

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Budget and Loan Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:00 on 26 October 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Neil Coleby, Alan Green (Chair), Graham Parker and Andy Pearce
Also participating: Shona Bendix (Clerk), James Cox (Finance and Administration Assistant) and Lauren Elliott (Committee Clerk)

24. 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.

25. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies and all members were present. Cllr Barnard had joined the meeting as the substitute member, but as the meeting was quorate, her attendance was not required.

26. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

There were none.

27. Receipt of any comments and noting that the draft minutes of the meetings on 12 October 2020 will be considered at the next appropriate meeting

Cllr Coleby gave his apologies for the last meeting.

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

There were none.

29. The 2020 – 2021 Lowestoft Town Council Budget

The budget monitoring document was displayed at the meeting. There did not appear to be any anomalies or causes for concern. Certain anticipated repairs and maintenance work will require more in-depth confidential discussions, but it was queried whether the budget will be sufficient to cover this. Officers will review the budget provision and report back to the Sub-Committee. A planning application for the Pakefield Street public conveniences has been submitted but not yet processed and the fee has not yet been paid. It was queried what effect the pandemic had on the Norse contract. There have already been discussions regarding some reduction in charges for the seasonal workers, who were not employed for as long as they have been in previous years. The contract will be discussed in more detail during the confidential session.

30. The 2021 – 2022 Lowestoft Town Council Budget, including the following:

30.1 Any further advice regarding the Lowestoft Taxbase Forecast and its impact on the precept – Further information has been received today. The situation appears better than the previous forecast. The precept demand must be submitted by 29 January at the latest. East Suffolk Council will recalculate the Council Tax base in early January, but the Town Council will need to decide what it would like to set in terms of its budget and precept, and previously this has been in line with a cost of living increase. This Sub-Committee will be making recommendations on the 2021-22 budget and precept and would like to start by confirming what elements are contractual and non-negotiable. Officers have put together a spreadsheet which highlights what is contractual and non-negotiable, what is contractual but negotiable, and what is discretionary and flexible. This will be discussed during the confidential session. Now that this information is available, it was queried whether this Sub-Committee could start meeting weekly and go straight into confidential session to consider these items. Items requiring confidential discussion will be marked as such on the agenda, and if this is likely to be

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the entire meeting (excluding the administrative items), a statement to this effect will be included on the agenda. Norse has indicated that there will be an increase to the cost of the contract next year is marginally over the cost of living. The Norse Contract Working Group will be meeting shortly to consider the contract, and this can also be discussed during the confidential session.

30.2 A request from the First Light Festival for funding of £8,000 in principle, towards running the festival in 2021 – The Sub-Committee had requested a breakdown of the costs, as the amount of funding requested had increased from that given in previous years. More detailed information is not available at this stage and it was agreed the request could not be approved in principle until the Sub-Committee has sufficient information to understand the cost increase. Officers will make further enquiries.

31. Noting that the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee are considering Committee and Sub-Committee structures and Terms of Reference, and consideration of whether to submit any comments

The Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee will be reviewing how the Town Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups communicate with one another, and how to streamline Council processes. All Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups are being invited to submit comments.

32. Date of the next meeting

It was agreed to meet again in two weeks' time, on Monday 9 November at 14:00. Following that, the Sub-Committee would like to meet weekly.

33. Items for the next Agenda and Close

Other than the items already identified during the meeting, there were no requests for items for the next agenda.

Cllr Coleby proposed moving the meeting into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour. The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream and the live stream was closed as the meeting went into confidential session. It was confirmed the meeting would end following the confidential session.

34. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

Officers had indicated within the budget which items were contractual and non-negotiable, which items were contractual but negotiable and which items were flexible, and each budget heading was discussed in turn.

The Committee Clerk temporarily left the meeting 15:30 and returned 15:40

Officers will circulate a copy of spreadsheet ahead of the next meeting, and will calculate what the Council would have to precept to cover contractual and non-negotiable elements.

The Chair closed the meeting 16:45

Signed: 

9 November 2020