



Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,
Marine Road
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 5AF

www.morecambe.gov.uk



Minutes of the Meeting of Morecambe Town Council's Full Council Meeting held at Morecambe Town Hall at 7pm on the third day of November 2022

Attendance Record

Councillors: C Matthews, P Anderton, V Boyd-Power, W Cowley, I Clift, D Whitaker, M Pattison, P Clarke, G Dennison, J Ashworth, A Ashworth, J Pilling, P Forster, G Blaikie, C Pilling, B Jackson, L Stansfield.

Officers: Luke Trevaskis (Chief Officer)

Press: One members of the press.

Public: No members of the public.

Minute 20448

Apologies

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs J Bates, T Heath, J Goodwin, P Hart, R Dennison, A Balcer, M Balcer, L Dagdeviren.

Minute 20449

Declarations of Interests

Cllr M Pattison noted membership of Lancashire County Council that could give rise to a non-pecuniary interest in agenda Item 13 'Weeding'. Cllr M Pattison also noted membership of Lancaster City Council.

Cllr G Blaikie noted membership of Lancaster City Council.

Minute 20450

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Minute 20451

Public Participation

None.

Minute 20452

Committees

The Council unanimously resolved to approve the membership of Cllr Bill Jackson to the Grants Committee - approving a committee membership of seven, including Cllrs J Pilling, L Stansfield, P Clarke, D Whitaker, V Boyd-Power, and B Jackson.

The Council unanimously approved the amends to the Personnel Committee's Terms of Reference.

Minute 20453

Local Council Award Scheme

The Council noted its application had been independently assessed and Morecambe Town Council had been recognised for its exceptional high standards in transparency, governance and community impact, becoming successfully accredited as the first parish and town council in Lancashire to be recognised as a Quality Gold Council.

This accolade puts the Council on a firm footing for future aspirations - instilling further trust and confidence amongst residents and stakeholders in the authority's ability to deliver for the Morecambe community.

Members expressed thanks to the Chief Officer for supporting the Council over recent years.

Minute 20454

Neighbourhood Plan

The Council received an update regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and noted officers were finding difficulty in moving this forward with the current resource of the council.

So far, Morecambe Town Council had previously received grants totalling £8,933.00 and completed the below work on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Conception and Evidence Gathering
- Baseline Assessment
- Finalisation of Vision and Objectives
- Undertaking and Review of Business Survey
- Identification and Review of Proposed Green Space
- Urban Design Analysis
- Review and Revision of Policies
- Community Workshop

There are seven key stages left to complete the Neighbourhood Plan as outlined below.

1) Review and Revisit draft Vision and Objectives

The draft prepared as of December 2020 should be updated subject to comments from the Town Council and reflecting changes to the review of the Local Plan which may be addressing some of the ideas at the higher level.

2) Prepare draft Policy Headlines

It is suggested to use the vision and objectives as a structure to prepare and present a set of policy ideas which will draw upon earlier drafts of the Plan and wider analysis undertaken, as well as the review of the Local Plan. This would be subject to review with the Council.

To help inform and develop policies in the Plan it is suggested to apply for the Housing Needs Assessment package available through the Locality Technical Support programme. This would help support policies in the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of housing type and mix, and subject to discussion with Locality and their advisors, could potentially be used to explore wider issues previously identified in respect of matters such as second homes.

3) Informal Consultation on Policy Headlines

It is suggested that an informal round of consultation takes place at this stage. The purpose of this will be to ratify the direction of the Plan and seek input on policies, allowing the planning consultants to consider feedback and potential changes to policy areas prior to the Plan being drafted.

It is assumed that the Town Council will lead on production of material at this stage, the organisation and facilitation of any events, as well as summarising feedback. The consultants have allowed some time at this stage to provide advice on the nature and form of consultation.

4) Prepare the draft Plan

A draft Plan will be prepared at this stage, pulling together earlier work and using the evidence to support and justify policies and any non-land-use projects and aspirations included within the Plan. The Plan will be drafted for discussion with the Council before being updated and shared with Lancaster City Council. The purpose of this will be twofold: (1) to inform the Screening of the Plan for SEA purposes, and (2) to seek feedback and input to the Plan such that it can be updated ahead of the formal consultation stage.

5) SEA and HRA Screening

As the 'competent authority' it is for Lancaster City Council to screen the Plan for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). We anticipate that the Plan will be 'screened out', meaning SEA and Appropriate Assessment (under HRA) is not required. If it is we will discuss potential scenarios, which may include expanding the scope to prepare such an assessment, or applying for support through the Locality programme to prepare this. In the event that the Plan is 'screened out', it is considered best practice (and, indeed, the City Council may recommend this in any event) that a 'high-level' sustainability appraisal of the Plan is carried out. We have allowed for this within the production of the submission documents (see Stage 7 below).

The Screening will involve a period of consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England for a minimum of five weeks. This will be undertaken by Lancaster City Council. During this stage we will liaise with the City Council, review the outcomes of the Screening, and make amendments to the draft Plan as necessary.

