

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 27 February 2018, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Matthew Cuthbert (Chair) Eleanor Armstrong
Marjorie Chambers Avril Chisholm
Stephen Fenwick Lynne Grimshaw
Lawrence Henderson Jim Lang
Mark Purvis Pauline Thompson
Tom Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

FGS 18/793 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Victor Bridges, Nicola Chambers, Brian Gallacher, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Ken Parry and Bob Walkinshaw.

FGS 18/794 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillors Marjorie Chambers and Jim Lang disclosed personal and prejudicial interests in Allotments.

FGS 18/795 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 January 2018, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 18/796 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

FGS 18/787 PEOPLES PARK – PROPOSED PLAY AREA SCHEME

Following the decision of the Town Council to be the project lead organisation for the proposed new play area at Peoples' Park, the Town Clerk reported that he had met with the Countryside and Parks Manager of Northumberland County Council to discuss and clarify the available S106 funding. The Town Clerk reported that it had been confirmed that the overall funding agreed in the planning process was available for the project but that a formal bid would be required once

the project costs were known and also what the indicative Town Council financial contribution would be. Cllr.Grimshaw confirmed that the Ashington Leisure Partnership had also been made aware of the project and were open to an application for capital funding.

The Town Clerk proposed that a small Ward based working group be established to oversee the project including the local consultation, school work and project design.

FGS 18/788 GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN

The Town Clerk informed members that the litter picking scheduled for the Great British Spring Clean had been postponed due to the bad weather and that the event was now scheduled for the weekend of 9-11 March.

FGS 18/797 5. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 19 January – 22 February 2018.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the financial period 19 January to 22 February 2018 be formally agreed and approved.

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

FGS 18/798 6. BUDGET REPORT 2017/18

The Town Clerk presented a Budget Report for the period 1 April 2017 to 22 February 2018 for members' consideration. The Town Clerk gave a detailed report on the overall budget and informed members that there were no exceptional items or significant variances to draw attention to. Members were informed that the predicted year-end balance at 31 March 2018, was in line with initial projection although key decisions were still to be made on the level of contribution to the Neighbourhood Services Partnership and also the option of the procurement of a town-wide survey.

Resolved:

That the budget report for the period 1 April 2017 to 22 February 2018 be formally agreed and approved.

FGS 18/799 7. TOWN-WIDE SURVEY 2018

The Town Clerk presented a brief report and requested that the Town Council give full consideration to the commissioning of a new 2018 "Life

in Ashington” town-wide survey. Cllr.Fenwick informed members that it was clear at this time, from both social media and from members own discussions with residents, that people in the town did not feel they were being given opportunity by Northumberland County Council (NCC) to make their views known, particularly in relation to regeneration of the town centre. Cllr.Fenwick reminded members that it was also important that the Town Council, on behalf of residents, continued to press NCC for updates and information regarding plans for the town.

Cllr.Chambers reported that it was important that the Town Council took a lead on this matter as there had been much criticism of the recent limited consultation undertaken by Northumberland County Council which had not been well advertised and had not presented sufficient time or opportunity to take part. Cllr.Chambers stressed that in her view that consultation was flawed and could not be seen to properly represent residents views.

The Town Clerk reminded members that an all household survey, supplemented by targeted surveys of young people and also interviews with businesses and visitors gave everyone an opportunity to respond and that it was the opportunity that was important. Members were reminded that the 2013 survey had elicited an almost 20% response rate and had subsequently formed the basis for many of the town-wide decisions including the development of the Neighbourhood Services Partnership, investment in community safety and the focus at that time on the Ashington market.

Cllr.Chisholm stated that she fully supported the early commissioning of a survey and in was critical that all residents were given an opportunity at this key time to make their views known on a range of matters. Cllr.Chisholm stated that responses regarding the town centre and whether they considered improvements had been made in environmental work, including litter and street cleansing, were vital and would clearly inform discussion on any new partnership agreement from 2019.

The Town Clerk requested that, were the Council minded to undertake a town-wide survey, he be given approval to initially contact Eljay Research Ltd the company who had undertaken the 2103 survey and delivered an excellent service.

Resolved:

That:

- (i) The Town Council agree to the commissioning of a 2018 Town-Wide all household survey,**
- (ii) The Town Clerk be duly authorised to make contact with Eljay Research Ltd to discuss the brief of the survey and**

the project timetable,

(iii) A Working Group be set up to oversee the project, the Group to consist of the Leader and Deputy-Leader of the Council, the Business Chair and Vice-Business Chair and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and General Services Committee; and that

(iv) A further update report be brought to the next meeting of Finance and General Services Committee.

FGS 18/800 8. CONSULTATION ON STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING REQUEST

The Town Clerk informed members of a request for consultation on street naming and numbering for the proposed development at land South West of Land End Farm, Freeman Way, North Seaton Industrial Estate, Ashington, NE63 0YB.

Members were informed that the proposed name of the estate was Essendene Rise and the requested street names were Kilbourn Street, Floyd Close, Harrison Crescent and Lyon Court, all named after the Pitman Painters.

Resolved:

That the Town Council had no objection to the proposed naming and numbering of the new estate.

