

## **FC AGENDA 5, ENC i)**

### ***Public Questions (received 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026) for Full Council Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026***

1. Has ATC requested the PCC to come to a town council meeting about Crime in Ashington?
2. This year will there be an increase in spending for the Ashington Christmas lights display with fun fair rides making an appearance?
3. When will the announcement of the Saturday market take place as all permission for this has been approved?
4. Will the town council support my plans for a brown tourism board next to station road Mot center. Showing how much tourism we have in Ashington? I have also been in contact with NCC about this Brown Board.

---

Public Questions asks for the Council's response. This can be in writing or given at the meeting – this is at the Chair's discretion.

#### ***Officer Advice***

1. No
2. The Christmas Lights Displays budget has increased from £41,000 to £55,000. This year Ashington will have an amazing fully dressed and lit 8 metre Nordica Tree instead of the Cone Tree. The budget for the Christmas Lights Switch-On event has increased from £5,000 to £10,000. Planning for the event has not started yet.
3. Update sought.
4. If you would like the Council's view, please share the plans with us and we will comment on them at that point. As you are already in contact with Northumberland County Council on this, they would be the relevant authority for any necessary permissions given it relates to highways signage.

## **FC AGENDA 5, ENC i)**

### Questions for Ashington Town Council Annual Meeting 26 May 2026

#### 1. re Ashington Town Forum ToR

It is hard to disagree with the Purpose of the Forum. Under methods it states "look for opportunities to engage with **other stakeholders** in the town....Constructive relationship with **property owners**. Yet there are only Strategic Business and no representatives of the many smaller businesses and retailers in the town centre and around the whole town. These strategic businesses are important and will play a big part in major developments.

Does the council think it would be useful to have some formal representation of the smaller businesses too?

Similarly on Education the new college and EPNE are a vital part of education and training, but there are more children in the schools from 5 to 18 than the college.

Shouldn't the school partnerships be involved too?

There is no mention of the health sector, from GPs to the District hospital. This may be covered elsewhere but I believe it needs consideration. What does the Town Council think of this suggestion?

**Confidentiality.** While I agree there are some commercially sensitive matters does the council think it would be better for this section to read;

" All participants are expected to respect the commercially sensitive nature of **some** developments and to maintain the confidentiality of **such** information disclosed within the meeting"

Does the council think that the present wording is too restrictive for a forum aimed to bring a cohesive approach to the development, prosperity and community of the town?

The mantra should be tell as much as possible to as many people as possible as early in the design /planning process as possible.

#### 2. Size of council workforce.

The running costs of the council are a major part of the budget, and hence precept. I note the staff numbers are increasing. Has the council been able to identify any waste that has been eliminated as some councillors gave the impression when seeking election last year that there could be savings?

---

Public Questions asks for the Council's response. This can be in writing or given at the meeting – this is at the Chair's discretion.

### **Officer Advice**

1. The Terms of Reference for the Ashington Town Forum are set by Northumberland County Council, not Ashington Town Council, and the Council itself is not in a position to offer a formal view on the suggested changes to membership or to the confidentiality wording, as these are matters for NCC to determine. Individual Cllrs may wish to offer their own personal views on the points raised.
2. Staff numbers have decreased from 7 FTE to 5.4 FTE. The Council does not comment on statements made by individual councillors during election campaigns, as these are not matters of Council record. The Council has not identified or eliminated a specific item or category of spending that could be described as "waste." Staffing levels and the overall budget are determined by service need, statutory requirements, and member-led budget setting, and are kept under regular review by the Personnel Committee and Finance & General Services Committee.