

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 20th October 2016
at St James Church Rooms Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

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

In attendance: Councillor P Edge attended for item 3, W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; Steve Robson, NCC (SR), Ian Stanners, NCC (IS); Dr Michael Bullock, Arc4 (MB).

FP 16/16 Apologies

Councillors G Castle and P Holt.

FP 16/17 Declarations of Interest

None.

FP 16/18 Housing Needs Survey – presentation of results

Doctor Bullock from Arc4 gave an overview of the results of the Housing Needs Survey:

4006 households in Alnwick and Denwick.

26% affordable housing stock.

57% owner occupied.

Entry level purchase price has reduced from £130k in 2010 to £115k in 2015 meaning households need to have a combined income of £29.5k in 2015 (compared to £33.5k in 2010) to afford an entry level property.

30% of the people who responded have an income of between £15k and £36k.

Housing need in Alnwick

87 households in need of affordable housing each year with 79 available, giving an annual imbalance of 8 properties per annum.

Starter homes

Properties sold at 20% below market value. To be eligible you must be 23-40 years old and not an owner/occupier or an ex armed forces of any age.

Older people

78% prefer to stay in their own homes.

High preference for bungalows.

Downsizing: 38% wanted to stay in a property with the same number of bedrooms but with a reduction in the overall size.

Councillor questions:

Councillor Grisdale asked where the definition of affordable housing came from. MB advised that it was from the government definition.

Councillor Grisdale asked if there was any regional weighting. MB advised that there wasn't.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the survey had provided any evidence for people who may want to come and live in Alnwick. MB advised that part of the questionnaire had asked if people had moved and where from.

Councillor Patience asked if the survey provided any demographic or post code analysis. MB advised that the analysis was done geographically, then by tenure (i.e. age groups) but

that the survey analysis used representatives from all groups. He added that they had used the 2011 census as a starting point with the data in parish by parish order.

Councillor G Mavin said it was a comprehensive presentation and asked about affordable housing and income need. MB advised that this was different as some households wanted to buy and some to rent.

Councillor Humphries asked what size properties you would expect as starter homes. MB advised that these would be discounted homes and were usually houses. Steve Robson (NCC) added that discounted homes were selling well in Northumberland (Willoughby's Bank in Alnwick had affordable housing but there was none at Willowburn Park).

Councillor Grisdale said the finding about the need for bungalows was interesting but none were being built.

Councillor Patience asked if the survey had produced any evidence of homelessness. MB advised that the survey had picked up 65 households deemed homeless (i.e. in temporary accommodation).

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that NCC's Core Strategy allocated 1,100 new homes to Alnwick in the next 15 years.

Councillor S Allcroft asked when the final report would be available. MB advised that this would be sent to the Project & Funding Officer by the end of October.

FP 16/19 Budget update 2016/17

The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 17th October 2016. The expenditure to date was reviewed with the following highlighted by the Town Clerk:

INSURANCE – Council van added.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – small amount of additional spend to come.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN / COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN / OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES – invoice for housing needs survey now in.

MISC / CONTINGENCY – insurance for St Thomas's unit and new office printer and inks. St Thomas's unit – the lease is held by the Town Council who pay the insurance. The lease is with ARCH and ends in March 2017. They have indicated that a new lease will cost £3,000 per annum.

Councillor Patience asked about the cost of the new office printer. The Town Clerk explained that the cost shown covered the printer itself and a sets of inks.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Project & Funding Officer post would be reviewed during the year. The Town Clerk advised that at present the post included a 4th day for Economic Development and that this element would be reviewed as part of the Finance & Policy budget.

RESOLVED: To accept the budget update.

FP 16/20 Minutes of last meeting – matters arising not on the agenda

16/10 William Davison blue plaque

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised councillors that she had sent letters requesting financial support to several organisations and businesses and at present had £375 promised towards the cost of the plaque.

16/11 Council van

The Town Clerk advised that the council van had been purchased at a cost of £9,696.67 including boarding out. The insurance cover was £395.11 and the cost of having Town Council logos on it was £190. The Assistant to the Town Clerk circulated photographs of the new van with the logos.

16/15 Leaf blower

The Town Clerk advised that a new leafblower had been purchased.

FP 16/21 Community Forum

Councillor G Mavin reminded councillors his proposal regarding a Community Forum would be a useful way of getting input into council priorities and issues for the following year. He felt that if the forum met before Christmas it would provide input into the budget process.