FGS 18/801 9. ASHINGTON JOINT WELFARE SCHEME

The Town Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the secretary of the Joint Welfare Scheme inviting the Town Council to formally appoint a representative to sit on the Board of Management as a Community Trustee.

The Town Clerk reported that the letter made reference to the fact that the centre was currently run operationally by Active Northumberland and was at this time, like all other centres, under review. Members considered that until the review was completed, it was perhaps appropriate to defer any formal Council appointment; it was also important that the Town Council seek to work with the Welfare Centre to do everything it could to sustain its future.

Resolved:**That:**

- (i) The Town Council defer the request to elect a nominated representative to the Ashington Joint Welfare Scheme until the full outcome of the Active Northumberland review was known; and that**
- (ii) The Town Council work with the Ashington Joint Welfare Scheme to seek to establish a sustainable operating future for the centre.**

FGS 18/802 10. ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP

Cllr. Lynne Grimshaw presented an update report from a recent meeting of the Allotments Working Group.

- (i) Renewal of water systems at Woodhorn Road Allotment & Small Holding Site, High Market / Wansbeck Road and Seaton Hirst Allotment Sites**

Currently awaiting quotes from W.L Straughan & Son Ltd's for four water systems to be upgraded on the sites.

- (ii) Clearance of long term redundant allotment plots & improvements to roadway at North Seaton Colliery Allotment Site - total cost £6,473**

Site visit to be undertaken with Cllrs. Grimshaw and Cuthbert to review the decision to defer the project.

Cllr. Lang has agreed to contribute £2,000 and North Seaton Colliery Allotment Association has agreed £500 towards the project, should the work be agreed to go ahead.

- (iii) Improvements to Hirst East End Allotment Site roadways**

This item was deferred by the working group.

- (iv) Arson at High Market Allotment Site**

In December 2017, an arson and vandalism incident took place on a plot at the above Site resulting in a shed and greenhouse being destroyed. A Police investigation was now underway. The Town Council agreed to meet the cost of making the plot safe and removing rubbish and materials from the site at a cost of £680.

(v) Fly Tipping at North Seaton Colliery Allotment Site

There had been a number of fly tipping issues at this Site including the dumping of a significant number of car tyres which the Town Council had arranged to remove. Details had been passed to the Environmental Enforcement Officer for further action.

FGS 18/803 11. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES WORKING GROUP

Cllr. Lang reported on the following developments of the Environment and Amenities Working Group.

(i) Entrance Features at B1334 off North Seaton Roundabout and A196 at Wansbeck Bridge

It was agreed to appoint Groundwork NE & Cumbria Ltd to provide concept design images to detailed design stage, including liaising with Planning & Highway Authorities, with additional option of management of the tender process for perspective contractors at an agreed sum of £2,600 (+ VAT).

Ms Michelle MacCallam, Principal Landscape Architect for Groundwork NE & Cumbria, to visit next meeting of Environment & Amenities Working Group (on Tuesday 10 April) to develop ideas.

(ii) Purchase of Floral Planters

Following a visit to Wyevale (Heighley Gate) Garden Centre, it had been agreed to purchase four 'octagonal three tiered planters' and two 'floral fountain planters' at an agreed sum of £3,678 (+VAT) for entrance feature and town centre use.

The planters were to be delivered to Heighley Gate Garden Centre for floral presentation at a cost of £325 per octagonal planter and £188 per floral fountain planter and to be placed at the following locations:

- Entrance on A197 (from Pegswood)
- Entrance on A196 (Wansbeck Bridge)
- Entrance on B1334 (off North Seaton Roundabout)
- Entrance on A197 (Woodhorn Road)
- Wansbeck Square (x2 floral fountain planters)

Cllr. Lang reported that the planters were an initial trial of high quality floral and colourful displays and that further planters could be discussed in due course as part of the Town Council's environmental improvement plans. Cllr. Fenwick reported that the future responsibility for floral presentations was to be considered as part of ongoing discussion regarding the Neighbourhood Services Partnership.

(iii) Roundabout Features & Improvements

Woodhorn Roundabout - It was agreed to place the tree planting scheme on hold until full costs for other work relating to the Working Group were received.

Lintonville Roundabout (ASDA/Ashington Leisure Centre) - Discussion took place regarding enhancing the roundabout with low maintenance shrubs and boulders.

Seaton Vale Roundabout - A number of complaints from residents on the Seaton Vale Estate regarding the overgrown state of the roundabout at its entrance. Cllr. Lang has obtained a quotation from WL Straughan & Son Ltd to carry out improvement work at a cost of £4,692 (+VAT). It was agreed to place the scheme on hold until full costs for other work relating to the Working Group were received.

(iv) Replacement Bus Shelters x2 on B1334 in North Seaton

Work to replace the two shelters should be completed week commencing 5 March.

(v) Bus Shelters on Remscheid Way

Following a request by Cllr. Gallacher for the installation of two bus shelters on Remscheid Way, a quotation had been received from Clear Channel Ltd. The agreed amount for two shelters was £8,336 (+VAT). Work was expected to take place in April.

FGS 18/804 12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

FGS 18/805 13. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 27 March 2018, at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington NE63 8RX.

The Meeting ended at 7.40pm