



Ledbury Town Council

Review

Final Report

13th July 2017

LGRC Associates Ltd

Finance and Registered Office: Redwood House, Templars Way, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire SN4 7SR

Operations and Marketing: East Devon Business Centre, Heathpark Way, Honiton, Devon EX14 1SF

Phone: 01404 45973

Email: info@lgrc.uk

Website: www.lgrc.uk



Contents

1.	Executive Summary	2
1.1	Council Organisation, Committee Structure and Decision Making	2
1.2	Staffing, Roles and Workloads	3
1.3	Office Accommodation.....	3
2.	Terms of Reference and Approach.....	4
2.1	Terms of Reference	4
2.2	Approach to the Review	4
3.	Ledbury Town Council	5
3.1	Background and Overview	5
3.2	Plans for the Future	6
3.3	Finances.....	6
3.4	Comparison with Other Town Councils.....	7
3.5	Significant Issues within the Council	8
3.6	Recommendations	8
4.	Current Organisation and Committee Structure.....	10
4.1	Decision Making Effectiveness	10
4.2	Recommendations	11
4.3	Operational Effectiveness	12
4.4	Recommendations	13
5.	Staffing Structure, Roles, Workloads, and Grading.....	15
5.1	Existing Staffing Structure and Roles	15
5.2	The Roles of The Clerk and Deputy Clerk	16
5.3	Grading of Roles	17
5.4	Recommendations	17
6.	Office Accommodation.....	18
6.1	Existing Council Offices.....	18
6.2	Alternative Options	18
6.3	Recommendations	20
7.	Conclusions.....	21
	Appendix 1 – Outline Scheme of Delegations	22
	Appendix 2 – Comparison of Ledbury and 6 Other Councils	30



1. Executive Summary

1.1 Council Organisation, Committee Structure and Decision Making

- 1.1.1 The review carried out by LGRC has examined Ledbury Town Council's structure, organisation, staffing, accommodation and other areas under the headings covered by the terms of reference (set out in section 2 below).
- 1.1.2 Our impression is of a Town Council with enthusiasm and competence, both among members and in the Town Clerk and staff, with the energy to move the Council forward and deliver a greater range of services to the benefit of the community. However, the Council must address the personal differences and the political maneuvering that is currently undermining its purpose, invest in Councillor and staff training, and focus on its strategic goals and priorities.
- 1.1.3 The Council does not yet have an agreed vision and strategy for the future, and should put this in place as soon as possible. No frame of reference exists within which to set the priorities for the Council over the coming years, to set goals, milestones, timescales and appropriate budgets, and to demonstrate successes (see sections 3.2 and 3.6).
- 1.1.4 Analysis of data comparing Ledbury with other similar councils shows Ledbury to be average in terms of the key points of comparison. There were no indicators where Ledbury is performing significantly worse than average, although within the analysis sample there were councils which performed better. Some councils in the comparator group reported significant percentage increases in precept this year (see section 3.4).
- 1.1.5 There are significant divisions within the Council and factional infighting exists which is having a major impact on the Council's performance. The pressures and divisions which exist are currently causing the Council as a whole and the Council staff particularly some considerable stress. This is in turn impairing its decision-making effectiveness, its ability to set meaningful goals, and its operational performance. The Council should consider undergoing a mediation or other process to address the issues that are currently undermining its operation (see sections 3.5 and 3.6).
- 1.1.6 The current committee structure is ineffective in terms of decision making and a revised committee structure should be put in place in accordance with the recommendations at section 4.2 and the outline scheme of delegations set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.1.7 Councillor training should be provided to ensure that all councillors are aware of the scope of their role and act in accordance with good practice (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).
- 1.1.8 The Clerk should be provided with management training to equip her and the Council for an increasingly complex working environment and a likely broadening of the responsibilities of the Council in the context of the exercise of the General



Power of Competence and devolution of service delivery from unitary authorities to local councils (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).

1.2 Staffing, Roles and Workloads

1.2.1 In relation to staffing (see sections 5.1 to 5.4 and Appendix 3):

- The Deputy Clerk role will be extremely important to the effective operation of the Council. This role (and any modifications to the Clerk's role) should be carefully defined before proceeding to recruitment.
- Staff loyalty, commitment and dedication are high, but morale is low as a result of Council infighting, inconsistent interactions between staff and councillors, and the extra workload resulting from the absence of a Deputy Clerk.
- There is some lack of clarity in administrative roles, which should be addressed.
- The Groundsman's workload is too high; an Assistant Groundsman should be recruited to undertake work currently carried out by contractors, and the current Groundsman role should be modified to incorporate supervision of the Assistant.

1.3 Office Accommodation

1.3.1 The existing Council offices are far from satisfactory, but there is no short term solution to this situation. Medium term options may exist, but before a decision is made on whether to relocate, the Council should define its needs and assess the costs and benefits of relocating (see section 6) in further depth.



2. Terms of Reference and Approach

2.1 Terms of Reference

2.1.1 LGRC was appointed to carry out a wide ranging review of Ledbury Town Council with the objectives to:

- Assess the current organisation and structure of the Council, including its committee structure, and recommend whether improvements can be made;
- Assess the current staffing structure, roles, work allocation and grading;
- Assess whether the current office accommodation constrains the Council's ability to operate effectively and whether alternative accommodation would bring greater benefits.

2.2 Approach to the Review

2.2.1 LGRC's approach to the review has been to:

- Review information provided by Ledbury Town Council and attend meetings with the Town Council and its staff in Ledbury to gather relevant information;
- Request further information where considered necessary;
- Assess and analyse the information in the context of the terms of reference;
- Consider what actions or changes might have a positive impact on the Council in the areas covered by the terms of reference;
- Provide a draft report of our recommendations to the Council and, following consultation on this draft, prepare a final report and attend a meeting of the Council to discuss our findings.

2.2.2 LGRC's consultants, Max Goodison and Nick Randle, visited Ledbury Town Council from 10-12th April 2017 to meet with the Town Clerk, other members of staff, and Council members. Meetings were held with 13 council members and 6 members of staff including the Town Clerk. Two Council members declined to meet with LGRC and two other members were unable to attend due to illness. We would hope that the members who declined to meet us will however accept that our work has been conducted independently and in good faith and with an objective view of the issues, both practical and political, that the Council faces.

2.2.3 We have analysed key Council documents, procedures and records to develop an understanding of the Council's functions, management, assets, finances and the associated staffing structure, roles and grading. The issues identified have been discussed with staff and Council members to gain further understanding where necessary in the context of the Council's aims and plans for the future.

2.2.4 [This written final report is now provided following submission and discussion of a draft report in May. This final report will now be discussed with Council members.]



3. Ledbury Town Council

3.1 Background and Overview

3.1.1 Ledbury is an ancient market town whose origins can be traced back at least to the 7th century. Many of the buildings in the Town date back to the medieval period: for example the Market House, the Master's House, Ledbury Park, the Abbey House, the Feathers Hotel, and the Town Council offices themselves, which include the Painted Room. The Town now has a population of approximately 10,000 across the three wards: North, South and West. The Town Council was formed in 1974 following the Local Government reorganisation in the 1972 local government act that saw the abolition of the former Ledbury Rural District Council

3.1.2 An organisation called Ledbury Places was established in 2013 to work with local stakeholders, including Ledbury Town Council, to provide a 'sustainable future' by means of grant funding applications and a concerted programme of repair, maintenance and development works, for a number of historic buildings which form a significant part of the heritage of the Town. These buildings include:

- Barrett Browning Institute
- Burgage Hall
- Butcher Row House Museum
- Heritage Centre
- Market House
- Town Council Offices (including the Painted Room).

