

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 12th JANUARY 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 12th JANUARY 2022 at 7.15 p.m.**

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and

Councillors Eddy Adam, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, John Clark, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Mrs Sandra Haigh, Jed Hillary, Kate Hopper, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Maureen Shelton, and Michael Stead

OFFICERS

Mr D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Miss A. Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mr S. Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Tony Armstrong

Councillor Andy Hill

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Peter Bergg, Barbara A. Clare, Neil Collinson, Phillip Hawkins, Wendy Hillary, and John Moore.

75. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

77. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

78. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, seconded by Councillor Jed Hillary, and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 24th November 2021, be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

79. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on issues relating to the Council's allotments for the seven-week period ended 2nd January 2022.

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

80. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to update members on issues relating to the environment for the seven-week period ended 2nd January 2022.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the report be received

81. CEMETERIES REPORT

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report giving information regarding burials and grants of grave space and providing an update on issues relating to the cemeteries for the seven-week period ended 2nd January 2022.

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

82. WOODLAND AND NATURAL BURIAL SITE UPDATE

The Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator submitted a report updating members on the results of a Groundwater and Contamination Risk Assessment and the provisional funding which would be required to progress the woodland and natural burials project.

It was initially proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No immediate action be taken at this time.

Councillor Arun M. Chandran seconded the proposal and reserved the right to speak further at the end of the debate.

Following considerable discussion and a number of questions to officers, it was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No immediate action be taken at this time.
- iii) A visit to an operational woodland burial site be arranged for members in the Spring to enable a greater understanding of the proposal.
- iv) Budgetary provision be removed from the 2022/23 Capital Budget and instead provided for in the Medium-Term Financial Plan over a two-to-three-year period for the individual elements of the proposal.
- v) An initial expenditure of £50 for pre-application planning advice and £231 to register a change of use for the land be agreed.

A named vote was requested on the proposal.

The named vote was unanimously in favour of the proposal.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) No immediate action be taken at this time.
- iii) A visit to an operational woodland burial site be arranged for members in the Spring to enable a greater understanding of the proposal
- iv) Budgetary provision be removed from the 2022/23 Capital Budget and instead provided for in the Medium-Term Financial Plan over a two-to-three-year period for the individual elements of the proposal.
- v) An initial expenditure of £50 for pre-application planning advice and £231 to register a change of use for the land be agreed.

83. ISSUES RELATING TO THE LORRY PARK

The Town Clerk and Works and Environment Manager submitted a report updating members on the current situation regarding multiple issues relating to the lorry park on School Aycliffe Lane.

The Works and Environment Manager advised that a quote had been received for a height restricted barrier at a cost of approximately £2,000.

The Town Clerk advised that Homes England had confirmed that the allowance within the covenant for lorries and goods vehicles to park at the site could be removed and the land used for the parking of cars by the general public.

It was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, seconded by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) Arrangements be made for the lorry park to be permanently closed to lorries and goods vehicles.
- iii) Appropriate public notice of the closure be made in the local press, Council website and social media.
- iii) Appropriate signage, line marking and height restricting barriers to be installed to enable the land to continue its use as a visitors' car park for the Council Offices, including disabled parking bays, a public car park and, if required, emergency caravan access/egress to the Council's caravan site on the adjacent field.

84. PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE VACANCY

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam that Councillor John Clark be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Planning Sub-Committee.

Chairman