have rejected or refused to submit to sex-based harassment, sexual harassment, or gender reassignment harassment.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the following policies be recommended to the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for consideration, subject to the following amendments:**

i. **Draft Training Policy & Succession Planning Documentation**

**Examinations – that this be reworded as follows:**

***"Staff will be given suitable study leave ahead of examinations."***

**Repayment of Training Costs – that the first paragraph be removed.**

ii. **Draft Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy**

**That the paragraph following the list of harassment examples should be brought forward to the start of this section.**

**That the following two paragraphs should be amended to read as follows:**

**Harassment is unwanted **repetitive** conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (an area covered by discrimination legislation) which has the purpose of effect of**

violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for them.

Harassment will also occur where a colleague is **repeatedly** treated less favourably because he or she has rejected or refused to submit to sex-based harassment, sexual harassment, or gender reassignment harassment.

iii. **Draft Unpaid Leave Policy**

That this be recommend as presented, subject to "draft" being included on the document.

R36. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

To note that the date of the next meeting of the Resources Committee is scheduled for 1 February 2024.

R37. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

R38. **STAFFING MATTERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the outcome of the Appeal Hearing be received and noted.

The meeting ended at 7.27pm.

Signed .....

Dated .....