

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 4 APRIL 2024**

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**PRESENT:** Councillors Bradford, Chowns, l'Anson and Morris

**ALSO PRESENT:** Angela Price – Town Clerk  
Councillor Stephen Furlonger

**R57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hughes.

**R58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**R59. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES  
OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 MARCH 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Resources Committee held on 13 March be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:**

**Minute No. 52 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph – amend to read “.... this would turn from green, to amber, and potentially red.”**

**R60. ACTION SHEET**

R7(7) - The Clerk advised that she needed to check whether it was possible for staff to be on an alternative pension scheme to the LGPS due to the Council being signed up to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service.

R40 – Councillor Bradford ask for clarity in respect of this minute no. The Clerk advised that it was in relation to staff protection methods, which Members of the Resources had been invited to attend the offices and listen to the recording to assist with the correct wording of the minute.

R47(5) – The Clerk advised Members of some concerns around the trial change of hours.

Councillor Bradford asked that if neither the Clerk nor Deputy Clerk were available in the offices, who would be the person to go to. The Clerk advised that whilst she appreciated that there may be times when both senior officers are absent at the same time, this should not be the norm. It is expected that at least one senior officer is available in the office at all times. However, she suggested that if for any reason both senior officers were unavailable, the CDO would be the next in seniority and the person most likely to be able to provide assistance to Councillors.

R47(6) – The Clerk advised that she had not been able to provide this information at Full Council, however she advised that there was information in respect of this included in the attached report.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the action sheet be received and noted.**

R61. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

**To note that the date of the next meeting of the Resources Committee will be agreed at the Annual Council Meeting on 9 May 2024.**

R62. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair asked Councillor Furlonger if he had anything he wanted to contribute to the remainder of the business of the meeting. He advised that he did not have anything to add at this point.

It was proposed that Councillor Furlonger be invited to remain in the meeting for consideration of the confidential part of the agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Councillor Furlonger be permitted to remain in the meeting, for consideration of the confidential part of the agenda.**
- 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.**

R63.

## **STAFFING MATTERS**

Members were provided with a report detailing a number of staffing matters and proposed solutions to some issues.

To help Members understand the reason behind the report and some of the elements within, the Clerk provided some background as to why she felt the actions taken and being proposed were necessary.

Councillor Morris expressed surprise at what had been presented at the meeting. He asked whether those Members who had not been present at the Full Council meeting on 28 March 2024, should be brought up to date on some of the matters discussed at that meeting.

Councillor Morris advised on the Notice of Motion that had been presented at the Full Council meeting. He pointed out that there were some concerns in respect of the wording of the motion and that after some discussion it was agreed that the Motion should be re-written and referred back to Full Council.

The Clerk advised that the wording of the Notice of Motion had been referred back to the Resources Committee prior to it being submitted back to a future meeting of Council, which is why there was a recommendation within in the report.

Councillor Chowns advised that he had been made aware of some of the discussion at the full council on this matter.

Councillor Morris had anticipated that the recommendation to Full Council from this meeting would be that the Clerk would be required to work her contracted hours and no more going forward.

Councillor Bradford reminded Members of the discussion that had taken place at the extraordinary meeting of Resources held on 13 March 2024, whereby concerns had been raised by the Clerk in respect of the lack of public support in relation to allegations that had been directed at her over past years. He pointed out that there had been a resolution at that meeting which it appeared had not been dealt with.

The Mayor explained the reason behind the Notice of Motion, and she was saddened that Council could not say "sorry" in the full council meeting.

The Mayor was asked what changes would an apology bring? How would an apology change the working practices of the Council, the pressure the Clerk is under and the external factors that contribute to the stress experienced by the Clerk?

The Clerk reminded Members of the conversation at the previous meeting of the Committee, and read out the following resolution:

***“Minute R56(1) - That an item be included in the agenda for the Full Council meeting on 28 March 2024 providing a draft press release in support of the post holder, and that the press release include something to inform members of the public that any allegations made against the post holder over the past three-years are not true and that there is no evidence to support these allegations.”***

The Clerk reminded Members that it had been agreed that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had been nominated to draft a press release, however this had not been provided for inclusion on the full council agenda, and the minute had not been considered at the meeting.

It was noted that the wording of the Notice of Motion had been referred to this committee for consideration and it was agreed that the decision at the previous meeting superseded the Notice of Motion and that this should be referred back to Full Council for approval. Councillor Furlonger offered to write a draft press release as per minute no. R56(1).

The Clerk advised Members of some of the issues that impact on her workload, and if these can be resolved then it should provide a marked decrease in the hours being worked by the Clerk. The Deputy Mayor recognised that as the two senior roles within the Council, it is the responsibility of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to help with the resolution of these issues, which in turn will hopefully reduce the need for the Clerk to work so many hours.

There was further discussion around the Clerk’s working hours and issues that cause this. It was felt that the recommendations within the report provided by the Clerk, expectations were being set out and that it provides a starting point for change.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Deputy Clerk be instructed to commence work on the CiLCA qualification without delay and that they book to attend the four Saturday courses with HALC which are designed to help those undertaking the CiLCA qualification.**
- 2. That the progress be reviewed in the weekly meetings with the officer, with appropriate action being taken if the post holder does not sign up or attend the four-day courses and cannot show good progress on the course work.**
- 3. That the Deputy Clerk be given a timescale to complete the qualification of 12-months i.e. April 2024 – March 2025**
- 4. That the Deputy Clerk be allocated 100 hours of time off/paid time to undertake the CiLCA qualification, to include attendance at four Saturday sessions with HALC.**

- 5. That the Deputy Clerk be advised that they should complete circa 50% of the course work prior to registering on the online portal for the CiLCA qualification to ensure that they can complete the course within the timescale provided by the portal.**
- 6. That the training policy be revisited in respect of reimbursement of training fees should a member of staff leave within a set time period.**
- 7. That the Community Development Officer title be changed to Community Engagement Officer.**
- 8. That the role of Community Engagement Officer continues to be line managed by the Clerk, until such time as the Deputy Clerk has completed the CiLCA qualification and received suitable line manager training.**
- 9. That point 7 above be reviewed at 6-month intervals with a view to passing the line management responsibilities to the Deputy Clerk.**
- 10. That Members note the discussion in respect of the Accounts/Burial Clerk and the CDO swapping offices.**
- 11. That the Clerk be authorised to proceed with advertising for a replacement Administrator, but that she explores the possibility of employing an apprentice for this role.**
- 12. Subject to the outcome of the occupational health visit, Members agreed to revisit the possible amalgamation of the two roles as detailed within the report.**
- 13. That no time limit be placed on the post holder for passing both their theory and practical elements of the driving test at this time.**
- 14. That the information in respect of two disciplinary matters be received and noted.**
- 15. That a recommendation be made to the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee that funding be allocated for an additional role within the Council for a part time administrator to support the Clerk, 16-hours per week, considering the 7-hours reduction from the CEO role.**
- 16. That Councillor Furlonger draft a press release for submission to Full Council as agreed in Minute no. R56(1):**

***“That an item be included in the agenda for the Full Council meeting on 28 March 2024 providing a draft press release in support of the post holder, and that the press release include something to inform members of the public that any allegations made against the post holder over the past three-years are not true and that there is no evidence to support these allegations.”***

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

Signed ..... Date .....