



**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 16th February 2017
at the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), P Allcroft, J Humphries, G Mavin, S Mavin, P Broom, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

FP 16/39 Apologies

Councillors G Castle, W Grisdale and S Patience.

FP 16/40 Declarations of Interest

None.

FP 16/41 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

None.

FP 16/42 Budget update 2016/17

The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 14th February 2017. The expenditure to-date was reviewed with the following highlighted:

GRANTS – expenditure currently £11,000 with end of year predicted at £11,600. Budget increased to £16,000 for 2017/18.

PROJECT & FUNDING OFFICER – expenditure £24,454.94 with end of year predicted at £30,000. Includes costs of business networking event at Arcinova.

End of year actual budget likely to be £174,750 which is over original budget figure due to council decision to purchase rather than lease a council van.

Councillor G Mavin thought that the budget figure for 2017/18 for office accommodation seemed low. The Town Clerk explained that council will be asked to carry the underspend from 2016/17 into 2017/18.

RESOLVED: To accept the budget update.

FP 16/43 Grant Applications

The Town Clerk advised that 2 grant applications had been received which had been emailed to councillors before the meeting. One was from Alnwick Gymnastics for money towards a mat costing £3,100. They had so far received £500 from NCC and had raised £2,100 themselves. Their application had been submitted by the deadline date in December but had inadvertently emailed it to the wrong email address so it had not been received.

The second grant application was from Alnwick Tri Club who were requesting £100 towards the cost of the medals for their 2017 triathlon.

Alnwick Gymnastics - Councillor S Allcroft felt that any grant awarded should be in line with the other sport grants awarded in December 2016.

Councillor Symmonds agreed with Councillor S Allcroft about giving a proportion of the grant requested.

Councillor G Mavin asked if this was a separate club or was it part of NCC. The Town Clerk advised that they were a separate club which operated from Willowburn.

Councillor Humphries asked if the lifespan of the mat was known. The Town Clerk advised that he did not have this information.

Councillor G Mavin suggested Alnwick Gymnastics Club be awarded £250. Councillors agreed.

Alnwick Tri Club – Councillor Swinbank said he was generally supported of their grant request for £100.

Councillor Symmonds agreed and added that they were a very successful local club. He also suggested reminding them of the December date for grant applications.

RESOLVED: To award £250 to Alnwick Gymnastics Club and £100 to Alnwick Tri Club.

FP 16/44 Annual Procedures

Internal Audit Check List

The Town Clerk explained the changes that had been made to the Internal Audit Checklist which had been previously circulated. An additional control under Payroll Controls had been added to check that pension payments had been calculated correctly.

RESOLVED: To approve the Internal Control Checklist.

Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

The Town Clerk took councillors through the Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit sheet which had been circulated. He advised that in 2015/16 a three day internal audit had been carried out and that no significant issues had been raised. He explained that the fee for 2016/17 would be £450. The Internal Audit would be carried out after the AGM in May.

RESOLVED: To accept the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2016/17.

Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Town Clerk advised that John Ainsworth who carried out the Internal Audit for 2015/16 was willing to do the Internal Audit for 2016/17.

RESOLVED: To accept John Ainsworth as Internal Auditor for 2016/17 and accept his fee of £450.

Internal Controls

The Town Clerk took councillor through the updated version of the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls sheet which had been circulated. He highlighted the following additions:

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| PAYMENTS | Invoices have Payment stamp added to them which was done at the request of the Internal Auditor.
Councillors to check sample of invoices which was being done from February 2017, at the request of the Internal Auditor. |
| WAGES | Pension scheme payments reported to Council which had been added for 2016/17. |
| RECORDS | Cash Book maintained - new computerised system now in place using spreadsheets for income and expenditure and update monthly.
Bank statements checked against cashbook – bank reconciliation being done quarterly and reported to Full Council. |
| INCOME | Procedures for collection of large amounts of cash – all large cash amounts are split between staff. |

STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – Being reviewed at the Constitution meeting on March 7th.

INSURANCE Policy expires in 2018. Several new items to potentially add in 2017/18.

Councillor G Mavin asked if Allotment holders could pay by Direct Debit. The Town Clerk advised that this would be looked at as part of the review of electronic banking. He explained that many people who used the Mechanics Institute did pay by BACS.

Councillor Broom asked if the Town Council had a bank card. The Town Clerk advised that they didn't.

