

Lowestoft Town Council
Meeting of the Personnel Committee
First Floor, Hamilton House, Battery Green Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1DE
10:00 on 5 June 2025

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Wendy Brooks, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome (Chair), Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, Bernie 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

1. Welcome

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

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

3. Declarations of Interests and dispensations

- 3.1. 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 none.
- 3.2. Written requests for dispensations for interests and note dispensations granted – There were none.

4. The draft minutes and confidential note of the meeting on 1 May 2025, and the confidential note of the meeting on 3 April 2025

With the transition to the new website taking, it was understood these were to be circulated to members instead. It was agreed to defer the minutes and confidential notes to the next meeting.

Cllr Begum arrived 10:04

The agenda had been circulated via email as normal.

5. Public forum

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

6. Committee arrangements:

- 6.1. Membership of the Personnel Committee – Cllrs Sonia Barker, Nasima Begum, Connor Blowers, Wendy Brooks, Neil Coleby, Jen Jones, John Murray, Christian Newsome (Chair), Graham Parker, Keith Patience, Andy Pearce, Bernie Rappensberger, Nick Webb and Elise Youngman. Cllr Pearce proposed to accept the membership; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.
- 6.2. Appointing the Deputy Chair of the Personnel Committee – Cllr Parker nominated Cllr Webb; seconded by Cllr Jones. Cllr Brooks nominated Cllr Murray, however Cllr Murray did not accept the nomination. The vote was taken to appoint Cllr Webb as the Deputy Chair. Eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.
- 6.3. Review and adoption of the Terms of Reference – General points regarding wording and formatting had been raised by the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee when it reviewed its own Terms of Reference. These points were relevant to other Committees and reflected pre-existing Council decisions. Cllr Pearce proposed to adopt the Terms of Reference, subject to relevant amendments being applied; seconded by Cllr Barker; all in

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favour.

- 6.4. Agreeing the meeting schedule – Cllr Pearce proposed to retain the current meeting schedule; seconded by Cllr Newsome; all in favour.
- 6.5. Reviewing the delegations of the Personnel Committee – The delegations were set out in the Terms of Reference, and included the Committee’s financial delegation. Cllr Pearce proposed to approve the delegations as per the Terms of Reference; seconded by Cllr Rappensberger; all in favour.
- 6.6. Noting the Personnel Committee’s responsibilities with regard to reviewing the Risk Register and considering the relevant risks and ensuring implementation of the control measures – This item was to note for this meeting, however there would be a future agenda item to review the risks and controls, as per the Risk Register adopted by Full Council. Cllr Pearce proposed for an item to be added to the next agenda to begin to review the impact of the risks, and for this and the control measures to be kept under regular review (at least quarterly); seconded by Cllr Barker; all in favour.

7. Monitoring expenditure from the staffing contingency budget

There had been no expenditure.

8. Receiving further information on joining a Cycle to Work Scheme, as an employee benefit

A meeting paper had been provided to the last meeting, and the Committee had requested further information. The Town Council could not run its own scheme, as this would not provide a tax benefit to employees. Instead, the Council would have to consider adopting a Government scheme, of which a local supplier was a member. It was clarified that it would be an assisted purchase scheme, not a loan. This would allow both the employee and employer to obtain tax benefits, therefore the Town Council could not run its own scheme. Employees could not use their own funds towards the cost of goods, but this did not preclude the employer from purchasing additional equipment. Should an employee using the scheme leave the Town Council’s employment, the final balance of the bicycle would be deducted from their final pay. Cllr Pearce proposed for the additional information to be circulated, and an item added to the next agenda to consider whether or not to adopt the scheme; seconded by Cllr Brooks; all in favour.

9. Recruitment:

- 9.1. An update on the Town Hall Heritage Apprentice (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 9.2. The recruitment timeline for the Town Hall Manager (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

10. Staffing:

- 10.1. Organisational structure, job profiles and salary banding (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 10.2. Any items relating to staff terms and conditions (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.
- 10.3. Agreeing a mechanism and attaching deadline for the Personnel Committee and staff separately to provide input to the consultant regarding the personnel-related elements of the draft Business Plan (confidential) – To be considered during the confidential session.

11. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 3 July 2025 – 10:00 (TBC). This date had been confirmed with the approval of the meeting schedule.

12. Items for the next agenda and close

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Members were advised to send any requests to the office.

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

13. Resolution to close the meeting to the public:

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

9.1. An update on the Town Hall Heritage Apprentice (confidential) – The advertisement was still live and officers were seeking other avenues to promote the opportunity.

9.2. The recruitment timeline for the Town Hall Manager (confidential) – The benefits of bringing forward the recruitment timeline were considered. Cllr Murray proposed in-principle approval to bring forward the recruitment of the Town Hall Manager, and to ask the Finance and Governance Committee and Town Hall Project Committee to work up the detail and work out the contingency, once there is a proposed date for recruitment. Cllr Pearce seconded the proposal. It was requested that the Acting Town Clerk and Town Hall Project Manager provide a briefing paper and some proposed dates to the Finance and Governance and Town Hall Project Committees. There was not yet a salary benchmark or full scope for the Town Hall Manager role. Cllr Murray amended his proposal for this to be considered by the relevant Committees. The vote was taken and all Councillors voted in favour.

10.3. Agreeing a mechanism and attaching deadline for the Personnel Committee and staff separately to provide input to the consultant regarding the personnel-related elements of the draft Business Plan (confidential) – Detail had been circulated via email and paper copies were also distributed during the meeting. A draft business plan was being prepared, including an element relating to staffing. A Working Group of Councillors was also separately looking at another element of work relating to staff. It was considered there should be appropriate engagement between Councillors and OPR Consulting to ensure they were not working at cross purposes.

Cllr Jones temporarily left the meeting 10:57

Cllr Pearce proposed requesting a cut-off date from OPR Consulting, for both Councillors and staff to feed in comments, in preparation for the workshop. It was explained there was no expectation of pre-preparation for the workshop on 26 June, as it was intended to be an open session to think about the Town Council's objectives over the coming years. A second workshop had been proposed if required, and a separate personnel workshop could be run with OPR Consulting if required. It was not intended for the workshop on 26 June to be taken up by any particular issue.

Cllr Jones returned 11:00

It was considered there should be a mechanism of appropriate reporting between the two pieces of work. Cllr Pearce proposed for an appropriate mechanism of input to be put into place, and for OPR Consulting to give a deadline date for feeding into the business plan; seconded by Cllr Brooks; eleven Councillors voted in favour; one Councillor abstained from the vote.

The Senior Committee and Project Clerk left the meeting 11:10 for the consideration of the remaining agenda items

Signed:

3 July 2025

