

Minutes of a Meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2012 at 7.15pm.**

**PRESENT**                                    **Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and**  
Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, T.R. Bowman, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, V. Crosby, W. Curtis, Mrs. M. Dalton, G.C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, Mrs. K. Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, Mrs. A. Palmer and Mrs. V.M. Raw.

**IN ATTENDANCE**                    Mr. G. Wood (Regeneration and Economic Development, Durham County Council)  
Mr. S. Watkins (Managing Director from Business Durham)

**OFFICERS**                                Mr. A. Bailey (Town Clerk)  
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)  
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)

41.    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P. Gittins, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and A. Warburton.

42.    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**A declaration of interest was submitted by Councillor M. Iveson on Agenda Item No. 9(3.1(b)) (Newton Aycliffe Rotary Club Grant as he is a member of that organisation.**

**A declaration of interest was submitted by Councillor B. Hall on Agenda Item No. 10 (Citizens Advice Bureau) as he is a member of the Management Board.**

**Declarations of interests were submitted by Councillors Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S.J Iveson and Mrs. D. Bowman on Agenda Item Nos. 16 (Wolsey Close Traffic Management) and 17 (Council Tax Support Claim) as they are members at Durham County Council.**

43.    **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Agenda Item No. 10 (Citizens Advice Bureau)

Mr. N. McMenamin asked the Chairman if he could make a statement in support of the application by the Sedgefield and District Citizens Advice Bureau for a donation. He outlined the services which are provided by CAB and the reasons for the need to make an application for a donation from the Council's 2013/14 budgets.

Mr. McMenamin rounded off his statement by asking the Council to give serious consideration to making a donation from their next years' annual budgets to help to support the CAB.

Note:- Councillor Mrs. D. Bowman arrived at the meeting at this point in the agenda.

44. **ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE – NEWTON AYCLIFFE**

Mr. Graham Wood from Regeneration and Economic Development at Durham County Council and Mr. Stewart Watkins, Managing Director from Business Durham were in attendance to give information on employer engagement on the industrial estate.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the two officers.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the information be received.
- (ii) That Mr. Wood and Mr. Watkins be thanked for their excellent presentation and information given from questions from members.
- (iii) That the officers be asked to attend a future meeting to give another update on matters concerning the industrial estate and employment opportunities for this area.

45. **ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP NOTES**

Notes and recommendations from the meeting of the Asset Management Working Group held on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012 were considered.

It was proposed by Councillor B. Hall, seconded by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton and

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the notes and the following recommendations from the Asset Management Working Group be accepted:-

- (i) That the update report be received.
- (ii) That Simpasture changing room shower project be kept on hold pending assistance from the football team via. grant funding.
- (iii) That no works be carried out to the porch to the front of the golf complex pending a full review of the whole of the Oak Leaf Complex.
- (iv) That work to the replacement of the golf driving range dividers be carried out.
- (v) That monies be carried forward to the next financial year for works to be carried out to the golf complex irrigation system control board when needed.
- (vi) That the Sports Complex DDA lifts into the sports hall be not replaced due to problems with the size of new lifts and access space.
- (vii) That a ramp be provided from the changing room entrance point for DDA access to the sports hall.
- (viii) That it be noted that the ply boards in the Oakleaf Sports Complex hall had been replaced on an emergency basis funded via. the Sports Hall redecoration budget.

- (ix) That the non-slip surface works to the Humphrey Close bridge be noted and D.C.C. be contacted in regard to the works needed to the main structure of the bridge.
- (x) That a full report be brought before the Recreation Committee in respect of the possibility of the inner footpath at Simpasture Park being grassed over and seats moved.
- (xi) That the Council 'Logos' be placed on the newly purchased vans as soon as possible.
- (xii) That the replacement of the Oakleaf server and exo-server be left in abeyance pending information from our I.T. Officer.
- (xiii) That the costs be accepted for contributions to projects at West Park, Woodham Park and the Town Park and that the ongoing costs for insurance and maintenance be approved.
- (vx) That the Draft Capital Programme Budgets for 2013/14 be accepted for approval by the Policy and Resources Committee as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

46. **AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor W. Iveson, seconded by Councillor B. Hall and

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee held on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

47. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. V. Raw, seconded by Councillor V. Crosby and

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48. **ACCOUNTS CONTROL SHEETS**

Accounts control sheets for the period 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012 to the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and the General Bank Accounts for August and September 2012 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the accounts control sheets for the period 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012 to the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and the General Bank Accounts for August and September 2012 be received.

49. **GRANTS / DONATIONS**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report which gave the current donation budget for this financial year as £2,568.

The following requests for grants / donations had been received:

**A declaration of interest had been submitted by Councillor M. Iveson on item (b) (Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe) as he is a member of that organisation.**

- (a) Open Spaces Society - Request for funding.
- (b) 'Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe' – Request for a donation towards the organisation of the Community Carol Service which is to take place in Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

#### Letters of Thanks

The following letter of thanks had been received:-

Butterwick Children's Hospice                      £200 donation

#### Aycliffe Youth Council

The Youth Council donation budget is currently £3,900.

There had been no further grants to consider.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) Open Spaces Society  
That no donation be made.
- (iii) Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe  
That a donation of £150 be made to the Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe towards the organisation of the Community Christmas Carol Service.
- (iv) That the letter of thanks be received.
- (v) That the information supplied by the Youth Council be received.

#### 50. **CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

**A declaration of interest had been submitted by Councillor B. Hall on this item as he is a member of the Management Board of CAB, however, he would be remaining in the meeting during the discussion thereon.**

An application had been received from Sedgefield and District Citizens Advice Bureau for additional funding towards their advice delivery service in the Great Aycliffe area.

Councillor J.D. Clare spoke on the application from the CAB in respect of their application for a grant of £18,000 from the Council's 2013/14 budgets. He reminded members that a previous grant of £6,933 had been given on a 'one-off' basis and that the Council appreciated that the CAB carried out excellent work in the community, however, the previous grant had been given on the understanding that this Council could not afford to support CAB to the kind of degree that they required.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor J.D. Clare, seconded by Councillor K. Henderson, that it be recommended that we do not make a donation to CAB as we could not make a donation on a year on year application.

Councillor V. Crosby proposed an amendment to the proposal, which was seconded by Councillor B. Haigh, that the Council look at the possibility of getting a Working Group together who would consider other ways of assisting the CAB.

Voting took place on the amendment to the proposal:

This resulted in a unanimous vote for the amendment (Councillor B. Hall did not vote).

Voting took place on the original proposal with the addition of the amendment:

This resulted in a unanimous vote for the proposal and added amendment. (Councillor B. Hall did not vote).

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That no financial donation be made to the Sedgefield and District Citizens Advice Bureau as a previous amount of £6,933 had been on the basis of a 'one-off' donation.
- (ii) That the Council look to form a Working Group to consider other ways of assisting the CAB.

#### 51. **PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING CENTRE REPORT**

The Early Years Officer submitted a report setting out information with regard to the attendance figures, waiting lists and voluntary contributions for the two Pre-School Learning Centres.

The report also set out information on 'Children with Additional Needs', 'Safeguarding Children', 'Children with Allegies', 'Staffing' and 'Ofsted' changes.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the information be received and it be noted that the Pre-School Learning Centres would be subject to a review by the Service Review Working Group.

#### 52. **EARLY YEARS' SERVICE PLAN**

The Early Years' Officer submitted a report and draft Early Years' Service Plan for the period September 2012 to August 2013 for members consideration.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the Early Years' Service Plan for September 2012 to August 2013 be accepted pending the review of this service by the Service Review Working Group.

53. **2012/13 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT**

The Finance Manager submitted a report to provide members with details of the financial position on the Council's approved Revenue and Capital Programme Budget for the six months to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the half year financial position on the Council's Revenue Budgets and projection of expected outturn for 2012/13 be received.
- (ii) That a further Revenue and Capital Budget Position report would be submitted to the January Policy and Resources Committee detailing the financial position at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 and an updated projection of expected outturn.

54. **2013/14 DRAFT POLICY AND RESOURCES BUDGETS**

The Finance Manager had submitted a report seeking comments and feedback from members on the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2013/14 in respect of the Policy and Resources Committee and gave a verbal update.

