



Lowestoft Town Hall Project

Public Consultation

November 2023



The Lowestoft Town Hall Project is a Lowestoft Town Council initiative supported National Lottery Players via the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, The Architectural Heritage Fund, The Towns Fund, and East Suffolk Council

History of Lowestoft Town Hall



1884 Ordnance Survey Town Plan



1905 Ordnance Survey map



1927 OS map

Timeline for the project

HAT Projects
MossKing Associates

pre-1859

A chapel of ease was built on the site in the early to mid fourteenth century, which was incorporated into a market building that was eventually known as the Town House or Chamber. It was rebuilt in 1698.

1859

The 1698 building was demolished and replaced with a new building designed by John Louth Clemence. Samuel Morton Peto donated stained-glass windows by John Thomas. The existing Council Chamber remains from this version of the Town Hall.

c1870s

The New Market Inn on Compass St was built. It was incorporated into the Town Hall in the 1970s, although is not part of the listing.

1899-1900

Widening of the High Street meant much of the previous building was demolished and rebuilt, with only the old Council Chamber retained. The architect was Borough Engineer George Henry Hanby.

1904

Town Hall extended by three bays on Compass Street, also designed by Hanby.

1914

Town Hall extended up to Mariners Street to accommodate committee room, residential accommodation and offices.

1935

Small extension to the 1914 extension on Mariner Street

1970s

New Market Inn incorporated into Town Hall

1993

The Town Hall is listed

2015

Waveney District Council moved out of the Town Hall. It has remained unoccupied since.

2017

Lowestoft Town Council was formed and became the owner of the Town Hall

May 2021

Lowestoft Town Council's project team, led by MossKing Associates, submitted a successful first stage funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

May 2022

Appointed the design team - HAT Projects, Richard Griffiths Architects, Momentum (structural engineering), Max Fordham (building services engineers)

May 2023

Second stage bid submitted to National Lottery Heritage Fund and applied for planning permission

Nov 2023 – Delivery stage begins

July 2024 – Main contractor starts building work

Early 2026? – Town Hall reopens

Drawings below reproduced by kind permission from Suffolk Archives



SA-195-2-1-23-1

Drawing of Town Chamber (1784)



SA-1300-72-6-29-1-1

Town Chamber (anonymous, c1850s)



SA-1300-72-6-29-2-1

1859 Town Hall (anonymous, c1859)



c.1890 photograph of the High St showing the 1859 Town Hall



1897 photograph of the High Street showing the 1859 Town Hall
Photo Credit: Alice Taylor



1905 Photographs of the Town Hall and widened High St



Photo Credit: Alice Taylor



Photo Credit: Christine Bayes

Photograph showing construction of the new Town Hall. The retained Council Chamber can be seen in the top right.



Original drawing of the Mariners Street 1914 wing



Current day photograph of 1935 extension



1986 Photograph of the Town Hall

Lowestoft Town Hall



Why reopen Lowestoft Town Hall?

The Town Hall has been owned by Lowestoft Town Council since 2017. It is currently deteriorating, but if restored it could become an amazing community facility.

Redevelopment of the Town Hall would bring people to the High Street, helping other local shops and businesses. It will also create new jobs for local people, both directly (working in the Town Hall) and indirectly (through supporting other local businesses).

Follow the Town Hall project to keep up to date on activities:

Facebook @LowestoftTownHall

Instagram @lowestoft_townhallproject



Scan the QR code to take a tour of the Virtual Town Hall

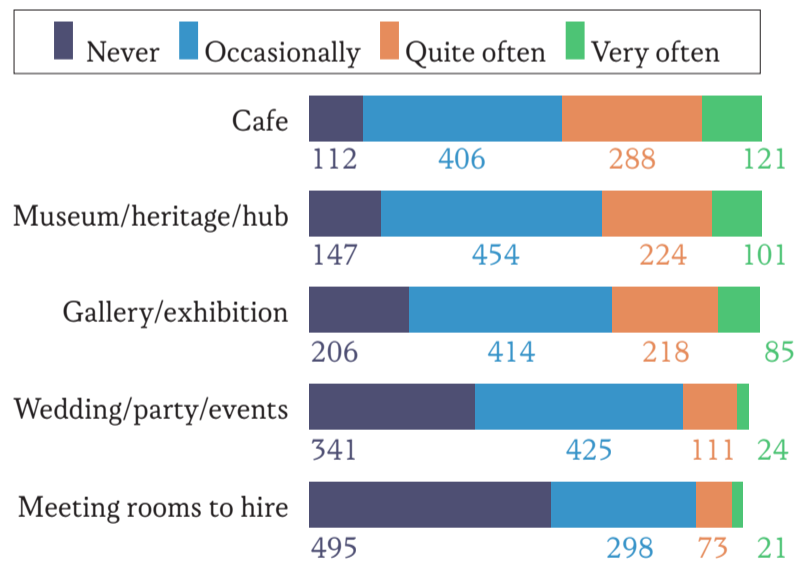


What you told us before

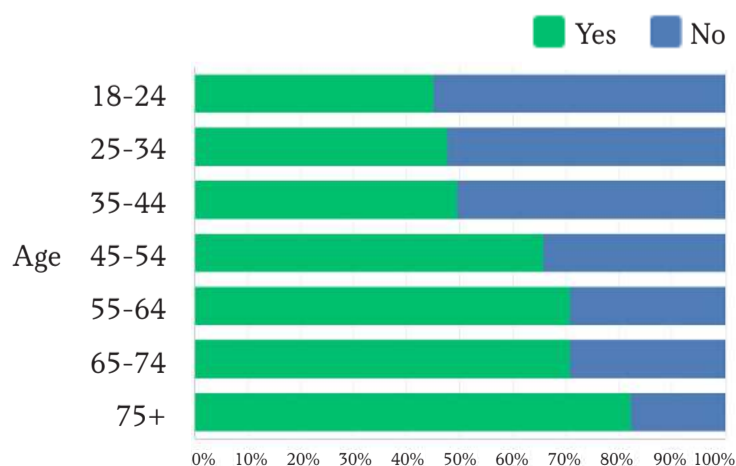
In January 2021, we asked the people of Lowestoft what they wanted to see in the Town Hall:

- 999 residents completed our survey
- Over 90% came from NR32, NR33 postcodes

How much would you use the facilities?

