

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011  
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs Walton (Chairman), S Allcroft, A Symmonds, G Castle and G Watson.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk.

**FP 11/6. Apologies:** Cllrs Blakey, Gray, Grisdale, Patience, J Thompson, and Waddell.

**FP 11/7. Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Watson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item on Alnwick Community Development Trust, considered in private.

**FP 11/8. Review of the current budget position**

The receipts and payments account for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 12<sup>th</sup> September was considered. This showed that payments were £78,143 and receipts £76,395. The overall balances at 12<sup>th</sup> September were £78,936. It was noted that cemetery income was lower than anticipated and that the new tractor for the cemetery had increased the cemetery expenditure.

The Finance and Policy Committee expenditure and estimates were considered in more detail. Estimated expenditure for the year was £61,750, some £4,600 above budget; this was mainly due to expenditure on a by-election and proposals for the festival coordinator for the Olympic torch visit.

The clerk explained the need for caution when expenditure was being considered which was outside the approved budget. Reserves were projected to fall from £82,000 to between £65,000 and £60,000 by the end of March and the minimum reserve approved for the council was £50,000. Members discussed this and were mindful that a number of funding requests do come forward during the year which are worthy causes but felt that if they were outside the budget provision then the Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee should be involved in the decision which should be made at full Council. It was also suggested that the additional £500 recently given to Alnwick in Bloom, may need to be funded out of the 2011/12 grants budget.

**RECOMMENDED: That any expenditure outside a Committee budget should be referred to the Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee and a decision made at full council.**

**FP11/9. 2010/11 Accounts – Completion of Audit**

The Clerk reported that the internal and external audit had been successfully completed. The internal auditor has asked for wish to draw the council's attention to the fact that the current fidelity guarantee held by the council was less than outlined in current guidance. This was set out in an 'Issues Arising Report'. Councillors considered this report and were in agreement that the level of fidelity guarantee must be reviewed annually and that the next review would be undertaken as part of the 2012/13 budget process. The next review of the guarantee should look to cover the end of year reserve, plus half the 2012/13 precept.

**RECOMMENDED: That the Council approve and accept the 2010/11 Annual Return and agree to review the level of Fidelity Guarantee annually, as part of the budget setting process.**

**FP11/10. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The following item was considered:

**FP11/11. Alnwick Community Development Trust**

The meeting closed at 8.12pm