

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2024**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Furlonger
Angela Price – Town Clerk

R38. **APOLOGIES**

None received.

R39. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

R40. **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER AND 7 DECEMBER 2023, INCLUDING A SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO MINUTE NO. R27, FOLLOWING REVIEW BY THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

a. 5 October 2023

“PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MINUTE NO. R27 – RESOURCES MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2023

Concerns had been raised at meeting of the Resources Committee, held on 7 December in respect of the accuracy of minute no. R27 of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023. It had been agreed that Members would meet to review the recording of this minute and consider making changes to this minute accordingly and noting that this should be a recommendation to Council and not a resolution of this Committee.

Following Members of the Committee having listened to the recording it was agreed that Minute no. R27 be amended as below, and that any reference to any individual councillor be struck from the record, due to it being inaccurate and inappropriate for it to be included within the minutes and resolution.

“iii. Staff Protection Measures

Members were requested to give consideration to staff protection measures being put in place to protect staff from unwelcome, persistent communications from both Councillors and members of the public.

It was noted that when contacting the office there is currently a policy in place whereby Councillors are informed that in the first instance they should contact the Clerk, or Deputy Clerk in their absence, they should not be contacting other staff.

Councillor Hughes advised that this conversation is about what distancing measures can be put in place, noting that the Council is not in a position whereby they can “sanction” any one particular Councillor, all that can be done is to protect staff by distancing of people who are reported to a line manager for presenting vexatious and/or aggressive behaviour. It was noted that the Council can put in distancing arrangements by way of a “request” that all communications between an individual and an employee be by way of a named person and if they want information or want to get in touch with the person and generally speaking this should be the Mayor or Deputy Mayor as the two most senior councillors, however, it could be any other Councillor. He reiterated that this can only be a request and it cannot be ordered as it could then be deemed as a “sanction” which is not within the remit of Council to put in place.

It was suggested that a draft policy/procedure be prepared by the Clerk and that the policy/procedure whereby if a vexatious complaint is reported to a line manager a distancing principle will be adopted and that the individual be asked to consider a request to provide them with one point of contact which should be senior councillor such as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, due to them having the experience and standing within council in order to handle such a situation.”

RECOMMENDATION:

That this council adopt a distancing policy where an individual councillor is acting in a vexatious and/or aggressive manner towards a member of staff who has reported to the Mayor that it be recommended to Council that they apply the distancing policy where that person is requested to only make contact with a named senior councillor.”

Councillor Hughes advised Members that he felt this was a more accurate reflection of what had been said at the meeting on 5 October 2023, and proposed that the original content of minute no. R27 be struck from the minutes and replaced with the above, and that the minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 5 October 2023, be approved subject to this amendment.

Councillor Hughes thanked the Clerk for her assistance in preparing the amendment to minute no. R27.

RESOLVED:

That the original content of minute no. R27 of the meeting of Resources held on 5 October 2023 be struck from the record of all copies of those minutes and that the above amendment become the content of that minute.

- b. Minutes of 7 December 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Resources Meeting held on 7 December 2023 be received and noted.

R41. **ACTION SHEET**

RESOLVED:

That the action sheet be received and noted.

R42. **NEW MODEL CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS**

Members were provided with a draft of the new model contract of employment for local councils, with highlights of the changes from previous contract used by Ledbury Town Council.

RESOLVED:

That the following observations be considered ahead of the document being submitted to Full Council for adoption.

- 1. Point 11 – That a footnote be added to provide clarity on what is an “Essential User” as opposed to a “casual user” in relation to mileage payments.**
- 2. Point 12 – Clarification was sought on the final sentence of the following paragraph:**

“Full time staff are entitled to 23 days annual leave, plus bank holidays and 2 additional (statutory) days (25 days plus bank holidays). An increase of 3 days is applied following 5 years’ continuous service (28 days plus bank holidays). We will pro-rata that figure where necessary so that your holiday entitlement is in proportion to your working time during the relevant holiday year.”

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Full Council approve the mileage payments at the NJC rate in force as detailed within the New Model Contract of Employment for Local Councils.**
- 2. That the New Model Contract of Employment be referred to Full Council for approval, subject to further information being provided in relation to the above observations and amendments.**

R43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of the Resources Committee is scheduled for 4 April 2024.

R44. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Bradford asked that Councillor Furlonger be permitted to stay for the remainder of the meeting, due to him being a recently new Councillor and therefore at the meeting to potentially learn more of how the Council’s business is undertaken.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Furlonger be permitted to remain for the remainder of the meeting.**
- 2. 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.**

R45. PROVISION OF HR SERVICES

Members were advised that the current contract for HR Services was due to expire in 2025 and were asked to consider whether Ledbury Town Council should obtain quotes for future HR Services, taking into account

that the Council have recently resolved to join NALC/HALC, who now offer HR Services via Worknest.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Ledbury Town Council do not seek quotations for HR Services, noting that NALC/HALC provide this service via Worknest to all members.
2. That the Clerk check with NALC/HALC on whether either they or Worknest can provide an Employee Assistance Programme for all staff and Councillors of Ledbury Town Council.

R46. **REPORT OF TEAM BUILDING DAY**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Clerk provide details of the qualifications of the person providing the Team Building services.
2. That the report be received and noted.

R47. **STAFFING MATTERS**

Members were provided with information on a number of matters in relation to staffing and operational issues.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the changes in working practice in relation to the Charter Market and endorse the actions of the Clerk, as a short-term measure.
2. That the Clerk be instructed to provide a straightforward report to Council with guidelines as to how councillor should be contacting the office, to include a “hard and fast” rule that councillors should not be contacting any staff other than the Clerk or Deputy Clerk in their absence, in respect of council business, with no exceptions.
3. That staff be advised that if councillors contact them either via email, in person or phone, then they should report this to their line manager who will report it to the Clerk to discuss with the Mayor so that they can speak to the relevant councillors to remind them that it is not appropriate for them to contact staff, other than the Clerk or Deputy Clerk in their absence, on council matters.

4. That a **RECOMMENDATION** be submitted to Council that on completion of the Committee Structure review process a review of all staffing be undertaken to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of their roles within the Council, and that tasks that have crept into their roles via mission creep are either allocated to the appropriate staff members or consideration is given to recruitment in respect of these tasks and projects.
5. That the request from Post Holder 53 be granted on a trial period until 1 June 2024, and that a meeting be held in mid/late May with the Post Holder, the Clerk and a Member of the Resources Committee to consider whether the change in their working pattern and hours has impacted on other staff roles and how the workload of the post holder has been managed during this period.
6. That a **RECOMMENDATION** be submitted to Council that consideration be given to the hours that are being lost due to two members of staff reducing their working hours being used to create a part time role, and that the Clerk be instructed to prepare a report to this effect for consideration at the next meeting of Council.
7. To note that the request to engage Citation to attend an on-site meeting with the Clerk to discuss a number of staffing issues, has been superseded by the Council having joined NALC/HALC, who are able to offer HR advice and support via Worknest.
8. That the Clerk contact HALC to arrange a meeting as soon as possible to discuss a number of issues and establish a way forward.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.

Signed (Chair)

Date