

Lowestoft Town Council

Full Council Meeting

Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ
19:30 on 9 January 2018

**At 19:00 there was a half hour presentation by Lowestoft Vision to the Council.
This session was open to the public.**

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Allyson Barron, Nasima Begum, Baz Bemment, Peter Byatt, Neil Coleby, Tracey Eastwood, Amanda Frost, Ian Graham, Alan Green, Dick Houghton, Peter Lang, Mathew Owen, Graham Parker, Keith Patience and Alice Taylor.

In attendance:

Public: 4 members of the public (2 arrived later) and Danny Steel representing Lowestoft Vision (for part)

177. Fire evacuation procedure, welcome and announcement on reporting

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

178. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Tara Carlton and June Ford. Cllr Peter Collecott was due to join the meeting later.

179. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Graham and Ms Bendix noted that they had an interest in 182.2 relating to reimbursement of Council expenses. Cllr Lang noted that he had an interest in 183.1g owing to employment arrangements.

180. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, 5 December 2017, were approved. Proposed: Cllr Lang; Seconded: Cllr Green.

181. Public Forum and Public Service Reports

A member of the public, Mr Alexander, raised concerns including:

- Some cynicism in the town and a fake Town Council Facebook page
- Problems with access to the town owing to lack of appropriate public transport and traffic problems including at the bridge which might need improved traffic flow. It was noted that the Council could make relevant representation, including to bus operators, where opportunities arose.
- The lack of public transport routes connecting nearby towns and villages with Lowestoft.
- The need for alliance with other town and parishes. It was noted that a liaison meeting was being planned.

- Mental health support. Access to suitable facilities had reduced and more encouragement was needed for young people to use space's like Sam's Café. It was noted that the Town Council will be conducting a survey and developing a youth council. It would also be issuing a publication which could incorporate information about Access and other community groups. It was noted that there was a Waveney Youth Council but not yet a Lowestoft-focused one. It was noted that Feedback are one organisation that are supporting mental health initiatives.
- Mr Alexander was encouraged to email in any further points.

Written District and County Council reports received had been provided to councillors in advance.

182. Finance:

182.1 h and i relating to office space were taken first in order to enable Danny Steel to answer any questions that might arise. Terms to be discussed within a later confidential session without Mr Steel (the agent) present. The offer of locating the Town Council office at Hamilton House was explained.

Clr Collecott and 2 members of the public arrived at 19:59.

The office offer was explained for the benefit of Clr Collecott.

There were discussions about this new option for tailored office space available to the Town Council with disabled access. Annual rent would be comparable to other premises explored. There would also be development costs to make the facilities which would cover adaptations to addresses the whole needs of the Council over forthcoming years, pending decisions about a permanent location. Comments were made about the security and usability of the site for councillors and staff. The package being put together might potentially include IT and furniture. It was noted that some draft plans had been explored with the landlord's architect. A number of car park spaces would be included and there were additional nearby car park facilities at £12 per month for each space. It was noted that Whapload Road is free after 18:00. There will be councillor and staff security access. It was noted that the landlord was looking for a community rather than a business partner. It was noted that the lease could be provided within days. There was concern that there should not be significant legal delays given the importance of the Town Council being able to operate its business effectively and the team being based somewhere they could work together. Staff could be located at the site on a temporary basis under a licence to occupy and then Heads of Terms could be agreed for a longer lease. It was noted that break clauses would be important to provide the Town Council with flexibility. It was noted that the Town Hall was not yet usable as office space.

Danny Steel left at 20:11

182.1 The minutes of the previous Finance and Governance Committee (15/12/17) were noted including the following matters:

1821b Progress with a condition survey for the Town Hall was underway.

182.1a The agreement to progress a condition survey for the Marina Theatre building had been communicated to the Trust who would respond with options for surveys.

182.1c Expenditure for further office equipment (including computers and mobile phones) for new staff members were noted for the budget. Cefas equipment was no longer available.

182.1c Expenditure for support organisation memberships had been delegated to the Clerk but no expenditure had taken place to date (other than Suffolk Preservation Society which was agreed by Council).

