



**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 18th August 2016
at the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), P Allcroft, P Broom, G Castle, P Holt, S Mavin, G Mavin, M Swinbank and A Symmonds

In attendance: B Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

FP 16/08 Apologies

Councillors W Grisdale, J Humphries and S Patience.

FP 16/09 Declarations of Interest

Councillor G Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.

FP 16/10 Budget update 2016/17

The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 15th August 2016. The expenditure to date was reviewed with the following highlighted by the Town Clerk:

TOWN TWINNING – Approx £2,200 remaining in the budget for Time Kommune visit.

WILLOWBURN UNIT RENT – 1st quarter rent paid to date.

Councillor Broom asked if there was an update on Town Council Office Accommodation. The Town Clerk advised that the Playhouse were keen to give the Town Council space in the building. Councillor Castle advised that plans for the building were still being drawn up.

The Town Clerk advised that there was budget under Miscellaneous that was unspent. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she had spoken to the Blue Plaque Trust about the Blue Plaque for William Davison and had been advised that the application had been successful. The cost of the Blue Plaque was £750 and she asked if councillors were supportive of allocating some of the miscellaneous budget for this.

Councillor Symmonds asked for more information about William Davison. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that William Davison had been based in Alnwick all of his working life at the location which is the old Collectable shop. He was a printer and pharmacist and had also been part of the group responsible for building the Mechanics Institute and had bought gas to Alnwick. He is buried in Alnwick Cemetery.

As part of his work as a printer he had produced the Alnwick Mercury, a newspaper that was the forerunner of the Northumberland Gazette. A display at Bailiffgate Museum commemorates his life and works examples of which are held at the Woodhorn Museum and the British Library.

Councillor G Mavin said he was very supportive of the request and felt that the Town Council should look to do something similar each year.

Councillor Castle said he agreed entirely as Davison was one of the town's principal residents and was a man of some standing.

Councillor Swinbank said he supported the request in principle but that it was very expensive. He asked if Planning permission would be needed. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that it would. She added that she would ask some of the businesses and organisations in the town if they would be prepared to offer money towards the cost.

RESOLVED: i) To recommend to Full Council that the Town Council fund the cost of the plaque not covered by contributions from local businesses and organisations; ii) To accept the budget update.

FP 16/11 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

16/04 b) Provision of a Council Van

The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave an update on the quotes she had received for a NV200 van in white. Five prices had been obtained and Bristol Street Motors have confirmed that they will reduce the price further to the Town Council. So far the prices received ranged from £9,495 to £10,253. She confirmed that the price from Bristol Street Motors was for a Euro6 Aventa 1.5d van in white.

Councillor Broom asked if the van would be fitted with a tow bar. The Town Clerk advised that this had not been asked for. Councillor Broom felt this might be useful for towing a trailer with dirty equipment or a water bowser.

Councillor G Mavin felt that the council's logo should be added. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the van would be appropriately badged and that a suitable company had been found to do this.

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that delegated authority regarding the purchase of the van had been given to himself and the Mayor.

16/04 c) Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was any update regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk advised that the text had been amended and the document updated. He advised that the next step was to be given a date for the referendum.

FP 16/12 Updates on:

a) Housing Need Survey

The Town Clerk advised that he had received the Housing Needs Survey Report. There had been a 21.1% return rate (847 replies) with a sampling error of +/- 3% which was within tolerance levels. He advised that a meeting would be arranged for early September to go through the findings. He added that an initial look at the report it had identified that the level of affordable housing needed in Alnwick was not as high as identified in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Swinbank asked how the results of the Housing Needs Survey would be used in relation to Planning Applications. The Town Clerk advised that it would be taken into account. Councillor Castle advised it would be used as statutory guidance within planning.

The Town Clerk suggested that he asked the consultants to make a presentation to Full Council.

Councillor G Mavin asked how long the Housing Needs Survey would be valid. Councillor Castle advised that it would need to be updated after a few years.

b) Future CCTV provision in Alnwick

The Town Clerk reported that a survey with the police had taken place around Alnwick resulting in the location list for CCTV cameras being revised. He also advised that a meeting had taken place with the contractor replacing the CCTV system in Berwick who had provided a report. He reported that the images from the current cameras are transmitted to the NCC building in Fenkle Street then onto the Police Station.

The report had suggested PTZ (Pan, Tilt and Zoom) Cameras were used but that some fixed cameras were included in the new system. As a guide the cost of the control equipment at the police station, including colour monitor and keyboard, would be around £4,000, the fixed cameras around £500 and the PTZ cameras around £1,000 each.

He reported that AGS, the company doing the Berwick upgrade, were also doing an update for Arriva so this would not be covered in the Town Council scheme but would be recorded at the police station.

He reminded councillors that the original system was that five cameras would be provided and the proposed system would have a further two cameras covering car parks and the Hotspur Statue which is currently covered by a camera in The Centre at Fenkle Street.

Councillor G Mavin asked where NCC would put their deployable cameras in Alnwick. The Town Clerk advised that NCC cameras were not including in the proposed CCTV scheme. He added that the Town Council would take advice from the police on issue locations around the town.

Councillor G Mavin thought it was not a cheap solution to get suitable cover.

Councillor Symmonds endorsed the need for the Town Council to get the best system they can get.

Councillor Broom asked if additional budget could be put in place for 2017/18 on top of the £15k allocated in 2016/17.

