

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 20TH APRIL 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe on Wednesday 20th April 2022 at 7.15pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Arun M. Chandran (Chairman)

Councillors Eddy Adam, Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, Dorothy Bowman, John Clark, Bob Fleming, George Gray, Ian Gray, Brian Haigh, Mrs. Sandra Haigh, Phil Hawkins, Andy Hill, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, and Michael Stead.

OFFICERS

Mr. D. Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. T. Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Mr. S. Cooper (Works and Environment Officer)

Miss. A. Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mrs. S. Stretch (Senior Administrative Officer)

147. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Neil Collinson, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Kate Hopper and Andrea Miller.

148. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

There had been no applications for dispensations.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ken Robson declared an interest in Agenda Item 9, as a member of Acorn Residents Association and Councillor Eddy Adam declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13, Internal Auditor Provision as a County Councillor.

150. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public

151. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on the 2nd March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

152. AUDIT, RISK AND G.D.P.R SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson, and

RESOLVED – that the notes of the meeting of the Audit Sub Committee held on 15th March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

153. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor George Gray, and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on the 16th March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

154. ACCOUNT CONTROL SHEETS

Account Control Sheets for the period 8th February 2022 to 7th April 2022 and the General Bank Accounts for February and March 2022 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the Account Control Sheets for the period 8th February 2022 to 7th April 2022 and the General Bank Account for February and March 2022 be received.

155. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Councillor Ken Robson left the meeting at this point.

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out the Grants and Donations requests which had been received since the last meeting.

It was reported that a total of £5,000 is currently available in the 2022/23 Small Grants and Donations Budget, £2,000 in the Youth Council Grants Budget, £9,368 in the COVID Recovery Community Grants Fund and £5,109 in the Community Benefit Fund including the balances carried forward from 2021/22 financial year.

The following requests were considered:

i) **Newton Aycliffe Women's Institute**

Newton Aycliffe Women's Institute applied for grant of £1,000 towards the cost of transport and admission fees for visits to museums, stately homes and theatres.

It was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that a grant of £500.00 be awarded.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor John Clark that a grant of £1,000.00 be awarded.

A vote was taken on the amendment with the following results:

For: 7 Against: 12

A vote was then taken on the original proposal which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that a donation of £500.00 be awarded to Newton Aycliffe Women's Institute from the Donations Budget.

ii) **Sedgefield Water Polo Club**

Sedgefield Water Polo Club applied for a £4,995 grant towards the cost of pool hire, following a 50% price increase at their home training centre at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre from April 2022.

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, seconded by Councillor George Gray and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that a grant of £500.00 be awarded to the Sedgefield Water Polo Club from the Covid Recovery Grants Budget.

iii) **Acorn Community Association**

Acorn Community Association requested a £500 contribution towards the cost of their annual petting zoo event.

The association are requesting financial assistance from the Council to help reinstate this event which was cancelled for the last two years due to COVID.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Bob Fleming and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that a grant of £500.00 be awarded to the Acorn Community Association from the Large Community Events Budget.

Councillor Ken Robson returned to the meeting.

iv) **Ryan Griffiths – Water Polo**

A request was received from the mother of a young man who has been selected for the England Junior Water Polo Squad for financial assistance, via a donation, towards his training expenses.

It was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that a donation of £500.00 be awarded to Ryan Griffiths for Water Polo Training Expenses from the Donations Budget.

v) **Rachael Tumelty - Women's American Football Training Expenses**

A request was received for a donation from a young lady who currently works at the Sports Complex as a Sports Attendant. She has been selected for the Great Britain American Football Women's Team and has requested financial assistance via a donation towards her training expenses.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that a donation of £500.00 be awarded to Rachael Tumelty towards her Women’s American Football Training Expenses from the Donations Budget.

- vi) The Town Clerk gave the year-end position with regard to the 2021/22 grants and donations budget and the return of post grant questionnaires.

RESOLVED – that the information be received.

156. TOWN COUNCIL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN FOR 2022/23

A report was submitted setting out for Members’ consideration, comments and approval the Draft Town Council Service Delivery Plan for 2022/23.

Councillor Bob Fleming wished to have Member’s thanks recorded to the Corporate Management Team for their hard work in producing the document.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) the report be received
- ii) the Draft Town Council Service Delivery Plan, be approved.

157. FINANCE SERVICE PLAN FOR 2022/23

The Finance Manager submitted a report setting out the Finance Service Plan for 2022/23 for Member’s consideration and approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:-

- i) the report be received
- ii) the Finance Service Plan for 2022/23, be approved.

