



Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,
Marine Road
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 5AF

www.morecambe.gov.uk



12 October 2023

To: **Members of Morecambe Town Council - Cllr C Ainscough, Cllr J Ainscough, Cllr D Blacow, Cllr D Bottoms, Cllr L Bradbury, Cllr T Clarke, Cllr B Cooper, Cllr F Cooper, Cllr C Cozler, Cllr R Dennison, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr K Gee, Cllr J Goodrich, Cllr J Hanson, Cllr P Hart, Cllr C Kent, Cllr D Knight, Cllr G Knight, Cllr J Livermore, Cllr M Pattison, Cllr J Pilling, Cllr J Rogerson, Cllr J Slater, Cllr M Stenneken, Cllr R Walsh, Cllr D Whitaker.**

Dear Councillor,

Dated this twelfth day of October 2023, you are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of Morecambe Town Council to be held at 19:00 on the nineteenth day of October 2023, to transact business listed in the agenda.

The meeting will be held in Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road East, Morecambe, LA4 5AF to transact business on the agenda.

Note to Councillors:

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Proper Officer of your apologies.

Note to Public:

Electors of the town wishing to address the Council are advised to notify the Proper Officer before 10am on the day of the meeting. Permission to speak at the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairman. Public participation session at a meeting shall not require response or debate and shall solely consist of matters relating to items on the agenda. If the representation made is considered outside the remit of Morecambe Town Council, electors will be referred to the principal authority or other appropriate body.

Your sincerely,

Mr Luke Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC.
Chief Executive

Agenda

1. **Apologies** - to receive apologies for absence and consider any reasons for acceptance.
(*Local Government Act 1972, Section 85*)
2. **Declarations** - to record any declared interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Proper Officer.
(*Localism Act 2011, Section 31*)
3. **Minutes** - to approve the minutes of the last meeting.
(*Local Government Act 1972, Section 111*)
4. **Public Participation** - to receive representations from electors that have requested to speak by 10am regarding a matter on the agenda.
(*Morecambe Town Council Standing Orders - Sections 1d-1l*)

Note: any electors addressing the Council must not exceed a three minute time limit.

5. IT Infrastructure

Motion:

Morecambe Town Council is currently struggling to get the basics right. The sheer amount of emails and paperwork that the Proper Officer and supporting staff have to deal with is not compatible with an efficient and modern town council. We do not have any internal supporting software to maintain the website and other social media channels efficiently, ensure exempt documents are kept secure and provide administrative support to staff preparing agendas, taking minutes etc. Other similar sized councils, such as Stroud Town Council <https://www.stroudtown.gov.uk/> are making use of digital tools to enable this work, working with software partners to achieve this.

This council recognises that if it is to embrace an ambitious agenda over the next administrative term and onwards, it needs to get the foundations correct and provide as much support to our administrative staff as possible and that it should form a small working group including any Councillors with a background in IT and administration support to explore how such software could benefit the Town Council and the costs involved. The results of this investigation will be brought to full Council as a paper before the date of the next budget Council.

Proposer: Cllr Joanne Ainscough

Seconder: Cllr John Goodrich

6. Morecambe Sparkle / Baylight

At its meeting held on 4 November 2021, Morecambe Town Council approved (in principle) an annual contribution to the Baylight / Morecambe Sparkle event of £20,000 per annum for four years from 2022 to 2025.

Initially, it was intended that the Town Council would sponsor specific illuminations that aligned to its core values - for example, displays which raised awareness about climate change.

There was also the offer that a representative of Morecambe Town Council would sit on the board of the festival.

Feedback from members last year was that the West End of Morecambe should be included in some capacity.

Whilst money has been set aside in the budget to cover this expenditure, members must approve the invoice of £20,000.00 and agree what role it wishes to play in this year's display.

7. Tourism Information Service

We propose that Morecambe Town Council convenes a meeting of the Tourist Information Service Working Group as soon as possible as approved at its meeting held on 23 February 2023. The group being tasked with exploring the feasibility of Morecambe Town Council undertaking the operation of a Tourist Information Service for Morecambe, following the announcement that Lancaster City Council is unable to fund the service beyond October 2023.

Proposed: Cllr Jim Pilling

Seconded: Cllr Paul Hart

8. Local Government Association - Peer Review

In March 2023, the Town Council welcomed the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.

The purpose of this scheme is to provide benefit to local authorities, offering guidance, mentorship, and advisory reports to support councils as they develop.

Whilst high tier authorities are regularly offered such opportunities, at the time Morecambe Town Council was only the fourth parish and town council to be offered the opportunity nationally.

The report from the review was recently published and it is a requirement of the Council to respond to the feedback ahead of an update visit which is scheduled to take place in February 2024.

The Corporate Peer Challenge delivered by the LGA is an important milestone in Morecambe Town Council's improvement journey. The report is a testament to the hard work of staff and the continued efforts of members to improve Morecambe and the services the Council provides to the town and residents.

