

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

## LLR and Governance Sub-Committee

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 1 November 2017 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution, Hightown.

In Attendance: Cllr M Forster (Chairman)  
Cllr S Corcoran (arrived 7.03pm)  
Cllr K Haines  
Cllr G Merry

There were two members of the press/public in attendance.

---

### 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr R Hovey

Absent without apologies: Cllr Eaton

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

---

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public. There being no questions, the Chairman reconvened the Meeting.

---

### 3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 22 AUGUST 2017**

As there were insufficient members present to approve the minutes, they were deferred to Sandbach Town Council.

### 4. **FINAL REVIEW**

Lead: Martin Forster

The Town Clerk had prepared draft report to Council, which recommended the closure of the LLR Sub-Committee.

A detailed progress report was reviewed on a line by line basis, with some minor amendments being made. A final version of the progress report is attached.

**RESOLVED:** that the report and detailed progress report be agreed and recommended to Council for adoption.

Before closing the meeting the LLR Sub-Committee was thanked for its sterling working in delivering all recommendations in under a year.

Special thanks goes to Cllr Davies, for his professional support at the time of the review and to Cllr Forster as Sub-Committee Chairman.

**5. NEXT MEETING**

Subject to the approval of Council on 7 December, the LLR and Governance Sub-Committee will not meet again.

Meeting Closed at 7.24pm  
Cllr M Forster  
Chairman  
ALB

DRAFT

## LESSONS LEARNED REVIEW

RECOMMENDATIONS AS AGREED BY STC 15.11.16

Final Review – amended following the meeting of the LLR Sub-Committee on 1 November 2017

	RECOMMENDATION / ACTION	ACTION / IMPLEMENTATION
1	<p><i>Apology</i></p> <p><i>"The Council recognises the hurt, anger and mistrust that has been caused by the Market Hall Project. We apologise unreservedly to all those affected by it. We wish to reassure those affected that the project has now been cancelled, and that in future any such project will be conducted in a fully open and transparent manner. The Council wishes to reassure the public that it will be actively working with the market traders to improve the indoor market for the future."</i></p>	<p>A complete apology was made by Sandbach Town Council on 15.11.16. The whole apology was recorded within the minutes of the meeting.</p>
2	<p><i>That key stakeholders must in future be clearly identified and involved in the very early stages of project planning.</i></p>	<p>A Project Management Guidance Document was adopted by Council on 20 April 2017, in which it outlines the involvement of stakeholders.</p> <p>Thanks to Cllr Haines for his work in producing the document.</p>
3	<p><i>That Councillors be reminded of the importance of working within the Standing Orders and that the Council implements a review of the standing orders and schemes of delegation to ensure that weaknesses highlighted in this review are properly addressed. This</i></p>	<p>A review of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders have been undertaken. Revised versions of both documents were adopted by Council on 21 September 2017.</p>

	<i>should include a review of the financial regulations and these should be reviewed regularly as per the standing orders.</i>	
4	<i>That STC Committee Quorum requirements be revisited to guard against minority decision making in future.</i>	<p>The LGA1972 (Sch12) states that a quorum will be three or a third – this is the statutory requirement and as such cannot be changed in the Standing Orders, however, contained within the ‘draft’ revised Standing Orders is line which reads:</p> <p><i>Sandbach Town Council has resolved that its quorum will be four or one third, whichever is the greater (adopted 20.4.17). nb This applies to all meetings of the Council, Committees, Sub-committees, and Working Groups.</i></p> <p>It is also noted that through this revision, it confirms that the attendance of the Mayor as ex-officio member also counts towards the quorum.</p>
5	<i>That working groups which are established for the progression of a given piece of work are genuinely working groups. No binding decision making power should be delegated to them. No financial power should be delegated to working groups.</i>	<p>Working Group Rules were agreed by Council on 20 April 2017. Thanks to the Town Clerk for producing the document.</p> <p>These state that ‘unless clearly specified within the Council/Committee resolution, WGs have no delegated authority.’</p> <p>And</p> <p>Working Groups have no power to incur expenditure.</p>

6	<i>That oversight of working groups or project teams be carried out by full Council or an appropriate Council Committee/Sub-Committee.</i>	Working Group rules state that the Lead Member is responsible for 'reporting to the parent body'.
6a	<i>There should not be a Working Group comprising of all councillors.</i>	Working Group rules state (underlined): <u>There should never be a WG that comprises of all members of the Council.</u>
7	<i>The practice of all Councillors meeting behind closed doors without published agendas or minutes should be for the purpose <u>only</u> to report recommendation to Full Council or appropriate Committee to enable full discussion in public.</i>	Standing Orders are applied, with each meeting determining whether items require private discussion and taking a vote on the matter.  Working Group rules state: All WG meetings will be open to the public.
8	<i>Where an item needs, for valid reasons, to be considered by the Council confidentially the letter of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting Act) 1960 should be followed; the council should resolve in public to defer the agenda item to part II, giving reasons for doing so. Clear records of the justification for items being considered in part II must be kept to assist future auditing of those decisions.</i>	As 7 above. Standing Orders are applied.
9	<i>That STC considers whether existing guidelines, headed PROJECT GOVERNANCE, are fit for purpose in the light of the Market Hall Project and re-worked accordingly.</i>	Project Management Guidance documentation was reviewed, with the revision being adopted by Council on 20 April 2017
10	<i>That, for major work, STC employs an independent professional project manager, appointed following the processes set out in the standing orders and financial regulations. The meaning of major work</i>	This is defined within the revised Project Management Guidance document.

