

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Town Hall Project Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:00 on 7 December 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker (Chair), Wendy Brooks, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger and Elise Youngman. Non-Councillor member Ben Porter (East Suffolk Council Officer)

In Attendance: Sarah Foote (Deputy Town Clerk) and Christopher Meek (Events and Administration Officer)

Also in Attendance: Sheila MossKing (Project Manager)

14. Welcome

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

15. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Helen Johnson East Suffolk Council and Cllrs Green and Patience with reasons provided. Cllr Pearce proposed approval of apologies; seconded by Cllr Youngman; five in favour and one abstention.

16. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

16.1. To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from Councillors on items on the agenda – No interests were declared.

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

17. To consider the draft notes of the meeting on 16 November 2023

It was noted that the agenda item should read as minutes to be approved rather than notes. Cllr Brooks proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

18. 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.

19. Finance, budget monitoring and payments (see report):

19.1. To note and consider income and expenditure, including:

19.2. To monitor the budget – Invoices had been received from the Interpretation Consultants and the Design Team, which the Project Manager would process for settlement totalling £53,000. More invoices for settlement were expected to be received before the Christmas period.

19.3. To consider any payments for approval – This was covered in the update provided under item 19.2.

19.4. To consider any reporting and work required for the completion of the Towns Fund Agreement – Ben Porter confirmed the Town Council had received the draft Towns Fund Agreement and a draft schedule of drawdown payments with the £900,000 grant from East Suffolk Council. The Town Council had not yet received the draft grant agreement for the East Suffolk Council £900,000 grant, this would be sent to the office once amendments had been made.

20. To consider a report from the Project Manager, including progress with the following:

20.1. An update on the procurement of the Quantity Surveyor and Cost Consultant, Contract

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Administrator, Construction Design Manager and Evaluation Consultant – The Evaluation Panel for the Quantity Surveyor Cost Consultant position had met, the recommendation from which would be dealt with separately due to commercial confidentiality. The meeting of the Evaluation Panel for the Contract Administrator role had been postponed until Monday 18th December, therefore the appropriate delegations were required so that when the panel meets it can progress the appointment under delegation.

As Full Council had authorised the procurement of the Contract Administrator, Construction Design Manager and Evaluation Consultant, Cllr Pearce proposed completion of the procurements be authorised under delegation and not require ratification via a formal meeting. The results of the procurement would be provided to this Committee upon completion. Cllr Barker seconded the proposal and a vote was held with all in favour. Cllr Pearce clarified that the delegation was to officers in conjunction with this Committee. Cllr Barker seconded the amended proposal and a vote was held with all in favour.

- 20.2. Receive an update on procurement of services and surveys required for RIBA Stage 4 – No further surveys for RIBA Stage 4 needed to be undertaken at the time of the meeting.

Telephone lines had been found to bypass the building that would be on the footings of the new building, therefore work was required to find out the owner of the lines and ensure the lines were redundant before works commenced.

Strip-out works for the dry rot had commenced and should be completed before Christmas.

Per previous remediation and degradation works, air circulation for the building had been improved.

As Full Council had authorised for any surveys required for RIBA Stage 4 to be progressed between the Project Team and officers, authorisation would not be required from this Committee.

- 20.3. Receive an update on the Interpretation Plan – Proposals had been made to hold a community exhibition at several areas in the Town Hall to celebrate and explain the heritage of the building.

The Project Manager confirmed that the original idea for the safe door in the interpretation plan to be placed in the café and open onto an infinity mirror, had been altered with the door to be located in a more central position of the building and open into one of the vitrines with civic items displayed rather than an infinity mirror. The Project Manager confirmed the Mayoral regalia, due to be provided from the Lowestoft Museum, would be held behind the safe door.

The paintings held in the Lowestoft Collection have been reviewed and there was money in the budget to undertake restoration work on the frames. The paintings were to be located up the civic stair and along the civic landing, though the light levels of the area needed to be checked. The Project Manager confirmed a recommendation on the items to be used from the collection would be prepared.

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21. To receive a list of planned actions from the Project Manager to be authorised for progression

The Project Manager had submitted a list of tasks to be completed by mid-January 2024 to the Town Council.

The Project Manager confirmed the procurement of the Quantity Surveyor and Contract Administrator was progressing and the PWLB loan application would soon be submitted to Suffolk Association of Local Councils for triage.

The Project Manager advised the Committee that advertisement for the Construction Design Management Consultant and the Evaluation Consultant should go out before Christmas with evaluation to take place in the new year.

Documentation needed to be compiled to receive Permission to Start from the Heritage Fund, after which grant reclaims could be made.

RIBA 4 design works were due to be completed by February 2024 and a cost plan for RIBA Stage 4 works needed to be developed to ensure all designs were within the cost plans.

Finalisation of the requirements of the café kitchen and preparation kitchen were being reviewed with the Catering Consultant.

The Project Manager needed to instruct Suffolk County Council on the street lighting and heritage fittings, noting the works needed to be completed before the main contract begins and scaffolding is installed. £10,000 had been budgeted for the works, however the cost received was £18,000.

The Committee noted that the procurements and RIBA Stage 4 works had been authorised by Full Council and delegated by this Committee.

Cllr Pearce proposed as the streetlights had been part of the original design and part of the pre-approved works, that the work be authorised and the contingency budget to be used as required, with the Project Team to be authorised to progress the works with any related decisions to be made on specifications to be delegated to officers in conjunction with the Project Manager to progress. Input would be required from this Committee only if there was a significant increase in budget. Cllr Brooks seconded the proposal, and a vote was held with all in favour.

Cllr Barker thanked the Project Manager and the team, all involved Councillor and officers and East Suffolk Council representatives on their work to date on this project.

22. To note the updated risk register

The Project Manager confirmed she was in the process of updating the register and would circulate it for comments next week.

23. To receive an update on the boundary agreement and the process of registering with the Land Registry

Ben Porter confirmed East Suffolk Council would provide resources to progress this work and had engaged their solicitor.

24. To receive an update on the Heads of Terms for the Registrars

The Deputy Clerk confirmed progress had been made on items 23 and 24 with support from

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East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council but had no update to provide at this meeting.

25. To consider any recommendations to Full Council

There were no recommendations.

26. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 11 January 2024 – 10:00

27. Items for the next agenda and close

28. 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:

28.1. To consider any legal issues, including those above as required – Cllr Pearce proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved to meeting to confidential session at 10:54

20.1 An update on the procurement of the Quantity Surveyor and Cost Consultant, Contract Administrator, Construction Design Manager and Evaluation Consultant – The Committee noted that the Evaluation Panel for the role of Quantity Surveyor had happened, and the contract had been awarded.



Signed:

11 January 2024