There is recognition that whilst progress has been made, the Council is at the start of its journey with its new administration and there is much to do in coming years. For instance, the Community Action Plan needs to be revisited to become more strategic and the Council is in a position to look to capitalise on new opportunities as they arise. This is timely, as the Council also must set a new budget in the new year, and a revised strategic plan will help to inform the Council's financial position over the next three years.

Some of the highlights of the report by the LGA include:

- "The peer team witnessed a commitment to continuous improvement at MTC and were impressed by the developments that have been put in place over the last two years. As stated by an interviewee (external stakeholder), "there is hope, optimism and a sense of looking forward".
- "Commitment to developing income generating opportunities is also evident; with a programme of events and the initiation of a district-wide weeding service commissioned by Lancashire County Council, providing additional revenue for the council.
- "This is an ambitious town council with a desire to make a fundamental and long-lasting change to Morecambe. This is illustrated through the drive and progress that has been made by MTC over the last 2 years by both members and officers, demonstrated for example through improvements to governance arrangements, expansion of public realm work, enhanced engagement with the community and delivery of a successful programme of events.
- The peer team saw commitment to Morecambe from MTC members, staff and key stakeholders , including Lancaster City Council, Morecambe Business Improvement District (BID), Eden Project Morecambe and Marketing Lancashire, matched with a strong vision for Morecambe and visible leadership from the chief executive officer and chair. This has contributed to a sense of optimism for the town from the range of stakeholders that we spoke to."

The Council must publish an initial response to the key recommendations outlined in the report.

Proposed High-Level Response to the LGA's Peer Challenge Review:

The Council would like to thank the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils and peers from Frome Town Council and Falmouth Town Council.

The Council has considered the report and is encouraged by the positive feedback.

The Council acknowledges the areas of focus as highlighted within the recommendations and sets out its high-level plan to address these below.

Place Shaping

The Council agrees that it should be undertaking a key role in place-shaping for Morecambe.

Since the LGA's visit, a new Planning and Regeneration Committee has been formed, the primary responsibility of which is to play a significant role in place leadership, working with other agencies to oversee the Council's input into matters concerning the planning and regeneration of Morecambe, including projects earmarked for key sites such as Frontierland.

Mission Statement

The Council will be considering a new corporate mission statement when it revises its strategic action plan, underpinned by shared outcomes and aligned to its longer-term aims and objectives.

Staffing

The Council has already undertaken a full staffing review since the LGA's visit. Interviews have taken place for positions and new officers are due to commence employment in the coming weeks.

It is anticipated that the new staffing team will better meet the current and future ambitions of the Council, to ensure the authority can deliver against its strategic plan.

Partnerships

The Council acknowledges the benefits of becoming further embedded in local partnerships and community groups, to influence the delivery of shared outcomes. The Town Council has the capacity to adopt a role as a facilitative council, working to champion the local voice to influence the delivery of shared outcomes through other authorities such as Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council.

Communications Strategy

A PR and Marketing Officer will commence employment in the coming weeks and they will be tasked with developing a communications strategy that increases and enhances the reach of internal and external communications. This will include a review of the website and help to ensure information about the Council is updated more frequently for residents, visitors, and stakeholders alike.

Civility and Governance

As noted by the LGA, the Council became the first parish and town council in Lancashire to achieve Quality Gold accreditation through NALC's Local Council Award Scheme. This scheme assess standards in transparency, responsible governance, and exceptional community impact, with Quality Gold illustrating that the Council is not only meeting basic requirements, but is also demonstrating good practice in a range of areas.

The Council has undertaken significant work in recent years to address issues identified in historic audits, and it has improved governance - this is evidenced through the 2021-2022 internal and external audit reports that provide assurance that the Council now has a sound system of internal control.

The Council will continue to focus on its governance and procedures, with the new Finance and Governance Committee tasked with providing periodic reports and recommendations back to the Council.

Branding & Information

The Council acknowledges that it can sometimes be confusing for residents to know which of the three tiers of local government they should contact in relation to which service. The Council hopes this will be clarified as it defines its communications strategy and promotes the activities within its remit.

The Council is considering how it can develop its street-level branding for residents to access information. Some discussions have taken place regarding the Principal Authority's decision to close the Visitor Information Centre, and dialogue is ongoing to ascertain the feasibility of the Town Council supporting a similar service in the future.

Conversations have also been had regarding the Council's noticeboards throughout the town. The current noticeboards that have fallen into disrepair are being removed and the Environment Committee is currently exploring options to ensure that information can continue to be easily accessible by a wider demographic who may not have access to the Internet.

It is a key responsibility of the newly formed Planning and Regeneration Committee to play a significant role in any rebrand of Morecambe that will provide a clearer tourism offer.

