



# ALNWICK TOWN COUNCIL

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: FIN 4/14/15

Chief Officer & Clerk to Council  
Bill Batey  
Tel: 01665 714922  
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10<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee will be held on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014** in the Mechanic's Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at **7.00pm** when you are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

Bill Batey  
Chief Officer & Clerk to Town Council

## **AGENDA:**

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. 2014/15 budget update
4. Council Transparency Requirements
5. Grant Application process 2014/15
6. Proposed visits to outside organisations
7. Review of Council Boundaries
8. Any Other Urgent Business.

## **Agenda item 4 Council Transparency Requirements**

DCLG have been introducing a range of measures regarding the open-ness and transparency of councils' affairs. The filming of council meetings, the noting/reporting of officer decisions and new audit arrangements are just some examples. DCLG has also been looking to introduce statutory weight to its Transparency Code. Hitherto, this has been a voluntary code, and applicable to principal authorities.

DCLG have now announced that regulations will make the Code mandatory (subject to Parliamentary approval), with effect from 7 November, and not just for principal authorities. All local councils with annual income or expenditure greater than £200k will be affected. This means that Alnwick Town Council will be required to publish information.

The first deadline for quarterly data to be published is no later than 31 December 2014 and thereafter not less than quarterly, with the data being published no later than one month after the quarter to which it relates. After the Code is issued, local authorities will be expected to publish two sets of quarterly data in 2014-15. The first set of annual data must be published no later than 2 February 2015 and thereafter not less than annually, with the data being published no later than one month after the year to which it relates.

Data which is to be published quarterly is:

- expenditure exceeding £500
- Government Procurement Card transactions and
- procurement information

Data which is to be published annually:

- grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- organisation chart
- trade union facility time
- parking account
- parking spaces
- senior salaries
- constitution
- pay multiple and
- fraud

Attached with the agenda is a copy of the Transparency Code and the Frequently asked questions and answers. **PLEASE DO NOT PRINT OFF AS BOTH DOCUMENTS ARE ABOUT 30 PAGES LONG.** I will bring relevant extracts to the meeting; we need to consider the mandatory requirements and the additional recommendations.

**Recommendation: That the Committee agrees the Council's response to the requirements, for approval at the November Council meeting.**

### **Agenda item 5**

#### **Grant Application Process 2014/15**

The Committee has the opportunity to review the grant application guidelines prior to being made available. New applications will then be considered the December meeting. A copy of the advice to applicants that was used last year and the application form, has been sent out with the agenda.

### **Agenda item 6**

#### **Proposed Visits to Outside Organisations**

To assist the discussions about different ways of filling the gap left by the former Alnwick Development Trust visits have been arranged to the Glendale Gateway Trust and Ashington Town Council to look at their approaches. Ashington Town Council have appointed their own Funding and Projects officer. The dates offered will be discussed and finalised.

### **Agenda item 7**

#### **Review of Council Boundaries**

This agenda item will look at the current parish boundary and consider the developments which are happening adjacent to it and councillors will have an opportunity to discuss possible options. A more detailed paper will be available.