

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2020 – 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, 2 December 2020 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and
Councillors Eddy Adam, M. Ashcroft, Kathy Beetham, P.J. Bergg, Bill Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, George C. Gray, I. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, Dave Hardaker, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper, M. Iveson, Mrs. V. Raw, Ken Robson, Michael Stead and Paul Symons.

OFFICERS

Mr. A Bailey (Town Clerk)
Mr. D. Austin (Finance Manager)
Mr. L. Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Miss C. Ryder (Senior Admin Officer)

138. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jim Atkinson, B. Hall and Mrs. S.J. Iveson.

139. MEMBERS' DISPENSATION

No dispensation requests had been received.

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors M. Iveson, Jed Hillary and Eddy Adam declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item No. 9 (Grants and Donations – Rotary Application)

Councillor Ken Robson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 9 (Grants and Donations – Acorn Community Association).

141. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public.

142. 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 21st October 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

143. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

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

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 4th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

144. ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The notes and following recommendations from the meeting of the Asset Management Member Working Group held on the 24th November 2020 were submitted for consideration:-

- (i) That the update report and detailed appendices be received and agreed.
- (ii) That the purchase of a Toro LT-F3000 ride-on mower be progressed.
- (iii) That the purchase of specific electric equipment for the Works Section should proceed as and when it is required.
- (iv) That Officers obtain designs and quotes for replacement play equipment for Woodham Park Infant Play Area and report to the Recreation Committee in the New Year.
- (v) That the draft Capital Programme Budget be approved.

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

RESOLVED – that the notes and recommendations from the Asset Management Member Working Group held on the 24th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

145. ACCOUNT CONTROL SHEETS

Account control sheets for the period 23rd October to the 20th November 2020 and the General Bank Accounts for October 2020 were submitted.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the accounts control sheets for the period 23rd October to the 20th November 2020 and the General Bank Accounts for October 2020 be received.

146. GRANTS / DONATIONS

Councillors M. Iveson, Jed Hillary and Eddy Adam declared non-pecuniary interests on the application in respect of Rotary Newton Aycliffe.

Councillor Ken Robson declared a non-pecuniary interest on the application in respect of Acorn Community Association.

The Town Clerk submitted a report which detailed the combined donations budget with the Youth Council budget and a further allocation of £10,000. The total donation budget currently stands at £16,623.55.

A 'Small Grants Fund' had been created of £15,000 to specifically assist organisations under the following two key themes with each grant allocation being up to a maximum of £1,000. The further amount of £1,623.55 remain in the donation/grant account.

- (1) Those organisations that are experiencing funding problems affecting their organisation in delivering their support services as a consequence of the Coronavirus Pandemic and restrictions.
- (2) Organisations that are looking to support vulnerable residents that are struggling to cope during the Christmas period.

An advert was placed in the Newton News and on social media seeking applications for a grant from the 'Small Grant Fund' as per the two key themes and the following three applications had been received for consideration:-

Councillor Ken Robson left the meeting for the discussion on this item.

- (a) **Acorn Community Association** – Request for help towards the cost of renewing / renovating current garden tubs, compost, plants and sundries to enhance the appearance of the area.
Request for £1,000 being sought for this project.

Councillor M. Iveson proposed an amount of £500 which was seconded by Councillor Bill Blenkinsopp.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran proposed an amount of £1,000 which was seconded by Councillor Mrs. D. Bowman.

Following discussions on the two proposals a vote was taken and resulted in agreement for a donation £1,000 being made.

Councillor Ken Robson returned to the meeting.

- (b) **Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group** – Requesting funds for the supply of heaters, cables, storage boxes, trolley together with 12 months rental towards a storage unit for craft items and prizes to be stored.
Request for £689.34 being sought for this project.

Councillor Ian Gray proposed an amount of £1,000 which was seconded by Councillor M. Ashcroft and subsequently agreed.

Councillor M. Iveson left the meeting for the discussion on this item.

- (c) **Rotary Newton Aycliffe** - Requesting funding towards supplying Christmas Food Vouchers for needy families in Newton Aycliffe.
Request for £1,000 being sought for this project.

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

Councillors also wished Rotary to be informed that they would be welcome to make a further application for funding if necessary.

Councillor M. Iveson returning to the meeting.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the current donation budget of £1,623.55 be noted.
- (ii) That the following grants be made from the 'Small Grants Fund':-
 - **Acorn Community Association** - £1,000 donation
 - **Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group** - £1,000 donation
 - **Rotary Newton Aycliffe:-**
 - A donation of £1,000
 - That a further application for funding would be considered for the Rotary Club to assist in their campaigns.
- (iii) That the remaining balance of the 'Small Grants Fund' be re-advertised for further applications to be submitted based on Theme 1.

147. DRAFT POLICY AND RESOURCES BUDGETS – 2021/22

The Finance Manager had submitted a report requesting members' consideration, comments and approval of the draft 2021/22 Revenue and Capital Budgets for the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the draft 2021/22 Policy and Resources Revenue and Capital Budgets be approved.

148. OVERALL 2021/22 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

The Finance Manager submitted a report for Members consideration, comments and approval of the Council's overall draft 2021/22 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Budget.

The report sought Members' to provisionally agree the proposed level of Precept and Town Council Tax for next year and note the likely movement on the Council's balances and reserves.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:-

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the following summary of the draft 2021/22 Revenue and Capital Budget be agreed:-
 - The draft 2021/22 Precept of £1,697,500
 - The proposed freeze in the Town Council Tax
 - The draft 2021/22 Capital Programme Budget of £196.500
 - The expected fall in the Council's Balances and Reserves to £1 million by the end of the 2021/22 year.

149. REPLACEMENT RIDE-ON MOWER (UPDATE)

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator had submitted a report to update Members on the purchase of a replacement ride-on mower following the original report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on the 26th August 2020.

Following consideration at the Asset Management Member Working Group on the 24th November it was recommended that a Toro LT-F3000 be purchased. The delay in purchase has meant that the preferred option is now unavailable and the replacement upgraded machine is now £36,750.

A budget amount of £35,000 had been previously allocated for the machine and Officers were now seeking to increase this budget by £1,750 in order to purchase the Toro LT-F3000.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That an additional amount of £1,750 be allocated to the 2020/21 Capital Budget for the purchase of the machine.
- (iii) That approval be given for the purchase of a new Toro LT-F3000 at a cost of £36,750.

150. PURCHASE OF ELECTRICAL GROUNDS MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT (UPDATE)

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator had submitted a report in respect of the purchase of electrical grounds maintenance equipment.

A report had previously been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee regarding the purchase of a range of electrical equipment as part of a rolling programme of replacement.

An amount of £15,000 had been allocated in the 2020/21 Capital Budget.

Officers had supplied two lists of equipment, one required and one desirable, and were seeking agreement to the purchase of the required items at a total cost of £12,400.56 from the current budget.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- (i) That the report be received.
- (ii) That the electrical items listed in the required list be purchased at a total cost of £12,400.56.
- (iii) That the list of desirable equipment to be purchased at a later date, as required, to replace existing equipment.

CHAIRMAN.