

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 7.00pm.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Councillor Carl Robinson (Chairman)**

Tunde Akinsanya, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Jaci Beddard, Tony Beddard, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, Neil Collinson, Luke Ellis, Jordan Gill, George Gray, Brian Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Richard Hutchinson, Sandra Kirby, Jackie McFadden, John Moore, Kyle Robinson, Ken Robson, Brian Sowerby, Michael Stead, Tracey Williams, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

### **OFFICIALS**

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)  
Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)  
Ms. Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)  
Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the public in attendance.

The Chairman requested, and members agreed, that the agenda order be changed so that Item 10 - Grants and Donations would follow Item 11 - Community Support Fund.

### **22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Tony Armstrong and Lisa Connors.

### **23. MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS**

No dispensation requests had been received.

### **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **25. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **26. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and;

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 27. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor John Moore wished to have it recorded in the minutes that the greenkeepers on the golf course be commended for their hard work, during a period when one of the team was absent from work, as it is only a small team adding that the golf course is in better condition than ever.

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

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee, held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025, be agreed, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

## 28. ASSET MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, and seconded by Councillor Richie Hutchinson and;

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Asset Management Sub Committee, held on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, be agreed, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

## 29. PRE SCHOOL SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor Martin Ashcroft wished to have it recorded in the minutes that the pre-school is a fantastic establishment and that the team do an excellent job.

He proposed that the minutes be agreed, subject to the suggestion at the meeting by Councillor Ken Robson that officers contact the Chairman of Durham County Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, being added to the recommendations. This was agreed.

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

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Pre School Sub Committee, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025, be agreed, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman subject to the addition to the recommendations that officers contact the Chairman of Durham County Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 30. ACCOUNT CONTROL SHEETS

Account Control Sheets for the 25<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and the General Bank Accounts for May and June 2025 were submitted for approval.

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

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that the Account Control Sheets for the 25<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and the General Bank Accounts for May and June 2025 be received.

## 31. COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

The Finance Manager provided a report for Member's to present proposals for the allocation of the new £50,000 Community Support Fund, which was approved by this Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Members discussed the suggested proposals in the appendix to the report on an individual basis as follows:

### **Officer Suggestions:**

1. It was agreed to boost the Grants and Donations Budget from £5,000 to £15,000, an increase of £10,000.
2. It was agreed to boost the Large Community Events Budget from £25,000 to £31,000 an increase of £6,000, as opposed to the officer suggestion of a £3,000 increase, to be used to further boost the budget for the youth event. This was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and agreed by all councillors.
3. It was agreed to purchase five defibrillators for various Council facilities at a cost of £10,000. It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft that officers also liaise with the Missed a Beat charity to source trauma kits for all Council facilities. This was agreed. It was further agreed that the proposed defibrillator for Moore Lane be substituted for one at the Council Depot as Moore Lane Sports Club already has a defibrillator. It was suggested by Councillor Michael Stead that officers seek alternative suppliers for the defibrillators for comparative costs.
4. It was agreed to purchase five additional metal picnic benches for the Town Park including disabled access at a cost of £4,650.

### **Councillor Suggestions:**

1. Improve drainage at the cemeteries. Provision for this is already built into the Capital Programme Budget, and therefore this proposal was not agreed.
2. Place a memorial bench somewhere in the town for Covid-19 or VE Day. Councillor Andy Hill proposed that a bench be purchased to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and to increase the amount suggested to £2,000. This was seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and agreed by all councillors.
3. Plant the three flower beds outside of the offices with sustainable shrubs and bulbs. This was discussed and the Chairman proposed that the flower beds be retained. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and agreed. No budget was therefore set aside for this proposal.
4. Plant more bulbs along roadsides. It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson that this proposal is not agreed. Councillor Ken Robson suggested that officers instead contact Durham County Council's Clean and Green Team regarding bulb planting. No budget was therefore set aside for this proposal.
5. Provide free hotdogs to children at the party in the parks. This proposal was not agreed due to the operational difficulties this would create.
6. Place hanging baskets on lamp posts around main roads. This proposal was not agreed as it creates an ongoing financial commitment and the Council do not own any roadside lighting.
7. Increase the residents prize funds for blooming gardens. This proposal was not agreed as it creates an ongoing financial commitment.
8. Host a free breakfast with Santa at the complex. This proposal was not agreed due to the proposal replicating what is already happening elsewhere on the town.