Councillor Patience asked who would be invited. Councillor G Mavin advised that the document that had been circulated contained a suggested invitation list which included grant giving organisations.

Councillor Humphries said he was generally in favour but felt that a mass meeting might cause logistical problems. He felt that it might be more effective if people were brought together in smaller groups with areas of commonality.

Councillor Patience agreed that getting the community groups together was a useful suggestion it might be a bit too large to be useful. She felt that it needed to be organised and run well to be most effective. Councillor G Mavin reminded councillors that they had organised a successful volunteer fair in 2015 and that in 2016 the Town Council had updated a tourism leaflet. He felt that other people in the town would have some good ideas and that the community forum would be a way of accessing these ideas.

Councillor Broom advised that the Duke had offered land for sports facilities but that it had proved difficult to get people together to take this forward.

Councillor S Mavin said that she liked Councillor Humphries suggestion of having focused groups such as sport.

Councillor S Allcroft asked if anyone felt a working group would be useful.

Councillor Symmonds said that he had been involved in the Newbiggin forum but that they never had a full room of people. He felt it was important that people knew that their role in the community forum was advisory only and not somewhere to come with a wish list. He thought that the Terms of Reference needed to be spelt out for those invited to attend.

Councillor Grisdale suggested that the community forum could be put to one side until the Neighbourhood Plan had been to referendum.

The Town Clerk suggested that a consultation event could be organised around the Town Council's budget for 2017/18.

Councillor Humphries suggested widening the invitation to be part of the working groups to all councillors.

Councillor Patience felt that once the Neighbourhood Plan was approved the community forum would be a good way of keeping the document moving forward.

Councillor Symmonds suggested that a working group be organised to look at a one-off consultation event.

RESOLVED: To ask councillors to be part of a working group to discuss a one-off consultation event.

FP 16/22 a) Future CCTV provision in Alnwick

The Project & Funding Officer gave councillors a summary of the document which had been circulated regarding CCTV in Alnwick. He advised that several meetings had taken place to discuss options for a CCTV system which had initially indicated that PTZ (Point, Tilt & Zoom) cameras were felt the most appropriate. He had since been advised that PTZ cameras are best when the system is monitored 100% of the time as their automatic movement could miss issues that might arise. The initial cost for the CCTV system with PTZ cameras was estimated at around £21k and for the same money two or three fixed

cameras could be installed instead of one PTZ. He advised that the next step was to finalise a specification and go out and request quotes hopefully for the next Finance & Policy meeting in December.

Councillor Swinbank asked how many extra cameras the new system would have. The Project & Funding Officer advised that there would be an extra six camera locations.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Council increased the number of cameras did anyone else such as residents or businesses need to be asked for comments.

Councillor Grisdale said that as the cameras were in public areas this was not necessary.

Councillor Symmonds said that the Town Council had already agreed to install a new CCTV system in Alnwick so it would involve the public once the system was installed.

Councillor Swinbank said he would like to ask people to make comments on the location of the cameras.

Councillor S Allcroft felt that if compliance guidelines were followed then it should be fine.

Councillor Broom asked if a map could be sent showing the areas that would be covered by the new CCTV system.

Councillor S Allcroft suggested that a press release could be written about the new CCTV system. Councillor Grisdale thought it would be useful to put something on the Town Council website.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

b) Economic Development Activities

The Project & Funding Officer gave a summary of the document he had circulated. He advised that a business questionnaire had been delivered to 231 businesses in Alnwick and Denwick from the database provided by Arch.

He reported that 54 questionnaires had been returned and all had contained very favourable replies. 39 businesses said they would be interested in taking part in networking events; 25 would be interested in attending presentations on finance, grants and procurement; 19 would be interested in enhancing business skills and 17 would be interested in offering work experience or apprenticeships.

As the questionnaires were hand delivered this enabled the database records to be updated.

He explained that it was proposed to hold the first Business Networking Event on January 10th 2017 at 5.45pm for approximately two hours. Arcinova have offered to host this event at their facility in Taylor Drive which will include a 15-minute presentation by the Town Council, a 15-minute presentation by Arch on grant funding and other available support, a 20-minute tour of the Arcinova facilities followed by an hour informal networking with wine and buffet food.

He and Councillor G Mavin had held meetings with local businesses including Arcinova, Pure Fishing and Sainsbury's.

