

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2023**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Gwilym Rippon – GR Consultancy

R8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chowns.

R9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

R10. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were requested to approve the amendment to the Terms of Reference as agreed at the Full Council Meeting held on 3 August 2023 (minute no. C82 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference for the Resources Committee be recommended to Full Council for approval, with one abstention.

R11. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JULY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 6 July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record, with one abstention.

R12. ACTION SHEET

RESOLVED:

That the action sheet be received and noted.

R13. OUTCOME OF DSE REVIEWS

RESOLVED:

That the items listed within the report provided to the Committee as required following the recent DSE Assessments be purchased at an approximate cost of £965.89.

R14. INVOICES FOR PAYMENT (August final)

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment in the sum of £9,104.12 be approved.

R15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the date of the next meeting of the Resources Committee meeting is scheduled for 5 October 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Council Offices.

R16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

1. 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.
2. That Mr Gwilym Rippon be permitted to remain in the meeting as he had been invited to attend the meeting to provide advice and support on agenda item 10(i).

R17. STAFFING MATTERS

i. Letter received from post holder 49

Members were requested to give consideration to a letter received from post holder 49. Mr Rippon had been invited to attend the meeting to provide advice on what action the Council could legally take in respect of safeguarding staff.

Mr Rippon shared a draft of a document that Councillors may wish to consider for the future and Members requested 10 minutes to read and digest the document provided.

Members felt that the document needed more consideration and did not feel that this would be something they could use at this time to consider what, if any, safeguarding measures could be put in place.

Following considerable discussion Members agreed on a three-stage plan, which they felt was one that could be implemented into Council procedures in any future documents and procedures.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Mayor write to Councillor Sinclair, without delay, as per the resolution made at a meeting of Full Council held on 29 June 2023 (minute no. C33 refers):**
 - 1. That Councillor Sinclair be asked to provide a written and public apology to councillors regarding his repeated and unsubstantiated allegations of fraud and criminal activity.***
 - 2. That Councillor Sinclair be asked to make a written and private apology to The Clerk regarding his repeated and unsubstantiated allegations of fraud and criminal activity.***
- 2. That the content of the letter to Mr Sinclair should include the following points:**
 - That Mr Sinclair should provide acknowledgement of receipt of the letter within 14 days of the date of the letter**
 - That Mr Sinclair should provide a written apology to the Clerk within 14 days of receipt of the letter**
 - That Mr Sinclair should make a public apology to the Councillors at the meeting of Council scheduled for 29 September 2023**
- 3. That the letter will be sent via recorded delivery so as to provide evidence that the letter has been received.**
- 4. That all future discussions on this matter will be held in Public Session and the identity of the Councillor will not be withheld from public record.**
- 5. That a copy of the letter to Mr Sinclair will be provided to Councillors present at the Resources Committee meeting.**

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

- 6. That the Mayor be instructed to write a letter to Councillor Sinclair insisting that this matter is closed between himself and the Council and that any further allegations or**

accusations against staff or councillors should be directed to the Monitoring Officer.

- 7. That if no acknowledgement is received within 14 days and no action is taken to provide the appropriate apologies to Clerk or Councillors within the 14 days the Mayor instruct the Councils Solicitors to proceed with a cease-and-desist letter.**

ii. Letter Received from Post Holder 50

Members were requested to endorse the actions of the Town Clerk, in which she had agreed to post holder 50 reducing their hours from 37 to 30 per week, in support of flexible working.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Clerks actions be endorsed in respect of a reduction of working hours from 37 to 30 for post holder 50.**
- 2. That an item be included in the next Markets Working Party agenda to discuss employing someone on a 7-hour contract per week to provide a visible presence at the Saturday Market.**
- 3. That the Community Development Officer provide an update report to Full Council meetings on what they have been doing between each cycle of meetings.**

iii. Other Staffing Matters

Members were provided with an update on a number of staffing matters.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Members receive and note the information provided within the report.**
- 2. That an item to consider cover for staff when on annual leave be included on the next Resources Committee agenda.**
- 3. That a Disciplinary Hearing Panel of three Councillors and the Clerk be stood noting that the following Councillors agreed to sit on the Panel:**

Councillors Hughes, l'Anson, and Morris

4. That an Appeals Panel of three Councillors be stood up with Councillors other than those listed above:

Councillors Bradford, Chowns and one other to be agreed at Full Council.

5. That there be a trial period of six months whereby the Accounts Clerk provide additional support to the Clerk by taking on more tasks, in an attempt to reduce the work of the Clerk but noting that the Clerk will still oversee all of the additional tasks given to the Accounts Clerk.

6. That following the team building day the Clerk provide a report to the Resources Committee.

R18. **CORRESPONDENCE FROM LEDBURY RESIDENT**

Members were provided with further correspondence from a local resident, which was in addition to previous correspondence. They were also provided with an email that had been received after the agenda despatch, dated 29 August 2023.

Members considered the content of the emails and following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should be instructed to write back to the local resident in a similar manner to that of a local Ward Member.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be instructed to provide a response similar to that of a local Ward Councillor, as follows:

“The Council have attempted to engage with you on this matter and have, since April this year, provided you with responses to your questions wherever possible in an open and honest manner. An invitation for you to meet with the Chair of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee was extended to you, which you declined, and a copy of the Council’s complaint form was provided to you on 15 April 2023, which you declined to return.

Given that the Council have provided these responses and they have been met with your intention to pursue legal action against this Council, the Council no-longer feel able to correspond with you further on this matter.”

The meeting ended at 8.39 pm.

Signed Date