182.1d Expenditure for Certificate of Lawful Use applications

It was noted for the budget that £1000 has been delegated to the Clerk for this purpose.

182.1e Agreement and delegation for an office credit card

It was agreed that a credit card should be obtained for use by the Clerk for Council expenditure, as authorised and in line with the delegation limit of £5000 and safeguards within the Council's financial regulations. Proposed: Cllr Coleby; Seconded: Cllr Knight.

182.1f Delegation of training budget

It was noted for the budget that £8500 was delegated to the Clerk for training for councillors and staff. It was agreed that a training programme for staff would be provided in due course, once staff were in post and needs had been identified. It was also noted that the council had a strong commitment to training for councillors and staff within its policy as part of its risk management. The budget report had noted the need for training costs to be accommodated. It was noted that in 2019 there might be a full new cohort of councillors and a training budget would be required to support them.

182.1g The finalised grant awarding policy was accepted. Proposed: Cllr Green; Seconded: Cllr Barron.

182.1h and 182.1i were dealt with above.

182.1j The budget monitoring report and budget 2017-18 were noted.

182.1k The draft budget 2018-19 and the special meeting of the Council to set the budget and precept on 2018-19 on 23 January at 18:30 were noted.

It was noted that there would be a debate at the Full Council meeting on 23 January 2018. The Clerk would try and obtain the number of properties in each banding and the estimated number of councils receiving discounts and reductions. It was noted that the Council does not receive business rates.

182.2 Payments

The following payments were considered and approved:

182.2a Replacement sales invoice for insurances for approval: Invoice 0007272831: £26,316.11 (£22,485.68 as previously agreed)(new recharge for agreement £3,830.43 in place for 1 April).

182.2b Travel and expenses reimbursement to Clerk £135.80

182.2c Invoice 10304 Bugle 12 editions advert: £1953 (+no VAT)

182.2d Invoice 0007272857 August WDC recharge for Norse Management £81600

182.2e Invoice 0007272899 September WDC recharge for Norse Management £79200

182.2f Invoice 0007272886 October WDC recharge for Norse Management £44400 (adjusted downwards to take account of duplicate charge)

182.2g Invoice 0007272873 November WDC recharge for Norse Management £67200

182.2h Invoice 0007272860 December WDC recharge for Norse Management £63600

To note the following payments which have been agreed (Finance and Governance Committee):

182.2i Invoice 0007272446 £72.61 (no VAT) recruitment advertisement

182.2j 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

182.2k Invoice 0007272433 fire service, WDC expenditure including ID badges, domain name) £1378.97 (+VAT£275.79) = £1654.76

182.2l Invoice 0007272462 Town Hall contract/fire alarm/valuation £3035 (+VAT £607) = £3642

182.2m Invoice 00007272828 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

182.2n Invoice 0007272844 business rates £5219.20 (+no VAT), allotment grant £900 (+no VAT), totalling £6119.20

182.2o 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.

To note the following payments have been made in addition to monthly salary payments:

182.2p Invoice 19831 £1,647.59 to SALC (recruitment adverts £1555 with £311 VAT)(Publication – Local Councils Explained £14.99, Local Council Administration £72.60, postage £5 with £1 VAT)

182.2q Meeting expenses (delegated to Clerk), reimbursement to Clerk £156.50

182.2r Office laptop and software (Finance and Governance Committee), reimbursement to Clerk, £855.96

Proposed: Cllr Green; Seconded: Cllr Barnard.

The payments were authorised with the condition that no further payments would be made to Norse, unless charged direct to the Council rather than recharged through Waveney District Council. It was noted that the Council wanted a more detailed financial breakdown than was currently being given with more information about service delivery and actual operations, such as grass-cuts. There is a process underway to try and achieve this. It was noted that liaison meetings had been held Norse had provided framework documents and there is also a budget breakdown. The Facilities Manager will be progressing Key Performance Indicators which will be an important part of enabling the assessment of performance. It was noted that there remains a significant job of work to progress a full understanding of the contract.

