

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 3 MARCH 2021 – 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, and virtually, on Wednesday, 3 March 2021 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and

Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Dave Hardaker, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw, Ken Robson and Michael Stead.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Derek G. Atkinson.

OFFICERS

Mr. A Bailey (Town Clerk)

Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)

Mrs. C. Walton (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mr. L. Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)

Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin Officer)

161. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs. M. Dalton, B. Hall, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary and Paul Symons.

162. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

No dispensation requests had been received.

163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors M. Iveson, and Eddy Adam declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item No. 8 (Grants and Donations – Rotary Application).

Councillor J.D. Clare declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 8 (Grants and Donations – Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre Application).

Councillor Kate Hopper declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 8 (Grants and Donations – Applicant Catherine Lenahan).

164. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public.

165. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on the 20th January 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

166. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 17th February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

167. ACCOUNT CONTROL SHEETS

Account control sheets for the period 14 January to the 18 February 2021 and the General Bank Accounts for January 2021 were submitted.

Councillor M. Stead asked for clarification on the Water Charges and an I.T. query which were answered by the Finance Manager.

RESOLVED – that the account control sheets for the period 14 January to the 18 February 2021 and the General Bank Accounts for January 2021 be received.

168. GRANTS / DONATIONS

Councillor J.D. Clare had declared a non-pecuniary interest in item (a) – Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre.

Councillor M. Iveson and Councillor Eddy Adam had declared a non-pecuniary interests in item (c) -Rotary Newton Aycliffe.

Councillor Kate Hopper declared a non-pecuniary interest in item (b) – Applicant Catherine Lenahan.

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out details of requests received from four organisations for consideration of being granted funding from the ‘Small Grants Fund’.

A ‘Small Grants Fund’ had been created of £15,000 to specifically assist organisations that are experiencing funding problems affecting their organisation in delivering their support services as a consequence of the Coronavirus Pandemic and restrictions. Each grant allocation being up to a maximum of £1,000.

The ‘Small Grants Fund’ currently stands at £9,000 and the General Donations Balance is currently £1,623.55.

Councillor J.D. Clare left the meeting the discussion on this item.

- (a) **Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre** – Request for funds to make repairs to roof leaks and tiles which occurred whilst the centre was under lockdown due to Covid regulations
Request for £1,000 being sought for this project.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran proposed an amount of £1,000 which was seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and subsequently agreed.

Councillor J.D. Clare returned to the meeting.

- (b) **Applicant – Catherine Lenahan** – Request for funding towards printing costs of a Literacy Project as a means of linking pupils in the school with their local community for post-Covid recovery.
Request for £400 being sought for this project.

Discussion took place on the valuable works which will be carried out by the Literacy Project and Members expressed that they would be prepared to consider a further application in the future.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran proposed, and Councillor M. Ashcroft seconded that an amount of £400 be donated with a proviso that a further application would be considered by the Committee if needed. This was subsequently agreed.

Councillors M. Iveson and Eddy Adam left the meeting during the discussion on this item.

- (c) **Rotary Newton Aycliffe** – Requesting further funding towards helping families in the Parish of Great Aycliffe with urgent domestic needs. Again these are identified by Health Visitors and Social Workers.
Request for £1,000 being sought for this project.

Councillor P.J. Bergg proposed an amount of £1,000 which was seconded by Councillor Mrs. V.M. Raw and subsequently agreed.

Councillors M. Iveson and Eddy Adam returned to the meeting.

- (d) Letters of thanks had been received for previous donations issued by the Council:-

- Aycliffe Village Residents Association for an amount of £600
- Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group for an amount of £1,000
- Rotary Newton Aycliffe for an amount of £1,000.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the current donation budgets of £9,000 for the ‘Small Grant Fund’ and £1,623.55 for the General Donations be noted.

- (ii) That the following grants be made from the 'Small Grants Fund':-
 - (a) Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre - £1,000
 - (b) Applicant – Catherine Lenahan - £400 with the provision that Members would be prepared to consider a further application for funding if needed.
 - (c) Rotary Newton Aycliffe - £1,000
- (iii) That the letters of thanks from Aycliffe Village Residents Association, Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group and Rotary Newton Aycliffe be received.

169. REVIEW OF COUNCIL FUEL USAGE AND COSTS AND WORKS VEHICLE AND MACHINERY PURCHASES

The Finance Manager and Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to provide information on the purchase and usage of vehicle fuel in the Council's Works Department, along with consideration of the environmental implications linked to fuel purchases and usage, and the procurement of works vehicles and machinery.

The report provided information on the current fuel card system and a subsequent review of the arrangement following previous discussions. It also provided information on how the Council's fuel usage is monitored and controlled together with environmental implications linked to fuel purchase and usage and procurement of works vehicles and machinery.

Members sought clarification on a number of items within the report and regards to the fuel card changes made to another supplier. The previous fuel card was being retained in order that a comparison could be made on the best value for fuel purchases.

Officers were tasked to bring back a detailed report setting out all aspects of fuel usage and environmental impact in the future use of vehicles and machinery with in the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Officer's be thanked for the work carried out in submitting the report in such a timely manner.
- (iii) That Officers bring a further report back to Committee setting out all aspects of fuel usage and environmental impacts for more detailed consideration by the Council.
- (iv) That the two fuel card providers be retained and a comparison made to ensure the best value of fuel purchases.

170. ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT 2020/21

The Corporate Management Team had submitted the report to provide information to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to undertake the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's Internal Audit Service for the 2020/21 financial year, in accordance with non-statutory best practice.

It was proposed by Councillor P.J. Bergg, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Policy and Resources Committee supports the Corporate Management Team's conclusion that the Council's Internal Audit arrangements are effective.
- (iii) That the Policy and Resources Committee review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit Service be taken into account in the Annual Review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and governance processes for 2020/21 and taking into account the public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

171. CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL'S BANK MANDATE

The Corporate Management Team had submitted a report to seek approval for an amendment to the Council's bank mandate which is required as a result of the forthcoming retirement of the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Council's bank mandate be amended following the appointment of the new Finance Manager.

172. BUSINESS RISK OUTTURN REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21

The Corporate Management Team had submitted a report and full list of current corporate business risks for the financial year 2020/21 for Members consideration.

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

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the Outturn Business Risk Register for the year end 2020/21 be approved.

173. REPLACEMENT UTILITY VEHICLE

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator had submitted a report for Members to consider the options regarding the replacement of the Kawasaki Mule machine at the Golf Course.

Five suppliers had been contacted to provide information and quotations for their utility vehicles.

As part of the rolling programme for replacement of vehicles an amount of £15,000 had been allocated for the replacement of this machine in the 2021/22 Capital Budget.

The Officer gave members information on the various uses of this replacement vehicle and what the benefits would be off it being available for road use. The Kawasaki Mule PRO-DXT was the vehicle which was being recommended and came in under the current budget amount.

Following discussion and the extra use and flexibility which could be made if the vehicle could be road registered the Kubota RTV-X1140 at a cost of £16,750 was seen to be a better option.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Iveson, seconded by Councillor J.D. Clare and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That a vehicle be purchased to be road registered and operated using duty paid road fuel.
- (iii) That a Kubota RTV-X114 be purchased at a cost of £16,750 + VAT which includes road registration.

CHAIRMAN.