

Lowestoft Town Council
Budget and Loan Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
12:30 on 4 December 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Wendy Brooks, Alan Green (Chair), Andy Pearce and Elise Youngman (Deputy Chair)

In Attendance: James Cox (Finance and Information Officer)

101. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report was explained and the meeting was welcomed.

102. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence from any Councillors not in attendance.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Parker and Rappensberger with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

It was noted that a written resignation had been from Cllr Begum.

103. Declarations and dispensations

103.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

103.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

104. Public forum

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No members of the public were in attendance and no advanced comments had been received.

105. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2023, 6 November 2023 and 13 November 2023.

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

106. To review the 2023 – 2024 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves (some aspects may be confidential).

107. To review the 2024 – 2025 Lowestoft Town Council Budget and reserves (some aspects may be confidential).

These items would be discussed in confidential session.

108. To consider the updated draft of the Reserves Policy

The core text of the policy remained unchanged. Section 6.1 had been updated to reflect target levels and timescales for the general reserves, furthermore, in the appendices the budget streams listed for each reserve had been removed as they were already displayed in the budget document, leaving only the statement of purpose or each reserve.

The appendices required further review and the draft would be discussed further at the next meeting.

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109. Date of next meeting

11 December 2023 at 12:30

110. Items for the next agenda and close

An item was requested regarding the updated Reserves Policy.

111. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal and employment issues relating to the matters on this agenda.

Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; four votes in favour and one abstention.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved to confidential session at 12:42

Staff Budget: The remaining amount for the 2023-2024 staff budget would be examined after the Finance and Information Officer has reviewed the figures.

Training: It was suggested to utilise some of the £12,500 anticipated year-end balance to offset against a combined Training budget that would consist of £19,000 for Staff Training, £2,000 for Staff Training - Play Inspections and £3,750 for Councillor Training.

Offices: It was agreed to recommend the Parking budget stream be reduced £1,500. It was agreed to recommend the IT Service Costs budget stream be increased to £13,200. It was agreed to recommend the Workshop Premises budget stream be split out with two new streams added, one for Business Rates and another for Utilities. It was agreed to recommend the costs under the Grounds Maintenance Cost budget stream be split out into their own separate budget streams as capital purchase costs are identified.

Professional Services: It was agreed to recommend the Legal Fees budget stream be increased to £40,000.

Events: It was suggested to use the £12,000 Earmarked Reserves offset for the Events budget. It was agreed to review this budget at the next meeting.

Community Engagement: It was suggested to increase the budget to £20,000.

The Chair closed the meeting at 14:20

Signed:

12 August 2024