

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 4th DECEMBER 2019 – 7.15 p.m.

Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on Wednesday, 4th December 2019 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Kathy Beetham, Bill Blenkinsopp, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, Mrs. M. Dalton, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw, Ken Robson and Paul Symons.

OFFICERS

Mr A Bailey (Town Clerk)

Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)

Mrs. C. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin. Officer)

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jim Atkinson, P.J. Bergg, Mrs. D. Bowman and B. Hall.

67. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

No dispensation requests had been received.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were declared:-

Councillors Jed Hillary, Eddy Adam, M. Iveson and Mrs. M. Dalton declared non-pecuniary interests on agenda item No. 10 – (2.1 (c)) Grants and Donations for the Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe but would be remaining in the meeting during any discussions thereon.

Councillor Eddy Adam, declared a non-pecuniary interest on Agenda Item No. 11 (Human Resources Support Update) as a member of Durham County Council but would remain in the meeting during any discussions thereon.

69. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A Member of the Aycliffe Residents Association was in attendance to give information and update the Council on their proposals for events to be held during the VE Day 2020 Celebrations. The Association have applied for a donation towards the cost of the Celebrations.

The Chairman thanked the Member of the Association for the information which would be considered with their application under Agenda Item No. 10 (2.1 (a)).

70. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 23rd October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. AUDIT, RISK AND G.D.P.R. SUB-COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor M. Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Risk and G.D.P.R. Sub-Committee held on the 23rd October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:-

‘That it be noted that the Chairman for the Meeting was Councillor M. Iveson’.

72. CHARGES WORKING GROUP

The notes and following recommendations from the meeting of the Charges Working Group held on the 30th October 2019 were submitted for consideration:-

(i) Cemeteries

It was recommended that all charges would be increased by 5% for 2020/21 (rounded to the closest usable figure).

The Working Group also noted the information provided in the report about the introduction of the ‘Children’s Funeral Fund for England’ by the Government, and the arrangements put in place by officers to comply with the new requirements and manage the recovery of children’s burial fees via this Fund moving forward.

(ii) Football Pitches

It was recommended that the fees for football pitch hire in 2020/21 be increased by 5% for adult teams, with the fees for junior teams frozen.

(iii) St. Oswald’s Pre-School Learning Centres

It was recommended that the fees for the pre-schools in 2020/21 be frozen at the current rates.

(iv) Allotments

The allotments rents for 2020/21 has been set a year in advance, at last year’s Charges Working Group, in accordance with allotment law.

It was recommended that the allotment rents for the financial year 2021/22 be increased by 2.5%.

It was further recommended that the charges for pigeon lofts, poultry sites and bee plots would also be increased by 2.5%.

It was agreed that a refundable £50 bond for new allotment tenants would not be implemented.

(v) Sports Complex

That it be recommended that the following be agreed for the various facilities at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex for 2020/21:-

- Membership prices increased by £1 to £20 for adults and £14 for concessions;
- Bowls locker prices be increased from £6.00 to £6.50;
- All other fees and charges for five-a-side football, squash, bowls, badminton, table tennis, coaching and function room hire to be frozen.
- That the Leisure Manager continues to be authorised to implement promotional pricing offers.

(vi) Golf Course and Driving Range Charges

Following the comprehensive review of golf complex fees and charges by the Golf Administrator, that it be recommended that the following be agreed for facilities at the Oak Leaf Golf Complex:-

- Adult and Over 60 Golf Membership fees are increased by £10 for each category of seniors and adults for the 2020/21 season.
- Junior 15 to 18 charges are frozen at £50 for 2020/21 and Junior Under 14 memberships continue to be offered free of charge;
- The 19 to 24 (in full time education) membership is deleted and replaced with a new 19 to 25 intermediary membership at £250;
- The following golf membership promotions are implemented:-
 - Existing members who renew during January and February 2020 will pay the current year's membership price;
 - New members may join from 1st January 2020, effectively receiving fifteen months for the price of twelve months.
- The green fee pricing structure is simplified with a system of peak and off-peak pricing and winter fees being implemented;
- The main green fee prices are increased by between £1 to £2 per category;
- Visiting party prices are frozen pending a review during 2020/21;
- Member buggy hire fees are increased by 50p and non-member buggy hire charges are increased by £5 for 2020/21;
- Equipment hire fees are frozen for 2020/21;
- Driving range fees are frozen for 2020/21;

(vii) Caravan Fees

That it be recommended that the casual caravan and camping site fees be increased by 2.5% to £12 per night and the charge for weekend rallies of up to 10 vans be increased by 2.5% to £10 per night per van. Prices for weekend rallies of more than 10 vans will continue to be subject to negotiation with the Leisure Manager.

(viii) Card Payments at the Council Offices

That it be recommended that the introduction of a card payment facility for the Council Offices is introduced, on a trial basis, for allotments rents payments.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp and

RESOLVED – that the notes and recommendations from the Charges Working Group held on the 30th October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor Dave Hardaker, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 20th November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

74. ACCOUNT CONTROL SHEETS

Account control sheets for the period 18th October 2019 to the 22nd November 2019 and the General Bank Accounts for October 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the accounts control sheets for the period 18th October to the 22nd November 2019 and the General Bank Accounts for October 2019 be received.

