



Minutes of the proceedings of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at Hutton House, Chilton on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 commencing at 6.00pm

**Present:-- Chair** - Cllr. S. Reece

**Cllrs:-**E. Bruce, D. English, P. Herbert, J. Houlihan, S. Sutherland (Mayor)

**Finance and Admin Officer-** Mrs Anne Hall (AH)

**Locum Town Clerk:-** Mrs. Joanne Dickinson (JD)

71. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs V. Collinson and P. Malpas- apologies received and accepted by Members
72. **Declarations of Interest-** None
73. **Member Dispensation** – None received
74. **Public Participation-** None present
75. **Approve and accept the recommendations therein-**
  - a. Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
**RESOLVED-** Cllr English proposed the minutes were accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr Houlihan. All agreed.
76. **Receive the year to date Financial Report and budget spend year to date-** Members agreed to the suggestion by JD that the Financial Report up to the end of October be reviewed at the November Town Council Meeting. Going forward the Officers will review the format for delivering the Financial Report to align with the P&R Meetings.
77. **Review the information added to the External Funding Log-** No update
78. **Receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan-** Cllr Reece informed Members that the initial meeting of the advisory group had taken place and was well attended. Positive feedback had been received from those that attended. Public meeting will now be on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 due to the availability of the club which has been confirmed with the family of Brian Turner. The leaflet with the public survey details will be circulated from w/c 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Focus Groups and Surveys will be taking place from w/c 11.11.24.
79. **Website Governance-** Cllr Reece advised that the web pages for the Neighbourhood Plan and Miners Welfare Trust are being developed.
80. **Discuss the membership and subscription costs to CDALC & NALC for the financial year 2025/2026-**

At a recent CDALC meeting it was cascaded that the costs per elector will be increased for 25/26

**RESOLVED-** Cllr Sutherland proposed that the increase be accepted by the committee. Seconded by Cllr Bruce. All agreed.
81. **Consider if the council has any feedback for the Durham County Council Budget Consultation Proposal for 2025/2026 and Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/2027-** Cllr Reece shared her notes on the proposal with Members highlighting the salient points of the consultation [Consultation on our budget proposals for 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-2029- Durham County Council](#) Members discussed how the potential cuts would impact on residents and longer term social impacts on removing various services. Long term thought on infrastructure and the cultural, social and economic liveability for existing residents and attracting new residents has not been considered. JD advised that there

are pots of money available for various options such as Litter Picking support, Neighbourhood Warden match funding which could be looked into.

**RECOMMENDATION-** Members agreed that a statement should be placed on the council website advising what the comments were from the council on the consultation.

- 82. Discuss the maintenance and repairs required for Hutton House** – The building has areas of damp that are becoming more noticeable. Members discussed the various reasons why this may be occurring and how the issues may impact on room bookings in the future. Sustainability options should be considered when looking into energy efficiency option. If this is not viable then the Town Council can demonstrate that advice has been sought.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr Reece proposed that quotes be arranged for building works to rectify the issues. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

**RECOMMENDATION-** The front room used by The Ladder Centre to be set up more as a professional meeting space. The Locum Town Clerk and Chair of the P & R Committee to look into this matter.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr English proposed that information be obtained for the energy efficiency options for the building be explored. Seconded by Cllr Bruce. All agreed.

**83. Policy Review-**

- **List of Policies and a schedule with the review dates**

JD advised that an Officer had commenced work on collating this information and that is a work in progress which will be worked on in November 2024. Cllr Reece advised that the Code of Conduct and Sickness and Absence Policy were agreed at the HR Committee Meeting.

- **Out of hours and Emergency Contact Procedure-** JD has had the telephone diversion onto her mobile phone and asked if that could continue until further notice.
- **Lone Working Policy-** JD has reviewed the policy and advised that when full staff complement is in place the policy is workable. The buddy system would work but currently when a person is alone in the office the system wouldn't work. It was agreed for it to be added into the policy is a sentence that If the staff member is alone and has to leave the office then the staff member will inform the HR Committee of their whereabouts. Members discussed the positive aspects of the new security system set up at the Miners Welfare Trust.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr Sutherland proposed that a quotation is obtained for the security system to be set up at Hutton House. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

- **Health and Safety Policy-** The council currently has a policy in place which is still within the guidelines and the Locum Town Clerk has adapted a Zurich Insurance Health and Safety Policy template. The Zurich policy includes an option for a committee to be referred to for updates/information. The council staff have access to Hiscox training. The HR Committee have agreed that Health and Safety and Safeguarding training should be a priority. Members reviewed the policies provided.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr Sutherland proposed the committee adopt the Zurich template policy. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr English proposed that the committee stated in the policy will be the Policy and Resources Committee. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

- **Modern Slavery Statement-** There isn't a legal requirement for the statement but a lot of public bodies have a statement talking about zero tolerance to modern slavery. Policies would need to include a statement that any organisation the council work with do not engage in modern slavery. Training videos on how to spot the signs are available on the government website. This could be included in the safeguarding training.

**RECOMMENDATION-** Members agreed that the council adopt a zero tolerance policy on modern slavery and human trafficking. The statement to be included for review at the next meeting.

- **Tree Management Policy-** AH advised that the policy has been updated and that the committee have reviewed the policy on several occasions.

**RECOMMENDATION-** The policy be included for ratification at the Town Council Meeting. If the policy is ratified then the sections of each policy relevant to each committee are to be included for review at each committee meeting.

**84. Items to be taken to next council meeting-**

- Tree Management Policy
- Costings on security systems and building works
- Health and Safety Policy and Lone Working Policy-ratification of each policy

**85. Date of next meeting –** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Exclusion of Press and Public- No public present.

- 86. Street Lighting-** AH has received an update from the DCC Officer that a consultant has been arranged by DCC and AH has confirmed that DCC will fund the costs.

- 87. FOI Requests-** None received as at 22.10.24 that was for the Town Council

- 88. School Playground-** JD to email the contact at the CAT Team who has queried the recent ASB issues. Members advised that this has been ongoing for around a year. JD to look into the information from previous minutes. If nothing in minutes then it was agreed to reply that the meeting took place around a year ago and list the main partners who attended and advise that the same issues are being raised again.

- 89. Request for funding from the Chilton Sports and Social Club-** This agenda item was added to the agenda after publication. Members discussed the request and whether there was a timeline for when funding had to be requested and whether there is a procedure for the publicity of funding provided by the council. Members reviewed the current spend from the grants and donations.

**RESOLVED-** Cllr Sutherland proposed that the funding of £500 be agreed and that it be specified that as a condition of the funding that any promotional material should include mention of the funding from the council and include its logo.

**Seconded by Cllr Reece. All agreed.** Members of the club- Cllr Bruce, Herbert Houlihan, Sutherland did not vote on this matter.

Members also agreed that a statement on the website/facebook page should advertise which organisations have received funding this year and to let residents know that the fund will be open again in April 2025.

The funding policy is to be reviewed prior to April 2025.

Meeting Closed at 7.24pm.

Cllr Sue Reece,  
Chair of the Committee,  
26<sup>th</sup> November 2024