LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of The Standing Committee held on 22nd February 2017

Present: Councillors: D Baker (Chairman)

R Barnes M Eager E Fieldhouse K Francis

In attendance: Mrs K Mitchell – Clerk to the Council

S.8 - 02.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr J Roberts

S.9 – 02.17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

S.10 - 02.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

S.11 - 02.17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 11th January 2017, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

S.12 – 02.17 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Members were given an update on a Freedom of Information request received from a Ledbury Town Councillor, who said that the information had been requested by the Council's External Auditor (S.4 - 1.17 Refers).

The scope of the original request had been reduced from 22 months to a period of one year, 28th January 2016 to 21st January 2017. The request related to emails sent by, or copied to, staff email accounts ending 'ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk' to any Herefordshire Council or Balfour Beatty email addresses.

The Clerk advised that a total of 7¾ hours had been spent dealing with one element of the request. It had therefore been estimated that to continue with the request would exceed the appropriate limit of £450, i.e. the estimated cost of one person spending 2½ working days in locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Since being advised that the second request would not be processed any further the applicant had subsequently submitted a further request for information, limiting scope to a start date of April 2016.

Members expressed concern that the increasing number of Freedom of Information requests was placing an additional heavy burden on an already understaffed office. Staff were already having to work additional hours to meet existing commitments.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk arrange temporary staff cover as necessary.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act, a resolution was passed to exclude the public and press during discussion of the following agenda items. The confidential nature being the consideration of employment matters.

S.13 – 02.17 STAFFING MATTERS

1. To consider complaints against members of staff by a local resident.

RESOLVED: That matters had been fully addressed with no action required.

2. To consider complaints against a member of staff by two Ledbury Town Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the complaints are rejected as unfounded. The member of staff in question had acted professionally in all respects.

RESOLVED: That office procedures will be looked at under the forthcoming operational review.

RESOLVED: Emails of a general nature that would normally be sent to all Councillors from staff email accounts will continue to be sent in this way, with no special arrangements made for individual Councillors.

RESOLVED: That under a duty of care to its staff, Code of Conduct complaints be submitted against the two Ledbury Town Councillors for on-going bullying, harassment and intimidation of staff.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.35 am.

SIGNED	DATE
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