3.1.3 The Town Council comprises 18 councillors, 6 from each ward, including an elected Mayor. In addition to the Standing Committee, other Committees exist for Finance & General Purposes, Economic Development & Planning, and Environment & Leisure. However, Committees have very limited delegated powers and in practical terms all non-routine decisions are made at Full Council meetings, which take place monthly.

3.1.4 The staffing of the Council comprises:

- The Town Clerk (37 hrs/week)
- Deputy Town Clerk (27 hrs/week - currently vacant)
- Clerical Officer (10 hrs/week)
- Junior Clerical Officer (16 hrs/week)
- Receptionist (20 hrs/week)
- Grounds Officer (37.5 hrs/week)
- Street Cleaner (9 hrs/week – currently vacant)
- Tour Guide Coordinator and Tour Guides (as needed)
- Ceremony Coordinator (as needed)
- Town Crier (as needed – retiring shortly)



3.1.5 Recruitment to the Deputy Clerk role is on hold pending the outcome of this Review.

3.2 Plans for the Future

3.2.1 We were keen to understand how councillors viewed the role of the Council and what their vision for the future was. While it was clear that councillors are individually keen to meet the needs of the community and deliver value for money, it was difficult to identify a coherent plan for the future from their responses.

3.2.2 All the councillors we interviewed believed that there is further scope for new initiatives. However, the Council does not yet have an agreed vision and strategy for the future, including specific objectives or aims. This means that no frame of reference exists within which to set the priorities for the Council over a given period, to set goals, milestones, timescales and appropriate budgets, and to demonstrate success.

3.2.3 Some planning has recently taken place and a Town Plan has been developed following consultation with the community. However, although the Council has formally expressed its support for this Plan, views on the usefulness of the Plan varied among the councillors we interviewed. Some councillors felt that this was a key piece of planning which could guide the Town Council in its future work, while others described it as a “wish list” which it would be impractical to implement or achieve in the real world. In our view it represents a sound starting point for any subsequent Council strategy. There are good examples of strategies which have been prepared by other councils and LGRC would be pleased to identify relevant examples if required. There is also an opportunity to include the community in this planning process by means of a community survey.

3.2.4 A Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared, led by the Council, and this work should play an important role in informing the Council’s strategy and priorities.

3.3 Finances

3.3.1 The proposed budgetary expenditure for 2016/2017 is £363,558 with budgeted non precept revenue of £46,111. The precept income is £329,883. The tax base is 3,394 households and the band D council tax is £97.20. The Council has reserves totalling approximately £209,264. Comparing Ledbury with the nearly 10,000 Town and Parish Councils that exist nationally, during the 2014/2015 tax year Ledbury had the 478th largest population but levied the 778th largest precept per average Band D property.

3.3.2 A number of services and facilities are provided by the Council, including

- Maintenance of the closed churchyard
- Operating Ledbury cemetery
- Grounds, green spaces, amenity (eg Dog Hill Wood) and recreation land maintenance



- Guided visits to the Painted Room
- Hanging baskets and Christmas lights
- Minor infrastructure such as CCTV, war memorial, street furniture and footpaths
- Hire of the marriage room
- Civic services and events

3.4 Comparison with Other Town Councils

3.4.1 Throughout this assignment we have made use of our knowledge of best practice among Town Councils generally across England and Wales. We undertook specific research to compare Ledbury Town Council against six other town councils of a similar size to assess whether there were any significant differences. The comparator group consists of six medium sized councils with populations and precepts which are the approximately the same size as Ledbury. These are:

- Balderton Parish Council, Nottinghamshire
- Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council, Buckinghamshire
- Angmering Parish Council, West Sussex
- Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council, Shropshire
- Ross-on-Wye Town Council, Herefordshire
- Selsey Town Council, West Sussex

3.4.2 Overall, analysis of the data (provided in Appendix 2) showed that Ledbury is average in terms of the key areas of the research. There were no indicators where Ledbury is performing significantly worse than average, although within the analysis sample there were councils which performed better. It was noticeable that some councils in this group reported significant percentage increases in precept this year, which may reflect the national trend for functions to be passed down to town and parish councils from cash-strapped principal councils.

3.4.3 Office Hours

Office opening hours ranged from 10 hours a week to 40 hours a week compared to Ledbury's 16 hours. Ledbury ranked equal fourth out of the seven councils.

3.4.4 Staff Costs

Staff costs were not available for two of the six councils. Of those where data was available, staff costs ranged from £90,000 pa to £176,000 pa compared to Ledbury's £125,000. Of the five councils where costs are available Ledbury was the second highest.

3.4.5 Committees

The numbers of committees varied from two to six. Three other councils had three committees, which is the same number as Ledbury.

3.4.6 Functions and Activities



Ledbury is average in terms of functions undertaken. However, among the town councils activity in Ledbury was slightly lower than in Selsey or Ross on Wye.

3.5 Significant Issues within the Council

3.5.1 LGRC was appointed to evaluate and make recommendations about a number of aspects of the management of the Council as outlined in 2.1 above. However, as we conducted our investigations it became clear that a significant factor is in play which we feel we need to take into account and which has a major bearing on the performance of the Council.

3.5.2 From our discussions with councillors and staff and reviewing media and other sources, it is clear that there are significant divisions within the Council and factional infighting exists which is having a major impact on the Council's performance. The pressures and divisions which exist are currently causing the Council as a whole and the Council staff particularly some considerable stress. This is in turn impairing its decision-making effectiveness, its ability to set meaningful goals, and its operational performance.

3.5.3 The primary issue appears to be a difference of view on how the Council should proceed. These issues appear to have degraded to infighting between personalities which have found expression in social media and the press. There is significant loss of trust on both 'sides' and normal debate about issues affecting the Council and the community of Ledbury appears to have been displaced by the debate among personalities. In addition, the working modus operandi between councillors and staff appears inconsistent and this would seem to be having a further detrimental effect on morale.

3.5.4 The Council does not at present appear to be working cohesively. We feel that this is an issue that must be addressed by the Council for the good of the community it serves, since a failure to do so will inevitably have an ongoing impact on its effectiveness. Several of the recommendations which we make will relate to this issue.

3.5.5 While council decision making often arises out of robust debate and the existence of different opinions, a successful council operates on the basis that councillors and staff observe basic standards of behavior. Such standards include:

- a willingness to share and consider all relevant information relating to an issue;
- a willingness to debate the issues and not the personalities involved;
- a willingness to accept the will of the majority and not to work directly against a democratic decision of the Council.

3.6 Recommendations

3.6.1 The Council should consider undergoing a mediation or other process to address the deep-seated issues that are currently undermining its operation. The Council needs to reach a point where everyone observes appropriate standards of



conduct, regardless of their personal feelings about fellow members of the Council. The focus should be on issues rather than personalities. Unless a process is followed to re-establish such standards of conduct, mutual respect, and effective co-working, in our view the Council will be largely ineffective in serving the needs of the local community and its reputation and morale could be seriously impaired.

