

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee**  
**Via Video Meeting**  
**16:00 on 17 March 2021**

**MINUTES**

**Video meeting participants:** Cllrs Neil Coleby, Jacqueline Hardie, Peter Lang (Chair) and Paul Page

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

**65. 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.

**66. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Andy Pearce and David Youngman. Cllr Coleby proposed acceptance of the apologies received; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

**67. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

There were none.

**68. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meetings on 17 February 2021 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting**

The draft minutes were noted. The Sub-Committee had received a meeting paper detailing individual budgets which would be appropriate to delegate to other Committees and Sub-Committees.

*Cllr Page arrived 16:04*

There was a lot of discussion around the subject but no formal recommendation was put forward to proceed with the delegations, although it seems this was the intention. The Finance and Governance Committee has agreed to consider this at its next meeting.

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

There were none.

**70. Noting that, following this Sub-Committee's review of Committee and Sub-Committee structures and Terms of Reference, the Community Safety Committee does not have sufficient membership to allow meetings to take place**

The Community Safety Committee is currently one member short of the number of members it requires to enable meetings to take place, as per its Terms of Reference. It is hoped additional members will be appointed at the next Full Council meeting.

**71. Reviewing the following Town Council policies:**

71.1 Legionella Control and Water Hygiene Policy – The Clerk has suggested some amendments and the amended version was displayed. The amendments are primarily typographical and grammatical corrections and updating references to officer positions which no longer exist. Each premises has an individual risk assessment and a regime for legionella monitoring. The policy provides the overall framework. It is intended that Essex and Suffolk Water will take over the management of Legionella management from the Town Council. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Legionella Control and Water Hygiene Policy as amended; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

71.2 Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessment, with particular regard to staff who will primarily work outdoors – The policy does not distinguish between staff who work from the office and complete site visits, and staff who primarily work outdoors because the controls and safeguarding arrangements should mostly be the same. The Policy will however be reviewed again once the Council has outdoor workers in post. It was

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suggested that the Council could explore providing personal security equipment to officers depending on their role, such as a personal alarm or smartphone with an emergency alert function. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessment with an amendment that officers should be provided with a smartphone with an alert function or another alternative suitable alarm if available, and a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to consider the purchase of smartphones for all Town Council officers; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

- 71.3 Public Participation Protocol – If Full Council decides to hold video meetings in a webinar format going forward, amendments may be required to this protocol and the Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings), as per the next agenda item. Cllr Hardie proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Public Participation Protocol in its current format, with the acknowledgement that further review may be required; seconded by Cllr Coleby; all in favour.
- 71.4 Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings) – The Annual Assembly was held in a webinar format this year, and Full Council will be considering whether to hold all video meetings in this format going forward. As with face-to-face meetings, if a large number of members of the public were present this would have to be well organised with strict time limits and representatives of views. Effective Chairing of the meeting is crucial but the mechanism of virtual meetings allows more control. It is likely in due course that there will be hybrid arrangements to remote involvement in some way, but this will be a policy decision for the Council. Data could be provided on the number of members of the public who attend webinar meetings, but the number of YouTube viewers may not be known until after the meeting. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Public Participation Protocol (Video Meetings) in its current format, with the acknowledgement that further review may be required; seconded by Cllr Lang; all in favour.
- 71.5 Redundancy Policy – Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Redundancy Policy; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 71.6 Reserves Policy – Amendments have been made to reflect the fact that the Council is aspiring to maintain general reserves equivalent to six months' precept, and this will be embedded in the Council's five-year budgeting plans. There is regular reporting on the reserves position to the Council through the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee and the Finance and Governance Committee. The Council follows governance and accountability proper practises and internal and external audit processes. The Council's reserves should be proportionate to its budget and requirements. A minimum amount does not have to be set for earmarked reserves but does for the main reserves. The Council is currently maintaining sufficient reserves. This Sub-Committee would like to see details of the Council's earmarked reserves added to the policy as an addendum. Currently there is no trigger point at which action would need to be taken if the level of reserves fell below a certain point, but the reserves are monitored regularly so any issues would be identified. The Council would not wish to see its level of reserves fall below three months' worth of precept, and two months would be the absolute minimum. Appropriate wording will be added to the policy to reflect this. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Reserves Policy with the amendments as discussed; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.
- 71.7 Reporting Procedure for Assets and Maintenance – Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Reporting Procedure for Assets and Maintenance; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

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71.8 Reporting at Meetings Protocol – It was clarified that point four of the protocol refers to any person intending to report on the meeting. As far as can reasonably be accommodated, arrangements would be made to ensure that person could see and hear the proceedings of the meeting well. Point two of the protocol refers to calling the meeting to order, which is a dated term and could cause confusion. Keeping the meeting to order is the responsibility of the Chair and is not affected by any amendments made to this protocol, but the wording of the policy will be amended to make it clearer. Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Reporting at Meetings Protocol as amended; seconded by Cllr Hardie; all in favour.

71.9 Safeguarding Policy – Cllr Coleby proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee to adopt the Safeguarding Policy; seconded by Cllr Page; all in favour.

**72. Date of the next meeting**

21 April 2021 16:00

**73. Items for the next agenda and close**

The Standing Orders will be reviewed at the next meeting. The Clerk has reviewed the Pond Policy and the Petty Cash Policy since they have been reviewed by this Sub-Committee, and has suggested some amendments to make them clearer and more specific, particularly regarding the contractual arrangements the Council would wish to extend to cover its ponds. The suggested amendments should not contradict the overall policy positions. Full Council will see the proposed changes before considering the policies for adoption.

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 16:49.

**74. Resolution to close the meeting to the public**