

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2025

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Councillors: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr A. Wood

Officers: N. Cleal (finance manager), A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

Absent: Cllr M. Denney

24/54/SF Public Forum

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

24/55/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr G. Caddy – holiday
Cllr M. Ellis
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness
Cllr G. Stammers – illness
Cllr D. Holland – work commitments

24/56/SF Minutes

Proposed by Cllr C. Aldridge and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024, with the above amendment, were **ADOPTED**.

24/57/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

24/58/SF Dispensations

There were none.

24/59/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 24 April 2024

Consultation by Dorset Council about the local adoption of Street Trading legislation

The town clerk confirmed the council's response to the consultation was submitted on 24 January 2025.

24/60/SF Update Report

Members noted the report.

24/61/SF Strategy and Finance Objectives

Members noted the report.

24/62/SF Internal Audit Report, Visit One 2024-25

Members were concerned about the delays in the drafting of leases by the council's solicitor and whether the service provided met the council's needs.

Officers confirmed they were intending on re-tendering these services within the next few months, as it was last tendered in 2017.

As the auditor's report referred to an al fresco licence, members discussed the current al fresco charges as some businesses on the seafront were unhappy with the price increase for 2025-26.

The town clerk outlined the background to this issue and the council's rationale for setting its charges, but said it was a policy decision so it was up to members if they wanted to review the charges.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the internal auditor's report and approve the management responses.

24/63/SF Corporate Plan 2025-30

Members acknowledged the council's achievements, as laid out in the corporate plan, and hoped it would reach a wide number of ratepayers.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr A. Wood, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the Corporate Plan 2025-30.

24/64/SF Review of Beach Hut Bookings

It was noted the council was in the process of setting up a new telephone system, which would allow multiple callers to join a queue and hopefully would be able to tell them which position there were at. The system would be Teams based and would be free, as it was part of the existing IT package with Dorset Council (DC).

Members acknowledged the beach hut booking system had flaws but the majority of customers went away happy. It was felt the new phone system would improve the system and members agreed this should be trialled before any fundamental changes were made.

24/65/SF Dorset Council's Council Plan 2024-29 and its implications for Lyme Regis Town Council

The town clerk said officers felt the plan lacked detail of what DC was going to achieve and how they were going to do it. He highlighted the key points of the plan which might affect the town council.

Members felt DC was not carrying out its routine work and maintenance in the town and were concerned this was not mentioned in the plan. It was agreed the town council needed to keep pushing for the transfer of assets DC were not able to properly manage.

The town clerk suggested a separate session was held for members to discuss the plan, DC's financial position, devolution, and the implications for the town council. A report for the next meeting of this committee was discussed.

24/66/SF Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England

Cllrs C. Aldridge, P. Evans and P. May agreed to work with the town clerk to formulate a response to the consultation on the council's behalf.

It was noted members could also respond individually.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to delegate the final response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England to the town clerk in consultation with Cllrs C. Aldridge, P. Evans and P. May.

24/67/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

The finance manager said the four sets of investments with NatWest, which had now matured, had earned £14k interest. She said officers would look to re-invest and the investment options would be discussed with the chairman and vice-chairman of this committee.

24/68/SF List of Payments

There was concern about the high electricity charges at the Marine Parade Shelters. The finance manager said the council paid the total charge, which was then re-charged to the shelters' tenants.

Proposed by Cllr P. Evans and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** approve the schedule of payments in December 2024 for the sum of £301,981.95.

24/69/SF Works to New Council Offices

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local

Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

24/70/SF Debtors' Report

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr S. Larcombe, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

24/71/SF Exempt Business

a) Works to New Council Offices

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to instruct officers to write a letter of intent prior to formal approval at Full Council on 12 February 2025 to appoint Bagwells Ltd to carry out the planned works at the council's new offices at St Michael's Business Centre on the basis of negotiated rates and at an estimated total cost of no greater than the approved budget of £100k, and to note and approve the exception to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations involved in this process.

b) Debtors' Report

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.