Members considered each section of the Budgets for the Policy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the report and draft Revenue and Capital Budget figures for the Policy and Resources Budgets for 2013/14 be received

55. **2013/14 OVERALL DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET**

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out a summary of the Council's overall draft 2013/14 Revenue and Capital Budget and the likely level of Precept and Council Tax next year.

Members had previously approved the Budget Framework and Timetable for the setting of the Council's 2013/14 Revenue and Capital Budgets at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Councillor J.D. Clare spoke on the budgets that had been set over the past six years especially as this was to be the last one which this Council would set. The Council should be proud of the success which had been achieved to the management of those budgets and once again a freeze had been possible to the budgets and Council charges for next years' budget.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the attached overall summary of the draft 2012/13 Revenue and Capital Budget and the likely level of Precept and Council Tax and the movement on the Council's balances be agreed.

- (iii) That the information be taken into account when considering the individual draft Committee Budgets.
- (iv) That any comments or amendments to the 2012/13 draft Revenue and Capital Budget be submitted to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of each Committee.
- (v) That the congratulations and appreciation of the Council be recorded to the Officers for their hard working in carrying out the preparing the budgets.

56. **WOLSEY CLOSE – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

**Declarations of interests had been submitted by Councillors Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S.J. Iveson and Mrs. D. Bowman on this agenda item as they are Members of Durham County Council, however, they would be remaining in the meeting during the discussions thereon.**

Information had been circulated via. an e-mail from Durham County Council in respect of the possibility of introducing a restriction to prevent motor vehicles from using the shared cycle route which leads from Wolsey Close to Middleham Way. It was being proposed to install a gate to prevent motor vehicles accessing the cycle route. A detailed plan was attached for information.

Whilst this Council did not wish to agree or not agree to the proposal it was felt that this Council should ask Durham County Council to make sure that, before any final decisions are made, a full consultation is undertaken on the wishes of the residents in this area. The consultation should take into account the wishes of the residents of both sides of the cycle route. Particular emphasis should be made on the access to emergency vehicles into the Burn and the traffic parking problems whilst football matches are held on the school fields.

**RESOLVED** - that it be recommended:

- (i) That Durham County Council be asked to carry out a full consultation of the residents views on this proposal and that this survey include the residents at either end of the cycle way.
- (ii) That it be pointed out to Durham County Council that they should take into account the need for emergency vehicle access to the school fields and the Burn.
- (iii) That it should be pointed out in the survey to residents that closing this area to parking used during football matches may have an impact on surrounding roads.

57. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – IMPACT ON TOWN COUNCILS**

**Declarations of interests had been submitted by Councillors Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S.J. Iveson and Mrs. D. Bowman on this agenda item as they are Members of Durham County Council, however, they would be remaining in the meeting during the discussions thereon.**

Correspondence had been submitted from Durham County Council to draw attention to a proposal for changes to the national Council Tax Benefit system and to seek this Council's views as part of the consultation process. It was pointed out that this would have a financial impact on the Council.

The Finance Manager submitted a briefing note for circulation to explain the potential impact on Town and Parish Councils.

The Town Clerk and Chairman of Policy and Resources also circulated a copy of a proposed letter of response to be forwarded to the Local Council Tax Support Team for members to consider.

The letter indicated the Councils support to Durham County Council in regard to the overall principles of its Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

The letter also asked D.C.C. to consider ways of extending the protection element beyond 2013/14 and acknowledge D.C.C.'s intention to the £5.5 million shortfall by withdrawing discounts for empty properties, second homes and introducing an empty property premium for long term empty properties.

The letter also referred to the withdrawal of the Double Taxation grant and stated that it was incorrect and unfair to link the two issues. The Double Taxation Grant to Town and Parish Councils is not in any way related to the proposed localisation of council tax benefits.

The letter suggested that D.C.C. should, if the grant is withdrawn, look to finding a solution to this issue such as differential taxation or special expenses.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the letter as proposed be forwarded the Durham County Council.

58. **STANDING ORDER EXEMPTION FORM – FOOTPATH REPAIRS**

The Town Clerk and Finance Manager had submitted a Contracts and Procurement Standing Orders Exemption Application Form in respect of resurfacing works to the tarmac footpath adjacent to the Giant Redwoods in Woodham Burn.

**RESOLVED** – that the Exemption Application be approved.

**CHAIRMAN.**