

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Personnel Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:00 on 7 November 2024

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome (Chair), Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman

In attendance: Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Lauren Elliott (Senior Committee and Project Clerk)

Public: There were no members of the public in attendance

83. Welcome

The fire evacuation procedure and public right to report were explained, and the meeting was welcomed.

84. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

85. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

85.1. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Registerable and Non-Registerable interests from councillors on items on the agenda – There were none.

85.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

Cllr Youngman arrived 10:02

86. The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 3 October 2024, and the confidential notes of the meetings on 21 August and 5 September 2024

Cllr Pearce had some comments on the confidential notes, which he would raise during the confidential session, though these were not fundamental changes to the documents. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the public minutes of the meeting on 3 October; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; twelve Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

87. Public forum

No advance comments had been received and there were no members of the public in attendance.

88. Monitoring expenditure from the staffing contingency budget

The Acting Town Clerk would check with the Finance Manager and requested to defer this item to later in the meeting.

89. Matters relating to data protection and use of Town Council email addresses and devices (some aspects may be confidential)

To be considered during the confidential session.

90. Staffing:

90.1. A report on the implementation of the revised staffing structure and consideration of further requirements (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

90.2. Completion and outcomes of staff appraisals (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

90.3. Staff terms and conditions (confidential), including the following:

90.3a. Implementation of the Local Government Pay Award, backdated to 1 April 2024 – To be considered during the confidential session.

90.3b. Pay awards from 1 April 2025 – To be considered during the confidential session.

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- 90.4. An update on recruitment matters (some aspects may be confidential) – Appointments were due to be made following recent interviews but candidates had not yet been informed.
- 90.5. Matters relating to staff absence (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 90.6. Staff delegations (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 90.7. Measures for performance management (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

91. A proposal to assist with the implementation of the Councillor Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (some aspects may be confidential)

The Acting Town Clerk had provided a meeting paper. As a consultant was named within the meeting paper, it was agreed to discuss it during the confidential session.

92. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 5 December 2024 – 10:00.

93. Items for the next agenda and close

Councillors were asked to send any requests to the office.

Cllr Pearce proposed to move the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

94. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

94.1. Any employment matters relating to items on this agenda, including those above as required:

86. The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 3 October 2024, and the confidential notes of the meetings on 21 August and 5 September 2024 – Cllr Pearce gave details of the amendments to be made and proposed to approve the confidential notes of 21 August, 5 September and 3 October, subject to the amendments as identified; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; twelve Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

88. Monitoring expenditure from the staffing contingency budget – The Finance Manager had confirmed there was no spend in the last month against the staff contingency budget, and the year-end calculation needed to be finalised.

89. Matters relating to data protection and use of Town Council email addresses and devices (some aspects may be confidential) – The investigation had been concluded and there were no outstanding actions. The Acting Town Clerk would provide a report. Data protection training had been sourced, and the Acting Town Clerk requested this Committee's support in compelling Councillors to attend. Cllr Pearce proposed to reiterate the decision previously made regarding this; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

90.1. A report on the implementation of the revised staffing structure and consideration of further requirements (confidential) – There had been a confidential discussion by this Committee or Full Council without officers present. Cllr Brooks had taken notes and circulated to those present at the meeting, and would circulate to the rest of the Committee. It was agreed to move this item to the end of the meeting.

90.2. Completion and outcomes of staff appraisals (confidential) – As per the policy, every staff member had had their appraisal by 1 November. Some outcomes may need to go to Full Council. A list of training requirements had been produced, some of which had already been budgeted for. The provisional training budget for 2025-2026 was £19,000 plus inflation. It was understood the staff and Councillor training budgets had been merged and this figure would therefore need to be reviewed, and the Budget and Loan Working Group notified.

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- 90.3a. Implementation of the Local Government Pay Award, backdated to 1 April 2024 – This was noted and would be included in November’s payroll. The Finance Manager would be doing the calculations and feeding that and the Government’s decision on National Insurance contributions to the Budget and Loan Working Group.
- 90.3b. Pay awards from 1 April 2025 – Cllr Pearce made a confidential proposal regarding staff terms and conditions, with effect from April 2025; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.
Cllr Pearce made a further proposal regarding staff terms and conditions; seconded by Cllr Newsome; twelve Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 90.4. An update on recruitment matters (some aspects may be confidential) – The Acting Town Clerk provided an update on the current staffing position and the outcomes of recent recruitment processes.
- 90.5. Matters relating to staff absence (confidential) – Cllr Begum requested to move this item to the end of the meeting, for staff to leave as required.
- 90.6. Staff delegations (confidential) – This item would again be moved to the end of the meeting for staff to leave the meeting as appropriate.
- 90.7. Measures for performance management (confidential) – Cllr Begum would provide an update later in the meeting.
91. A proposal to assist with the implementation of the Councillor Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (some aspects may be confidential) – Cllr Murray proposed to review the proposal which had provided, and how this would interact with the Town Council’s Standing Orders, and consider further at the next meeting; seconded by Cllr Barker. The Acting Town Clerk explained the background to the proposal. Cllr Murray was asked to amend his proposal to accept the offer of training within the proposal, and use this to decide what steps to take next. As the Personnel Committee did not have a delegated budget, this would go forward as a recommendation to Full Council or the Finance and Governance Committee. Cllr Murray amended his proposal to include this and all Councillors voted in favour. An appropriate item had already been added to the agenda for the Finance and Governance Committee.

The Senior Committee and Project Clerk left the meeting 11:00 for the consideration of the rest of the agenda items

Signed:
5 December 2024