

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe on Wednesday 23rd October 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Arun M. Chandran (Chairman)

Councillors Eddy Adam, Martin Ashcroft, Lindsey Aston, Dorothy Bowman, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Sandra Kirby, Brian McAnaney, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

One member of the public

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Tony Armstrong, Jim Atkinson, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Wendy Hillary, Simon Hocking, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones and John Moore.

44. MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

No dispensation requests had been received.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

46. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

47. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on the 11th September 2024, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48. ASSET MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, and seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam and;

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Asset Management Sub Committee, held on the 9th October 2024, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, and its recommendations and decisions be agreed.

49. ACCOUNTS CONTROL SHEETS

Accounts Control Sheets for the 28th August, 11th September, 25th September and 9th October 2024 and the General Bank Accounts for August and September 2024 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the Account Control Sheets for the 28th August, 11th September, 25th September and 9th October 2024 and the General Bank Accounts for August and September 2024 be received.

50. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

The Town Clerk submitted a report setting out the current position on the Council's Grants and Donations Budgets and setting out any grant and donation requests which had been received since the last meeting.

It was reported that a total of £2,565 is currently available in the Donations Budget, £7,156 in the Community Benefit Fund and £1,550 in the Community Events Grants Budget.

It was advised that since the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, no further grant or donation requests or letters of thanks had been received.

It was proposed by Councillor John Clark, and seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and;

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) the report be received.

51. 2024/25 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AND PROJECTION OF EXPECTED OUTTURN

The Finance Manager submitted a report on the six-month financial position on the Council's approved 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budget up to 30th September 2024, along with a forecast of the expected year-end outturn position.

The report also quantified any income losses, additional costs and savings relating to the economic situation and how these have impacted upon the Council's Revenue Budget and overall financial position in the current year.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked the Finance Manager for a detailed report and with reference to the Cemeteries Revenue Budget asked if the trend for less burials was something to be concerned about.

The Finance Manager advised that the burials are currently below normal levels and this trend had been accounted for in the Draft 2025/26 Revenue Budget. However it was difficult to project any longer-term future changes.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that the recommendations of the report be agreed. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report on the six-month financial position on the Council's 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budgets and the early projection of year-end expected outturn be received; and
- ii) A further report on the Revenue and Capital Budget Position be received at the January Policy and Resources Committee, detailing the financial position as at 31st December 2024 and an updated projection of expected outturn.

52. 2025/26 DRAFT POLICY AND RESOURCES BUDGETS

The Finance Manager submitted a report to present for Members' consideration, comments, and approval, the draft 2025/26 Revenue and Capital Budgets for the Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked the Finance Manager for a relatively positive report and recommended that the draft budget and capital programme budget be agreed.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam, seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran that the recommendations of the report be agreed. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received;
- ii) The draft 2025/26 Policy and Resources Committee Revenue Budget be agreed.
- iii) The draft 2025/26 Policy and Resources Capital Programme Budget be agreed as per the report and officers' recommendations;
- iv) Members report any feedback or proposed amendments on the draft budgets to the Finance Manager

53. OVERALL DRAFT 2025/26 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

A report was received from the Finance Manager setting out the Council's overall draft 2025/26 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Budget for Members' consideration, comments, and approval.

The report also asked 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.

Councillor Lindsey Aston asked for clarification regarding the 2025/26 pay award increase.

The Finance Manager added that any pay award increase had already been built into the budget.

It was proposed by Councillor Arun Chandran, seconded by Councillor Eddy Adam that the recommendations of the report be agreed. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The 2025/26 draft Precept of £2,050,300 be agreed.
- iii) The proposed increase of 3.75% in the Town Council Tax be agreed.
- iv) The draft 2025/26 Capital Programme Budget of £666,600 be agreed including the proposed classification of the various capital projects.
- v) The possible fall in the Council's Balances and Reserves to as low as £0.983 million by the end of 2025/26 be noted.
- vi) Any comments, feedback and proposed amendments to the 2025/26 draft Revenue and Capital Budgets be submitted to the Chairman or Vice Chairmen of the Committee and officers as soon as possible.

CHAIRMAN