Councillor Swinbank advised that Local Living had an electronic payment system.

RESOLVED: To accept the updated Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls dated February 2017.

Risk Management

The Town Clerk took councillors through the updated Risk Management document which had been circulated. He explained that the document was a table showing the Category, Risk, Control Factors, Actions taken in 2016/17 and Proposals for 2017/18.

He advised that the recommended document needs to be taken to Full Council meeting in March.

Updates to document for 2107/18:

Financial Budget Provision made for elections.

VAT return for 2016/17 made by end of April 2017 and to be made quarterly in 2017/18.

Investments to be reviewed annually.

Legal Section 137 year to date to be added to figure in Full Council agenda/minutes.

Updated declarations of interest to be done after elections in May.

All policies reviewed in light of increase in staffing numbers.

Operational Briefing sessions to be held and information on role of councillors to be issued to attract candidates in the election.

Councillor training to be developed in May/June 2017 including for new Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees.

Continue to develop risk assessments for all council activities and keep up to date; Develop training plans for staff training to include health & safety.

Councillor Swinbank asked if Councillor Training could include existing councillors.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the council van was inspected. The Town Clerk advised that there was a checklist which the Town Handyman completed.

Councillor G Mavin asked if something could be added regarding councillors comments requested from outside bodies and individuals. The Town Clerk advised that he would check the constitution.

Councillor Broom felt that all councillors' requests to NCC should be made through officers.

RESOLVED: To recommend the updated Risk Management document to Full Council in March for approval.

FP 16/45 Update of a) request for funding from Gallery, b) loan request from Alnwick Town Juniors

a) request for funding from Gallery

The Town Clerk advised summarised the Youth Services in Alnwick report he had prepared so far. He explained that Youth Provision for 13-19 years old in Alnwick is undertaken in the main by Northumberland Youth Services and Gallery Youth Project. Other providers include Contagious, Active Northumberland and the Barndale Youth Club. The two main providers appear to liaise and undertake some joint work.

Gallery Youth are open 5 days a week with Drop in sessions on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 6pm-8pm. Overall advertised opening at Bondgate Within are a minimum of 24.5 hrs per week. Around 350-450 individual young people access the services each year. The main issues addressed include Health, (General, Sexual and Mental); School, Education and Careers; Substance Misuse; Bullying & Exclusion from services and Relationships.

A number of years ago the project funded 4 posts (including 1 housing worker), the project now supports 2 part time project workers doing 21.5 hours each and uses 2 sessional workers doing a maximum of 6 hours each. Total staff hours are therefore 55 hrs.

Budget/Financial position - At 31st December 2016, the project had total funds of £14,432.63. There are no other reserves. Average running costs per month are £5,500 based on (Jan, Feb, March). A £3,000 grant was received in February so by the end of March it is forecast the project will have a small budget left. A number of grant applications have been made including Awards for All (£9,500), Belford Trust (£20,000 over 2 years) John Laing Fund (£5,000) and Ballinger Trust (£20,000 over 2 years – no decision likely until June).

The project has applied for Lottery Funding (Reaching Communities) for £273,476 over 3 years. They have reached stage 2 and are now completing their bid but a decision is unlikely before June 2017. The feedback was that the Phase 1 was that it was a very strong bid. Only 17% of all applications go through from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and around 80% of Phase 2 applicants are successful. However it will depend on which other bids go to the panel meeting and if Gallery are up against a projects in deprived areas of Newcastle or Middleborough success is less likely.

Other points - NCC's Youth Services have confirmed that Gallery Youth was seen as a strong project. Previously they had received £3k from NCC no decision was made yet for 2017/18.

Northumberland Youth Services

Community@NE66 delivers a number of regular projects for 13+, 2 of these are delivered in partnership with Northumberland Youth Services. These include:

Friday Night Project - Friday Night Detached Sessions based at Alnwick Market Place aim to respond to the community concern and youth need for there to be a 'pre-drinking' preventative session, in which young people could access; information, support and an alternative to risk taking behaviours. For older and more at risk young people the session delays the time in which young people start drinking thus, decreasing their intoxication during a drinking 'session'.

The organisations who actively work in partnership, and their roles, are:

- **Northumberland Youth Service** - providing resources, confidential space and a Youth Worker/Youth Work Assistant.
- **Community@NE66** - provide resources, project co-ordination and a Community a Youth Worker.

