

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Services Committee Meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 30 April 2019, at Ashington Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Lynne Grimshaw (Chair) Eleanor Armstrong
Victor Bridges Avril Chisholm
Matthew Cuthbert Stephen Fenwick
Brian Gallacher Jim Lang
Lawrence Henderson Ken Parry
Bob Walkinshaw

IN ATTENDANCE: Neighbourhood Inspector Kevin Waring – Northumbria Police
PC Ian Lawson - Northumbria Police
Chief Inspector Ron Charlton – Northumbria Police
Kath Falcus – Real Deal Plus
Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Project Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Administration Officer (minutes)

FGS 19/925 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marjorie Chambers, Nicola Chambers, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis, Pauline Thompson and Tom Wilson.

FGS 19/926 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS.

There were no disclosures of interest.

FGS 19/927 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2019, were agreed and signed as a true record.

FGS 19/928 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

There were no matters arising from the minutes held on Tuesday 12 March 2019

FGS 19/929 5. AUTOMATED NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION CAMERAS.

The Chair invited Neighbourhood Inspector, Kevin Waring, PC Ian Lawson and Chief Inspector Ron Charlton to give a presentation outlining the results of a feasibility study carried out supporting a case for the use of Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras

in Ashington. The Chair reminded members that Northumbria Police had been invited to attend to give the presentation in support of an application for funding to the Town Council for financial support in the purchase of the cameras.

The officers fully presented the case in terms of how ANPR cameras are used nationally and regionally in tackling organised criminal activities moving across boundaries and operating in towns and cities. Members were reminded that Northumbria Police were fully committed to tackling crime and disorder in Ashington and the surrounding localities and reinforced the viewpoint that ANPR cameras would be of great benefit in making a significant contribution in safeguarding the public.

Members were informed that, were the Town Council to support and agree the funding it would be for capital acquisition only, Northumbria Police would be responsible for all subsequent installation costs and maintenance costs and the cameras would be the responsible asset management body.

Resolved:

That Northumbria Police be awarded a grant of £15,000 for the purchase and acquisition of 3 No. Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.

FGS 19/930 6. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING SUPPORT – REAL DEAL PLUS.

The Chair invited Mrs Kath Falcus to address Councillors present in support of an application for funding support. Mrs Falkus began by thanking Ashington Town Council for their continued support over the years.

Mrs Falcus presented a detailed update on client support and provided the following key statistics in relation to;

- Homeless support – 10 regular street sleepers referred by homeless/crisis teams.
- Food bank & Food provision – 148 food parcels or referrals given out plus many more with access to Greggs & Cafe food. Huge increase from people waiting for universal credit to be processed.
- Community Cafe – 300-400 clients per month across all of our projects.
- Benefits & Welfare – universal credit support averaging 20 to 30 per month.
- Lottery Grant – funding which is ring-fenced for the refurbishment of the building to allow disabled access to upper levels and staffing cover for extended hours and weekends.
- Furniture – increase in referrals from housing office/jobcentre.

- Job Club – increase in numbers needing one to one support because of mental health problems, lack of literacy/IT skills.
- Teen Bar – approximately 40 young people registered.
- Art & Craft groups – more clients referred by support workers and mental health teams.

After a lengthy general question and answer session, the Chair thanked Mrs Falcus on behalf of the Town Council for the detailed presentation

Resolved:

That the consideration of funding support for Real Deal Plus be deferred for further consideration following the appointment of a new Town Council representative.

FGS 19/931 7. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT 2019-2024.

The Chair of the Partnership Board Cllr.Gallacher informed members that after a considerable amount of work and consultation, a new draft contract had now been prepared for the consideration of the Committee. Cllr.Gallacher advised members that further to Partnership Board meetings and the receipt of external legal advice from Ward Hadaway and from the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC), a number of amendments had been made to the initial draft.

Cllr.Gallacher advised that the contract now being presented for approval strengthened the position of the Town Council in relation to the new 5-year agreement and provided assurance and guarantees that would safeguard the Town Council moving forward. Cllr.Gallacher thanked the Partnership Board members and the Town Clerk for the detailed and arduous work that had been undertaken over recent months to get to this position.

The Town Clerk presented a detailed report on the process undertaken and outlined the key changes that had been made to the draft contract. The Town Clerk reported that discussions had also taken place with nearby Town Council's undergoing a similar process at that time which had proven very beneficial in ensuring a common approach from Northumberland County Council.

Members were also advised that the external legal advice from Ward Hadaway and NALC had very clearly also covered the requirement for Town Council members who were also members of Northumberland County Council (NCC) to now have to formally declare interests in any financial matters referring to the contract as NCC was a direct financial beneficiary.

Resolved:

That:

- i. The Neighbourhood Services Partnership Agreement 2019-2024 be formally approved; and that**
- ii. The Leader of the Town Council and Town Clerk be formally authorised to now sign the agreement on behalf of the Town Council.**

FGS 19/932 8. PROPOSED NEW ENTRANCE FEATURE.

The Chair informed members that this agenda item had been withdrawn.

FGS 19/933 9. ALLOTMENT RENTS – NURSERY PARK ALLOTMENT SITE.

Members discussed current level of rental for the Nursery Park Allotment Site and agreed that, in view of the careful management of the site, the rental amounts remain the same as 2018/19.

Resolved:

That the rental levels for Nursery Park Allotment Site be agreed for 2019/20 at £65 per plot with a 25% reduction for senior citizens to £48.75 per plot.

FGS 19/934 10. NAMING OF HIGHWAY – TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEME.

The Chair reported that members had been approached to suggest a name for the new road within the town centre development area. After discussion members suggested 'Woodlands Way'.

The Chair reminded members that the name could only at this stage be put forward for due consideration by Northumberland County Council, mindful of the wider regeneration works and development yet to happen with the Town Centre.

Resolved:

That "Woodlands Way" be proposed for consideration as the formal name for the recently opened Town Centre access road.

FGS 19/935 11. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS.

The Town Clerk submitted a full schedule of payments and income receipts, for the financial period 20 March 2019 to 25 April 2019.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Payments for the financial period 21 March 2019 – 25 April 2019 be formally agreed and approved.

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

FGS 19/936 12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.

There were no other items of urgent business.

FGS 19/937 13. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Tuesday 29 May 2019, at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The Town Clerk reminded members the Annual General Meeting was scheduled to take place, next Tuesday, 7 May, 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

The Meeting ended at 8.30pm.