

Lowestoft Town Council

Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee

Riverside, Waveney District Council Offices, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ
12:30 on 15 December 2017

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Allyson Barron, Neil Coleby, Ian Graham and Alice Taylor

In attendance: Mr Brian Mew (WDC finance) and Shona Bendix (Town Clerk)

130. Welcome

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

131. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

None.

132. Minutes:

The minutes were agreed of 28 November 2017

133. Public Forum

None.

134. Banking arrangements

It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain information about CCLA investment accounts. An AAT course should be funded for a member of staff and there should be further investigation into the options for WDC to support their development and to provide ongoing specified support to the Town Council's financial administration and potentially to set up new financial software.

135. Insurance arrangements

The Mayor and Clerk met with the current insurers who have indicated that they could incorporate the Lowestoft Collection and still come in lower than the existing costs but this is subject to further information (including Collection valuation and the number of items in each play area need to be assessed).

136. Key Performance Indicators

It was noted that the new Facilities Manager, Mark Speller, would be able to support this when he starts.

137. Funding streams affecting Council assets

The successful Heritage Action Zone bid was noted along with the fact that further funds were being sought to support the Town Hall development through the Heritage Lottery bid process. There were also various other funding streams which might be explored.

138. To note a revised grant awarding policy and application form

Next agenda.

139. Durrants valuation of the Lowestoft Collection, if received

Not received.

140. Costs for art on the Town Hall hoardings

There would no costs linked to Flipside art work.

141. Condition survey for the Marina Theatre

Following the Town Council decision, this should be progressed with the Marina being able to select the appropriate surveyor. The Facilities Manager could consider this when details of proposed surveyor were received.

142. Condition survey for the Town Hall

Quotes for a heritage specialist condition survey have been obtained by Cllr Taylor at £21,000, £11,500 and £12,500 (clarification on asbestos survey costs on the latter to be sought). It was decided that the two companies offering the lowest quotes would be invited to attend the next meeting to describe their service.

143. Options for office space and agree next steps

It was agreed that options would be explored by Cllrs Graham and Coleby and Clerk Shona Bendix.

144. Budget and any delegations for expenditure from the office equipment budget for computers and other office equipment and associated costs (software etc) for new staff members

It was agreed that the budget should be a maximum of the remainder of the equipment budget of £10,000. Cllrs Coleby and Taylor would continue to look into office furniture.

145. Three mobile phone contracts to be agreed by the Clerk for staff members not exceeding £25 per month per phone.

This was agreed.

146. Authority for a maximum of £1000 for expenditure of support organisation memberships, especially to include NABMA (markets) and linked to staff development, especially clerking and facilities management

This was agreed delegated to the Clerk.

147. Certificate of Lawful Use applications and authorisation of expenditure for two locations

This was agreed at a maximum of £1000 delegated to the clerk.

148. Developments on the Cefas property list

None.

149. To receive an update on business rates and the town hall

It was noted that if use changes and the Hall comes back into use, the Council will need to consider whether the rating needs reviewing.

150. Credit card or debit card arrangements to enable payments under delegated authority by the Clerk and RFO

Agreed at £5000 at present. It was agreed that the bank signatories could authorise credit card establishment.

151. Training budget for staff and councillors with delegated authority to the Clerk up to a maximum of £8500.

Agreed delegated to the Clerk and to be reviewed if this proves limited.

152. Monitoring the budget for 2017-18 and noting any bank reconciliations

This has all been looked at by Full Council. The bank reconciliation will be due at the next Full Council/Finance and Governance Committee. It was noted that there were some ongoing discussions about the arrangements with leases and agreements e.g. with the Marina and with Denes Oval.

153. Credit note to cancel the original WDC recharge of income and expenditure invoice (0007264234) and consider replacement sales invoices for approval

The credit note refers to a previous payment approved for recharge. This is being credited back as new invoices have been issued to break down VAT accurately, as it has proved more complicated than originally administered. The original amount has not been paid, so the credit note is purely administrative, and it is now requested that 8 replacement invoices are paid: Also presented for approval for payment, August to December (with October being adjusted to take account of a Norse error in duplicate charging). It was noted that this would need to go to Full Council. They are new and significant invoices with expenditure exceeding the Committee's authorisation limits. WDC are still paying the Norse fees and presenting them for recharge but this is no longer necessary and direct invoices could be made. Credit note 0900036352 was noted for administrative purposes and its effect in cancelling the original invoice 0007264234 was also noted.