- 3.6.2 The Council should put in place a vision and strategy, drawing on ideas expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Town Plan and supported ideally by a community survey. It should be based as far as possible on consensus among the serving members and could benefit from the involvement of an external organization to facilitate and co-ordinate the preparation of the agreed strategy. The strategy should set goals and priorities in relation to the elements of community needs that it aspires to meet over the current term of the Council and beyond.
- 3.6.3 The Council should clarify its position in relation to the Town Plan and the strategic goals expressed therein, and likewise in relation to Ledbury Places and initiatives to preserve and maintain important historic buildings in the Town.



4. Current Organisation and Committee Structure

4.1 Decision Making Effectiveness

- 4.1.1 In principle, the best expression of democracy in a Council is for decisions to be made on a majority vote of all councillors meeting together in the full Town Council. Good decision making relies on total transparency and good quality provision of information so that all councilors base their voting on the same information. However, only the very smallest councils can usually work in this way. Once a council has more than a very few functions, and certainly in a council of Ledbury's size, this purist approach has to be compromised in a number of ways.
- 4.1.2 The Council can increase its workrate by retaining the principle of making all decisions in full council but by having more frequent full council meetings. This approach can only be taken so far due to the voluntary nature of the councillor role.
- 4.1.3 In practice the democratic principle has to be compromised by delegating decisions to smaller groups of councillors working in committees and/or officers of the Council. The Local Government acts support this arrangement although they are less prescriptive in Town and Parish Councils than in Principal Councils.
- 4.1.4 Such delegations also compromise the transparency principle since, ordinarily, information supporting decisions is primarily provided to the decision makers sitting in committees, although it is good practice to ensure that all councillors have access to the same information if they wish.
- 4.1.5 The transparency principal is also compromised if officer resources are insufficient or otherwise unable to provide good information in support of council meetings. Insufficient resources also compromises the Council's ability to implement the decisions it takes.
- 4.1.6 Typically there are two kind of committees: Standing Committees and Advisory Committees. Both these types of committees may have only councillors sitting on them and are subject to standing orders. Standing committees usually have specific decision areas delegated to them and will routinely make decisions in that area unless the decision is recalled to the full council. Advisory Committees are usually set up for the purpose of researching an issue and reviewing the facts before presenting options to the full council for a decision. Both Standing and Advisory Committees can establish sub-committees which may include non-members of the Council. Sub-committees may recommend actions to a committee which will deal with the recommendation according to the remit of the committee. In addition to committees and sub-committees, the Council or any committee can appoint a working party. In some cases, working parties might have no Council members sitting upon them at all and their outputs are treated in a similar way to reports of council officers, as advice to the Committee or the Council.



4.1.7 Ledbury Town Council has established a number of committees that are associated with different areas of the Council. These are the Standing Committee, Finance & General Purposes, Economic Development & Planning, and Environment & Leisure. However it is clear that, apart from the Standing Committee, all of these are advisory committees and most decisions are referred to the full council before they can be implemented.

4.1.8 Members generally agree that the decision making process is too drawn out and that decisions are often batted backwards and forwards between committees and the full council.

4.1.9 Despite the demanding programme of committee meetings and full council meetings, the lack of delegated powers to committees means that in practice all substantive decisions (except those of a relatively routine nature such as considering planning applications and approving payments) are taken only at full council meetings. This in our view unduly constrains the decision making process, and in addition means that a great deal of councillor time is spent in discussions which may then be duplicated at full council meetings in order to reach a decision on the relevant matter.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 A revised committee structure should be put in place as follows:

- A formal scheme of delegations of standing committees should be put in place delegating specific functions to the committees and to the clerk, with appropriate checks and balances to ensure that significant matters are referred to the full council. A proposed Outline Scheme of Delegations is put forward at Appendix 1.
- For the efficient conduct of business, committee membership should be between 6 and 8 voting councillors. Voting councillors will be sent committee papers as a matter of course.
- The Council should establish a balanced committee membership approach that meets the following principles:
 - All councillors should in the normal course of events have the opportunity to sit on at least one committee.
 - Apart from the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, no councillor should sit on more than two committees
 - The Mayor and Deputy Mayor may be ex-officio members of all committees to ensure continuity and oversight
- Under the model Standing Orders provided by NALC, provided they observe the mandatory requirements Councils may make whatever arrangements they wish for the operation of committees. While it is traditional for Councillors who are not members of a Committee to be treated similarly to a member of the public, we recommend that, due to Ledbury's specific context, councillors who are not members of a committee should be treated



as being a relevant representative of the entire corporate body and that this principle should be overseen and managed by the Chairman of each Committee.

- All councillors should be eligible to attend any committee meeting and to speak at the Chairman's invitation. They should be sent committee agendas as a matter of course and should be supplied with papers on request. Only voting members however may vote on any proposal.
- Matters may be recalled to the full council on the recommendation of:
 - the Clerk
 - a majority of the voting members on a Committee
 - a majority of the voting members on the Council.

4.3 Operational Effectiveness

4.3.1 We asked councillors what training they had had in their role. Councillor training provision is informal and ad hoc. While all new councillors are offered access to Herefordshire Association of Local Councils training for parish and town councillors, training take-up is patchy. We saw evidence of councillor conduct that is contrary to good practice, which may however in some cases be from a lack of understanding as to how they should carry out their role. This included a failure to observe the Nolan Principles and attempts to restrict transparency. Views were expressed that some information should only be shared among certain councillors or committee members even if normal confidentiality criteria did not apply. The main reason for this appeared to be to stop information appearing in social media. We also saw examples of a failure to observe the correct relationship between councillors and staff, and a failure to respect democratic decisions taken by the Council. Some councillors advocated practices which were once relevant but are now outdated and have been superseded.

4.3.2 The Clerk is clearly hard working, competent and dedicated, and has the deserved support of a majority of the councillors. She has been with the Council for many years, having worked up through the Council's administration. She has been in post as Clerk for approximately 8 years, and has very recently gained the CiLCA qualification. It is understood that, on the basis of this, the Council has now adopted the General Power of Competence and must now decide in what specific ways it intends to exercise these new powers.

4.3.3 The Clerk has not, however, had any formal management training and we believe this would be of benefit. The remit of the Council is likely to broaden over the coming years, partly through exercise of the GPC and partly as a result of the devolution of responsibilities from unitary authorities to local councils. The Council has an obligation to ensure that the Clerk can perform to the best of her abilities and that further training and study time should be offered to her to ensure her management and council administration knowledge and skills are complete and up to date.



