

**Minutes of the meeting of Lowestoft Town Council Finance and Governance Committee
held at 14:30 on Tuesday 4 July 2017 at Riverside, 4 Canning Road Lowestoft**

Committee Members: Cllrs Allyson Barron, Alan Green, Alice Taylor, Nasima Begum, Neil Coleby, Tess Gandy, Ian Graham and Graham Parker

Present: Cllrs Alice Taylor, Nasima Begum, Graham Parker, Neil Coleby and Allyson Barron

Also attending: Shona Bendix (Clerk)

Public in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllrs Alan Green, Peter Knight, June Ford, Tess Gandy and Ian Graham (observer) (Mayor)

1. Welcome

The meeting was welcomed. The fire evacuation procedure was outlined and the meeting was reminded of the public rights in relations to filming, recording and reporting at the meeting.

2. To elect a Chair of the Committee

It was noted that the Chair would also be a bank signatory. Cllr Green was elected in his absence. Proposed by Cllr Begum; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.

3. To consider appointing a Vice-Chair

Cllr Begum was appointed as Vice-Chair. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Coleby; All voted in favour.

4. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Alan Green, Peter Knight, June Ford, Tess Gandy and Ian Graham and accepted by the Committee.

5. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

None.

6. Public Forum

No members of the public present.

7. Finance Reports

To consider the following finance reports:

a) Budget

It was noted that the pension provision was too low for the Local Government Pension Scheme. However, the employment pattern was likely to be different initially and under budget.

b) Budget Monitoring.

This was noted.

c) Bank reconciliations

The Clerk noted that the Council's Financial Regulations required a councillor, who was not the Chair or a bank signatory, to take responsibility for checking quarterly bank reconciliations. Neil Coleby was appointed. Proposed by Cllr Taylor; Seconded by Cllr Parker; All voted in favour. VAT was also discussed and it was noted that registration was still under consideration with HMRC.

8. To consider any payments:

To consider the following payments authorisations:

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- a) Up to £50 for a pin code protected and encrypted memory stick for Council information (with delegated authority to decide and progress this to the Clerk, following consultation with the Mayor). Anticipated expenditure £36.48.
The Clerk had looked into a recommendation that had been made by Waveney District Council IT, following her request for advice on a suitably protected and reliable device. However, 14 out of the 99 reviews online had indicated problems with loss of data. Cllr Taylor agreed to look into this and payment was authorised up to £50. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; Seconded by Cllr Barron; All voted in favour.
- b) Up to £650 for a laptop with software for the secure and segregated storage of Council information (with delegated authority to decide and progress this to the Clerk, following consultation with the Mayor).
This was discussed and it was agreed that the amount was too low for a reliable laptop with software. Initially the recommendation to Council would be for one laptop with software for up to £1200 with acknowledgement that further equipment would be needed as more staff were employed. Cllr Taylor would provide a recommendations paper. Proposed by Cllr Coleby; Seconded by Cllr Barron; All voted in favour.
- c) Up to £4200 expenditure delegated to the Finance and Governance Committee for financial accounting software and training.
The Clerk raised concern about the timing of this proposal. Originally it had been hoped to acquire and populate the system for when the new Council came into existence but there had not been time and there was not the capacity to do so currently. It was suggested that the Council wait until the new Responsible Financial Officer was in place, which would also save training costs and this was agreed. It was noted that the Personnel Committee might have an interest. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.
- d) Training for the Mayor and Clerk on Civic Protocol/Procedures (Broadland District Council 16/6/2017) of £320 plus travel expenses.
This expenditure was approved. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Taylor; All voted in favour.
- e) Up to £340 for costs associated with councillor induction visits to assets (with delegated authority for the Clerk to decide and progress this project, following consultation with the Mayor).
This expenditure was agreed. Proposed by Cllr Barron; Seconded by Cllr Coleby; All voted in favour.

9. To consider the adoption of a reserves policy

The Clerk would forward her advice on this to councillors for further consideration on the next agenda. It was noted that there was difficulty being sure of the budget position in year 1 and year 2 and the ideal reserve position might not be achievable within this time.

10. To note the Finance Chair and Cllrs Begum and Taylor are authorising signatories for payments and to consider any need for change

This was noted. No change needed.

11. To note the amended Financial Regulations

No change was needed for the bank signatory situation as this was covered by the Full Council minutes. Additionally, it was noted that the bank reconciliation safeguards were built into the Regulations and the Council had minuted the appointment of Neil Coleby to this role earlier on the agenda.

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12. To note the CIL and s.106 reports

These were noted as was the need to work out a strategy for expenditure priorities in due course and to look at any additional funds linked to assets which might complement this funding.

13. To note progress with the establishment of a Short-Term Savings with the Debt Management Office

The bank had been notified of the change of name to Lowestoft Town Council and as soon as the signatories were confirmed, the short-term accounts could be progressed.

14. To consider recommending the adoption of a chairman's allowance of £500 or a budget for reimbursable travel and other expenses.

A budget for reimbursable expenditure for travel expenses was set at £500, subject to confirmation following further consideration of this matter and consultation with the Mayor.

15. To consider the terms of reference for the Committee

This was reviewed and it was noted that although there was a Grant Awarding Policy (which was also discussed), the overall budget would have to be established in due course.

16. Training sessions

Induction and training sessions would be set up, joint with Oulton Broad Parish Councillors, for new councillors and those who had been unable to attend previously.

17. Date of the next meeting

To note the next meeting on 8 August.

18. Items for the next Agenda and Close

- Reports of actuals and projections for budget.
- Triangle Market development

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Signed

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Date