



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Thursday 6 November 2014 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillors: J R Potts (Chair in the Chair), G T Knox (Vice-Chair), B W Elliott, K Ellis, K Nisbet, O Potts and J Reid.

Members of the Public: One

Also present:

Councillors M Parker and R Parker

Sue Noddings – Town Clerk (Corporate Services)

Sean Robinson – Assets Officer

082/14/01: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton

083/14/02: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS

None

084/14/03: MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

085/14/04: EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Chair of the Finance Committee stated that there were three issues he wished to deal with under this heading: -

4.1 BDO Issues Arising – Councillors had previously been issued with a copy of this document and the Chair went through each of the three issues raised that related to the timing of Risk Assessments being approved; Re-statement and Adjustment of previously stated figures; and the need for each page of minutes to be initialled by the Chair of that meeting.

4.2 Governance & Accountability for Local Councils – the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) had prepared a one page report of the changes introduced and stated that she had printed a full copy of the Practitioners Guide which would be placed in the Members Room for information.

4.3 Risk Assessment – the draft risk assessment was discussed and amendments identified. **Action SN**

086/14/05: WORKING GROUP

A report of the Working Group had been previously circulated and the Chair highlighted the key issues: -

5.1 Blyth Town Council will continue using Excel, making amendments and additions as appropriate. **Action SN and AM**

5.2 Blyth Town Council will seek to arrange a visit to Morpeth Town Council to meet with the Town Clerk, Gillian Turner, to discuss their use of Sage line 50 accounting programme. **Action SN**

087/14/06: INTERNAL AUDIT

6.1 Current Position and review of Internal Auditor - the Chair requested that Blyth Town Council's thanks should be placed on record with regard to the work carried out by Richard Slater since his involvement started in 2009-10. It was requested that a letter be sent. **Action SN**

6.2 Terms of Reference – the Chair highlighted that the Practitioner's Guide for Governance and Accountability provided an excellent brief on the role of an Internal Auditor.

It was agreed that three potential Internal Auditors would be approached and that a working group comprising of the Town Clerk (Corporate Services), Chair of Finance and Vice Chair of Finance be established.

Councillor K Ellis requested that the working group should include Town Clerks not Town Clerk.

Councillor G Knox requested that a member of the opposition should be part of the working group and proposed Councillor J Reid. This was seconded and agreed.

088/14/07: BUDGET

7.1 Precept – The Chair drew Councillors attention to the recent correspondence received from Northumberland County Council and requested that all committees ensure that their budgetary requirements are identified in advance of the January 2015 Finance Committee meeting.

7.2 Committee Recommendations – it was confirmed that the following committees had indicated their budgetary requirements: -

- Assets Committee £320,000
- Planning & Development £ 20,000
- Community Support Grants £120,000

The Chair confirmed that there would be a Staffing Report to the full council on Thursday 20 November 2014. **Action SN**

7.3 Partnership Board – it was requested that information regarding detailed expenditure be sought from Northumberland County Council to establish whether monthly payments were meeting cost of wages, contract hire, etc. **Action SN**

089/14/08: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

As requested the letter from Northumberland County Council had been circulated to Councillors along with a DCLG statement and a response drafted by the Town Clerk (Corporate Services). The documents were discussed in detail and suggested amendments made to the draft response. **Action SN**

090/14/09: WEBSITE

In the absence of Liam Forsyth, Committee Clerk, a written update had been provided by Steve Bradley of Widescope. The website will be live before the full council meeting on 20 November 2014 and a demonstration will be provided.

091/14/10: BTC COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

Councillors had been provided with information from Collingwood Legal and a copy of Blyth Town Council's Protocol. The information was discussed and it was agreed that all policies and procedures must relate to both Officers and Members. It was also agreed that, if at the time of audit, any equipment was not being utilised for the purpose provided consideration would be given to requesting the return of said equipment. **Action SER and SN**

092/14/11: NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL (SECTION 106)

A comprehensive discussion ensued about the need to make provision for the transfer of monies from Northumberland County Council to Blyth Town Council for developers plans for bus shelters (S278), play areas (S106), surveys etc.

Care was advised in dealing with enquiries as historically agreements have been between Northumberland County Council and the developer not Blyth Town Council.

It was also acknowledged that there may be potential for Blyth Town Council to have some involvement in future negotiations with developers, particularly as responsibility for ongoing maintenance costs are transferred to Blyth for any bus shelters and play areas provided by developers. It was unanimously agreed that Blyth Town Council would request involvement based on "taking consideration of Blyth Town Council's responsibilities". **Action SER**

093/14/12: UPDATE ON THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Chair took Councillors through the following reports:-

12.1 Management Report – Councillors were provided with comprehensive information of actual expenditure against budget plus a summary of expenditure by Budget Heads. The Chair advised Councillors that the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) had also provided him with further information of anticipated expenditure against Budget Heads. It was agreed that this would be circulated. **Action SN**

12.2 Cash Book/Petty Cash – the Chair advised Councillors that all transactions were included in these documents and that they formed part of the standard financial reports provided for each Finance Committee.

12.3 Total Deposit Accounts – the Chair reminded Councillors of an earlier decision to invest some of the reserves in another bank of building society and advised that the Town Clerk (Corporate Services) had been tasked with addressing this. **Action SN**

094/14/13: MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR B W ELLIOTT

Councillor Elliott was invited to speak to his motion that had been circulated as part of the agenda for the meeting. The motion was not seconded and no decision was therefore made to purchase video recording equipment.

095/14/14: MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR K ELLIS

The Chair proposed that the discussion of Councillor Ellis's motion should be moved into Part 2 of the Agenda and that any members of the press or public be asked to leave. This was seconded and agreed and the member of the public was asked to leave the Council Chamber.

Part 2 Minutes will be provided separately for this motion.

096/14/15: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND URGENT MATTERS

This was also dealt with under Part 2 of the Agenda and will be incorporated into the Part 2 Minutes.

097/14/16: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next Meeting of the Finance Committee is to take place on Thursday 8 January 2015 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Adopted as a true record and signed by the Chair

DATE:

Signed:

MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Councillor J R Potts (Chair)
- Councillor G T Knox (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor C Bruce
- Councillor B W Elliott
- Councillor K Ellis
- Councillor A Gibbs-Barton
- Councillor K Nisbet
- Councillor O Potts
- Councillor J Reid

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