- 4.3.4 Councils normally have a wealth and diversity of experience and skills within their numbers, and it is recommended that a full skills audit of Council members is undertaken to identify skills and utilise those skills as much as possible within the Council environment.
- 4.3.5 Effective staffing structure, supervision, job definition, training and skills development, interaction between councillors and officers, IT support, and suitable office accommodation all play important roles in operational effectiveness, and each of these is discussed further in the sections that follow.
- 4.3.6 The role of Deputy Town Clerk adds a layer of supervisory capacity, additional administrative capacity and also, ideally, complementary skills to those of the Town Clerk and other members of staff in certain important areas (for example, marketing, website, and grant funding applications). Recruiting the right person for this role can make a dramatic difference to the operational effectiveness of the Council. This is discussed in further detail in section 5 below.
- 4.3.7 The Council offices are and should be open to the public as much as is practicable. While forming an important part of the Council's day to day role, the amount of 'footfall' in the Council offices is unpredictable and therefore the demands on officer time are also unpredictable. However, we are of the view that the opening hours of the Council are currently adequate and that no changes are necessary in this area.
- 4.3.8 Councillor access to officers is also important for the proper discussion of Council work. However, this interaction can be made more efficient (and effective) by making appointments in advance of meetings wherever possible. This is also in line with good practice.
- 4.3.9 At the time of our visit, the IT system recently implemented at the Council (supplied by Microshade) appeared to be causing some operational difficulty. This may be due to the quality and/or speed of broadband provision, on which Microshade's systems are heavily reliant. This should be investigated in further depth to determine the likely impact on the Council's operation and any possible solutions to the problems experienced.

4.4 Recommendations

- 4.4.1 The Council would benefit from one or more all-council training workshops aimed both at new and experienced councillors, to ensure that everyone understands their role and the role of a 21st century town council. These workshops could also be combined with some work to collectively develop a Council Strategy.
- 4.4.2 There would in our view be significant benefits to the Council if the Clerk were to receive management training appropriate to her role, to equip her with up to date and relevant management skills to perform what is a complex role, and prepare for the developing role of the Council in the years to come.



- 4.4.3 The appointment of a suitably experienced Deputy Town Clerk is extremely important to the operational effectiveness of the Council and this role should be carefully defined so that the right balance of responsibilities and skills can be put in place.
- 4.4.4 Councillors should be encouraged to arrange meetings with the relevant members of staff in advance of attending the Council offices whenever possible.
- 4.4.5 If the current IT systems are not performing to the required standard, solutions to this should be investigated.



5. Staffing Structure, Roles, Workloads, and Grading

5.1 Existing Staffing Structure and Roles

- 5.1.1 We interviewed the Town Clerk, the clerical officer and the junior clerical officer, the receptionist and the groundsman. We found that these members of staff were loyal and dedicated, all in their own way prepared to go the extra mile for the Council. Examples of this were the excessive hours worked by the Town Clerk in the absence of a Deputy Town Clerk, and the preparedness of the Grounds Officer to turn his hand to any task required of him, whether or not it was in his job description, and whether or not he was on duty. However, it is clear that staff morale is low and that the factional infighting within the Council has had an impact on the staff and their ability to give of their best.
- 5.1.2 Overall the structure is satisfactory, although the lack of a Deputy Town Clerk is presenting significant issues including, apart from the obvious lack of capacity to undertake the day to day tasks of the Council, less accessibility of administrative staff to supervisory support and management guidance than is ideal. This has been exacerbated by the recent spate of Freedom of Information requests which are time consuming to process and detract from the normal day to day work of the Council.
- 5.1.3 There is also some lack of clarity in the roles of admin staff and this results in a degree of overlap. This may be alleviated by the recruitment of a replacement Deputy, but should in our view be addressed prior to this as a substantive issue (see below).
- 5.1.4 Before recruiting a new Deputy Clerk, the opportunity should be taken to review the role of Deputy Clerk to include additional skills which are needed (such as website maintenance skills and marketing communications skills - see below) and to review reporting lines so that support staff benefit from sufficient supervision and guidance, while enabling the Clerk to perform other important aspects of her role. Currently the Deputy role is defined as a 27 hrs/week role and consideration should be given to increasing the hours to full time.
- 5.1.5 The nominal 'job-share' between the two clerical officers needs some clarification. One has the title Clerical Officer and the other Junior Clerical Officer, but they both believe they are doing essentially the same job and have the same responsibilities (albeit the Clerical Officer works 10 hrs/week and the Junior Clerical Officer 16 hrs/week). This should be addressed either by making the role formally into a job share (which would imply the same salary point, job title and job content), or by making a formal distinction between the two roles in terms of seniority and/or responsibilities and/or job content.
- 5.1.6 The Receptionist works longer hours (20 hrs/week) than each of the clerical officers and because of this is sometimes requested to carry out tasks which would otherwise be covered by one or other of the clerical officers. This is

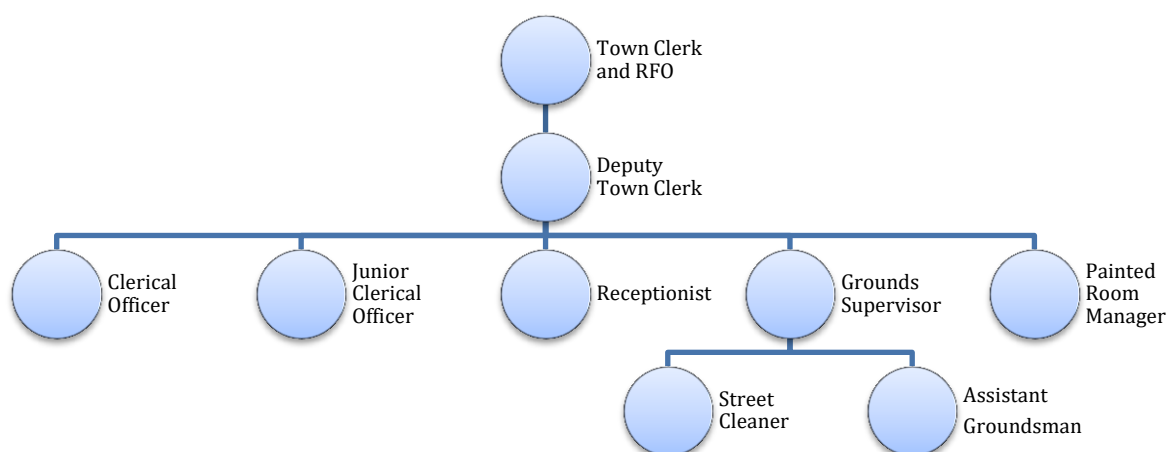


unsettling to the clerical officers, who see tasks that they understand to be within their own role being undertaken by a different member of staff.

5.1.7 The Groundsman role would seem at present to require longer hours than are reflected in the job description and remuneration for this role. The current Groundsman may be at risk of leaving the Council if, in addition to the high workload, he can see no career path available to him at the Council or any way in which the high demands on his time can be alleviated. A possible solution is for this role to evolve into a role both to undertake and also to supervise the Council's grounds maintenance work and for the Council to employ a further groundsman (in addition to the current Street Cleaner) to provide the additional capacity which would appear to be needed.

5.1.8 The Council currently spends over £2,000 per month (nearly £26,000 in 2016/17) on contracted grounds maintenance services. This represents considerably more than the salary of a further full time groundsman. The Council should therefore consider the benefits of employing a further groundsman (on a salary of c. £15k-16k) under the supervision of the existing groundsman.

Proposed Structure with New Deputy Clerk and Assistant Groundsman



5.2 The Roles of The Clerk and Deputy Clerk

5.2.1 Although the Deputy will be required to deputise for the Clerk from time to time, most of the role should be complementary to the Clerk's role, providing additional capacity in some areas, responsibility for others, and additional skills in others (eg marketing, website, grant funding applications, etc). As the above staffing structure shows, the Deputy Clerk could assume line management responsibility for the administrative staff and grounds supervisor. A revised job description will be needed before proceeding to recruit to this role.