	<p><i>to be defined by STC in adopting the methodology discussed in recommendation 9.</i></p> <p><i>Where consultants are appointed, their role is clearly specified and that action is taken to ensure that they do not present themselves as acting for the Council in a role not assigned to them.</i></p>	<p>The Market Hall Refurbishment is the first project to apply the new guidance.</p>
11	<p><i>That any spend of public money should be authorised by a clear decision from an officer or body authorised to spend it. Where, by reason of value, the spend requires the approval of a Committee or the Council, that authorisation must take the form of a minute of that body.</i></p>	<p>In accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.</p>
12	<p><i>That no statement by a third party be used in Council communication without that person's written approval.</i></p>	<p>Improved awareness amongst councillors and council staff. There is no written policy.</p>
13	<p><i>That financial figures issued in the name of the Council be appropriately scrutinized; where possible, they should be approved by the Finance Committee, or by the Council itself. If approval by the Finance Committee, or by the Council is not possible, the Chair of the Finance Committee or RFO should be consulted and proper records of that consultation be made.</i></p>	<p>Improved awareness amongst councillors and council staff. There is no written policy.</p>
14	<p><i>That urgency powers should not be used for contentious decisions, and where they are used, strong and robust reasoning must be recorded, along with a record of alternative courses of action considered.</i></p>	<p>The use of this power by the Clerk requires support from at least two members of the Council and is now referenced in the revised standing orders.</p>

15	<i>That where consultants are appointed, their role is clearly specified and that action is taken to ensure that they do not present themselves as acting for the Council in a role not assigned to them.</i>	Removed and merged with 10 above.
16	<i>Good communication is key to healthy public perception of the work of the Council. All Council staff and Councillors should be mindful at all times to communicate in a respectful and professional manner towards members of the public and stakeholders. Communication training may be appropriate.</i>	Communication Policy written but not adopted by Council. The policy has been sent to CEC Monitoring Officer for their opinion. Cllr Forster agreed to pursue this and to report his findings back to a future meeting of the Council.
17	<i>That STC consider reviewing the Town Hall project including the appointment of the architects, and previous discussions with SLI trustees and discussions around accommodation to assess whether there are lesson to be learned from them.</i>	This was presented to Council 20.4.17. It was agreed by the LLR Sub-Committee that the recommendations of the 2016 LLR cover lessons to be learnt from the Town Hall Project.  It is felt that all actions implemented would cover any issues arising from a Town Hall Review.
18	<i>That the Council review its document storage and management policies with a view to introducing a numerical record keeping system with proper version control mechanisms to allow more rapid recovery of information.</i>	A full review of the electronic filing system has been undertaken, with changes being implemented. Version control is managed by a front page template. File path footers are added to all electronic documents, making retrieval easier.
19	<i>All email communication regarding council business is conducted using council provided email addresses to ensure a complete and visible audit trail.</i>	.gov.uk email addresses have been in use since 10 July 2017.  During September 2017 the whole system migrated over to Outlook, with an aim to provide a more robust and

		<p>secure operation, along with added capacity to store and access all Council documents from the Cloud.</p> <p>Cllr Forster and the Town Clerk to do a survey to establish councillor experience of the change.</p>
20	<i>It is recommended Finance committee look into how accounts can be easily presented and managed. A simple income and expenditure spreadsheet with breakdowns of costings would be clearer and easier to understand.</i>	Simplified system to be presented to FPG 2 November 2017.
21	<i>That these recommendations, as amended, be taken in good faith as a plan to improve confidence in Sandbach Town Council.</i>	The changes should be embraced. Change is always difficult to manage, however there is sensible justification behind the majority of recommendations. We should view the Lessons Learned Review as a positive experience.
	<p><i>A final Recommendation was made:</i></p> <p><i>That the LSD Steering Group, the LSD Working Group and the Lessons Learned Review Group all be dissolved with immediate effect.</i></p>	Dissolved at full council meeting on 15 November 2016.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS CONSIDERED BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE (ARISING THROUGH NORMAL BUSINESS)**

22	Councillor Metrics – develop a way of monitoring member engagement.	This was not progressed.
----	---	--------------------------

23	Use/issue of tablet devices, to reduce paperwork and improve member access to information.	This was not progressed.
24	Management/monitoring of undischarged resolutions	Schedules are presented to each Council and Committee meeting for review and noting.
25	Working Group – definition and guidance	This has been done and was adopted by Council 20 April 2017.
26	Criteria for the Legitimate closure of meetings to the public/press.	This has been done and was adopted by Council 1 June 2017.
27	Naming of public in minutes? [Ref email from Steve Kirkham 27.1.17]	Public will continue to be named in minutes, however may need to be reviewed in light of the forthcoming changes to Data Protection Regulations.
28	Communication Policy	This was drafted but not adopted. Referred to CE Monitoring Officer for guidance 8.6.17 – see 16 above.
29	Formation of Committees and Chairmanship	Approved by Council on 12 October 2017.