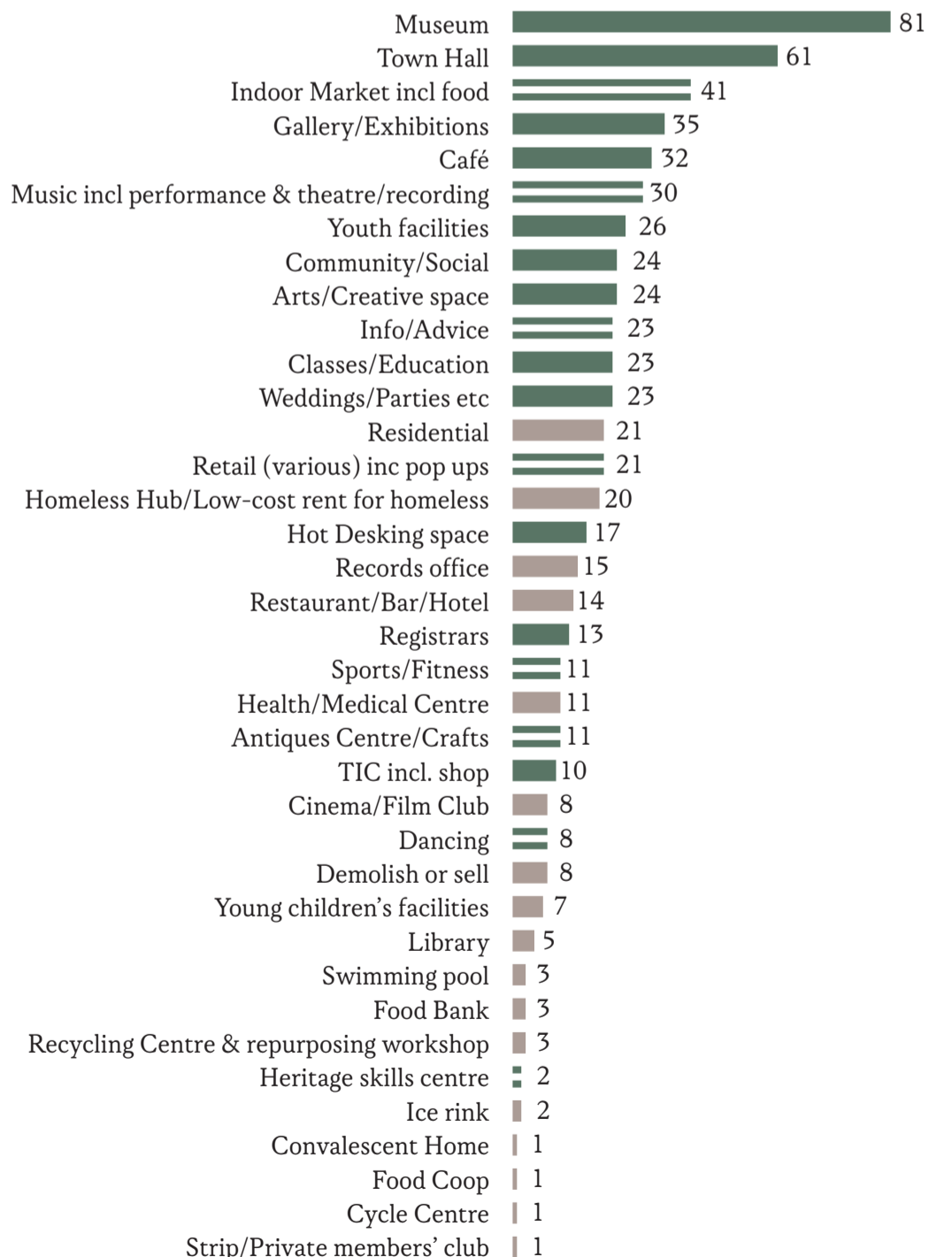


Should Lowestoft Town Council move into the Town Hall?



What you would like to see the Town Hall used for?

Legend: █ Included in the Town Hall design █ Can happen in the Town Hall design



A renewed Town Hall for Lowestoft

Heritage Hub

A Heritage exhibition gallery which will tell the story of Lowestoft in a vibrant, interactive, inclusive and engaging way. People and their experiences will be firmly at the centre of the exhibitions. It will provide a venue for the display of items from the Lowestoft Town Council collection and loans from national and local museums.

Registry Office

for the Suffolk County Council team*, handling the registration of births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, and citizenship ceremonies.

*Subject to final agreement with Suffolk County Council

Co-working hub

where people can rent a desk for a day or a month, working alongside like-minded people