5.2.2 At present the Clerk is responsible for most aspects of finance, including acting as RFO. Consideration should be given to allocating most day to day finance tasks to the Deputy role (while retaining the RFO responsibility within the Town Clerk



role). This would free up a considerable amount of time for the TC to devote more time to strategic planning and overall management tasks.

- 5.2.3 We have already highlighted the absence of a formal Council strategy/business plan and the impact of this on the effectiveness of the Council. Co-ordination of this key task should form an important part of the Town Clerk's role and this should be reflected in the job description for this role.

5.3 Grading of Roles

- 5.3.1 We have examined the roles of Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk and have re-drafted in outline the job descriptions for both roles based on our suggested job content and, specifically, the division of responsibilities between these two key roles. These are included at Appendix 3 [to be added].

5.4 Recommendations

- 5.4.1 The roles of Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk should be reviewed to ensure that they incorporate the right balance of responsibilities and duties, taking into account the need to provide 'strategic management' to the Council in addition to maximum the effectiveness of day to day administrative support.
- 5.4.2 Consideration should be given to making the Deputy Town Clerk a full time role.
- 5.4.3 On the basis of an agreed revised job description, proceed to appoint a new Deputy Town Clerk and ensure that a suitable induction programme is put in place to enable the new appointee to become effective as quickly as possible.
- 5.4.4 Recruit an Assistant Groundsman and redefine the existing Groundsman role to incorporate supervision of the Assistant Groundsman and Street Cleaner. Decide what additional grounds services the Council requires, if any, over and above the capabilities and/or capacity of the Groundsman, Assistant Groundsman and Street Cleaner and contract as necessary for these additional services.
- 5.4.5 Consider whether there are valid differences between the roles of Clerical Officer, Junior Clerical Officer and Receptionist, and update the job descriptions for these roles as necessary. If the roles of Clerical Officer and Junior Clerical Officer are essentially the same, consider making these roles formally into a job share.



6. Office Accommodation

6.1 Existing Council Offices

- 6.1.1 The Council's current offices consist of three cottages which have been joined together. In terms of location they are very central and in a building which represent the essence of Ledbury's historic and cultural heritage. Internally however, the linking of the cottages has meant that the building is a warren of small rooms on a number of levels linked by dark passages and narrow staircases.
- 6.1.2 A Town Council office should provide accommodation for Council employees that allows them to be as efficient and effective as possible in undertaking their roles and serving the public. On the one hand the building is centrally located and the reception area, which has a traditional counter at the entrance, is accessible for the public. The reception does have a rather old fashioned feel to it, but has the advantage of being more accessible than some.
- 6.1.3 The office environment however is far from ideal. There is more separation of staff than is ideal due to the peculiarities of the building's structure. In one case this contributes to a feeling of isolation from the workings of the team. Due to the layout, it is difficult to utilise the space effectively and compromises have been necessary to allow the Council to function. For example, Full Council meetings take place in the Community Hall and the majority of Committee meetings take place in The Market House, with some taking place in the Council offices. Ideally the council meeting chamber should be within the Council office building.
- 6.1.4 Some rooms in the Council building are being used for storage and document archiving, but access to these rooms is up rickety staircases and it must be difficult for heavy or bulky objects to be maneuvered in and out of these rooms, quite apart from the possibility of accident.
- 6.1.5 The Council must balance a range of factors, not least the cost of different premises and the cost of moving but, in our view, if an alternative Council office can be found which is reasonably central and accessible to the public and which provides generally more accessible and useable accommodation, then the disruption involved in relocating will be worthwhile in terms of improved efficiency of the staff and the Council as a whole.
- 6.1.6 Overall there is no immediate urgency to relocate from the current premises and the Council can continue to operate there though, as noted above, in less than ideal working conditions and hence at lower operational effectiveness than could otherwise be the case.

6.2 Alternative Options

6.2.1 Barrett Browning Institute



- This is an important heritage building in a prominent location in the centre of the Town. Ledbury Places has applied (unsuccessfully, to date) for grant funding for a major refurbishment scheme and is currently considering how to modify this scheme in order to attempt to secure the necessary grant funds. This would be a major project and, even if the necessary grant funding were eventually forthcoming, it would in all likelihood extend over a period of years before occupation could take place.
- It would provide sufficient accommodation for the Town Council at its current size, but would not offer significant space for expansion over and above this.
- The original refurbishment scheme will almost certainly need to be amended before re-applying for grant funding, and this revised scheme may not meet the Council's needs.
- The costings of the project, specific modifications to meet the Council's needs, rent payments and maintenance are not yet defined in detail and may not be in line with funds available from the Council budget.
- In summary, overall this project is subject to much uncertainty and would be at best a medium term solution. It may not ultimately meet the Council's needs in terms of space, layout and accessibility, and would not offer space for expansion. The associated costs are at this stage unpredictable. The prestige building, central location, and the desire to support a programme to bring this building back into productive use should not in our view outweigh the more practical considerations of cost, timescale, space availability, access, and layout.

6.2.2 Community Hall

- The Community Hall is also located very centrally in the Town, though not in quite such a prominent position as the Barrett Browning Institute. However, it offers good accessibility and is close to car parking.
- It is a modern, purpose-built, single storey structure and is at present used for a variety of purposes, offering flexible space including a large central hall.
- Subject to further investigation, this building could offer scope for extension and the addition of further office accommodation which could be tailored to suit the Council's needs. An alternative may be to replace this building in its entirety with a building which suits the needs both of the Council and the local community. Without the benefit of costings at this stage, it is felt that both these options could potentially provide suitable accommodation, tailored to the Council's needs, at lower cost and in a shorter timescale than the Barrett Browning Institute option above.

6.2.3 Other

- It is possible that other town-centre premises may become available in the near to mid-term on vacation by another organisation, but we are not aware of any specific premises at this stage apart from the former Ledbury Youth



Centre, which is currently vacant. Awaiting the availability of such premises is an option, but not a plan as such, since it is completely unpredictable whether such premises will become available, in a good location, offering the right accommodation and right layout, at the right cost.

- If the Council decides that moving from the current premises is essential, we cannot therefore recommend this option in view of the lack of certainty as to timing, type and amount of available space, and costs.

6.3 Recommendations

- 6.3.1 Assess the Council's needs in terms of amount of space, ideal location and layout, facilities, timing, and budget.
- 6.3.2 Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the benefits of moving and the costs of doing so and, on the basis of this, take the decision on whether an office move is essential and, if so, in what timescale and to what budget.
- 6.3.3 Assess the options outlined in section 6.2 above in the light of the above analysis.



7. Conclusions

- 7.1.1 Our review has identified that Ledbury Town Council is at an important point in its development and is faced with several options which will determine its future purpose, direction and priorities. The first step in this situation is, in our view for the Council to address the significant divisions that exist among Councillors and between some councilors and staff. Either as part of this process or as a next step, the Council needs to work together to create a master plan or strategy setting out the agreed goals, priorities, methods of achieving these, and the relevant timescales.
- 7.1.2 Our impression is of a Town Council with enthusiasm and competence, both among members and in the Town Clerk and staff, with the energy to move the Council forward and deliver a greater range of services to the benefit of the community. However, the Council must address the personal differences and the political maneuvering that is currently undermining its purpose, invest in Councillor and staff training, and focus on its strategic goals and priorities.
- 7.1.3 LGRC have been pleased to support the Council with this review and thank the Town Clerk, staff and members for their help and co-operation. We would be pleased to provide further assistance and support to the Council in any way we can.