158. INSURANCE CONTRACT RENEWAL

The Finance Manager submitted a report to update Members on the current situation with the forthcoming renewal of the Council’s insurance policy, which is due at the end of June 2022.

The Finance Manager advised members of a potential 42% increase in premiums due to increased volatility in the insurance market.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked the Finance Manager for the update and asked how the additional costs would be met and if this would be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Finance Manager added that it would potentially need to come from the reserves as there is no contingency budget for this and would be factored into the forthcoming update of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Manager for the report and update.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the report be received
- ii) that members note the current position with the renewal of the Council's insurance long-term agreement which is due on 24th June 2022.
- iii) A full report be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the renewal of the Long-Term Agreement when the quotations are available.

159. INTERNAL AUDIT PROVISION

The Finance Manager submitted a report to update members on the Internal Auditor recruitment process following the resignation of the current post holder, and to consider alternative options for the Internal Audit function in light of the difficulties recruiting to this staffing position, including the possibility of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Durham County Council (DCC).

Councillor Jim Atkinson asked what the reasons for recruitment problems were. The Finance Manager advised that there is a shortage of Internal Auditors nationally.

Councillor Lindsey Aston asked if a cost comparison had been made between the cost of employing an Internal Auditor and the cost of an SLA with DCC.

The Finance Manager clarified that officers would need to estimate the number of days required for internal audit coverage but that it was proposed to keep costs within the current budget. The Town Clerk advised that under an SLA with Durham County Council we may pay more or have a lower number of audit days to compensate.

The Chairman suggested that officers seek a cost for keeping the same amount of days of audit coverage.

Councillor Peter Bergg suggested that any SLA with DCC should be a short-term measure with the aim of returning to an employed member of staff in the future.

It was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson, and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the report be received.
- ii) that the Town Clerk and Finance Manager enter into negotiations with Durham County Council Chief Internal Auditor in relation to a Service Level Agreement for internal audit provision to commence when the current Internal Auditor ceases employment with the Council.
- iii) a further report be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee with the specific proposals from DCC in due course.

160. REPLACEMENT 4x4 VEHICLES

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report setting out options for replacing the two Mitsubishi L200 4x4 vehicles within the Works Section and highlighting the supply difficulties being experienced.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the report be received.
- ii) that the repairs to the existing Mitsubishi L200 are carried out.
- iii) that a further report is brought to the committee when further investigations have been undertaken and additional options identified.

161. COUNCIL DEPOT SECURITY UPDATE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report updating Members on the improvements to the security arrangements at the Council Depot.

The Chairman wished to record his thanks to the officers for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the report be received.

162. COUNCIL OFFICES FLAT ROOF REPLACEMENT

A report was submitted by the Works and Environment Manager to update Members regarding the replacement of the flat roof on the Council Offices.

After a lengthy discussion and a number of questions, it was agreed that further quotes should be sought via Durham County Council Procurement Department based on an EPDM bonded rubber roof, with quotes required with and without insulation, and that all quotations needed to have guarantees.

It was proposed by Councillor Bob Fleming, and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the report be received.
- ii) that officers approach Durham County Council Procurement Department for list of contractors that they have used for flat roof replacement projects.
- iii) that further quotes are sought for an EPDM bonded rubber roof, with and without insulation.
- iv) that a further report is brought to a Special Policy and Resources Committee Meeting, if required, to speed up progress on this item.

163. DRAFT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, COMPUTER AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

A report was submitted setting out for Members' consideration, comments and approval a Draft Information Technology, Computer and Communications Acceptable Use Policy

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the Draft Information Technology, Computer and Communications Acceptable Use Policy be approved.

164. APPROVAL OF UKRAINE DONATION

Members were requested to retrospectively approve the £1,000 donation to Community Spirit which was agreed at the Council Meeting on 9th March 2022.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that the £1,000 donation to Community Spirit agreed at the Council Meeting on 9th March be retrospectively approved.

165. ADDITIONAL CAPITAL BUDGET APPROVALS

Members were requested to agree, as required, additional capital programme budget approvals reported to and discussed at the meetings of Environment Committee and Recreation Committee on 13th April 2022:-

RESOLVED – that it be recommended:

- i) that an additional £2,350 for cemeteries grave shoring equipment be added to the 2022/23 Capital Programme Budget
- ii) that an additional £2,500 for golf course ditch clearance works be added to the 2022/23 Capital Programme Budget.

CHAIRMAN.