Consultations

The Council has noted that it has undertaken some good online consultation to date, and accepts that more targeted offline approaches to consulting with communities should be considered in the future. It is hoped this will help to engage with hard-to-reach communities in ways that local residents can easily access and understand.

It is a key responsibility of the newly formed Planning and Regeneration Committee to hold regular meetings and consultations with the community, and engage with local stakeholders and authorities, to establish a vision for Morecambe's future.

Income

The Council will be employing a prudent approach when considering additional income generating opportunities - including applying for additional grant funding for projects and schemes. One of the key roles of the new Finance Officer will be to advise the Council on potential funding opportunities and any financial risks with undertaking service delivery. A key role of the Events Officer will also be to ensure the Council's annual events programme delivers a return to help subsidise costs.

9. Finance

- i) **2024-2025 Budget** - members should note that the Council has a statutory deadline to set its 2024-2025 precept before 1 March 2024. Lancaster City Council would prefer the Town Council's budget to be set by the end of January for administrative purposes.

In line with the Council's Financial Regulations, each committee must submit its budget bid by the end of November 2023.

The Finance and Governance Committee will meet December-January to review budgets with the RFO.

A final budget will be presented to the Council for consideration at its meeting to be held on 18 January 2024.

It should be noted that the Staffing budget will see a significant underspend in this financial year as vacancies will not have been filled until Month 8 onwards. Some additional costs will need to be coded to

this budget line as the Town Council currently does not own its own office furniture (and it has been requested that loaned equipment be returned to Lancaster City Council in the near future). New furniture and equipment will need to be purchased for the new recruits next month (including desks, chairs, cupboards, computers, and telephones etc).

- ii) **2023-2024 Budget Monitoring** - to receive a report on the Council's current budget, account summary, bank reconciliations, and end of quarter statements.

10. Personnel Committee - Terms of Reference

At a recent Personnel Committee meeting, members noted that there was a historic iteration of the Terms of Reference approved by the Council at its annual meeting.

The Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to full council the approval of the updated TORs (as originally agreed by the full Council at its meeting held on 3 November 2022).

It is recommended the Council approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Council is recommended to pass the following recommendation in relation to the following items:

"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."

12. Festival Grant Application 2023/4-012 - to consider the grant application and agree actions.

13. Grant Award Application 2023/4-01 - to consider the confidential report and agree actions.



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Personnel Committee - Morecambe Town Council - Terms of Reference Adopted - XX/XX/XX

1. Objective

This Committee is constituted in order to fulfil the obligations of Morecambe Town Council as an employer.

2. Membership

Membership shall consist of nine members, elected annually. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Morecambe Town Council may sit on any Committee in an ex-officio capacity with no voting rights.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Committee shall be elected by the membership.

A quorum shall consist of three members.

All members must receive human resources training and must ensure compliance with relevant employment law in the undertaking of all Committee business.

3. Areas of Responsibility

The Personnel Committee has the authority delegated in sub paragraphs i) to xviii) set out below.

- i) To provide advice to the Council on human resource matters relating to the Council's employees.
- ii) To periodically review the Council's policies in respect of human resources and make amendments to HR policies, performance management processes, the employee handbook;
- iii) To facilitate the appraisals of staff and annual objectives;
- iv) To facilitate annual pay increments of staff subject to contracts;
- v) To facilitate the relevant training requirements for staff;
- vi) To undertake regular reviews of the Council's staffing structure to enable the Council to continue to deliver high quality services;
- vii) To review job descriptions and revise as necessary;
- viii) To review particulars of employment as necessary;
- ix) Where appropriate, conduct any initial personnel investigations and request relevant supporting documents and evidence;
- x) Where appropriate liaise with the Council's human resources consultants to obtain advice, guidance, and information;
- xi) Appoint an independent third party, where necessary, to consider any grievance and/or disciplinary proceedings;
- xii) Power to terminate employment of employees of the Council on disciplinary grounds subject to the terms and conditions of service*;
- xiii) Power to terminate the employment of employees of the Council on capability or ill health grounds, subject to following the Council's agreed process*;
- xiv) Power to dismiss any employees on grounds of redundancy or work shortages*;
- xv) To undertake recruitment when vacancies arise and review terms of employment;
- xvi) To undertake recruitment for new positions as directed by the Council.

- xvii) Select a person or persons to represent Morecambe Town Council at appropriate meetings and/or employment tribunal proceedings.
- xviii) Power to delegate any responsibilities to the Proper Officer regarding employees under their charge.

*Decisions regarding the Head of Paid Service to be reserved for full council.

5. Meetings

The Proper Officer may call Personnel Committee meetings when necessary.

The Chairman, or two other members, of the Personnel Committee may also call meetings of the Personnel Committee.

All meetings of the Personnel Committee will be minuted.

6. Review

The terms of reference of the Personnel Committee are to be reviewed annually.