Councillor Grisdale asked if breakfast clubs had been contacted. Councillor G Mavin they hadn't been contacted. He also said that they needed to emphasise that the meetings would be held every month. He added that four or five businesses had already offered to delivery specialist sessions.

RESOLVED: To allocate £375 to fund the business event.

c) Bus Shelter Review

The Project & Funding Officer explained that the bus shelter review was being undertaken as part of the Community Action Plans from the Neighbourhood Plan. He advised that he had produced a report following consultation with local bus companies

and NCC Transport Officers. He highlighted the main actions recommended in the report:

1. To receive the bus shelter review
2. To prepare costings and specifications for new bus shelters, i) at the bus stop at the foot of Willowburn Avenue (towards the town centre), ii) at the St Oswald's/ St Paul's bus stop on the outward side of the road and iii) at the foot of Wagonway Road outside Barter Books on the same side of the road.
3. To undertake the maintenance and repair works identified in the report.

Councillor Humphries asked who's decision it was to install the new bus shelters on Taylor Drive. The Town Clerk advised that were a condition of the planning approval.

Councillor Symmonds asked if NCC would provide any funding for the new bus shelters. The Town Clerk advised that NCC did not have a budget for bus shelters but would undertake the preparatory works such as lowering kerbs.

Councillor Broom asked what type of bus shelter was proposed at St Paul's School. The Project & Funding Officer advised that it would be a cantilever type. Councillor Broom asked if the bus shelter could be set back through the school wall.

Councillor Broom reported that Arcinova had a bus shelter inside their grounds. Councillor G Mavin reported that it was a smoking shelter and that the Town Council had been offered this.

Councillor Swinbank said that Lidl could also be asked for money towards the cost of the bus stop at St Paul's School.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

FP 16/23 Section 106 priorities

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that Section 106 funding was linked to specific planning applications and that a decision was needed by the Town Council as to how to determine priorities. He added that as present these were bound by the former Alnwick District Council policies but would have a wider scope when the new NCC Core Strategy was in place.

Councillor Swinbank asked if part of the Section 106 funding from the Greensfield development had been used to build the road. The Town Clerk confirmed that he understood that it had.

Councillor G Mavin said he understood that at present, in Alnwick, Section 106 could only be used for infrastructure or sports facilities.

Councillor S Allcroft asked how this could be taken forward. The Town Clerk advised that one approach was that a list could be produced for each development site.

Councillor G Mavin thought that the sites could be looked at first then the Town Council could go to NCC to ask for any other uses for the Section 106 funding.

Councillor Symmonds felt it was important that the Town Council could influence future applications. e.g. taking on board Councillor G Mavin's comments about cul-de-sacs in new developments. Councillor Patience felt this was the remit of the County Councillors. Councillor G Mavin felt it was the responsibility of NCC's Planning Officers to provide information to developers including potential safety hazards.

RESOLVED: To draw up a list of future development sites and potential Section 106 items, for consideration on a future agenda.

FP 16/24 2016/17 Grant Application Process and application from Friends of Alnmouth Station

Councillor S Allcroft asked councillors if they were happy to use the grant criteria and form from 2015/16 which had been circulated. All councillors agreed to this.

The Town Clerk advised councillors that a grant application had been received from the Friends of Alnmouth Station. He said that the committee may want to wait to review the application at the December meeting with all the other applications. He added that it did not really meet the normal grant criteria but that a grant had been given in the past.

Councillor Patience suggested sending them the Grant Criteria and Application form which could then be reviewed in December.

RESOLVED: To update the grant application criteria and form on the Town Council website and send the Friends of Alnmouth Station an application form to complete.

FP 16/25 Any Other Urgent Business

Cycle track (Councillors Patience and Grisdale declared an interest and left the meeting)

The Town Clerk reported that he had given an update at the last Recreation & Amenities meeting and that there were three points of clarification relating to the lease:

- i. A fence needed to be erected on the right-hand side of the proposed site – this could be incorporated into the design
- ii. A fence needed to be erected alongside the footpath from Allerburn Lea (for approximately 336 metres) - this could be incorporated into the design
- iii. A compensation figure of £1,259.04 needed to be paid to the agricultural tenant. Northumberland Estates have confirmed they cannot waive this.

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the Town Council had received £1,000 from Alwick Youth Hostel for the project, which could be used towards this with the Town Council paying the remainder of the compensation. Councillors were supportive of this.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm