

**Lowestoft Town Council**  
**Meeting of the Personnel Committee**  
**First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE**  
**10:00 on 1 May 2025**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome (Chair), Andy Pearce, Bernadette Rappensberger, Nick Webb (Deputy Chair) and Elise Youngman

**In Attendance:** Sarah Foote (Acting Town Clerk) and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk and Planning Assistant)

**155. Welcome**

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

**156. To receive and consider approval of apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Graham Parker and Keith Patience with reasons provided. Cllr Jones proposed approval; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.  
Cllr Connor Blowers was absent with no apologies received.

**157. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

157.1. To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests and declarations of bias and pre-determination from Councillors on items on the agenda – There were no declarations.

157.2. To consider written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – No written requests for dispensations had been received.

**158. To consider the draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 3 April 2025**

Cllr Brooks proposed approval of the draft minutes; seconded by Cllr Begum; ten votes in favour and one abstention.

The Acting Town Clerk was progressing the confidential note and the confidential note taken by the Councillors would also be submitted.

**159. Public forum**

An opportunity for the public to make comments on any matters on this agenda, and to consider any advance comments from the public – No advance comments had been received and no members of the public were in attendance.

**160. To monitor expenditure from the staffing contingency budget**

There was no update to provide on expenditure.

**161. To consider joining a Cycle to Work Scheme, as an employee benefit**

Cllr Pearce proposed to in-principle support implementation of the scheme with clarification to be sought on whether there was an assisted purchase model and, if the employee left employment whilst payments were still being deducted, would there be an option for the employee to continue payments on the original terms to acquire ownership, or if Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) would be compelled to implement a surcharge; seconded by Cllr Brooks.

Cllr Brooks withdrew her seconding of the proposal due to queries with the scheme requiring use of Government selected providers.

Cllr Coleby seconded the proposal on the basis the item would be returned to the Committee

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with the answers requested. A vote was held with all in favour.

**162. To consider the revised draft Complaints Procedure and make any recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee**

It was suggested LTC define what is recognised as a complaint, which would be treated in accordance with this procedure, otherwise the communication would be treated as regular correspondence.

An issue was raised with the procedure as there were no internal mechanisms for dealing with complaints made by a member of public against a Councillor, and any complaints made by Councillors against officers resulted in the complainant not being involved in any initial discussions in the process. It was suggested that if a Councillor makes a complaint, it should be initially dealt with verbally, rather than via emails with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair of Personnel. Furthermore, an invitation should be sent to the complainant to meet with members of the Personnel Committee and the member of staff whom the complaint was raised about to seek a resolution.

It was noted the majority of complaints captured by this policy would be complaints from the public against the corporate body of LTC.

A query was raised regarding section 3.2 on appeals and the responsibility of the clerk to plan the appeal and how this would be dealt if the original complaint concerned the clerk.

It was queried if data could be captured on the number of complaints. The Acting Town Clerk noted a log of complaints was maintained and most related to assets or incidents at assets and queried which Committee should have oversight of such complaints as it would not be within the remit of this Committee.

Cllr Pearce noted the policy currently allowed for a meeting to be requested by either party at any phase of the complaint process. It was requested this be checked as other members were not able to identify this in the procedure.

Regarding the recording of complaints, a suggestion was made for all complaints received to be logged, even if it concerned the responsibility of a different authority.

Cllr Pearce proposed a recommendation be made to the Finance and Governance Committee to consider and take forward the staff recommendations and Councillor contributions and ask Full Council to agree on a formal definition of complaint and have that definition built into the policy. Furthermore, at each stage of process the escalation option must be communicated to the complainant. There should also be an agreement on a procedure on dealing with complaints based on false premises or related to another authority, ensuring that the complaint was still logged. Cllr Murray seconded the proposal.

Cllr Pearce amended the proposal to include a request to the Finance and Governance Committee to determine which LTC body would have ownership of monitoring complaints, be it Finance and Governance or Full Council; Cllr Murray seconded the amended proposal; ten votes in favour and one vote against.

**163. To consider the following regarding recruitment:**

163.1. An update on the Town Hall Heritage Apprentice (confidential) – To be discussed in

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confidential session.

**164. To consider the following regarding staffing:**

164.1. To receive a recommendation from the Working Group on organisational structure and job profiles (confidential) – To be discussed in confidential session.

164.2. Staff terms and conditions (confidential) – To be discussed in confidential session.

**165. Date of the next meeting**

Thursday 5 June 2025 – 10:00 (TBC).

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

None requested.

**167. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely any legal issues or employment matters relating to items on this agenda, including the following:**

167.1. Any employment matters relating to items on this agenda, including those above as required – Cllr Coleby proposed the meeting be moved into confidential session; seconded by Cllr Webb; all in favour.

*The Chair closed the meeting to the public and moved into confidential session at 11:02*

*Cllr Brooks temporarily left the chamber at 11:03*

163.1. An update on the Town Hall Heritage Apprentice (confidential) – A confidential update was provided.

It was requested there be consideration of the Safeguarding policy to reflect the potential for employees or apprentices who are minors or vulnerable adults and how this should be handled by LTC.

*Cllr Brooks returned to the chamber at 11:05*

**162. To consider the revised draft Complaints Procedure and make any recommendations to the Finance and Governance Committee**

Cllr Pearce noted that under the current complaints procedure (2.1i) at any time in the process further information may be required and the complainant may be requested to attend a meeting, therefore this should be amended so either party can request a meeting.

164.2. Staff terms and conditions (confidential) – There were some inconsistencies with working groups as some requested a clerk attend and taken notes of their meetings whilst others did not have clerks attend. It was requested the Committee clarify if they wished to make it a requirement that an officer or consultant attend all working group meetings.

Cllr Coleby proposed that working groups as a rule do not have a clerk in attendance to take notes, but if a business case can be made for why a clerk is needed, then it would be submitted to the Acting Town Clerk for consideration; seconded by Cllr Pearce; all in favour.

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164.1. To receive a recommendation from the Working Group on organisational structure and job profiles (confidential)

*The Acting Town Clerk and Committee Clerk left the meeting at 11:25 for consideration of item 164.1*

Signed:  
3 July 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'L' shape followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.