Appendix 1 – Outline Scheme of Delegations

This Scheme of Delegation specifies the authority delegated to the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (the Town Clerk) and the Standing Committees to act on behalf of the Council in the specific circumstances detailed. It will be reviewed annually at the Annual Town Council Meeting.

Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer - Duties and Authority

1. Responsible Financial Officer

- a) The Responsible Finance Officer to the Council shall be responsible for the Town Council's accounting procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

2. Proper Officer

- a) The Clerk to the Council shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is specifically authorised to:
 - i) Receive declarations of acceptance of office
 - ii) Receive and record notices disclosing interests
 - iii) Receive and retain plans and documents
 - iv) Sign Notices or other documents on behalf of the Council
 - v) Receive copies of bylaws made by a principal local authority
 - vi) Certify copies of bylaws made by the Council
 - vii) Draw up agendas usually after consultation with the relevant Committee Chair
 - viii) Sign summons to attend ordinary meetings of the Council

In addition, the Clerk to the Council has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

1. Day to day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control
2. Day to day supervision and control of all staff employed by the Council
3. Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence, requiring or requesting information or relating to previous decisions of the Council, but not correspondence requiring an opinion or decision to be taken by the Council or its Committees
4. Authorisation of routine recurring expenditure within the agreed budget
5. Emergency expenditure up to £5,000 outside of an agreed budget. The Clerk may seek emergency authorisation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee for further expenditure up to an additional £5,000.
6. Authorisation of expenditure on works up to a maximum of £5,000.



Delegated actions of the Clerk to the Council shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and in line with directions given by the Council from time to time and use of the Clerk's delegated powers shall be reported verbally to the next meeting of the full Council.

Council and its Committees - Duties and Powers

Council

- a) The following are reserved matters for the Council to decide, notwithstanding that the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendations thereon for the Council's consideration.
 - i) Appointment of the Town Clerk / RFO following consideration being given to a recommendation from the Staffing Sub Committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
 - ii) Setting the Precept
 - iii) Borrowing money
 - iv) Approval of the Council's Annual Accounts and the Annual Return
 - v) Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or this Scheme of Delegation
 - vi) Making, amending or revoking bylaws
 - vii) Making of orders under any statutory powers
 - viii) Approving and adopting the Council's Long Term strategy
 - ix) Appointment of all Standing Committees
 - x) Matters of principle or policy including those recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee
 - xi) Receiving and noting of all minutes approved by Committees
 - xii) Approval of any application for Quality Status and/or its equivalent
 - xiii) Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body
 - xiv) Any proposed undertakings committing expenditure above £20,000
 - xv) Responses to legislative and other allied consultations excluding those dealt with by the Planning Committee
 - xvi) Prosecution or defence in a Court of Law other than an Employment Tribunal
 - xvii) Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a Committee
 - xviii) Decisions to adopt the General Power of Competence



Urgent Matters

- a) In the event of any matter arising which requires an urgent decision the Clerk to the Council shall forthwith consult with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and other relevant Committee Chairs and/or Vice Chairs before acting on behalf of the Council. A minimum of three such members will be consulted.
- b) Before the Clerk exercises the delegated powers granted by the above paragraph, those Members consulted shall consider whether the matter justifies summoning an Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Council or appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee.
- c) Whenever any action is taken in this way, full details of the circumstances justifying urgent action shall be submitted in writing to the next available meeting of the Committee concerned and/or Council.

Committees and Sub Committees

- a) The **Finance and General Purposes Standing Committee** shall have 9 members and be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters:
 - i) Approval of its Minutes as true and correct record
 - ii) All matters relating to financial management of the Council's affairs including legal matters, excluding the final setting of a precept or any amount to be borrowed.
 - iii) Following consultation with all budget holding Committees, to receive estimates from the RFO for all Committee budgets (including that for the Finance and General Purposes Committee) to enable the establishment of an overall budget estimate for recommendation to Full Council as laid down in Financial Regulations
 - iv) To discuss all grant applications in accordance with the Grant Scheme's agreed criteria and guidelines which should be reviewed on an annual basis and make recommendations to Full Council for inclusion in the overall budget estimate
 - v) The monitoring of all budgets on an ongoing basis, taking action where required to vire (transfer) unspent provision to ensure that the overall budget parameters are maintained
 - vi) Audit arrangements, including the selection and review of Internal Auditors.
 - vii) Approval of expenditure on items within the Committee's area of responsibility and included in the approved Council budget up to the amount specified in the budget.
 - viii) Approval of additional emergency expenditure up to £5,000.
 - ix) The maintenance of a Fixed Asset Register covering all items purchased exceeding £1,000. The safe custody and upkeep of all accoutrements and objects of interest or value in the ownership of the Council.



- x) Oversee the management of Town Council Offices and the Market House.
 - xi) To negotiate any changes to existing lease agreements, and negotiate terms for all new lease agreements remaining mindful of the Council's financial responsibilities.
 - xii) To maintain an overview of all Service Level Agreements with partner public bodies, in conjunction with other committees as appropriate.
 - xiii) The maintenance and safe custody of the civic insignia and ceremonial dress.
 - xiv) Corporate Management including matters of general policy ahead of recommendations to Full Council.
 - xv) Oversee that management of the Council's ICT resources and infrastructure.
 - xvi) The administration of the charities that fall within the Town Council's jurisdiction.
 - xvii) To select from members of the Committee those who will be appointed signatories/authorisers of expenditure
 - xviii) To receive and note the minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- b) The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision but the Committee may make recommendations:
- i) Reviewing the Council's Financial Regulations / Standing Orders and Council policies in consultation with other Council Committees on an annual basis.
 - ii) Recommendation of the Committee's budget and overall Council budget for each financial year.
 - iii) Any funding required outside of, or above, the set budget in any given financial year.
 - iv) Any other matter that has been delegated to it by the Council from time to time.
 - v) The Committee may refer specific matters to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.
- c) The **Staffing Sub-Committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee** shall have 5 members including the Mayor, The Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of Finance and general Purposes and be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters and will meet as necessary:
- i) Approval of its Minutes as true and correct records
 - ii) Oversee the recruitment and selection of all staff with the exception of the Town Clerk / RFO and Deputy Town Clerk?
 - iii) The short listing of applicants for the post of Town Clerk/RFO and Deputy Town Clerk with applications circulated to all Councillors



- iv) To interview applicants for the post of Town Clerk / RFO and Deputy Town Clerk and make recommendations to the Council thereon
- v) To consider and implement any changes that are required for the Council to comply with Employment Law, Health and Safety legislation and terms and conditions of service for all employees as set out in the Employees Handbook. This includes those agreements for Clerks recommended by National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and other national agreements that the Council may recognise.
- vi) To administer any discipline or grievance cases in accordance the Councils' adopted policies.
- vii) Prosecution or defence in any Employment Tribunal proceedings
- viii) To ensure all staff appraisals are being carried out in accordance with Town Council policy.
- ix) To ensure that three members, being the Mayor, The Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes, carry out an annual appraisal of the Town Clerk
- x) To approve any changes to the terms and conditions of employment of employees of the council.
- xi) To approve changes to remuneration of any employee within the approved budget.
- xii) The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision but the Sub-Committee may make recommendations:
 - (a) Recommendation of the Committee's budget each financial year (if any)
 - (b) Any funding required outside of, or above, the set budget in any given financial years
 - (c) Any other matter which may be delegated to it by the Council from time to time
 - (d) The Committee may refer specific matters to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.

