

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Standing Orders and Policies Sub-Committee
Via Video Meeting
14:00 on Wednesday 16 September 2020

MINUTES

Video meeting participants: Cllrs Sue Barnard, Neil Coleby, Amanda Frost, Alan Green, Jacqueline Hardie, Paul Page, Keith Patience (Chair), and Andy Pearce

Also participating: Sarah Foote (Deputy Clerk) and James Cox (Administration and Finance Assistant)

13. Welcome

The right to report and the application of the video meeting protocol were explained and noted, and the meeting was welcomed.

14. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Taylor and accepted. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Coleby and unanimously agreed.

15. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

Cllr Pearce and Cllr Barnard declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 17.2A and 17.2D and any matters which related to Suffolk Records office arising in these.

16. Advance comments from the public on any matters on this agenda

There were no comments.

17. The following matters were considered and agreed regarding Town Council policies:

17.1 Schedule of policy reviews ahead of the 2021 Annual General Meeting - it was proposed by Cllr Hardie, seconded by Cllr Coleby and agreed that the policies would be reviewed in alphabetical order. A schedule of policy review would be put together and the relevant committee or sub-committee would duly be advised that policy(ies) relating to their work were due to be reviewed on xx date and comments should be submitted to the Standing Orders and Policies Committee by xx date. It was also agreed that a version control system be introduced to show how policies had been amended, why and when.

17.2 The following policies were reviewed with amendments made as stated. Where amendments required, these were made to versions displayed on screen during the course of the meeting and it was requested that the Finance and Administration Assistant ensured that all policies on the website were the current version.

17.2A Acquisitions and Disposal Policy - it was proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Barnard and agreed (two abstentions) to amend point 3.11 to 'a repository agreed by the Council'.

At 14.25 Cllr Coleby left the meeting

17.2B Adverse Weather Policy - given that the Council intended at a future date to recruit staff who would be working outside, it was asked that the policy be reviewed by the Clerk for suitability for outside workers.

At 14.30 Cllr Coleby returned to the meeting. It was also requested that a statement be added to the policy to include measures that were being put in place for the safe operation of the air conditioning system at Hamilton House particularly in relation to Covid-19. At item 3.2 the addition of the 'the Council may at its discretion grant discretionary leave should circumstances warrant'. This amendment would be referred to the Personnel Committee for comment and this policy would be considered again by

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this sub-committee at the next meeting subject to receipt of the Personnel Committee's comments.

17.2C Data Protection Policy - the following items were agreed to amendment or further exploration by the Clerk; 1.2 to be amended to include the words 'or prevailing data protection legislation'. For section 3.0 the wording to be amended to clarify that for the purposes of this policy it does not cover commercial confidentiality or corporate entities and is for individuals only. 3.3 clarity over the wording 'living individuals' as the data of deceased individuals can still be protected if it can be used to identify living individuals. Cllr Pearce also asked for a typographical error of repeat text to be corrected. 5.6 regarding timely processing needs clarification and could be renamed 'retention of personal data'. All mentions of the safety and security of data need to be amended to confirm that the Council works with an external provider as the current policy implies that the Council is the IT provider. It was agreed (one abstention) that Cllr Pearce would submit his comments in writing, the policy would be amended and be presented to the next meeting for final approval.

17.2D Data Retention Policy - it was agreed to amend item 1.4 to read 'offered to a repository agreed by the Council'. Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Barnard and agreed with two votes against.

17.2E Representation of Outside Bodies Protocol - it was proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Coleby and agreed (one abstention) that this item would be deferred pending the review by Full Council at the November meeting.

17.3 Youth Engagement and Community Engagement policies - it was noted that these were being drafted by Officers and it was agreed the first draft would be presented to the AID Committee with further consideration by this sub-committee as necessary.

Proposed by Cllr Pearce, seconded by Cllr Green and agreed.

At 14.48 Cllr Frost left the meeting.

18. Review of the Town Council's Financial Regulation, including procurement, contracts, preferred supplier arrangements and climate emergency issues, and recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee

The Finance and Governance Committee had reviewed the Financial Regulations in relation to procurement and the Deputy Clerk detailed the proposed changes for procurement thresholds. Cllr Pearce proposed the following additional changes to the Financial Regulations:

1.7 the last sentence the word 'may' be added to the wording 'bring office into disrepute'.

3.1 Cllr Pearce asked if each committee does have a three year forecast. It was agreed to add the words 'where appropriate' to this sentence.

5.11 Passwords and PINS - the Clerk would be asked if these regulation has been adhered. Where there is reference to security of storage of data, a statement should be added that the Council periodically reviews arrangements for storage of data.

Where there is mention of senior officers having regular performance checks this should be amended to reflect that all officers have these checks.

6.13 Cllr Green had asked for clarity about where the offsite storage of data was and if this was 'cloud' based and this needed confirmation.

At 15.00 Cllr Frost returned to the meeting.

At 15.00 Cllr Hardie left the meeting

Preferred supplier arrangements were complex and not included in the model Financial Regulations. It was agreed that Cllrs Pearce, Green and Coleby work with the Clerk to explore this item further.

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Climate emergency issues - members did not comment on this element.
At 15.10 Cllr Frost returned to the meeting

19. Consideration of processes for review of committee structures, Standing Orders and Terms of Reference in order to make recommendations for improving work in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Coleby to request explicit approval from the Finance and Governance Committee to carry out of review of committee structure, (including working groups and sub-committees) Standing Orders and Terms of References . This review would happen at a January meeting and all Councillors would be asked to submit their comments on Committee structure ahead of this meeting. This was unanimously agreed.

20. Date of the next meeting and meeting schedule for 2020 - 2021

Given the number of policies to be reviewed, it was agreed the sub-committee would meet on a monthly basis on the third Wednesday of the month to ensure fulfilment of the policy review ahead of the Annual General Meeting. The date of the next meeting was therefore agreed as 14:00 on 21 October 2020.

21. Items for the next agenda and close

As per the policy review schedule.

22. Resolution to close the meeting to the public

The Chair thanked those who had been viewing the meeting via live stream. There were no confidential matters for consideration and the Chair closed the meeting at 15:28.

Signed: 

16 June 2021