

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 4th DECEMBER 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 4th December 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Arun M. Chandran (Chairman)

Councillors Tony Armstrong, Martin Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Dorothy Bowman, John Clark, Neil Collinson, George Gray, Ian Gray, Andy Hill, Jed Hillary, Sandra Kirby, John Moore, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)

Miss. Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)

Mr. Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)

Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE

Two members of the public.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Eddy Adam, Lindsey Aston, Brian Haigh, Sandra Haigh, Phillip Hawkins, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones, Neville Jones, Brian McAnaney and Michael Stead.

61. MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS

No dispensation requests had been received.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

63. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

64. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and;

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on the 23rd October 2024, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65. ACCOUNTS CONTROL SHEETS

The Accounts Control Sheets for the 24th October; 6th November and 22nd November 2024 and the General Bank Account for October 2024 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the Account Control Sheets for the 24th October; 6th November and 22nd November 2024 and the General Bank Account for October 2024 be received.

66. 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 the three grant and donation requests which had been received since the last meeting for consideration.

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

The following grant and donation requests were considered:

a) **Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe**

A request was received from Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe for a donation of £450 to support the cost of their annual Model Railway Exhibition in March 2025.

The request was to assist with the costs of room hire and accommodation for some of the exhibitors.

It was proposed by Councillor Jim Atkinson, and seconded by Councillor John Clark and;

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) A donation of £450 be given to Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe to support the cost of their annual Model Railway Exhibition in March 2025, funded from the Grants and Donations Budget.

b) **Missed a Beat**

A request was received via a letter from the newly established local charity; Missed a Beat.

The charity was requesting a donation of £700 towards the cost of purchasing defibrillators and associated equipment and cabinets, to be installed at the Council's facilities at West Cemetery and Simpature Pavilion as previously agreed.

Councillor Carl Robinson spoke in support of Missed a Beat and proposed that a donation of £700 be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor Martin Ashcroft.

A brief discussion was held regarding clarification on the ownership and maintenance of the equipment if it was to be installed.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Missed a Beat would be taking on the ownership and future maintenance of the equipment.

Councillor Jed Hillary proposed an amendment, that a lower donation of £500 be given as the Council were already supporting the charity by paying for the installation of the equipment and infrastructure adaptations. This was seconded by Councillor Neil Collinson.

A vote then took place on the amendment with the following result:

For: 2

Against: 15

Therefore, the amendment failed.

Members then voted on the original proposal which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) A donation of £700 be given to Missed a Beat towards the cost of purchasing a defibrillator and associated equipment and cabinet, to be installed at West Cemetery and Simpature Pavilion, funded from the Grants and Donations Budget.

c) Husqvarna Charity Fundraiser for the Sick Children's Trust

A donation request was received via email, from a representative of local business Husqvarna, who are raising funds for a national charity; The Sick Children's Trust, requesting the donation of a raffle prize.

Councillor Jed Hillary initially proposed that a round of golf for two be given. This was seconded by Councillor John Clark

It was further proposed by Councillor Martin Ashcroft and seconded by Councillor Carl Robinson that four ball voucher for a round of golf be given.

It was further proposed by Councillor Neil Collinson and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson that a meal voucher for the Oak Leaf Sports Complex to the value of £40 be given.

Following a short discussion Councillors Hillary and Ashcroft withdrew their proposals.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) A donation of a £40 meal voucher for the Oak Leaf Sports Complex be given to Husqvarna for their charity fundraiser for the Sick Children's Trust;
- ii) The prize value to be charged to the Grants and Donations Budget (with the corresponding credit being made to the Sports Complex Income Budget).

d) Letter of Thanks / Post Grant Questionnaire

A post-grant questionnaire had been received from St. Elizabeths Church.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) The post–grant questionnaire from St. Elizabeths Church be received.

67. WORKER PROTECTION (AMENDMENT OF EQUALITY ACT 2010) ACT 2023

The Corporate and Policy Officer submitted a report to advise members of new legislation, which brings with it a specific employer duty to protect employees from sexual harassment.

The report highlighted the actions taken by officers to comply with the new legislation and requested the approval of amendments made to the Council’s Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy.

The Corporate and Policy Officer added that staff had received training on the new legislation and that new Councillors will be given training during their induction procedure as to their employer duties in relation to the legislation.

Councillor Jed Hillary thanked the Corporate and Policy Officer for a comprehensive report and proposed that the recommendations be agreed.

The Chairman clarified that the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Officer and Councillor and Officers Relations Protocol provide guidance for the Councillors.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Arun Chandran and

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The actions taken by officers to comply with the legislation be noted.
- iii) The amended Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy be approved.
- iv) The amended Social Media Acceptable Use Policy be approved.

68. SIMPASTURE PARK FOOTBALL PITCH DRAINAGE

The Works and Environment Manager submitted a report to provide an update on the proposed improvement of the drainage of the sports pitch at Simpasture Park, as agreed at the July Meeting of the Recreation Committee.

He highlighted that any works would need to wait until next summer when ground conditions were better and the football season is over and confirmed that the Council has £20,000 set aside in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year, and that Durham County Councillors may have funding available via their Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership (GAMP) budgets to provide match funding towards the project.

Members were requested to provide direction to officers as to how to proceed in regard to the funding of the project.

Councillor Jed Hillary proposed that the project is given the green light with a view to the works taking place next summer and that the Works and Environment Manager looks for funding streams to offset the project costs. This was seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson.

The Chairman clarified that there is currently £20,000 available in the Medium-Term Financial Plan which leaves an £8,000 shortfall based on estimated costs and that members have agreed that officers explore all avenues available for funding.

It was proposed by Councillor Jed Hillary, and seconded by Councillor Jim Atkinson and;

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that;

- i) The report be received.
- ii) The project is planned to go ahead next summer and that the Works and Environment Manager looks for funding streams to offset the project costs.

CHAIRMAN