Studios

- a well-equipped 'messy space' for art workshops and community activities

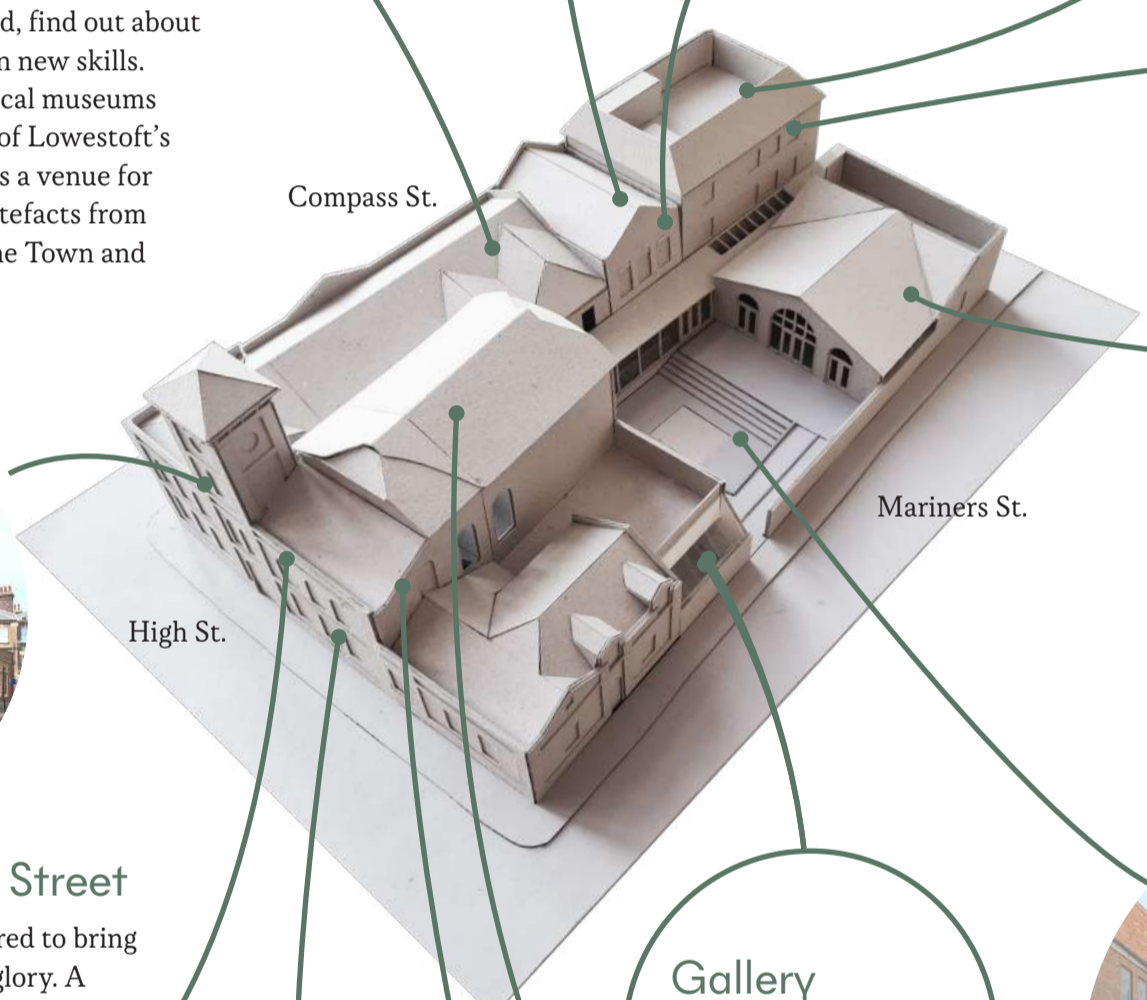
Lowestoft Town Council Offices

Heritage Activities

Two dedicated heritage staff positions will run activities for people to get involved, find out about the history of Lowestoft, and learn new skills. They will work closely with the local museums and historians to raise awareness of Lowestoft's heritage. The Town Hall will act as a venue for outreach activities, showcasing artefacts from other heritage/ organisations in the Town and signposting people to them.

New Hall

for community use, weddings and parties, craft fairs, performances, and anything else you would like to do in it!



Courtyard Garden

Presence on the High Street

The building facades will be restored to bring the Town Hall back to its former glory. A canopy at the entrance will welcome people.

Gallery

For changing exhibitions including local artists and community groups.

Visitor Information Point

Cafe

open to everyone

Council Chamber

will be used for ceremonies, council meetings and other events

Meeting spaces

for groups, classes, committees and more



A new atrium

The old yard will be opened up to welcome visitors with light and the lively sounds of the reception and cafe. Wherever possible, existing floor and wall finishes will be retained.



The design approach

We need to extend the Town Hall to make space for all the activities that will make it a thriving community hub.

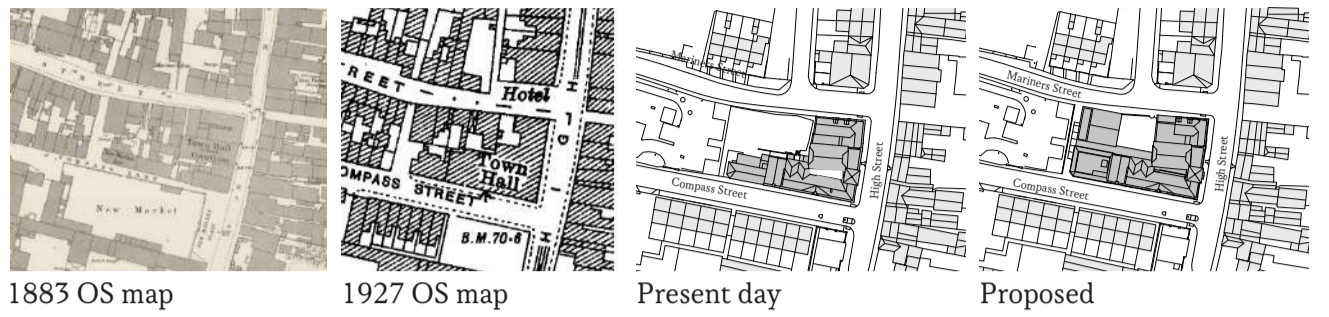
The Town Hall was originally one building within a dense urban block. The back of the Town Hall was never meant to be seen.

We want to use the new extensions to restore this setting by creating a strong frontage along all the streets, and placing a courtyard in the centre of the block.

In creating a courtyard at the heart of the block, the new buildings have less impact on the most significant historic part - the Council Chamber itself.

This also protects the Town Hall from the visual impact of future development proposals that may come forward on the site next door.

(Right) Sketch view of proposal from corner of High Street and Mariners Street. (Below) Same view today.



Examples of red brick boundary walls in Lowestoft surrounding a varied range of buildings and hidden gardens.



(Right) Sketch view of proposal from Albany Road (Above) Same view today.



Sketch view of new courtyard and event hall.



Sketch model of Town Hall with new additions

Proposed floor plans



Ground Floor

Public uses that bring the Town Hall to life are located on the ground floor.

Heritage at the Town Hall

The Town Hall will provide a focal point for celebrating the town's heritage and help support the wonderful local museums.

A dedicated heritage exhibition gallery will tell the history of the town in a vibrant, interactive, inclusive, engaging, and innovative way. It will also incorporate local people's stories captured through our 'Your Lowestoft Memories' activities. A separate Gallery will have space for a changing programme of temporary exhibitions and events.

A freelance filmmaker will be employed to film the TH repair and Lowestoft Town Hall redevelopment work, install a timelapse camera, run various film skills workshops with groups; help edit films they produce and edit films for the interpretation content. They will focus on creating a contemporary digital archive, recording people's memories of the recent past and showcasing the positive things happening in Lowestoft today.

People Landscapes and Buildings (PLB) are our museum interpretation specialists, and have worked with the Project Team to consult and engage local heritage experts, volunteers, families, schools and communities with the concept designs to inform how the design and content develops. We have incorporated the topics that were of most interest to people into the themes for the gallery:

- *Changing fortunes - development of the town*
- *Stories from the sea - World Wars, other conflicts and maritime history*
- *Leisure and entertainment*
- *Traditions, superstitions and witchcraft*

More information on the plans for the activities and the heritage gallery can be found on the Lowestoft Town Council website.



'Your Lowestoft Memories' project
For one of the pilot activities we worked with Poetry People to capture people's memories and stories of the Town Hall and Lowestoft Industries. These memories and recollections inspired a new video poem created by Dean Parkin and will be shared in the new heritage exhibition gallery.

Our Memories Bike
A tricycle with a fishing smack inspired design will continue to be at local events, sharing news about the project and chatting to people about their memories of Lowestoft.

Heritage activity programme

In partnership with local museums, organisations and charities, we are delivering a free and accessible programme to engage local communities in the project.

There's lots of opportunities to learn new skills and find out about the history of Lowestoft.

In the next stage there will be two dedicated Heritage staff who will run lots of activities for people to get involved in, such as:

'Your Lowestoft Memories'

A new project to capture people's memories of Lowestoft's music scene.

Town Hall Website

A volunteer programme to digitise and make available on online images of the Lowestoft Town Council collections, and a digital cultural archive.

Training opportunities

In film making, heritage management.

Creative workshops

Inspired by the history of Lowestoft, the Town Hall heritage displays and exhibitions



