

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 17th JULY 2013** at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT **Councillor Mrs. B.A. Clare (Chairman) and**
Councillors D.G. Atkinson, J. Atkinson, B. Blenkinsopp, A.M. Chandran, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, N. Collinson, Mrs. M. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, J.P. Hillary, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, P. Kjenstad, Mrs. A. Palmer, D. Summers and C. Wheeler.

IN ATTENDANCE Mr. G. Wood (Economic Development Manager – D.C.C.)
Mr. C. Waddell (Director – Mazars LLP)
Mr. M. Barnes (Senior Manager – Mazars LLP)

OFFICIALS Mr. A. Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mrs. C. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)

43. **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

44. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors E. Adam, R. Bowman, M.A. Dalton, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson and T. Twissell.

45. **MEMBERS' DISPENSATION**

No dispensation requests had been received.

46. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest given.

At this point the Chairman agreed to take agenda item Nos. 10, 11 and 12 out of sequence.

47. **AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT – 2012/13**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. C. Waddell, Director and Mr. M. Barnes, Senior Manager from Mazars to the meeting to present the Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31st March 2013.

The Auditors had given the Council an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and the Value for Money aspect of the Council.

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That Mr. Waddell and Mr. Barnes be thanked for their attendance to present the Audit Completion Report.

- (ii) That the information from the report be received.
- (iii) That the Finance Team be congratulated on the work carried out to obtain an unqualified opinion.

48. **CONCLUSION OF THE 2012/13 AUDIT OF THE COUNCIL AND APPROVAL OF THE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**

The Finance Manager submitted a report seeking approval for the signing of the 'letter of representation' as required by the Council's external auditors, Mazars LLP, as part of the completion of the annual audit of the Council.

The previous item on the completion of the audit had shown that the Council had received an unqualified audit opinion on both the financial statements and the value for money conclusion.

The Auditor now seeks from the Council and its management, written representations about the Council's financial statements and governance arrangements before they can issue their final audit certificate and the Annual Audit Letter. A copy of the letter of representation was attached for information prior to signing off by the Chairman of the Council, Town Clerk and Finance Manager.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the content of the letter of representation be approved.
- (ii) That the letter of representation be signed by the Chairman of the Council, Town Clerk and Finance Officer and be forwarded to Mazars LLP.
- (iii) That following receipt of the final audit opinion and audit closure certificate from Mazars LLP the Notice of Completion of the Audit of the Accounts and publication of the Accounts be advertised as soon as possible in accordance with the statutory framework.

49. **FUTURE ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Finance Manager had submitted a report providing Members with information on the options available to the Council with regard to its future accounting and audit arrangements, as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

The report sought Members consideration of the two options for the Council for the 2013/14 and subsequent years.

- (1) To move to the requirements of a 'smaller relevant body' within the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.
- (2) To continue to take up the voluntary option of following the rules applying the larger bodies and be subject to a full audit.

RESOLVED – That the Council agree to take up the voluntary option of following the rules applying to larger bodies and be subject to a full audit.

50. **ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE – NEWTON AYCLIFFE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Graham Wood, Economic Development Manager from Durham County Council back to give an update on employment engagement on the industrial estate.

Mr. Wood gave members current information on the unemployment figures which showed a decrease of approximately 96 in a twelve month period.

Information was provided on the position with Hitachi coming to Newton Aycliffe.

Members noted that the name of the site had been amended from Amazon Park to Merchant Park.

Focus was being made on the need for Apprenticeships.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Wood.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That Mr. Wood be thanked for his attendance and for the information provided.
- (ii) That a further update be given to the Council in approximately 6 months time.

51. **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 12th June 2013 and the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 25th June 2013 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

52. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had submitted a list of appointments she had attended for the period 13th June to the 17th July 2013.

The Mayor gave information on the various events she had attended with special mention to the Squash Club Presentation, Armed Forces Day, Visiting the Mining Museum at Spennymoor. She had attended a number of Dance and Music Productions by talented people from the town. The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for helping with some of her events.

Information was given on the 'At Home' which had been held in the Oakleaf Complex and was attended by community leaders, youth organisations, sporting organisations, fund raisers, local business people and representatives of the armed forces.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

53. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions raised by the Public.

54. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(a) **Environment Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor J.D. Clare, seconded by Councillor N. Collinson and

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 3rd July 2013 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(b) **Recreation Committee**

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

RESOLVED – as follows:

- (i) That the minutes of the Recreation Committee held on the 3rd July 2013 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

(c) **Policy and Resources Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor R.S. Fleming, seconded by Councillor Mrs. V.M. Raw and

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 10th July 2013 be received, and
- (ii) That the said minutes be approved and adopted.

55. **LICENCES**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report to advise members of licences that have been entered into and those which are due for renewal by the Council or to the Council.

Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd. and Great Aycliffe Town Council

The licence is due to expire on the 31st July 2013 and it was proposed not to renew this licence due to lack of progress being made by Network Rail.

Great Aycliffe Town Council and Livin

Permit for entry to Council property in order to undertake the demolition of former toilets and garages.

Licence still in use as per the agreement – project nearing completion.

Great Aycliffe Town Council and Livin

Permit for use of land for temporary parking bays during a housing project.

Licence still in use until project complete. Temporary bays to be removed following completion of the work.

Durham County Council to Great Aycliffe Town Council

Areas of land predominantly adjacent to the Great Aycliffe Way, for the purpose of open spaces for use by the general public or nature reserves as appropriate.

Annual licence – renewal request 19th June by GATC and acknowledged for renewal by Durham County Council.

Great Aycliffe Town Council to Story Contracting

Licence permit for the use of land behind the Oakleaf Sports Complex for the storage, welfare accommodation and generator whilst undertaking works to the stone bridge over the railway line.

A week by week fee payable to GATC for a period of approximately 3 weeks.

RESOLVED - as follows:-

- (i) That the information be received.
- (ii) That the licence between Network Rail Infrastructure and Great Aycliffe Town Council be not renewed.

56. **BRIDLEWAY NO. 11 – GREAT AYCLIFFE PARISH**

Information had been submitted on a proposal under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act to stop up a short length of the bridleway No. 11 and replace with a new public footpath. The Council's comments were sought on this proposal.

RESOLVED – that no comments be made to the proposal.

57. **PLANNING APPLICATION**

Councillor J.D. Clare declared an interest in this item as he is a Member of the Area Planning Committee at Durham County Council and he stated that he would re-consider the matter taking into account all the information that is put before the Planning Committee.

The Town Clerk submitted a report and gave a slide show on the proposals for an amendment to the planning application for 175 houses with associated infrastructure and landscaping works on Site O at Cobblers Hall.

The Town Council had previously had no comments on the application, however, a number of amendments were now planned and required comments.

Items of concern were the changes to the raised speed bumps for the traffic calming, there has been sufficient consideration for 'off-street' parking, access by bin wagons and emergency vehicles and the need to protect the wetlands on The Moor for the local wildlife.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the following comments be forwarded to D.C.C. in respect of the amended planning application:-
 - Members feel that the speed table traffic calming measures would be better than the speed bumps which appear to replace the speed tables.
 - The SUDS scheme providing water to "The Moor" must be retained and protected from the impact from the development to ensure that "The Moor" wetland area is protected for and provides a habitat for wildlife.
 - Due to the problems in other areas of the town it should be ensured that sufficient consideration been given to 'off-street' parking, access by bin wagons and emergency vehicles.
- (iii) That subject to the above comments, Great Aycliffe Town Council agree in principle to the scheme.

58. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Verbal reports were given by representatives on the undermentioned Outside Bodies:-

- (a) Youth Council
Councillor J.D. Clare gave a report on the Youth Council.
- (b) County Durham Association of Local Councils (AGM)
The next meeting would be the AGM in October.
- (c) Citizens Advice Bureau
That a vacancy exists for a representative.
- (d) Woodham Village Community Association
Councillor K. Henderson gave an update on the success of the Community Association.
- (e) Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Council's Committee
Councillor R.S. Fleming gave information on the meeting.
- (f) Larger Local Councils' Forum
No meeting.
- (g) Lifelong Learning Committee
A letter had been submitted informing the Council of the possible changes to this Committee and that further information would be forwarded as soon as possible.

- (h) Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre
Councillor D. Summers gave information on the meeting.
Members expressed their appreciation on the excellent report from Councillor Summers.
- (i) Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society
Councillor I. Gray reported on the actions of the Society.
- (j) Health and Wellbeing Partnership Network
The next meeting will be held in September.
- (k) Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve
Councillor I. Gray gave an update.

RESOLVED – as follows:-

- (i) That the information given from the Representatives serving on the Outside Bodies be received.
- (ii) That the possible changes to the Lifelong Learning Committee be noted and further information be awaited.

CHAIRMAN.