9. Provide fenced off dog walking areas so dogs are not on playing fields/football pitches. This proposal was not agreed as it had been previously considered and ruled out by the Council.
10. Place some benches at most used bus stops at a cost of £3,750. This proposal was agreed for only the bus shelters owned by Great Aycliffe Town Council.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that;

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The following proposed investments be approved and set aside in the Community Support Fund:
  - a) Boost the Grants and Donations Budget from £5,000 to £15,000.
  - b) Boost the Large Community Events Budget from £25,000 to £31,000.
  - c) Purchase of defibrillators for five Council facilities to include trauma kits at a maximum cost of £10,000.
  - d) Purchase of an additional five metal picnic benches for the Town Park including disabled access at a maximum cost of £4,650.
  - e) Place a memorial bench somewhere in the town to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and COVID-19 or VE Day at a maximum cost of £2,000.
  - f) Benches to be placed at the most used bus stops owned by Great Aycliffe Town Council at a maximum cost of £3,750.
- iii) The unallocated balance of £13,600 be retained as a contingency sum.
- iv) The three flower beds outside of the offices be retained.
- v) Officers contact DCC 'Clean and Green' regarding additional bulb planting around the town.

## **32. GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out for consideration two grant and donation requests received since the last meeting.

It was reported that a total of £2,500 is currently available in the Grants and Donations Budget, £8,510 in the Community Benefit Fund and £4,000 in the Community Events Grants Budget.

The following requests were considered:

### **a) Catherine Lenahan**

A request for a donation of £1,000 was received from a local resident who is a published author, editor, Early Years and Primary Education advisor, and Senior Research Officer for Global Literacy. She is also a former teacher at Sugar Hill Primary School. The request was for funding to create reading materials for early years children in local nurseries

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft, and seconded by Councillor Neil Collinson, and

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that;

- i) A donation for £1,000 be given to Catherine Lenahan towards the production of reading materials.

**b) Welcome Café – Parish of Great Aycliffe (St Clare’s Church)**

An application for a grant of £2,000 was received from the Welcome Café based within St Clare’s Church. The request was for funding towards the purchase of an industrial dishwasher.

Following a discussion around costs and options, it was proposed by Councillor Lindsey Aston, and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson, and

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that;

- i) A grant for £2,000 be given to Welcome Café towards the purchase of an industrial dishwasher.

**c) Letter of Thanks**

A letter of thanks had been received from the Newton Aycliffe Pipe Band. Councillor Andy Hill passed on thanks from the Pipe Band for the ties provided by the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that;

- i) The letter of thanks from the Newton Aycliffe Pipe Band be received.

**33. 2025/26 TOWN COUNCIL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN**

The Corporate and Policy Officer submitted the 2025/26 Town Council Service Delivery Plan for Members’ consideration and approval.

Councillor Tony Beddard noted that on page seven, ‘Manage Schools’, should include (with the exception of St. Oswald’s Pre School), and Councillor Martin Ashcroft wished to have his full name adding in the ‘Member Contact Details’.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and;

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The 2025/26 Town Council Service Delivery Plan, be approved subject to the addition of (with the exception of St. Oswald’s Pre School) on page 7 and Councillor Martin Ashcroft’s full name in the Member Contact Details section as requested.

**34. 2025/26 PRE-SCHOOL SERVICE PLAN**

The Corporate and Policy Officer submitted the 2025/26 Pre-School Service Delivery Plan for Members’ consideration and approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and seconded by Councillor Ken Robson, and;

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The 2025/26 Pre-School Service Delivery Plan, be approved.

**35. ADDITIONAL CAPITAL BUDGET APPROVALS REFERRED FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION COMMITTEES**

Members were asked to approve the following additional capital budget approvals as agreed at the Environment and Recreation Committees on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025:

**Environment Committee – Works Section Ride on Mower**

Members agree to refer an additional capital budget request of £6,750 (or £8,820 if the demo vehicle has sold) to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

**Recreation Committee - Sports Complex Heating System**

Agree to refer an additional capital budget approval request of £24,769 to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval (via a bringing forward of the Asset Management Plan budget provision) to facilitate the replacement of all three sports complex boilers and the water boiler.

**Recreation Committee – Additional Driving Range Ball Dispenser**

Agree that an additional Capital Budget approval request of £4,550 is referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- i) The request for an additional Capital Budget amount of £6,750 (or £8,820 if the demo vehicle has sold) for the works section ride on mower be approved.
- ii) The request for an additional Capital Budget amount of £24,769 (via a bringing forward of the Asset Management Plan budget provision) for the replacement of all three sports complex boilers and the water boiler be approved.
- iii) The request for an additional Capital Budget amount of £4,550 for the additional driving range ball dispenser be approved.

*A test emergency evacuation of the Council Chamber was undertaken at the end of the meeting.*

**Chairman**