Proposed: Cllr Byatt; Seconded: Cllr Begum. 1 abstention.

Cllr Graham left the meeting.

182.2s Mayoral expenses, reimbursement to Cllr Graham, £3.20

Proposed: Cllr Taylor; Seconded: Cllr Frost. 1 against.

Cllr Graham returned to the meeting.

182.3 Income

It was noted that VAT income receipt has not been received.

183. Assets and contracts

183.1 The minutes of the Implementation Committee (04/12/17 and 8/1/18) were noted and the following matters were considered:

183.1a Revised leases for the community halls will be considered at the next committee.

183.1b Condition surveys for assets had now been obtained and USB sticks would be obtained for councillors so that they could consider the surveys.

183.1c The Christmas market had been held on 20 December. Thanks were noted to all those who had contributed. It was commented that footfall might have been increased for local traders. It was noted that Lowestoft Vision were establishing a Christmas Committee.

183.1d Fees and charges for 2018 were agreed. There would be a freeze of charges to markets and events. Proposed: Cllr Lang; Seconded: Cllr Barnard.

183.1e Heritage Lottery Fund submission was being considered.

183.1f Heritage Action Zone bid meeting was due shortly.

Cllr Lang left the room at 20:43.

183.1g Public meeting on the future of the CCTV service. Provisional date was 5 Feb at 7pm at Riverside. Norse would be invited to present and stakeholders will be invited. There will be a press announcement. It would be a fact-finding and listening meeting to find out views of the public.

Cllr Lang returned at 20:47.

183.1h Concrete around trees near the sails on Triangle Market was to be removed by Norse at no cost to the Council.

183.1i Concerns about 5 yearly tree inspection programme were noted. A dead silver birch had fallen in advance of planned works this month. A draft tree policy will go to the next Implementation Committee.

183.1j Any land registration issues. None.

Cllr Byatt noted that the question of a potential bus shelter at the bus stop opposite the railway station had been raised. The Implementation Committee might explore the options of putting up bus shelters at various locations. There might be places where bus shelters are no longer used which could be relocated. This might also be a survey. It was agreed that the option of paying for the shelter should be explored. Proposed: Cllr Byatt; Seconded: Cllr Eastwood. 13 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention.
2 members of the public left at 20:36.

184. Planning and Environment

184.1 The minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee on 15/12/17 were noted. The minutes of 9 January 2018 were not yet available. It was noted that Carlton Colville had approached the Council regarding parishes getting together to discuss the implications of the local plan and housing allocations. Potentially this could also include neighbourhood planning and any other matters which might be of common interest. It was noted that there might be some conflicts of interest and that all councils had an opportunity to submit views in relation to the local plan. There was concern that all councils without neighbourhood plans might be vulnerable.

185. Personnel

185.1 It was noted that new staff will be starting this week. There has been no Finance Manager appointed as yet and this will continue to be explored.

186. Other Committee and Governance Matters

186.1 It was agreed that Cllr Patience would join the Personnel Committee. Proposed: Cllr Graham; Seconded: Cllr Coleby.

187. Written reports from Councillors including from representative roles

187.1 Charter Tree initiative

The planting of the tree in Sparrows Nest would take place on 5 February. The other tree would be planted in due course in the East of England Park. The Waveney Norse Tree Officer was involved. This would include refreshments at a local park venue (meeting refreshments budget).

187.2 Coastal Communities Team

None.

187.3 People's Forum

None.

187.4 Lowestoft Development Group

None.

187.5 Transport Steering Group

A report has been circulated.

187.6 Plaisir Twinning Association.

It was noted that health and safety needs to be considered which might limit access for a tour around the Town Hall but it was hoped this could be accommodated. A gift budget was agreed of £100. Proposed: Cllr Coleby; Seconded; Cllr Taylor.

187.7 Cefas neighbourhood group
An external lockable noticeboard will be erected for public information. The car parking appears to be reasonably controlled currently. Concerns were raised about the lighting on the pathway as it is pitch black and Cllr Byatt agreed this would be raised. Cllr Knight noted that a car park had been closed which would have an impact.

