

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday 31 March 2014 at 7.00 pm at The Gallery Woodhorn Villa Newbiggin by-the-Sea.

PRESENT:

Councillors: M Cholerton (Chairperson)

M Boon W Rogers A Thompson S Todd

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

Also present: Councillors L Burns and M Peden.

FC13/13 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 December 2013 be approved as a true record

FC14/13 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no new disclosures of interests.

FC15/13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to financial and business affairs.

FC16/13 PROJECTED BALANCES

The Town Clerk had reviewed the income and expenditure for the financial year. Details of the anticipated balances; earmarked contingencies and scheme commitments from the 2013/14 accounts were circulated to Members.

The Committee considered the level of contingencies and approved the scheme allocations to be carried forward.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the allocations approved.

FC17/13 ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Following meetings of the Environmental Working Group with Neighbourhood Services Officers the Town Clerk outlined the intended project works to enhance the environmental areas along the promenade initially where some clearance works had been carried out by the County Council.

The sites at Atlee Park; the 'Couple' Park; Horseshoe Steps; former boat park site at Beach Terrace had been jointly inspected although Neighbourhood Services had not been able to provide scheme costs in time for the meeting. Members confirmed priority for these improvement schemes to be carried out if possible ahead of the summer season and were advised that the litter bin replacement scheme along the promenade would shortly be completed.

RESOLVED that: priority scheme proposals be implemented up to the budget allocation for 2014-15.

FC18/13 ENHANCED LOCAL SERVICES – PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2014/15

The report highlighted the discussions between Town Councillors and the Head of Highways and Neighbourhood Services; the Routine and Winter Maintenance Manager (Urban); the Senior Locality Officer and local County Councillors to consider the Position Statement and Report on Public Realm Service Enhancements from the County Council.

It was proposed to enhance frontline service delivery making both councils equal partners with shared decision making and risk based on local needs and the Council had delegated powers to the Committee to decide on arrangements.

Newbiggin needed to enhance existing county services at the main entrances; town centre and the promenade to encourage more visitors to the town and an outline proposal had been presented by the Urban Manager. That suggested the employment of two additional summer seasonal posts which could be used to enhance the following services as prioritized by the Town Council: general cleanliness of the main street; help maintain a sand free, clean and tidy promenade; introduce additional planting along the promenade; increase shrub and floral bed maintenance to support Northumbria in Bloom entry; general maintenance e.g. painting of railings, wood-staining, graffiti removal; incorporating some of the existing service arrangements for bus shelter cleansing; maintenance of public seats and War Memorials.

Members considered the financial requirements for the partnership which could be met from the budget allocation for local services after taking account of continuing playground inspection and repairs and floral bedding arrangements as well as the Nipper Transport service and Christmas Lighting.

The focus was on the town's priorities for the summer season initially and the branding of the additional team would be important to the profile of the service. It was felt that there must be an actual enhancement of services providing a visible difference that could be monitored and the County Council would be asked to provide details of existing service standards and frequencies. The Working Group Members expressed the desire to be involved in the selection process.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Town Council enter into a Local Service Enhancement Partnership with the County Council as outlined in the proposal;**
- ii) The cost contribution amounting to £36,041, incorporating the bus shelter**

- cleansing; maintenance of public seats and War Memorials, be met from the Local Services Budget;**
- iii) Members of the Environmental Working Group be included in the recruitment process.**

FC19/13 TOWN CENTRE PROJECT

The Town Clerk advised the Committee of the proposals presented by Arch at a recent meeting to consider a joint development opportunity in the town centre which the Town Council had agreed to consider the previous summer. Indicative plans for the combined scheme to provide a County and Town Council presence in the same building with public toilets and housing were considered and Arch required a commitment and financial capital contribution to progress the scheme.

Members warmly welcomed the proposals as being the right development for the town centre and discussed the relative time-scales for completion of such a project and means of funding including borrowing.

Reference was made to the delay in the proposals to secure the town's first priority for additional public toilets and the lengthy processes just completed to secure the necessary planning and party wall approvals with funding retained in balances. Budget provision had been carried forward for several years and some Members felt that in addition to committing to the Arch scheme that the original small scale toilet scheme should proceed this year and increase provision in the town with the larger scheme in the medium term. The County Council had advised that the toilet provision on the Quay Wall would be removed shortly leaving no public facility in the town centre. Other Members felt that only the major scheme should proceed.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council:

- i) confirm to Arch and the County Council its commitment to proceed with the joint scheme;**
- ii) Provide a capital contribution of £100,000 spread over the next two financial years and/or secured through borrowing.**

RESOLVED that: a revised tender be obtained and the toilet scheme on Front Street be constructed as soon as possible.

FC20/13 ACQUISITION OF THE BUNGALOW

The Town Council's offer to purchase The Bungalow had been accepted and was being progressed by Property Services at NCC. It transpired that services for the Sports Centre passed through the site and for the legal transfer to progress the Town Council had to confirm that it accepted that a legal reservation would remain for the gas supply.

RESOLVED that: the position regarding service reservation be noted and the transaction proceed.

Signed by the Chairperson:Date:.....