

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 1st JUNE 2011 at 7.15pm.**

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

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

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors I. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Mrs. A. Palmer and A. Warburton.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A declaration of personal interest was submitted by Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton in respect of Agenda Item No. 7 (3.1(c)) Mayor's Charity Golf Tournament.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

6. **MINUTES**

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 13th April 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. **PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE**

It was proposed by Councillor V. Crosby, seconded by Councillor B. Hall and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 18th May 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

“That it be noted that Councillor B. Haigh was in attendance at this meeting”.

8. **ACCOUNTS CONTROL SHEET**

Accounts control sheets for the period 8th April 2011 to the 20th May 2011 and the General Bank Accounts for April 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED – that the accounts control sheets for the period 8th April 2011 to the 20th May 2011 and the General Bank Accounts for April 2011 were received.

9. **GRANTS / DONATIONS**

Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton declared a personal interest in item (c) – Mayor’s Charity Golf Day but would remain in the meeting during the discussion thereon.

The Town Clerk had submitted a report which gave the current donation budget for this financial year of £4,000.

The following requests for grants / donations had been received:

- (a) Durham County Council – Newton Aycliffe Library – Children’s Activities
- (b) Open Spaces Society
- (c) Mayor’s Charity Golf Day – Friday, 9th September 2011.

Aycliffe Youth Council

A grant of £50 had been given to Tom Hunter who was a serving member of the Youth Council and a member of the UK Youth Parliament to enable him to attend a Youth Parliament Working Weekend.

The current donation budget is £3,950.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) Durham County Council – Newton Aycliffe Library – Children’s Activities
That an amount of £300 be donated to the Children’s Activities.
- (ii) Open Spaces Society
That no grant be given on this occasion.
- (iii) Mayor’s Charity Golf Tournament
 - (a) That approval be given for the free use of the Oakleaf Golf Course For the Annual Mayor’s Golf Tournament to take place.
 - (b) That promotional vouchers for a free round of golf be issued to all Participating persons in the tournament.
- (iv) Youth Council
That the information from the Youth Council be received.

10. **PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING CENTRES REPORT**

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

The report also gave details of the contributions and income for each Pre-School up to the 15th April 2011.

There was concern at the number of incidents of vandalism which had occurred since the beginning of the year and the report set out both minor and major incidents which had occurred.

Officers were asking for members to consider options to stop unauthorised access to the Pre-School play area and the park in general.

A proposal to replace the existing bow top metal fence of 1.2m with a 1.8m twin wire powder coated mesh fence and gate at an estimated cost of £4,500. Also to seek authorisation for a combination of additional visits from the Park Patrol Officers in the evening and the use of a Private Security Company for a short period of time.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That changes be made to the fence around the pre-school at an estimated cost of £4,500.
- (iii) That the cost be allocated from earmarked capital reserves and added to the 2011/12 capital programme budget.
- (iv) That Officers acquire the use of a Security Company on an ad hoc basis to patrol the park on an evening together with assistance from the Park Patrol Staff.
- (v) That any offenders caught damaging Council property be subject to prosecution.
- (vi) That appropriate signs be erected stating that this Council will prosecute anyone breaking Park Byelaws, in particular by remaining or entering the Park after the stated closure times.

11. **2010/11 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET – YEAR END OUTTURN POSITION**

The Finance Manager submitted a detailed report setting out information in respect of the final year end position on the Council's approved Revenue Budgets and Capital Programme for the 2010/2011 financial year.

The report also outlined the impact of the year end financial position on the Council's balances and reserves and the key year end financial issues relating to the Council's Balance Sheet.

The Council's Statutory Statement of Accounts will be presented to a Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on the 29th June.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the year end financial position of the Council's Revenue Budgets be received.
- (ii) That the year end financial position on the Council's Capital Programme be received.
- (iii) That the year end position on the Council's Balances and Reserves be received.
- (iv) That the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme carry forward requests referred to in paragraphs 4.10 to 4.12 and 5.13 and Appendices 2 and 4 be approved.

- (v) That quarterly budgetary control reports continue to be submitted to Policy and Resources during 2011/2012 detailing the financial position and estimated outturn on the Council's 2011/2012 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

12. **FINANCE SERVICE PLAN 2011/2012**

The Finance Manager submitted a report and Finance Service Plan for 2011/2012 for members consideration.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Finance Section Service Plan for 2011/2012 be approved.

13. **FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AUDIT CONSULTATION**

The Management Team had submitted a report setting out for consideration of Members a Consultation Paper from the Department of Communities and Local Government on the Future of Public Service Audit.

The report highlighted the key issues that affect the Council arising from the consultation and on which officers wished to make a response on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the following Officer's responses to the consultation document be forwarded to the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- That the new arrangements should not require the Council to set up an independent audit committee as the Council feel that it should be able to utilise the services of the County Council Audit Committee in making external auditor appointments and that the Council's decision should be final.
 - That this Council strongly objects to the inclusion of the power for the County Council to withhold precept payments in the event of a public interest report.

14. **DRAFT PARISH PERFORMANCE PLAN**

The Corporate and Policy Officer had submitted a report to present the Draft Parish Performance Plan for consideration and comments.

The Parish Performance Plan is updated annually and sets out progress on existing targets together with the setting of new targets. It also gave financial information and an up to date Audit Report.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Parish Performance Plan for 2011/2012 be approved.

15. **CYCLE / FOOTBRIDGE – WOODHAM BURN**

The Town Clerk submitted a report to advise members of Officers actions to make necessary repairs to the cycle / footbridge and to request that monies be taken from Council Reserves to fund the repairs.

Following an inspection it was reported that the condition of the bridge made it necessary for urgent repair to avoid its closure.

Durham County Council staff confirmed the serious condition of the bridge which had been transferred to the Town Council as part of the Assets and liabilities package.

Verbal confirmation had been received from D.C.C. Officers that they would be prepared to assist with the repairs on a 50/50 cost split with D.C.C. Highways to procure and oversee the works.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received and the Town Clerk's actions be approved.
- (ii) That a joint initiative and providing of funding to the value of £2,500 to £3,000 be agreed with Durham County Council.
- (iii) That the cost be allocated from earmarked capital reserves and added to the 2011/2012 Capital Programme Budget.

CHAIRMAN.