It is important that the Council and Staffing Committee keeps confidential its deliberations and decisions around individual staff matters

- d) The **Economic Development and Planning Standing Committee** shall have 7 members and be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters:
 - i) Approval of its Minutes as true and correct records.
 - ii) Approval of expenditure within budgets that the Economic Development and Planning Committee is responsible for.
 - iii) To oversee the Charter Market and the Job Fair
 - iv) To ensure that Emergency plans are developed and maintained.



- v) To have delegated powers to make observations on all planning, highways, footpaths, Public rights of way, licensing applications and related matters, and submit those observations to the appropriate authority.
- vi) When necessary, hold meetings with residents, developers or planning officers to assist with the formulation of those observations.
- vii) To respond in a timely manner to all consultations, and to take part in any discussions which could result in changes to the Local Development framework, Core Strategy, Planning Policy Statements, Town & Country Planning Act, etc.
- viii) To submit proposals in respect of funding for any training requirements for staff and members to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- ix) If a meeting becomes inquorate it is delegated to the Town Clerk working in conjunction with the Chairman of the Economic Development and Planning Committee to make recommendations on those matters outstanding to enable a response to be given to the Principal Authority (BCC) within the laid down time scales.
- x) The Committee will consider all planning applications in a consistent manner, with those submitted by or on behalf of members of the Council, or on behalf of the Council itself being noted.
- xi) The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision but the Committee may make recommendations on:
 - (a) The Committee's budget each financial year.
 - (b) Any funding required outside of, or above, the set budget in any given financial year.
 - (c) The Town Plan
 - (d) Highways and Transportation
 - (e) Street names and Town Signs
 - (f) Neighbourhood planning and development orders and to appoint planning consultants as part of the development process of neighbourhood plans.
 - (g) The strategy to be formulated for neighbourhood planning across Ledbury
 - (h) Any other matter which may be delegated to it by the Council from time to time

The Committee may refer specific matters to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.

- e) The **Environment and Leisure Standing Committee** shall have 7 members and be delegated to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the following matters:
 - i) Approval of its Minutes as true and correct records.
 - ii) With the exception of the Town Council Offices and the Market House, the



maintenance, improvement and general upkeep of all council property including cemeteries, parks, gardens, play areas and open spaces (such as Dog Hill Wood), community buildings, leisure facilities, street furniture and street scene enforcement (including litter, dogs, parking and graffiti) parking, benches, bins, cycle ,parking, bus shelters, public clocks, war memorials, notice boards, public toilets, defibrillators, lighting, traffic signs, common pasture, closed church yards, crime prevention, tourisms allotments refuse and composting schemes within an agreed budget.

- iii) The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, has delegated power to take any action considered appropriate in a situation where the health and safety of public or staff is at risk and incur emergency expenditure as laid out in financial regulations to protect the Council, its assets and to prevent injury or loss of life.
- iv) Approval of Expenditure within budgets the Environment and Leisure Committee is responsible for.
- v) The maintenance, improvement and general upkeep of all the Councils' properties within the agreed budget.
- vi) To review and set charges for use of open spaces (including burial and cemetery fees)
- vii) To receive estimates from the RFO for the Amenities budget to enable a considered recommendation to be made to the Finance and Policy Committee as laid down in Financial Regulations
- viii) To ensure that all activities carried out within the Council's property have due regard to Health & Safety, Disability Discrimination Act and comply with all legislation in terms of public safety.
- ix) The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision but the Committee may make recommendations:
 - (a) Recommendation of the Committee's budget each financial year.
 - (b) Any funding required outside of, or above, the set budget in any given financial year.
 - (c) Any other matter which may be delegated to it by the Council from time to time.
 - (d) The Committee may refer specific matters to the Council for a final decision if it so wishes.

f) Sub-Committees

A Standing Committee may, if it believes it would be appropriate, appoint a Sub-Committee. Any powers to be delegated to such a Sub-Committee may be detailed at the time the Sub-Committee is formed by means of a Minute detailing the Terms of Reference but such delegated powers must be approved by the Council. Single Issue or Time Bound Committees may not appoint sub-committees without a specific authorisation from the Council.



g) Working Parties/Advisory Committees

Working Parties/Advisory Committees may be formed by resolution of the Council or a Committee at any time. The work of such a Working Party/Advisory Committee will be decided upon at the time it is formed by means of a minute detailing the Terms of Reference. Each Working Party/Advisory Committee will report back with recommendations to the Council or the Committee that formed it. A Working Party/Advisory Committee does not have decision-making powers. Non-Council members can be appointed to it. Its meetings are not open to the public.

Delegation - Limitations

Committees and Sub-committees shall, at all times, act in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and, where applicable, any other rules, regulations, schemes, statutes, bylaws or orders made and with any directions given by the Council from time to time. This does not apply to Working Parties/Advisory Committees.

Attendance of Members at Committee Meetings¹

All Councillors have an absolute right to attend any Committee meeting. The Chairman of the Committee has at his absolute discretion the right to allow a non-member to speak but is encouraged to do so. As a courtesy and if possible, a non-member is required to notify the Chairman in advance if they wished to speak on an agenda item. A non-member could make one statement per agenda item if invited by the Chairman not to exceed 2 minutes. Any further participation in the meeting of a non-member is at the invitation of the Chairman.

Transparency and Confidentiality

The Council believes in open and transparent governance wherever possible. However, a Committee has the right to exclude the press and public as per Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ss1&2 during any part of a meeting due to the special or confidential nature of the business to be transacted. With the exception of the Staffing Committee where personal and individual issues are discussed, Councillors who are non-members of a Committee that has passed a resolution excluding the press and public have an absolute right to remain in the meeting. If, in the opinion of the Staffing Sub Committee, the item is of a particularly sensitive or confidential nature, they will be asked to leave. In such circumstances, non-member Councillors will only be allowed to remain if they can demonstrate a 'need to know' as defined in the cases of *R v City of Birmingham District Council ex parte O* [1983] 1 AC 578 and *R v Hackney LBC ex parte Gamper* [1985] 1 WLR 1229. The decision of the Committee will be final.

Call-in Policy

Any five members may request the Clerk to call-in a decision taken by a committee for review by the Town Council at its next ordinary meeting.

¹ While the NALC model standing orders tends to treat non members of committee as if they were members of the public LGRC is of the view that the specific circumstances at Ledbury Town Council indicate a need for the Council to establish its own approach in this area.



