

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
at the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), G Castle, P Broom, B Grisdale, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds, A Waton and L Wearn.

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

**FP 18/35 Apologies**  
Councillor Humphries.

**FP 18/36 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillors Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in NCC matters.

**FP 18/37 Minutes of the last meeting - matters arising not on the agenda**  
None.

**FP 18/38 Budget update 2018/19**  
The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at February 27<sup>th</sup> 2019, advising that most of the expenditure for April would come back in 2018/19. He highlighted the following lines of expenditure:

Neighbourhood Plan – budget will be spent on more copies of the ADNP.

Town Team – this is the Town Council budget towards Town team items. The Project and Funding Officer and is researching some new maps for the town centre map cases.

Councillor Allcroft reported that some of the acrylic screens on the map cases were scratched and asked if they could be looked at.

Grants – a £300 grant cheque was received back from the Western Front Association

Willowburn Unit Rental – £1,000 paid each year to Local Living as the Town Council's part of the rent. Local Living have asked for a rent-free period for some of Quarter 3 and all of quarter 4 so this may reduce the final budget figure.

INCOME – is above budget and includes £5k towards the new bus shelter from Cussins.

Councillor Mavin felt that the Town Twinning budget for 2019/20 seemed low. The Town Clerk advised that there would be unused expenditure from 2018/19 and he would suggest that some of this is allocated to Town Twinning.

Councillor Swinbank asked about the new signage for the Bus Station. The Town Clerk advised that it was linked to the works being undertaken. The Project and Funding Officer reported that some work had been done, but that the barrier straightening and pressure washing was still to be done.

Councillor Broom asked if notice had been served on the Willowburn Unit. The Town Clerk advised that it hadn't, but that Mr Thorburn, the new owner of the old NCC Depot site, had offered a unit which is currently being refurbished.

Councillor Broom asked if the premises offered were suitable and large enough for everyone. The Town Clerk advised that it might be that only some of the organisations could use the refurbished unit. He added that it would make sense for all the organisations to be together in one place. Councillor Wearn advised that the Alnwick Music Festival would not require as much space.

**RESOLVED: To note the 2018/19 budget update.**

## FP 18/39 Grant Applications

The Town Clerk reported that there were two grant applications to be considered:

Loving Alnwick - the Town Clerk advised that following a further meeting with Loving Alnwick he was able to report on several projects:

- a) Alnwick guides (ambassador), a similar volunteer scheme to a previous one. TIC are to undertake training of volunteers. £5.00 voucher offered for a 2-hour volunteer session as a thankyou – to be spent on refreshments in participating local businesses. More money would enable more sessions to be offered.

The Town Clerk suggested that £500 to £600 would be needed.

Councillor Broom thought that if it was used for uniforms it would be supported by the Town Council. Councillor Castle suggested up to £500.

- b) Good Food Guide reprint, the Committee rejected this last year and recommended this be part funded by the Town team.
- c) Arts Project has enough funding at present – No grant needed.
- d) Planting – Further budget could go towards this.
- e) Signage – Loving Alnwick are in discussion with NCC and House of Hardy to replace/improve the signage at the Oaks Roundabout with improved branding and artwork.

Councillors agreed to support the grant application towards the Alnwick guides.

Councillor Castle felt that £5.00 didn't seem very much and may not work.

The previous scheme was very well operated. Councillor Wearn advised that £5.00 is a typical amount paid to a volunteer.

Councillor Broom asked if uniforms are being used. Could sweatshirts be purchased.

Councillor Mavin thought any grant should be to purchase tabards and sweatshirts.

Alnwick Triathlon – the Town Clerk advised they have requested £100 towards the cost of the medals for the Alnwick Triathlon.

Councillor Castle reported that there will be road closures to be paid for but that these should be able to be covered this year. He added that Alnwick Triathlon were a well-established team.

Councillor Symmonds supported the £100 grant but asked that they be reminded to apply as part of the annual grant round in December and that in future a late grant application will not be considered.

**RESOLVED: i) To give a grant of up to £500 to Loving Alnwick towards uniforms for the Alnwick guides volunteer project; ii) To give £100 to Alnwick Triathlon Club towards the cost of medals.**

## FP 18/40 Chief Officer and Town Clerk – filling the vacancy

The Town Clerk advised on the content of the vacancy information he had circulated which was based on SLCC and NALC information.

A discussion took place on the qualifications required, which is the Certificate in Local Council Administration. The advantage of having a qualified Town Clerk is that ATC can take advantage of the General Power of Competence (which replaced the Power of Wellbeing), which would help extend the amount of S137 expenditure.

Councillor Wearn reported that Town Clerks she had worked with before had the qualification and it was very useful. Councillor Waton asked if twelve months was long enough to complete. The Town clerk replied that he would take advice from NALC.

Councillor Wearn suggested that more councillors could be involved in the interview process through a smaller group meeting feeding back to the interview panel.

Councillor Patience suggested that a Finance Officer may be needed at some point.

Councillor Grisdale asked if the job could be split and felt it didn't have to be one post.

Councillor Waton said that as the Town Clerk will drive the Town Council forward he felt that if the Council did not go ahead, as suggested, then it may end up without a Town Clerk.

