

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 28 November 2017, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

**COUNCILLORS:** Matthew Cuthbert (Chair) Victor Bridges  
Marjorie Chambers Nicola Chambers  
Avril Chisholm Brian Gallacher  
Lynne Grimshaw Lawrence Henderson  
Kris Lavery Ken Parry  
Bob Walkinshaw Tom Wilson

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)  
Members of the Public - 0

## FGS 17/769 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Stephen Fenwick, Jim Lang, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis and Pauline Thompson.

## FGS 17/770 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no personal and prejudicial interests to disclose.

## FGS 17/771 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 31 October 2017, were agreed and signed as a true record.

## FGS 17/772 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**FGS 17/773 5. ANNUAL FUNDING SUPPORT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

**• WANSBECK VALLEY FOOD BANK (WVFB)**

The Chair reported that, further to the formal presentation from the WVFB on 31 October 2017, further discussions had taken place and information requested regarding local demands placed on the service.

The Chair reported that it was clear that the major service demand and service need came from Ashington and that the number of families using the food bank had increased year upon year. Members acknowledged this fact and commented that the future signs were not good given the expected impact of universal credit on needy families.

Members recognised that the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank continued to carry out an invaluable service in meeting real needs in the town and supplementing statutory services that had been badly affected by central government spending cuts.

**• NORTHUMBERLAND CVA**

The Chair reported that members had attended a site visit and received a detailed presentation from the organisation’s Chief Executive. Cllr Grimshaw explained that all of the financial facts and figures had been taken into consideration and also any amounts that been given by other Towns and Parishes across Northumberland.

Cllr.Grimshaw outlined that it was now clear that Ashington was the only Town Council continuing to give an annual contribution with other local council’s either commissioning or buying-in services on a project or “as and when” basis.

Members were unanimous that 2017/18 would be the last year of a general contribution and that all future funding, if so provided, would be on a commissioned work or local project support basis.

<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>That:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>(i) Wansbeck Valley Food Bank be awarded an annual subsidy of £8,000 for the financial year 2017/18,</b></li><li><b>(ii) Northumberland CVA be awarded an annual subsidy of £3,000 for the financial year 2017/18; and that</b></li><li><b>(iii) Any future funding for Northumberland CVA would be determined on an individual project application basis or for specified commissioned work.</b></li></ul>
--

## **FGS 17/774 6. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 27 October – 22 November 2017.

**Resolved:**

**That the Schedule of Payments for the period 27 October to 22 November 2017 be formally agreed and approved.**

*The full schedule of payments is attached to the minutes as schedule 1.*

## **FGS 17/775 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF TOWN CENTRE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) – DRAFT CCTV POLICY.**

The Town Clerk informed members that the CCTV system was in the process of being installed and was expected to be operational in early to mid December.

The Town Clerk presented a draft CCTV Policy to members and outlined that the policy was required to set the proper control and protocol of the system as well as setting out the overall aims and objectives as the effective use of the CCTV system to prevent crime, identify the perpetrators of crime, enhance community safety and reduce the fear of crime.

The Town Clerk informed members that the stated aim of the policy and system was to ensure that all residents, visitors and businesses have the confidence to undertake their activities during the day or night without fear and with confidence in their safety and the security of the environment.

Members welcomed that implementation of the CCTV system, fully funded by the Town Council and look forward to working closely with Northumbria Police and the other statutory agencies in making the Town Centre a safer environment for all.

**Resolved:**

**That the CCTV Policy be formally adopted by Ashington Town Council.**

## **FGS 17/776 8. SMALLER AUTHORITIES AUDIT APPOINTMENTS 2017/18.**

The Town Clerk reminded members that, further to the abolition of the Audit Commission, in 2016 the Town Council had opted-in to the central procurement process for the appointment of new external auditors.

The Town Clerk reported that the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) body had now informed the Council that the new external auditors had been appointed for the 5-year period commencing with the financial year 2017/18.

Members were reassured that SAAA had confirmed that the appointed audit firm, “*PKF Littlejohn LLP*”, had previous experience of conducting limited assurance reviews for smaller bodies and had dedicated personnel to support all communications. SAAA had also confirmed that they would monitor the performance of the appointed firm in providing limited assurance audit services in terms of quality and compliance with their statutory terms of appointment.

### **Resolved:**

**That the appointment of PKF Littlejohn LLP as the Town Council’s external auditors for the 5-year period commencing from the financial year 2017/18 be duly noted.**

## **FGS 17/777 9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.**

Cllr Gallacher informed members that an opportunity had arisen to explore the option of acquiring a dedicated part-time Environmental Enforcement Officer via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Northumberland County Council. Members were informed that Blyth Town Council had very recently entered into a similar arrangement for an initial one-year period.

Members agreed to delegate discussions and option appraisal work to the Neighbourhood Services Committee and Council Leadership.

## **FGS 17/778 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

To be agreed subject to the budget preparation timetable.

The Meeting ended at 7.00pm