Town Hall open days in October 2022



Craft activities inspired by the Town Hall stained glass



Artwork by YMCA Shine and graffiti artists Stane



Town Hall history talk by local historian David Butcher



Attending local community events



Examples of Town Council collections

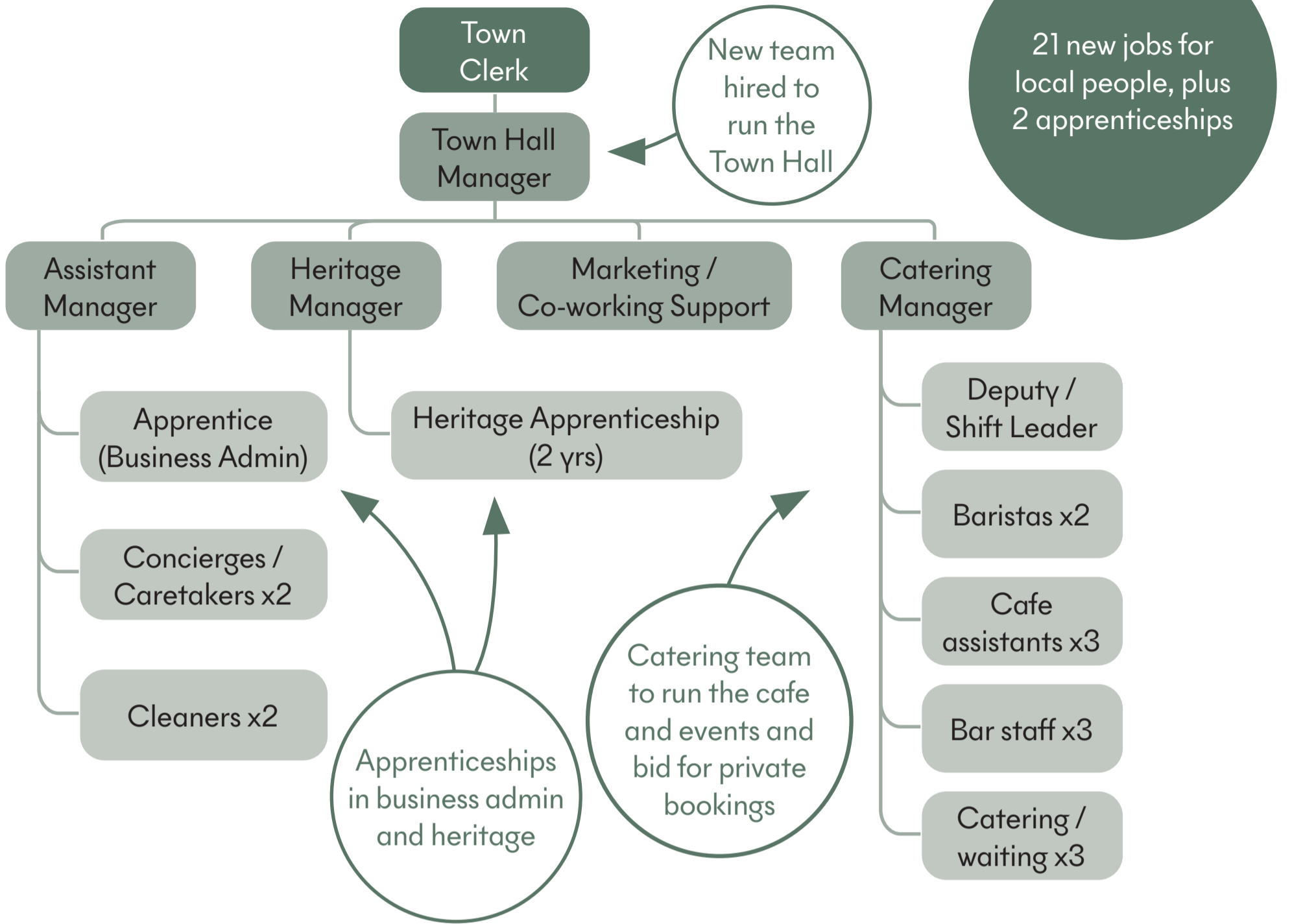
Photo Credit Bob Collis

For more info, take a look at our Activity & Audience plan:

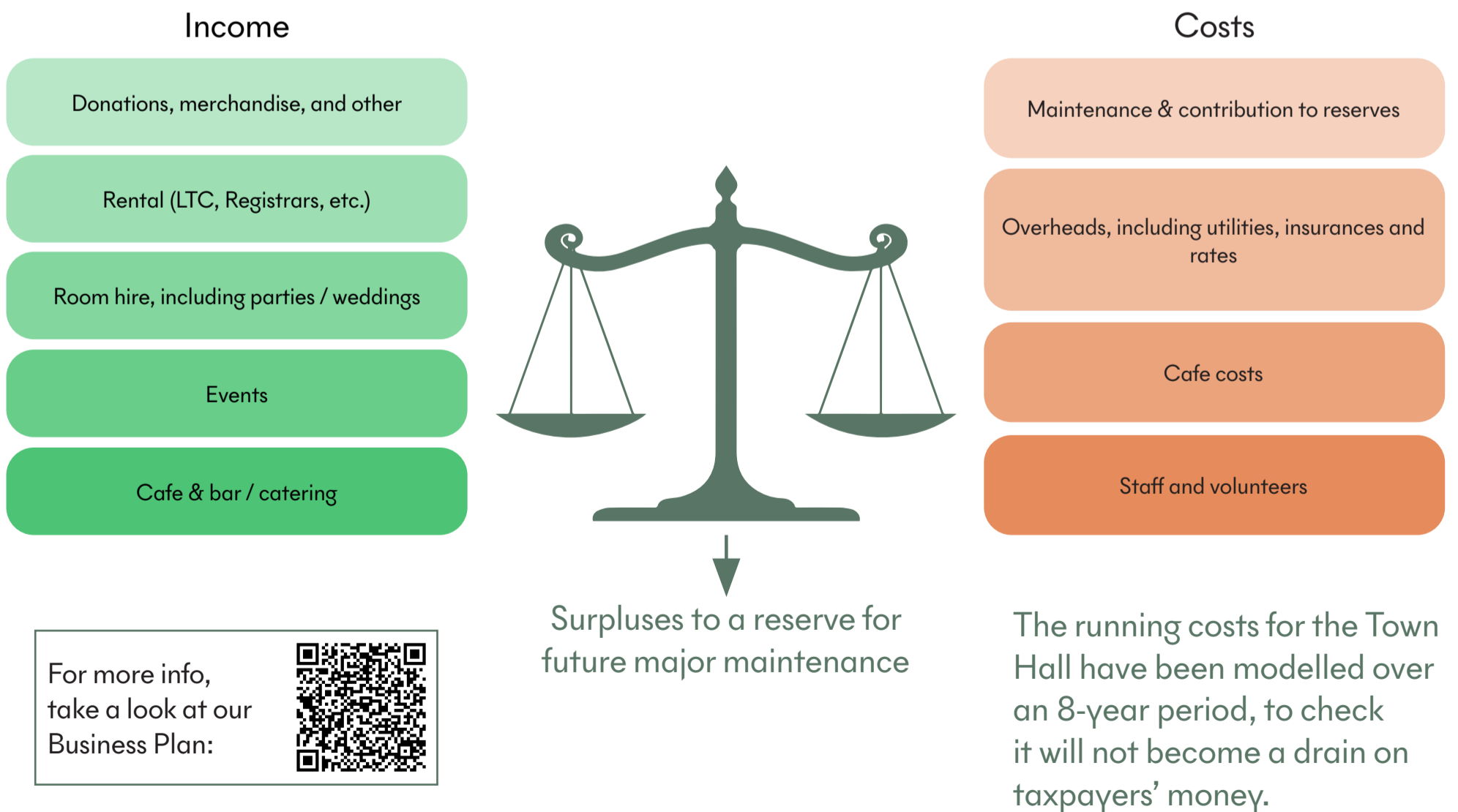
For more info, take a look at our Interpretation plan:



Managing the Town Hall

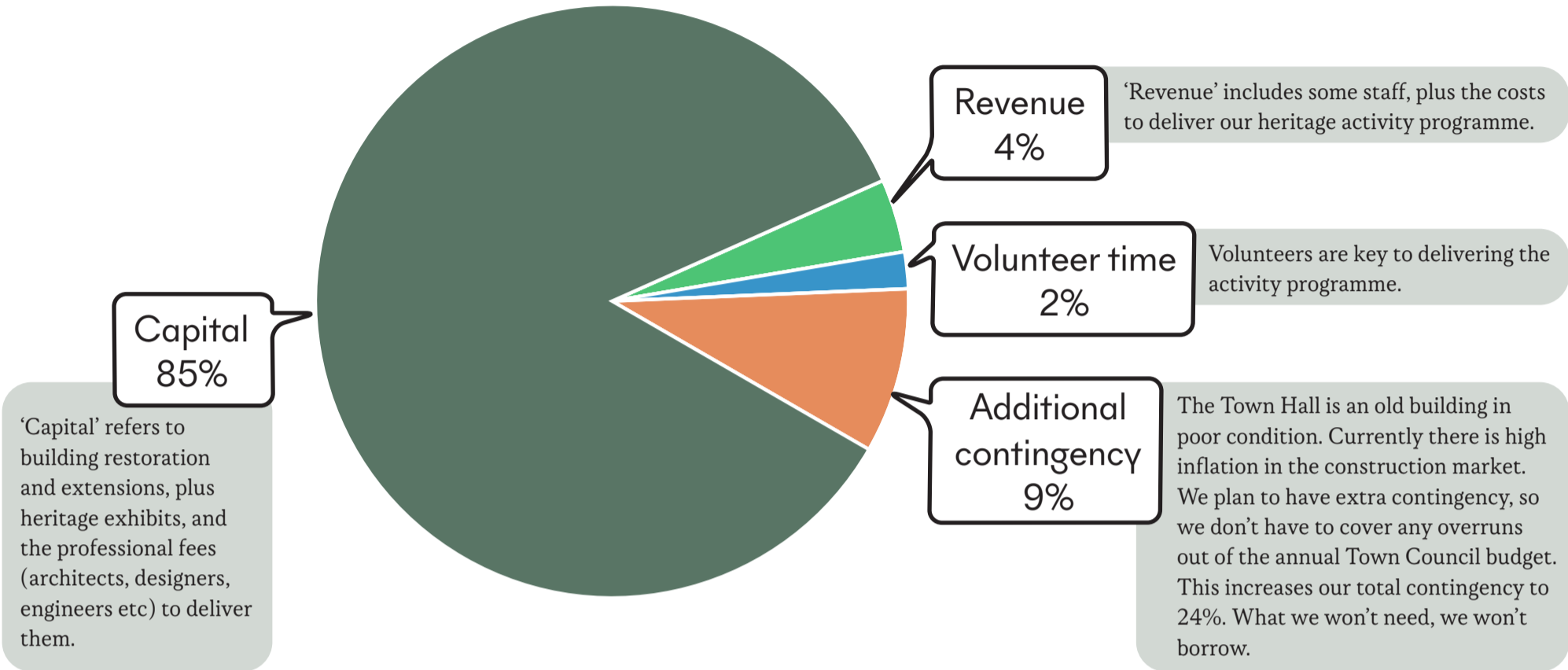


How will the Town Hall cover its running costs?