Appendix 2 – Comparison of Ledbury and 6 Other Councils

1. Ledbury Town Council

Population	(2011 Census) 9,290
Precept	(2015) £246,438
Parish Office	Open 10am – 2pm Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri
Councillors	18 elected members
Staff	Clerk, Deputy Clerk (Vacant), 2 x Clerical Officers, Receptionist, Groundsman, Street Cleaner
Staff Costs	£125,091 (2015/16)

Committees:

Finance & General Purposes
Environment & Leisure
Economic Development & Planning

Town Council Offices include 16th Century Painted Room which is open to the public

Services & Responsibilities:

Cemetery
Recreation ground with memorial plaque
Twice-weekly market (Tues & Sat)
Jacobean Ceremony Room – licensed for weddings

Ledbury Town Plan - adopted in 2016

Neighbourhood Plan - in progress – consultation prior to Draft Plan ended Jan 2017

2. Balderton Parish Council, Notts.

Population	(2011 Census) 9,757
Precept	(2015) £245,050
Parish Office	Open 10am – 12pm, Mon – Fri
Councillors	15 elected members
Staff	Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Head Groundsman, Deputy Head Groundsman, Playing Field/Centre Attendants, Apprentice Groundsman
Staff Costs	£176,222 (2015/16)

Committees:

Amenities
Finance & General Purposes

Balderton Village Centre:

Completed 2006 – houses Council Office; Council meetings held there; large hall for hire for parties, wedding receptions etc; 8 changing rooms with showers for sports users.



Services & Responsibilities:

Lakeside public gardens and lake with fishing club.
17 acre playing field and children's playground with 3 football fields,
cricket pitch, 2 multi use games areas and a bowls court
Mount Road Cemetery
Allotments
Millennium Tower Clock

Ongoing Café Project for Playing Field

Council taking out £100,000 fixed rate loan to fund.

NB This council does not have its own website – info hosted on District Council website

3. Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council, Bucks.

Population	(2011 Census) 10,172
Precept	(2015) £248,067
Parish Office	Open 9am-5pm Mon- Fri
Councillors	17 elected members
Staff	Full time Clerk, 2 x p/t Assistants, Groundsman, Assistant Groundsman
Staff Costs	£116,024 (2014/15)

Committees:

Finance & General Purposes
Planning, Highways & Lighting
Open Spaces, Allotments & Burials

Services & Responsibilities:

1.5 acre Village Green
31 acre Wooburn Park
Woodland on a 999 year lease acquired in 1994 and actively managed
and conserved
Recreation Ground
Allotments
Cemetery
Street Lighting
Council has submitted an application for designation of
Neighbourhood Area – in preparation for Neighbourhood Plan?

Precept	Increase of 38.59% (£52.97 up to £73.41) this year. Letter to parishioners explains that this is the first increase since 2012 and is due to the devolution of services from Buckinghamshire County Council. Parish Council now responsible for urban grass cutting, hedge cutting, footways maintenance, street furniture maintenance and cleaning traffic signs.
----------------	---



4. Angmering Parish Council, West Sussex

Population	(2011 Census) 7,614
Precept	(2015) £243,854
Parish Office	Open 9am – 1pm, Mon – Fri
Councillors	13 elected members. ‘Meet your Parish Councillor’ session monthly on a Saturday 1.30-3.30pm
Staff	Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Committee Clerk, Assistant Administrator/Grounds Maintenance Officer; Groundsman
Staff Costs	No information available.

Committees:

Housing, Transport & Planning
Community, Leisure, Environment & Wellbeing
Governance & Oversight

Services & Responsibilities:

Bramley Green play areas and open spaces
Some bus shelters
Maintenance of some areas
Newsletter

Neighbourhood Plan

Has produced Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029. Feb 2017 article in Parish Newsletter explaining that the Council is seeking a Judicial Review from the High Court against Arun District Council which has sought to override the Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Land Trust

Parish Council is providing funding alongside a grant from CLT to set up Angmering Community Land Trust for affordable housing, community farming and allotments, flood prevention, recreation and sports facilities and public toilets.

Precept Increase of £10 per Band D household - partly to fund Judicial Review.

5. Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council, Shropshire

Population	(2011 Census) 11,565
Precept	(2015) £248,350
Parish Office	Open 9am – 4pm Mon – Thurs; 9am – 12pm Fri
Councillors	16 elected members
Staff	Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Youth Engagement Officer (no more info on staff)
Staff Costs	£90,706 (2014/15)

Committees:

Finance & General Purposes
Parish Events



Personnel & Appeals meet as required

Services & Responsibilities:

Castle Farm Community Centre – houses Council offices; Function Hall with stage, licensed bar, kitchen and 2 smaller meeting rooms all for hire for parties etc.

Hadley Cemetery

Parish Environmental Team

Bus shelters

War memorial

Christmas lights

Footway lighting

Floral displays

Youth projects

The Council is also working in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council and the Friends of Apley Woods on the regeneration of Apley Woods.

6. Ross-on-Wye Town Council, Herefordshire

Population (2011 Census) 9,574

Precept (2015) £242,112

Parish Office Open 9.30am – 1pm, Mon -Fri

Councillors 18 elected members. Surgery with a councillor every Sat 10-11am in liaison with police who are also represented.

Staff Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Administration Assistant
(no other information on staff)

Staff Costs £96,918 (2014/15)

Committees:

Amenities

Planning & Development

Policy & Management

Finance & Personnel

Events

Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

Services & Responsibilities:

Weekly Markets on Thursdays & Saturdays

Corn Exchange – houses Council Chamber (seats 24), Mayor's Parlour (seats 6) - both rooms for hire

Deanhill Park

Crossfields

Skate Park

Caroline Symonds Gardens and Bandstand (free Sunday afternoon concerts in summer)

Riverside – Rope Walk & Long Acre

Weather station



Ross Town Cemetery
St Mary's Churchyard
The Old Chapel
The Larruperz Centre (community centre?)
The Market House (houses co-operative of local arts & crafts producers which is open daily)
Allotments
Public toilets in 2 car parks
Memorial benches
Railings in Smallbrook Gardens – need application to display posters etc
Christmas lights
Maintenance of footpaths

Council is involved with Twinning Associations and hosts an annual Civic Reception for visiting Mayor and guests.

7. Selsey Town Council, West Sussex

Population (2011 Census) 10,737
Precept (2015) £242,112
Parish Office Open 9.30am – 4pm, Mon-Fri
Councillors 14 elected members. Youth Council of 6 elected students is assisted by 2 Councillors
Staff Clerk, Operations Manager, Administrator, Apprentice Administrator, Selsey Centre Manager, 2 x Community Resource Assistants, 3 x Maintenance workers, (Town Co-ordinator is also based at Council office)
Staff Costs No information available.
SelseyWorks Award-winning community provision delivered by the Town Council. Sue Osborne is available 9.30am – 3pm to support job seeking, CV writing, benefits forms, housing etc

Committees:

Planning
Assets & Amenities

Services & Responsibilities:

Town Hall Complex – houses Council Offices and 3 halls for hire;
Council Chamber is licensed for weddings
Selsey Centre (joint project with Chichester District Council) – Conference Room, Kitchen, Dance Studio & Multi -use Sports Hall available for hire
6 recreation and play areas
Skate park
BMX track
Hanging baskets in High Street
Christmas illuminations



Seating on the sea wall
Some street lighting provision
Part financing of CCTV cameras

Consultation period on draft **Neighbourhood Plan** ended on 3rd April 2017

Precept Increase of 14% for 2017/2018 to £77.49 per Band D household (increase of £1.49 per week), due to shortfall in budgets and anticipated loss of income through rent reduction to Community Nursery and expected reduction in discretionary grant from the District Council.