

Lowestoft Town Council
Budget and Loan Council Meeting
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
12:30 on 8 January 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman (Chair)

In Attendance: James Cox (Finance and Information Officer) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

123. To appoint the Chair of this Sub-Committee

Cllr Pearce nominated Cllr E Youngman as Chair; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; three votes in favour and one against.

124. Welcome

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

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

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

Cllr Coleby was absent with no apologies received.

126. Declarations and dispensations

126.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – Cllr E Youngman declared she worked for the company who cleaned Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) owned toilets.

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

127. 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 advanced comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

128. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2023, 6 November 2023, 13 November 2023, 20 November 2023, 4 December 2023 and 11 December 2023

The draft minutes of 30 October 2023 and 6 November had been approved at a previous meeting. Cllr Pearce proposed the draft minutes of 13 November 2023 and 20 November 2023 be approved; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

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

To be discussed in confidential session.

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

To be discussed in confidential session.

131. To consider the updated draft of the Reserves Policy

This item was dependent on agreements made under item 130 as timescales for reaching the target General Reserved had yet to be agreed. Cllr Pearce proposed once the schedule of

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annual payments had been agreed that the relevant section of the policy then be finalised and presented to Full Council for adoption; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

132. Date of next meeting

15 January 2024 at 12:30

133. Items for the next agenda and close

134. 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 Rappensberger; three votes in favour and one abstention.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 12:39

Staff - The budget for salaries was reviewed. There had been provisional agreements at a recent Personnel meeting for a Warehouse Officer, Asset Manager and inhouse public conveniences cleaners. The salary figures for an Asset Manager covered a six-months period. The salaries for Public Conveniences cleaners accommodated a full-time seven days a week occupation split between two operatives to cover all sites. £898,097 was agreed for the 2024-2025 Salaries Gross budget. The Staffing Contingency Budget of £70,000 included £45,000 for a cost-of-living increase of 5%.

Officers would circulate the budget document to all members to review and make suggestions on what would be an acceptable precept increase to recommend, with the appropriate actions required.

Repair & Maintenance - Tarmacking requirements had been identified at Belle Vue Park, Sparrows Nest, Kensington Gardens and Normanston Park with a total budget of £65,000. The £30,000 diverted from the 2023-2024 tarmacking budget to pay for the condition surveys would be replaced in 2024-2025, therefore only a further £5,000 would be needed to meet the costs.

Compliance - Hardwire testing was required for all owned buildings at an estimated budget of £13,000. The Play Inspections budget line was decreased to £6,450.

Community Safety - The £25,000 budget for CCTV was highlighted for review and possible reduction.

Climate and Ecological - It was agreed to reduce the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget to £15,000. The Waste Disposal: Waste Collection budget line was highlighted for a possible decrease.

Public conveniences - The £31,282.50 Cleaning (excluding Community Halls) budget line was highlighted for potential removal in anticipation of the cost being replaced by salaries for inhouse cleaning staff.

Horticulture - It was suggested that the Tree Works: Routine Works and Tree Works: Emergency Works budget lines be merged for a single Tree Works budget of £52,500. Whilst the audit would occur every three to five years, additional inspections would be required to handle issues

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such as internal fungi, therefore officers would check if the £7,500 Tree Works: Routine Inspections budget line was sufficient.

Play areas - It was suggested for the Community Safety budget to be used to repair damages to the play areas caused by vandalism, rather than the Repair and Maintenance budget line. This budget would need to factor in an allowance to replace the Euroscope.

Normanston Park - At the request of Full Council a budget of £85,000 under Capital Expenditure provisionally covered refurbishment works for the toilets and changing room. No quotes had been received to date.

An East Suffolk Council document mentioned a contribution of insurance money to refurbish the changing room after a fire. Officers were asked to inquire if money could be made available to refurbish the asset.

Denes Oval - It was agreed to remove £50,000 from the Capital Expenditure budget line and instead consider a Public Works Loan in 2024 for the wall and clubhouse repairs. This would be discussed further by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee in February 2024.

Cllr Rappensberger left the chamber at 13:56

Marina Theatre - It was agreed for £65,000 to be rolled over for capital allowance.

Town Hall - The £10,000 on the Repair and Maintenance budget line had been suggested by the Project Manager to cover the first quarter before the commencement of capital construction.

Offices - Officers would confirm if the £13,200 IT Services Costs and Phones budget line was sufficient as the service costs were due to increase. Two budget lines of £10,000 had been created as requested by officers for maintenance of plant and equipment, including accidental damage, with a contingency element.

Professional services - It was agreed to decrease the Audit Fees budget line to £5,058.

Festive lights - Officers would confirm if the Festive Lights Contract budget line was sufficient for the new contract.

Civic - The Mayoral Travel budget line covered travel outside of Lowestoft and had been agreed as £1,000 for contingency should a future Mayor need to use public transport.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and External Funding – Officers would check the allocation of the approximate £1,500 CIL instalment as decided by the Finance and Governance Committee.

The Chair closed the meeting at 14:25

Signed:

12 August 2024