75. GRANTS / DONATIONS

Councillors Eddy Adam, Jed Hillary, M. Iveson and Mrs. M. Dalton had declared non-pecuniary interests in item (c) but would not be leaving the meeting during discussions thereon.

The Town Clerk had submitted a report which gave the current donation budget for this financial year as £2,925.

The following applications had been received for consideration:-

- (a) **‘Aycliffe Village Residents Association’**
Application for a grant towards their VE Day 2020 Celebrations.
- (b) **‘Aycliffe Village Local History Society’**
Application for a grant towards their VE Day 2020 Celoebrations.
- (c) **‘Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe’**
Application for a grant for their Model Railway Exhibition 2020

A letter of thanks had been received from the Great North Air Ambulance for their donation of £500.

The Aycliffe Youth Council current budget for the Financial Year was reported as £1,340.

The following applications had been received by the Aycliffe Youth Council for consideration. The Youth Council had made the following recommendations and sought approval from the Policy and Resources Committee for the payments:-

- (a) **Northern Citrins Marching Band** – Application for the purchase of instruments – an amount of £150 was recommended.
- (b) **Woodham Student** – Application for funding towards a Cultural and Volunteering Trip to Thailand – an amount of £150 was recommended.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the current donation budget of the Council be noted.
- (ii) **Aycliffe Village Residents Association – VE Day 2020 Celebrations**
That their application for a grant be referred to the next Events Sub-Committee for consideration.
- (iii) **Aycliffe Village Local History Society - VE Day 2020 Celebrations**
That their application for a grant be referred to the next Events Sub-Committee for consideration.
- (iv) **Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe**
That an amount of £150 be donated for their Model Railway Exhibition 2020.
- (v) That the letter of thanks from the Great North Air Ambulance for their donation of £500 be received.
- (vi) That the current donation budget for the Aycliffe Youth Council be noted.
- (vii) That the amount of £150 for the Northern Citrins Marching Band towards the purchase of instruments and the amount of £150 to the Woodham Student towards a Cultural and Volunteering Trip to Thailand be accepted for payment.

76. HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORT UPDATE

Councillor Eddy Adam had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as a Member of Durham County Council but would not be leaving the meeting during the discussions thereon.

The Management Team had submitted a report to provide Members with an update regarding the human resources (HR) support they received from Durham County Council and problems were being encountered.

Following from a previous meeting Officers had been tasked to seek other possible providers for the HR support of this Council.

Meetings had also taken place with Durham County Council to discuss the issues which were being experienced.

A number of other providers had been approached and three were identified to be able to carry out HR services.

Members were asked to consider and advise Officers of their preferred course of action.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That Durham County Council continue to be used as the Council's HR support for a further three month period.
- (iii) That a suitable 'time frame' for D.C.C. replying to HR queries be obtained.

77. EVENT STAFF EMPLOYMENT

The Town Clerk had submitted a report to advise members of the outcome of the recruitment process for the posts of Events Officer and Clerical/Events Assistant.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the information be received.

78. ANNUAL LEAVE PROCEDURE

The Management Team had submitted a report to provide the updated Annual Leave Procedure for Members consideration and approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Annual Leave Procedure be approved.

79. APPEALS NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Management Team had submitted a report to provide the updated Appeals Notification Procedure for Members consideration of approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Appeals Notification Procedure be approved.

80. GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Management Team had submitted a report to provide the updated Grievance Policy and Procedure for consideration and approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Grievance Policy and Procedure be approved.

81. PAPER LIGHT OFFICE AND GOVERNANCE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Management Team had submitted a report to provide information on the current use of paper by the Council and the feasibility of moving to a paper light system of office and governance, with a view to reaching a decision as to whether to proceed with the required investment to facilitate this.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp that the Officers work on a feasibility study of costs and needs for the Council to go 'paper light' which would be recommended for consideration to the newly elected Council in 2021.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran asked for a named vote on the proposal which resulted as follows:-

For the proposal:

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Kathy Beetham, Bill Blenkinsopp, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, Mrs. M. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson and Mrs. V.M. Raw.

Against the proposal:

Councillors Arun M. Chandran, George C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Ken Robson and Paul Symons.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That Officers work on a feasibility study of costs and needs for the Council to go 'paper light' which would be recommended for consideration to the newly elected Council in 2021.

82. ST. OSWALDS PRE-SCHOOL BOILER

The Works and Environment Officer had submitted a report to inform members of the need to replace the existing boiler in the Pre-School building with a new condensing boiler.

Following the annual service of the boiler it was noted that the boiler was beyond economical repair and for safety reasons the heating system had been immediately isolated.

A quotation from British Gas had been received to fit a high efficiency Vaillant ecoFIT Pure condensing boiler at a cost of £2,866.31 and duly accepted to be fitted as soon as possible.

It was reported at the meeting that a problem of a gas leak had occurred following the fitting of the new boiler which had meant the pre-school was closed for a further day.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the quotation from British Gas for a new high efficiency Vaillant ecoFIT condensing boiler at a cost of £2,866.31 be accepted and the new boiler installed as soon as possible.
- (iii) That Officers be commended for their actions in sorting the problems with the boiler fitting in order to have the pre-school re-opened.

CHAIRMAN.