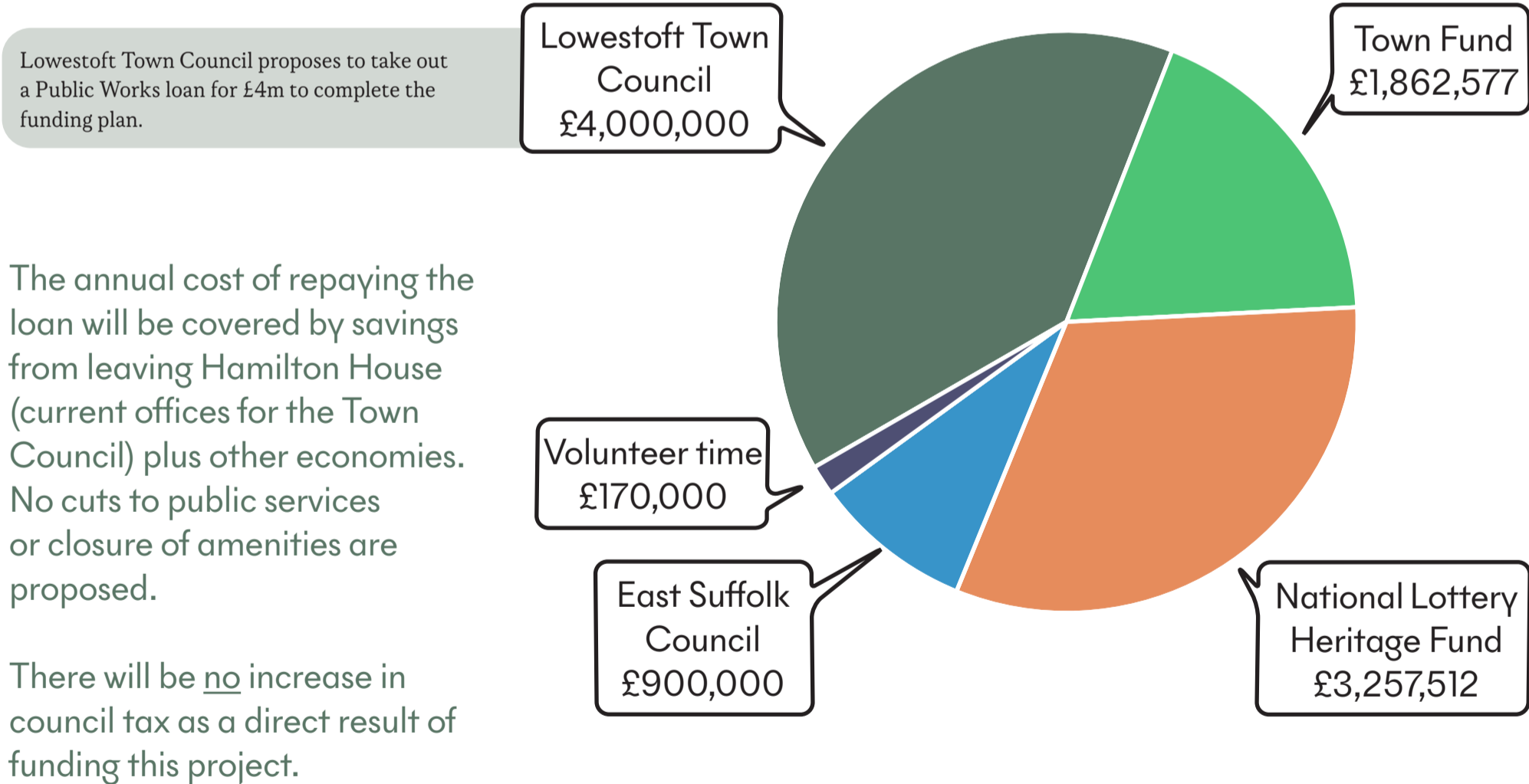


How Lowestoft Town Council plans to fund the project


Project Budget (c.£10m, incl. extra contingency)



Funding Plan



Tell us what you think of the plans to take out a loan to pay for the project. Fill in our survey online or on paper:



With the exception of the Town Council's contribution to be funded through the proposed loan, all other grant funding has already been secured.