Payments agreed and authorised:

Invoice 0007272446 £72.61 (no VAT) recruitment advertisement

Invoice 0007272815 £61.02 (+VAT £12.20), £126.15 (+VAT £6.31), £177.12 (no VAT) utilities totalling £364.29 (+VAT £18.51) = £382.80

Invoice 0007272433 fire service, WDC expenditure including ID badges, domain name) £1378.97 (+VAT£275.79) = £1654.76

Invoice 0007272462 Town Hall contract/fire alarm/valuation £3035 (+VAT £607) = £3642

Invoice 0007272828 utilities £1561.29 (+VAT £312.26), £730.44 (+VAT £36.52), £268.40 (+VAT) £13.42), £2389.43 (no VAT) totalling £4949.56 (+VAT £362.20) = £5,311.76

Invoice 0007272844 business rates £5219.20 (+no VAT), allotment grant £900 (+no VAT), totalling £6119.20

Invoice 0007272459 utilities £2353.55 (+VAT £470.71), £856.92 (+ VAT £42.85), £480.05 (+VAT £24), £2380.78 (+no VAT), totalling £6071.30 (+VAT £537.56) = £6608.86.

It was noted that the utilities should be looked at by the Facilities Manager in future. It was noted that there was income from CCTV which apparently stays with Norse until being paid over to WDC and it was noted that this should now come to the Town Council and be clearly separated out as income and expenditure. The insurance invoice was not approved as clarity was sought over why the sum differed and appeared to refer to two insurances despite the Town Council having only agreed one insurance policy (replacement sales invoice for insurances: Invoice 0007272831: £26,316.11 (£22,485.68 was previously agreed)).

It was agreed to recommend that the Norse recharges for August to December should be approved (October having been suitably reduced to take account of an incorrect duplicate charge).

154. Approving/noting any other payments including:

154.1 Up to £30 for up to 6 delegates plus travel to risk assessment courses (available under arrangements with Zurich insurance)

Agreed. It was noted that there is one free place.

154.2 Expenditure related to the Holocaust Memorial Day (and consider arrangements for 2019)

It was agreed to pay up to £50 for an individual wreath for the Holocaust Memorial Day.

155. Income

VAT income had not yet been received from 7 November claim as HMRC had raised questions which were being dealt with.

156. 2018-19 Budget

156.1 Report from the Budget working party

156.2 Draft budget

There were discussions about the draft budget which had been considered in some depth now, although with some problems obtaining all the information needed within the timescale required. It was noted that it is a revenue budget so CIL and Capital Programme are not included; these go direct to specific reserves.

156.3 Further matters which might further affect 2018-19 budget including:

It was agreed that £7500 should be allocated for Fen Park toilets running costs and it was noted that the training budget above is also to be included. There are some reserves which will be specified (and which are already within the budget but need extracting as reserves):

- Capital repair and maintenance for any assets
- Civic
- Culture and heritage (currently at zero)
- Legal
- Play areas
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Public conveniences
- Training (apprentices and all other training)
- Triangle (to incorporate capital programme and Heritage Action Zone funds)
- Arnold'S Bequest (separately accounted for owing to Charity arrangements)

It was agreed that there should be a recommendation that the Council accepts proposal 3 within the budget proposals as presented but with the adjustments noted for toilets and training, as above.

156.4 Potential scrutiny committee arrangements

Implementing Scrutiny Committee arrangement were not agreed as it was considered that all councillors had a significant opportunity to influence, participate and scrutinise and accordingly no budget was allocated.

156.5 Staffing reserves

This has been allocated at £50,000.

156.6 Specialist equipment

This would be reviewed when the Facilities Manager is in post.

156.7 Additional projects

None.

156.8 Further budget working group and note that a Full Council Budget and a precept meeting will take place on 23 January 2018. For the future there would be a breakdown related to specific types of asset e.g. public conveniences' and 'parks'.

156.9 It was noted that the Clerk would need to submit the precept demand to the billing Authority on 24 January as agreed with the relevant WDC officer.

157. Date of the next meeting

Next meeting date - 23 January 14:30

158. Items for the next Agenda

No additional matters.

159. Resolution to enable confidential matters to be considered.

There were no matters requiring such a resolution.