- **Mighty Oaks Coffee Van, Contagious Youth** - a team of volunteers work in groups of 3 to provide free hot drinks, a safe place and conversation with young people and vulnerable adults.
- **Gallery Youth** - delivered two sessions and were able to re-open on a Friday night with the interest from young people. This provides another safe place to which we can signpost young people.
- **Northumbria Police** - intelligence sharing for community risk assessment.

From October 2016 seven sessions have been delivered in Alnwick Market Place with the coffee van in place 5:30-8:00p.m. At 20 minute intervals Youth Workers detach to 'hot spots' for ASB and risk taking behaviour (as defined by Northumbria Police) approaching and engaging with young people.

Engagement - 66 young people whom workers have established relationships with, 115 total young people unknown to workers. Assuming 50% of the above group are repeat attenders this is an estimated 57 new contacts. Therefore, estimated total contacts is 124.

The Pop Inn - The Pop Inn is a sexual health drop in that offers; C-card, Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea testing, drug and alcohol issues, smoking cessation support and support referrals to GUM and mental health services to 13-19 year olds. The Pop Inn runs out of Alnwick Rugby Club and they are open on Monday and Friday lunch times.

One to one active listening sessions - These support young people and offer them advice during periods of time when the clients' needs are greatest. This support also involves attending meeting around the child conferences and advocating for the young person.

Girls Group - restarted in September after a break since June. Girls group is a young women lead session that facilitates informal education for 11-16 yr olds. It runs at Alnwick Community Centre on Mondays 6-7:30p.m during term time with an average attendance of 5.

Young volunteers

Offers a volunteer development programme for young people aged 13-19 and includes any supervision required by related educational courses, training and mentoring.

COUNCILLOR COMMENTS / QUESTIONS:

Councillors felt that the young people should be asked what they want in Alnwick.

Councillors asked if Gallery Youth had thought of renting out the building when they were not using it. The Town Clerk explained that the building was quite small with the upstairs including a pool table.

Councillors were totally committed to providing financial support to support Youth Services in Alnwick but were unclear at this stage as to the way this should be done and exactly what the provision should be. They were still awaiting any budget information from NCC for Youth Services in Alnwick. They also felt that, with the limited budget, they should ensure there was no duplication of services.

Some councillors felt that amalgamating the Youth Services in Alnwick may be the best way forward for the town.

Councillors asked how long the Lottery funding would be for. The Town Clerk explained that the funding would be for 3 years and, if it was given in full, Gallery Youth would need to raise £24k a year.

Councillors were concerned that there did not seem to be a plan in place should the Lottery Bid be unsuccessful. Councillors felt that subsidising Gallery Youth at £5k a month was unsustainable.

Councillors asked if the County Councillors could give any funding as they had done in the previous year. The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Castle had already allocated all his budget for 2016/17.

Councillors said that the Trustees needed to be more proactive to help resolve the situation.

Councillors asked if Youth Services was a statutory service for NCC. The Town Clerk confirmed that it was. Councillors then asked if NCC Youth Services team would be prepared to liaise to pull together youth provision in Alnwick.

RESOLVED: i) To receive the update which will be worked on further and a further report presented to the March Full Council Meeting.

b) Loan request from Alnwick Town Juniors

The Town Clerk advised that he had met with NCC, NALC and had a meeting with Peter Hatley (Alnwick Town Juniors) the following week to discuss the details of the business plan.

He reminded councillors that NCC were giving £450k and the Football Association were giving £325k towards the project costs. This left a shortfall of £190k which they had asked the Town Council to take a loan from NCC to cover.

The proposed loan would be over 15 years and the repayments would be £12,666 per year. The loan repayments would be taken out of the Town Council's precept with the 1st payment taken in April each year and the 2nd in October. He explained that the Alnwick Town Football Juniors could be asked to repay the loan to the Town Council on a quarterly basis in advance.

He added that the Duke of Northumberland had agreed to underwrite part of the cost of any deficit (up to £5,000 per annum for 10 years) and that he was happy to talk to the Town Council about the matter.

Councillor Swinbank asked what would happen if the costs overran. The Town Clerk reported that NCC had said that if this was to happen the football club should go back to them.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

FP 16/46 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

Public Meeting closed at 8.59pm

FP 16/47 PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS

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 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 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act".

The item discussed was:

Update on CCTV provision in Alnwick