

Lowestoft Town Council
Extraordinary Meeting of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
13:30pm on Monday 13 February 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks (Deputy Chair), Alan Green (Chair), Graham Parker and Andy Pearce

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

223. Welcome.

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

224. Approval of apologies for absence.

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

225. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

225.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests from councillors on items on the Agenda
None were declared.

225.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and note dispensations granted
None were received.

226. To consider the draft minutes of the meeting on 11 January, 16 January and 6 February.

Approval was deferred to the next meeting.

227. 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 comments were received.

228. To review the 2022 – 2023 Lowestoft Town Council Budget (some aspects may be confidential).

No comments were made.

229. To review Lowestoft Town Council's reserves including the reserves policy and EMR target levels (some aspects may be confidential).

Marina Theatre EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £200,000, pending receipt of the feasibility study and subsequent decisions.

Town Hall EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £100,000, which covered repair and maintenance works outside the scope of the project.

Town Hall investment fund EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £474,968.

Staff EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £200,000 due to the increased staff headcount, and seek the opinion of the Town Clerk in case further adjustments are required.

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Training EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £90,000 to cover any new Councillors in May 2023 and staff training requirements that have increased due to recruitment, work brought in-house under the grounds maintenance and refresher training.

Offices EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £200,000. It was noted this would need to cover the transition to the Town Hall and the grounds maintenance storage and outdoor working premises, for which a contingency would be required.

Amplification EMR: It was agreed to continue with the current system used, which was budgeted for another twelve months, and deal with the provider on an interim basis. It was requested officers notify the sounds system provider, before April 2023, and check that all meetings for the next year can be covered. It was noted advice might be needed on the amplification requirement for the Town Hall chamber. It was agreed to set the target level at £10,000. Cllr Green proposed to continue with the current provider on an interim basis until a decision is made on the commencement of the Town Hall delivery phase and a target date is set; seconded by Cllr Parker; all in favour.

IT EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £40,000. It was noted the acquisition of laptops for Councillors would be a one off expenditure and for the reserve to be gradually built up to allow for funding to replenish laptops and cover IT repairs for staff and Councillor laptops.

Professional Services EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £15,000.

Legal EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £100,000 and to review pending decisions.

Elections EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £80,000. After May 2023, funds would need to be reserved each year to accommodate the elections in four years.

Events EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £40,000.

Grants EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £50,000.

Community Engagement EMR: It was agreed to set the target level at £10,000 and it was noted that as a newly created budget this was likely to increase.

Festive Lights EMR: It was agreed to leave the target level at £45,000 and it would cover replenishment of the current lights and the new three year contract.

Civic and Ceremonial EMR: It was agreed to merge this EMR with the Arts and Heritage EMR.

Arts and Heritage EMR: It was agreed to increase the target level to £120,000.

Lowestoft Collection EMR: It was agreed to merge this EMR with the Arts and Heritage EMR.

Lowestoft Museum: It was agreed to set the target level at £10,000.

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CIL EMR: It was noted that there was not a target for this reserve as it is funded from an outside body.

Mayoral Robes EMR: It was noted the Mayoral Jabots would need to be replaced with the change of Mayor, and the Town Council needed to have some in storage. It was agreed to set the target level at £10,000 to cover the replenishment of the robes and any low value accoutrements. It was requested this be sorted before the 2023 local elections.

ESC Capital EMR: It was noted that there is not a target for this reserve as it is funded from an outside body.

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to February Full Council to adopt the targets agreed on in this and the previous meeting for the EMR reserves for the 2023-2024 financial year, with the acknowledgement that the targets may be increased or decreased during the year in response to prevailing circumstances; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

230. **Date of the next meeting**

Monday 20 February at 13:45 PM

231. **Items for the next Agenda and Close.**

It was noted the Sub-Committee would need to review the delegations to Committees, Sub-Committees and officers and consider in connection with the newly created budgets and whether to increase the financial delegation to certain Committees to accommodate the increase in costs for services. This would be discussed with a view to recommend the adjustments to the Finance and Governance Committee and Full Council.

232. **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 issues relating to the matters on this agenda.**

There were none.

The Chair closed the meeting at 14:29

Signed:

20 February 2023