

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:00 on 18 November 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Alan Green, Keith Patience (Chair), Andy Pearce and Alice Taylor

Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

23. Welcome

Councillors and members of the public were reminded of the right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol, and the meeting was welcomed. The Chair expressed concern regarding the number of policies the Sub-Committee was being asked to consider at this meeting, and requested the number of policies is distributed more evenly across the meetings in future.

24. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Page. It was noted that Cllr Amanda Frost had resigned from this Sub-Committee. Cllrs Neil Coleby and Jacqueline Hardie had not provided apologies and were absent. Cllr Pearce proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.

25. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

26. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meetings on 21 October 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

There were no comments and the draft minutes were noted.

27. Any advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were none.

28. Reviewing the following Town Council policies:

28.1 Tree Policy, including any recommendations from the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee – The Tree Policy, Co-option Policy and Cycling Strategy are being reviewed by officers and other Committees and Sub-Committees. Feedback on the documents from Councillors was welcomed. The Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee has requested officer review of the Tree Policy, particularly regarding the legal rights of the public.

28.2 Community Engagement Policy – It was requested that a section be added to this policy to ensure the Council is accessible for members of the public who may wish to stand for a position as Councillor at election times, regardless of their background and lifestyle. It was also requested that ahead of the next elections or by-elections, the Town Council publishes information about the role of a Councillor. Officers will make appropriate amendments or additions to the policy, and will ensure that information about the role of a Councillor is up to date on the website. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Community Engagement Policy, subject to a suitable amendment; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.

28.3 Conferring of the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen – The policy currently specifies that the recipient's consent must be sought as part of the process. There may be instances where the title is sought as a gift to another, therefore it was requested that an amendment be made to this point so that the Council can, at its discretion, consider conferring the title without prior knowledge of the recipient. Cllr Taylor proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Conferring of the Title of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen Policy with a suitable

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- amendment; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.
- 28.4 Co-option Policy – Officers are currently reviewing this policy, which will also take account of the earlier comments regarding accessibility for members of the public who are interested in becoming Councillors. The policy is quite complex legally, and officers are currently reviewing new advice received.
- 28.5 Cycling Strategy – Officers have put together a draft document, encompassing facts and figures, but Councillor input is now required to detail the Council’s aspirations. This will be brought back to the next meeting for further discussion.
- 28.6 Disciplinary Procedure – Under the heading of ‘Investigations’, the policy covers investigative interviews, but does not specify that the individual will be given advance notice of the interview. It was requested that this be included, to ensure the individual has a fair opportunity to prepare. It was also requested that provision is included for deviation from the procedure in exceptional circumstances, particularly those involving criminal proceedings.
- 28.7 Disciplinary Rules – The Disciplinary Rules will be reviewed by officers in conjunction with the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 28.8 Environmental Policy – The Council now has several environmental and climate emergency based policies, including the Environmental Policy, Sustainability Strategy and Net Zero Policy. Officers will be reviewing all these policies with a view to having one overarching policy, encompassing the points of each of the individual policies.
- 28.9 Equality and Diversity Policy – Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy; seconded by Cllr Barnard; all in favour.
- 28.10 Financial Regulations – The Financial Regulations are being reviewed by officers and have recently been reviewed by the Finance and Governance Committee. Some amendments have been made regarding petty cash and delegation levels, and to allow more flexibility. Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Financial Regulations, and consider any final amendments suggested in the interim; seconded by Cllr Green; all in favour.
- 28.11 Representation on Outside Bodies Protocol – This protocol is also being considered by Full Council. It was agreed that Full Council should consider including a mechanism in the protocol to remove and replace persistent non-attenders from their position as representative on a particular outside body.

29. Date of the next meeting
16 December 2020 14:00

30. Items for the next agenda and close

There were no specific requests for items to be included on the next agenda, but some of the items on this agenda will be carried forward. Regarding the concerns expressed at the start of the meeting, officers do try to ensure policies are distributed evenly across the agendas, but this Sub-Committee is required to review all of the Council’s policies before May. Sub-Committee members were asked to review the policies in advance of the meetings were possible, to have any comments prepared for the meeting.

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the livestream of the meeting. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 14:27.

31. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Signed: 16 December 2020