



**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 15th October 2015
at the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs S Allcroft, P Allcroft, D Farrar and R Roberts, B Griddale, G Mavin, S Mavin, S Patience, R Roberts and A Symmonds (Chairman).

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk and Councillor Holt.

FP 15/14 Apologies

Councillors G Castle, P Broom.

FP 15/15 Declarations of Interest

Councillor S Mavin declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item considered in private. Councillors Patience and Griddale declared pecuniary interests in the same item.

FP 15/16 Budget update 2015/16

The Town Clerk circulated the committee budget as at 15th October 2015. This showed expenditure at £39,341 and included the payments approved at the October Full Council meeting. This was reviewed line by line with the following highlighted by the Town Clerk:

ADMINISTRATION - currently at £21,307. Figure slightly below budget at this stage.

SEASONAL OPERATIVE – slightly above budget but includes training costs.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - £4k of the £6k budget spent. This is offset by a grant of £2,659.

AUDIT FEE – Has risen due to income moving into next bracket.

GENERAL – Above budget at present.

MISC/CONTINGENCY – Well below budgeted figure at present.

Councillor Farrar asked if the £10k for Neighbourhood Plan / Community action Plan delivery including the costs of a housing survey. The Town Clerk advised that it did.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget update.

FP 15/17 Draft Investment Strategy

Councillor Farrar gave an update on the Investment Strategy that had been circulated to councillors before the meeting. He advised that the group which had looked at the strategy consisted of Councillors Symmonds, Farrar, S Allcroft, P Allcroft and Humphries. He advised that the strategy was based on government guidance which is followed by most Town & Parish Councils. He explained that an order of priority had been used in the Policy based on:

- 1st Security – policy advising 80% in cash and 20% in other types of funds
- 2nd Liquidity – policy advising 4 months equivalent expenditure with instant access and a further 4 months equivalent expenditure available within 12 months.
- 3rd Yield

The Town Clerk explained that the policy also states that only organisations with A3 or above credit rating, should be used by the Town Council. He also advised that in the current year the Liquidity money that would need to be available would be £88k within 4 months and £88k within 12 months.

He also advised that some Investment Policies suggested not putting more than 50% with one financial organisation. He explained that the policy needed to state when the

investments were reviewed. He suggested this was done at the end of each financial year by the Finance & Policy committee in April then sent for approval to the Full Council meeting in May.

Councillor Roberts asked how the Financial Compensation Scheme worked with financial institutions that were part of a group. Councillor Symmonds suggested that the policy should have regard to different financial groups.

RESOLVED: To make the suggested amendments / updates then recommend to Full Council for approval.

FP 15/18 Identifying Section 106 Priorities

The Town Clerk advised that this item had been referred from Full Council. He advised that as part of the new Planning Protocols the Town Council would be asked to take part in pre application discussions where Section 106 applied. He felt it was useful for the Town Council to have a list of areas / items they would want to suggest for Section 106 monies.

He also informed councillors that, until the revised Core Strategy was in place, the Alnwick District Local Plan would apply. Councillor G Mavin advised that Councillor Castle had advised that the Core Strategy would be used to make recommendations. The Town Clerk advised that he would find out from NCC.

Councillor Farrar asked if the Core Strategy mentioned Section 106? The Town Clerk explained that the text blue in Paragraph 4, in the circulated document, were Alnwick District priorities and the list in Paragraph 8 were from the new Planning Protocols. He advise that the Alnwick Town priorities needed to be identified from this list.

Councillor Symmonds reminded councillors that at the recent planning training Councillor G Mavin had been advised that the Town Council should come up with a list of 10 priorities.

Councillor Farrar advised that there two types of Section 106 money: i) a pot of general money which NCC use and ii) items from Paragraphs 8 and 9 for specific developments.

Councillor G Mavin informed councillors that the list of 10 could include items not on the list that they felt the town needed.

Councillor S Mavin said she would love to see a skills training centre/workshop in Alnwick.

Councillor G Mavin advised that the Banks group were offering apprenticeships linked to S106.

Councillor Roberts commented that Paragraph 5 suggested that you can't just come up with random items. She asked if any guidelines had been given on the size of developments and the typical amount of S106 funding that would be available.

Councillor Farrar commented that although there had been significant development at Greensfield the only additional item in the planning approval was the provision of a road.

The Town Clerk advised that Greensfield had 160 houses and had been allocate £100k Section 106 money for sport and leisure.

Councillor Holt said that Alnwick Town Council had an advantage as there was no restriction on Section 106 funding having to be spent in the development itself.

Councillor G Mavin suggested some of the Section 106 funding could be used for shared workspaces, bus shelters or a bus station with toilets.

Councillor S Mavin suggested that the Town Council might want to categorise all the items on the list in Paragraph 8 linked to different sized developments.

The Town Clerk was concerned that if the Town Council did not define what they wanted

then they were relying on others to make the decisions.

Councillor Roberts suggested that councillors could look at the list and exclude the ones that were not relevant. She felt that councillors had sufficient information about the actual need in Alnwick for some of the items on the list.

Councillor G Mavin commented that Northumberland College had cut courses in Alnwick due to the cost of provision.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan might give ideas as to potential items for inclusion on the S106 list. He also suggested councillors feed any comments to the Town Clerk.

Councillor G Mavin suggested that the S106 spend could also be sent to all councillors with the S106 item list.

RESOLVED: To circulate the S106 inclusion list to all councillors for comments to Town Clerk by November 30th.

FP 15/19 Updates

- a) Project and Funding Officer Post - The Town Clerk advised the committee that the advert had been loaded onto the Gazette website which would be viewed through Jobs Today. It had also been put onto the Town Council website.

Councillor G Mavin asked how widely the job would be advertised? The Town Clerk advised that the Gazette website had links across the UK.

Councillor Holt asked how the interview panel was selected. The Town Clerk advised that the panel was made up of members of the Finance & Policy committee as that is where HR is covered. He also advised that the interview date had been set as November 5th at the Mechanics Institute.

- b) Community Governance Review - The Town Clerk advised that Northumberland County Council were undertaking work on this and had emailed the Town Council with a couple of questions. Consultation is due to be completed by the end of 2015.

Councillor Holt asked how long the consultation would take. The Town Clerk advised that it would take about six weeks.

RESOLVED: To receive the updates.

FP 15/20 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

FP 15/21 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEM

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press. "That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 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 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act". The item considered in private was:

Consideration of a request for financial assistance from Alnwick Young People's Association Ltd. (Gallery Youth).

Meeting closed at 9.20pm