187.8 Lowestoft Transport Infrastructure Partnership
None.

187.9 Lowestoft Railway Partnership
None.

187.10 First Light Festival Board
Not yet met.

187.11 Other reports and attendance/representation requests including:

i) Meeting with Peter Aldous

The MP had noted that there were plans afoot for 4 trains a day direct with a significantly reduced journey time to Ipswich.

Cllr Collecott noted that Lowestoft in Bloom are now at planning stage and would be pleased to hear from the Town Council if there were any suggestions. All welcome at their meeting on evening of 5 February. The meeting noted that some councillors would be pleased to attend future meetings but were not available on 5 February as there were already meetings on that date. It was noted that WDC had not paid any money to Bloom and money was raised from sponsors. There was a proposal that there is a Mayor's Shield £100 prize for a community presented at the Bloom ceremony. Go to Finance and Governance Committee.

ii) Lowestoft Collaboration Academy. This is to provide better communication across public services and there will be a series of meetings. Information is on the Lowestoft Rising website. It was agreed Cllr Byatt should be the Council's representative. Proposed: Cllr Graham; Seconded: Cllr Green.

iii) NALC Larger Council's Conference. This has been useful and, among other things, from this came the idea of a Christmas Lights Committee and having a festival, potentially related fishing. Information on Christmas lights and an offer of survey for posts for erection of further lights had been helpful. Also information on specialist benches and other street furniture had been obtained. There was a suggestion that a budget is set for potentially increased attendance next year, which would form part of the budget discussions. High Street Traders – Cllr Houghton noted that he is attending as an individual had been invited.

188. Date of next Council Meeting and other key meetings

23 January 2018 Full Council - noted

26 January 2018 Planning Training - noted

5 February CCTV meeting (to be confirmed) - noted

189. Items for the next Agenda

It was noted that expenditure decided within the Council meetings is also considered as part of the budget monitoring. Affordability was raised an issue. The Finance and Governance Committee also monitors expenditure. Cashflow also needs to be monitored. It was noted that this is currently incorporated when expenditure decisions are made. In due course there would be a review of how the budget was set up by Waveney District Council as there were some fundamental concerns.

Cllr Frost left the room at 21:31.

There was a request for more information about how communications with staff should be channelled.

Cllrs Begum and Patience left at 21:33

Cllr Frost returned at 21:33

There was a concern about unsolicited approaches from a variety of people selling services or goods etc in the town centre. A discussion would be had with WDC about how this might be dealt with and this would go on the agenda.

- 190.** It was resolved 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. Proposed: Cllr Coleby; Seconded: Cllr Lang:

190.1 Employment matters relating to members of staff

No discussion.

190.2 Legal matters relating to the council's assets

It was agreed that the Council could move its staffing operations to Hamilton House for up to 6 months, subject to the licence to occupy being agreed.

In terms of a longer temporary occupation, a maximum budget per year was set for Council office space, to be negotiated. The potential length of lease was discussed and the need for set break-clauses without penalties for use. There was a benefit to all-in contract, including IT and furniture in enabling the Council to be operational at the site at an early stage.

There were other advantages of an all-inclusive on-site package such as for IT support and procurement arrangement which enabled on-site support for laptops for 3 years.

Consumables would not be included e.g. tea and coffee and printing costs.

Cllrs Coleby, Taylor, Green Knight and Graham, supported by the Clerk, were agreed to continue negotiations and oversee the temporary move with presentation of a final case to the Full Council meeting on 23 January. It was noted that showers should be able to encourage cycling etc to work and that consideration needs to be given to a print room. It was suggested that councillors send in any suggestions.

Cllr Coleby will ensure that an amended draft plan is circulated. The Implementation Committee will consider this further on 22 January and Full Council on 23 January.

Proposed: Cllr Coleby; Seconded: Cllr Knight; 1 abstention.

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Signed

23 January 2018