Councillor G Mavin commented that there was budget allocated for the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Broom asked if the police would put a limit of the number of cameras they would monitor. He thought there might be some businesses in the town who might give money towards the new system. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council would speak to a number of businesses and organisations including the Chamber of Trade and Pubwatch.

c) Economic Development Activities

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting had taken place between Arch and Town Council officers and Councillors to discuss Economic Development in Alnwick. Since the meeting it had been advised that the European Referendum had resulted in the Arch EU funded business support programme being suspended.

He advised that Arch were providing a database of businesses in Alnwick and Denwick which the Town Council would send a business questionnaire to.

Councillor G Mavin explained that meetings were being set up to talk to some of the larger employers in Alnwick about economic development. He advised that the Chamber of Trade were supportive of the proposal. He added that one of the area covered on the business questionnaire was offering skills enhancement programmes and presentations from external organisations delivered in Alnwick.

Councillor Broom advised that not all businesses were on the list as many people were self-employed.

Councillor G Mavin advised that a press release would be prepared for the Gazette to encourage businesses to contact the Town Council.

Councillor Broom recommended using the local accountants to distribute some of the questionnaires. Councillor G Mavin advised that this would be investigated.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

d) Town Twinning Visit – August 2016

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that Civic Party from Time Kommune were arriving on Wednesday 24th August and leaving on Saturday 27th August.

She took councillors through the programme prepared for the party which included a Civic Reception on Thursday August 25th for the Civic Party, the Friends of Alnwick with

their Alnwick hosts and other guests including Councillor Alan Sambrook, Civic Head of NCC and the Vice Norwegian Consul. She added that engraved shot glasses had been purchased to issue to guests.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

FP 16/13 Section 106 priorities

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that in November 2015 an email had been circulated to councillor for potential areas for Section 106 funds. NCC had suggested that the Town Council did this to enable links to any development sites.

He advised that there were several large developments in the future which would attract Section 106 money so it would be sensible to review these lists again. He advised that lists had been received from five councillors and that ideas needed to be formulated for any Section 106 money.

Councillor G Mavin asked if a predisposed list needed to be produced or whether each development could be looked at in turn. The Town Clerk explained that sometimes the Town Council did not get much time to respond to requested from NCC.

Councillor S Allcroft asked if the Section 106 money needed to be spent on the development site. The Town Clerk advised that it didn't.

Councillor Swinbank asked if an NCC Officer could be asked to come and talk to the Town Council and included an idea of their timescales for responses. He felt that the Town Council needed a better idea of what they wanted from any Section 106 money.

The Town Clerk gave the example of the Greensfield site which allocated £100k into Section 106 for Sports & Recreation.

Councillor G Mavin said that Section 106 money had used for Sports & Recreation as the default for Alnwick District Council was for Sports & Recreation facilities.

Councillor S Allcroft thought it would be useful to hear from NCC Planning Officer about Section 106 money.

Councillor Castle felt a briefing would be very useful for all Town Councillors to hear. He also felt that flexibility was useful.

Councillor Symmonds supported Councillor Castle's comments. He also reminded councillors that the local doctors had advised about the stretch in NHS resources with the increase in the number of new houses in Alnwick.

Councillor Holt felt that this needed to be watched carefully to ensure that everyone benefitted from any potential Section 106 money and that communication was needed between the Town Council, the developers and NCC.

RESOLVED: To ask NCC Planning Officer to make a presentation at a Full Council meeting.

FP 16/14 Approach to future budgets

The Town Clerk advised councillors that to input into the review of future NCC budgets a list of non-statutory NCC services could be prepared against the relevant budget headings. He thought that input from NCC was needed to help define the list which would need to be ready in 12 months' time when the Town Council prepared its budget for 2017/18.

Councillor Symmonds hoped that the Town Council did not get capped on its precept and that the Town Council might want to take a strategic view on the precept for 2017/18. He also felt that some preparatory budgeting could be done.

The Town Clerk advise that NCC had already asked the Town Council about some items including the MUGA (Multi User Games Area) and the Zip Wire at Alnwick North.

Councillor Holt felt it would be helpful to know if there were any other items which the Town Council might potentially take over from NCC.

Councillor Castle advised that with an election coming up next year the political future was unknown. He added that there had been some suggestion about devolution to local councils but that nothing could be done until the new County Council was in place.

Councillor S Allcroft asked how the Town Council's precept compared to other Town Councils. The Town Clerk advised that it was about average but that many of the other town councils did not run a cemetery. He added that Berwick Town Council were considering recruiting a part time Tourism Officer.

Councillor S Allcroft thought if Town Council officers produced a list of the non-statutory services this would be a good starting point for discussions.

Councillor G Mavin felt this was sensible.

Councillor Symmonds commented that the Town Council need to be think carefully about what they take on.

Councillor Swinbank felt that the Town Council needed to work out a strategy for agreeing their priorities.

The Town Clerk advised that he would contact NCC to have an initial discussion.

RESOLVED: To contact NCC to discuss non-statutory services provided by the County Council in Alnwick.

FP 16/15 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Broom asked if a leaf blower could be purchased for use in the Cemetery and in the Town. The Town Clerk advised that this could be discussed by the Cemetery / Recreation & Amenities Committees.

Meeting closed at 8.43pm