6) Formal Consultation

Following the Screening decision and any amendments to the draft plan a formal consultation period will need to be organised. This is known as the Regulation 14 stage.

As per the informal consultation outlined above, it is suggested that the Town Council lead on this in order to reduce the cost of consultancy fees.

7) Prepare Submission Material

Following the formal consultation the planning consultants will make any agreed changes to the Plan as appropriate. They will also prepare the Basic Conditions Statement. As part of this, a 'high level' sustainability appraisal will be prepared, showing how the Plan responds to the sustainability objectives formed to test the Local Plan.

It is suggested that the Council prepare the Consultation Statement that forms part of the submission documents as a means to help 'personalise' the Plan. The planning consultants can provide examples of similar statements prepared elsewhere that will help inform the structure and content.

It is anticipated that stages 1-2 will be undertaken between October-December 2022, stage 3 undertaken in December-January 2023, and stage 4 undertaken in March-April.

Due to the elections of 2023, it is unlikely that the screening, consultation and submission will be able to be undertaken in April-May. However, it is anticipated that these stages will be completed by June-July 2023.

The Council submitted an application to Locality for a grant to undertake the work required this financial year and has received confirmation of an award of £5,063.00.

Minute 20455

Peer Challenge

The Council noted Morecambe Town Council has been selected by NALC to benefit from a peer challenge scheme undertaken with the Local Government Association, offering specific guidance, mentoring and advisory reports to support the Council as it develops.

The Council was pleased to hear it was only the fourth parish and town council to be offered such an opportunity nationally, and it was unanimously resolved to accept participation of the scheme.

Minute 20456

Training Centre

The Council resolved for officers to pursue the concept of offering training opportunities in 2023-2024.

The Council approved to deliver its own internal training provision for new employees, and resolved to approve that two officers undertake training to become trainers and assessors at a cost of approximately £650.00 (subject to fluctuation dependent on availability) per delegate.

Minute 20457

Biodiversity Emergency Declaration

The council declared a Biodiversity Emergency and resolved to take the biodiversity emergency by forming a working group involving councillors, residents, business owners, and experts from local education institutions to establish a plan to identify how Morecambe can deliver a measurable net biodiversity gain by 2030

Minute 20458

Finance

The council considered the internal audit report and accepted its findings.

The Council accepted the budget reports, bank reconciliations and finance summary.

The Council approved for GDPR training to be undertaken in January 2023.

The Council gave much consideration to the risks of using personal email addresses, as opposed to the Council's corporate email accounts which the Council approved to purchase.

The Council noted that some members had reported difficulty using/accessing the email accounts and that these members had requested communication via their personal email accounts.

The Council noted the advice of the Internal Auditor and were concerned that the use of private email addresses by councillors creates significant data protection risks as follows:

- a) Officers will be unable to apply the limits set in the retention policy to private emails and any attachments in the emails. Therefore, the Council will be unable to comply with the adopted retention

policy and may be keeping personal data longer than necessary which is a breach of one of the DPA 2018 principles.

- b) If a Subject Access Request (or FOI request) is received, officers will be unable to access and secure relevant information from the private email accounts to ensure all required data for the Council's response is completely and accurately captured.
- c) The risk of a data breach is increased as the Council security envelope does not extend to private councillor email accounts. If there is a personal data breach via a private email account, the Council will be unable to demonstrate to the ICO in the data breach report that the Council adequately secured and controlled the personal data held in a private email account.

The Internal Auditor has advised that members should use town council email addresses for town council business as this is the only way to mitigate the significant risks inherent in processing council data on personal email accounts.

Further, page 55 of the Joint Practitioner's Guide (the criteria to which the Council's annual audit is assessed against) details the importance of secure email systems and [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) accounts. It states "to comply with GDPR, councils should provide official email accounts for their councillors as well as for their officers". It also states "for the purposes of user management, councils should ensure that the Proper Officer can add and remove members and staff email accounts. Commercial 'dashboard', email and web systems offer centralised searching of all data contained within the system for effective compliance with GDPR Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests."

The Council resolved that officers, when communicating with members via email, should only send emails to the corporate accounts of each member.

The Council also approved to purchase a digital tablet device (up to a cost of £100 each) to assist any members experiencing difficulty in accessing their email accounts.

Minute 20459

Local Education Grant

The council resolved to contribute £1,000.00 to the local government education grant, to be coded under Grants Committee budget.

Minute 20460

Exclusion of Press and Public

The council resolved that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

Minute 20461

Frontierland

The council received an update on Lancaster City Council's call for EOI.

Minute 20462

Weeding

The council approved the updated costings that were presented and agreed for recruitment to commence for the additional full time positions - including two apprentices and one additional supervisor. The Council noted that some officer costs would need to be factored into the Council's budget for 2023-2024, however accepted that these would be negligible given the anticipated income for the public realm service in 2023-2024.