Councillor Symmonds supported the idea of a wider process with more people and suggested setting up several scenarios in the morning and interviews in the afternoon.

It was agreed to discuss this item further at the end of the Away Day.

**RESOLVED: To discuss further at the Away Day and finalise at the next Council meeting.**

#### **FP 18/41 CCTV Update**

The Project & Funding Officer had circulated a paper regarding adding additional cameras. He reported that Sergeant Sharon Wilmore-Greaves (SWG) had advised that a Privacy Impact Assessment form needs to be completed for a Number Plate Recognition (NPR) camera installation and moving cameras which the Town Council and the Police needed to complete.

SWG had also reported that three (NPR) cameras could be considered excessive by the Surveillance Commissioner.

The Project & Funding Officer advised that NPR cameras would reduce issues with pixilation of number plates and night-time glare

The Town Clerk thought that SWG will suggest one ANPR camera in Alnwick.

**RESOLVED: i) For Town Council Officers to speak to police about needs; ii) To give delegated authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Finance & Policy to spend up to £8k.**

Councillor Broom felt that as there were rural crime issues there may be a need to cover more exits from Alnwick.

The Project & Funding Officer reported that SWG is requesting an ANPR camera at the south end of town as there were no ANPR cameras north of Morpeth. The cost will be £4,750 and the two County Councillors have been asked for £2k each with a request of £750 from the Town Council.

Councillor Wearn stated that she was opposed to CCTV as there is no evidence that ANPR cameras work.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the location would be on the north bound slip road. The Town Clerk confirmed that it would be.

The Town Clerk advised that the £750 would be towards the camera purchase with the police paying for the ongoing maintenance.

Councillor Waton suggested that if adopted, the Town Council have a policy of asking for a report on its effectiveness.

Councillor Grisdale asked if this was a regional crime issue and if so why were the Town Council being asked for money.

**RESOLVED: To agree to a contribution of £750 towards a ANPR camera**

#### **FP18/42 Annual Procedures**

a) Internal Audit Check List

The Town Clerk explained there were no changes to the Internal Audit Checklist.

**RESOLVED: To approve the Internal Control Checklist.**

b) 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 2017/18 no significant issues had been raised. The Internal Audit would begin in March 2019 and be completed in May 2019.

**RESOLVED: To accept the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2018/19.**

c) Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Town Clerk advised that John Ainsworth who carried out the Internal Audit for the previous three audits was willing to do the Internal Audit for 2018/19.

**RESOLVED: To agree John Ainsworth as Internal Auditor for 2018/19.**

iv) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls

The Town Clerk took councillors through the updated version of the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls sheet which had been circulated.

Councillor Waton felt that in the **Records** section the word 'regularly' should be changed to 'monthly'.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updated Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls dated February 2019.**

v) Risk Management

The Town Clerk took councillors through the updated Risk Management document which had been circulated. He advised that the recommended document needs to be taken to Full Council meeting in March. He took councillors through the table including the updates for 2018/19 (red text) and the new proposals for 2019/20:

**Legal:** CCTV New Proposals for 2019/20 To review current surveillance requirements with Northumbria Police.

**Operational:** Additional Risk added: Appropriately training staff

**RESOLVED: To approve the draft Risk Management document and recommend it for approval to Full Council in March.**

#### **FP18/43 Progressing the Carbon Neutral Commitment**

The Town Clerk advised that the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the Carbon Neutral aim was to carry out a Carbon Audit. His suggestions after this had been undertaken was that a Working Group be set up to review the Carbon Audit and agree an Action Plan.

Councillor Waton suggested that the Town Council may not become carbon neutral, but it is best to mitigate.

Councillor Allcroft suggested producing an Environmental Policy after the carbon audit.

Councillor Swinbank advised he had received an email from Hexham TC about carbon audit.

Councillor Castle said that he could ask questions at the next full NCC meeting about NCC carbon neutral status.

The Working Group would be Councillors Allcroft, Broom, Castle, Waton and Wearn.

**RESOLVED: i) Officers to undertake a carbon audit; ii) To set up a Working Group (Councillors Allcroft, Broom, Castle, Waton and Wearn) to consider the audit and develop an action plan.**

**FP18/44 Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor Broom asked if the CCTV footage could be used to monitor dog fouling as it wasn't a good thing for visitors.

Councillor Swinbank asked if dog fouling was a civil offence and whether NCC Enforcement Officers could deal with it. Councillors Castle advised that NCC Enforcement Officers can deal with dog fouling and suggested that data was requested to see how many fines had been issued in Alnwick.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the public could report incidents of dog fouling.

Councillor Allcroft felt that an article on the Gazette might be useful.

Councillor Wearn reported there was always incidents of dog fouling in Greenwell Lane.

The Town Clerk advised he would ask Sergeant Wilmore-Greaves about dog fouling.

Councillor Broom suggested the Town Council could organise bags for dog owners.

Councillor Wearn asked about the new signs the Town Council had ordered for the bike track. The Town Clerk advised that the signs to the bike track from Alnmouth Road, were being provided by the developer.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm