

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**5 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Cooke (in the Chair); Councillors Harrison, Sutherland, Kinch, Blissett, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Moorhouse.

**Officers:** Mr King (Town Clerk) and Mrs Woodward (Deputy Clerk).

**In attendance:** One member of the press.

**18. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES**

None

**19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 17(b)/May/16 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion.

**20. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 13 JUNE 2016 – MINUTES**

**Resolved** – That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record.

**21. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS**

Submitted – A report outlining budget activity since the start of the 2016/17 financial year; relating to payments and receipts for the period 1 May 2016 to 31 July 2016; and income & expenditure relating to the month end of July 2016 (Month 4, 2016/17).

In line with point 2b of the Financial Regulations, reconciliation of the 2016/17 first quarter was carried out by the vice-chair on 23 August 2016.

**Resolved** – That the information be received and noted;

**22. BUDGET 2017/18 – TIMETABLE & BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**

Received – a report setting out the budget preparation timetable; the major pressures to be considered in preparing the budget; and seeking Members' views and direction on the principles to be adopted in preparing the Town Council's budget for 2017/18.

Members considered the overall budgetary position and identified growth factors to be taken into account in 2017/18.

A timetable was agreed. Resources Committee on 31 October would examine proposals for additional expenditure and new projects, with those projects to be progressed submitted to full Council on 14 November. Resources Committee on 16 January 2017 would examine the whole of the proposed budget for 2017/18, including submissions from other Committees, with formulated recommendations presented to full Council on 23 January 2017.

Inflation and underlying assumptions were acknowledged, including: the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant (LCTRS), which forecasted a net reduction in income to the town council of approximately £750 in 2017/18; 1% pay award and incremental

progression for staff not at the top of their scale; rates of Minimum Wage and National Living Wage; and non-pay inflation in the economy.

It was noted that capping criteria, if applied, would be unlikely to impinge on the town council at its current gross expenditure or Band D equivalent precept levels.

It was agreed that all known under-spends which had occurred on the 2016/17 budget would be taken into account when considering the recommended figure to be put forward for 2017/18.

All members had been contacted by letter to indicate any projects they wished to put forward for consideration within the 2017/18 budget. All items would be considered by the relevant committee, prior to Resources Committee, as part of the normal budgetary process.

**Resolved** – That approval be given to the budget setting timetable for 2017/18.

### **23. DISTINCTION OF ROLES OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF RESOURCES**

Submitted – a report proposing changes to some of the council's constitution documents to separate the financial and non-financial roles identified for the chair and vice chair of the Resources Committee. Following discussions with the current holders of these offices, it was proposed that the constitution documents should be amended to give the vice chair responsibility for personnel matters whilst retaining the chair's primary responsibility for financial matters. The benefit of making this distinction was that in the event of personnel issues relating to performance, discipline or absence, it preserved the role of the chair in leading any appeal to an original decision.

Changes were proposed to Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Staff Handbook.

**Resolved** – (a) That the distinction of duties, such that the chair of the Resources Committee leads on financial matters and the vice chair of the Resources Committee leads on personnel matters in the council's constitution, be agreed in principle; and (b) That the recommended changes be made to Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Staff Handbook.

### **24. WOODLEIGH UPDATE**

#### **(i) Asbestos Management Plan**

Following occupation of the building, an asbestos management plan was completed in July by Durham County Council (DCC) as part of the SLA, which identified one priority action: the need to repair/ encapsulate the broken corner of the asbestos board on the back of the cellar door. Two options were presented to Members.

**Resolved** – That members approve removal and disposal of the whole cellar door as asbestos waste at a cost of £364.50 and replace with a hardwood fire door at a cost of approximately £150 from Woodleigh PPM budget.

#### **(ii) Gutters**

Following several reports to DCC about leaking guttering, no action had been taken. Prior to the town council occupying Woodleigh, remedial works had been carried out by DCC to the roof. The leaking gutters were causing the pavement to become dangerous and

an increased risk of slips and falls. It was further reported that the mortar flashing had become loose, leading to questions over the quality of repairs.

**Resolved** – That it be delegated to the Clerk to continue to lobby DCC to repair/rectify the leaking gutters and mortar flashing as a matter of urgency.

**(iii) CCTV**

Pursuant to Minute 14/Jun/16, a CCTV system had been purchased and installed in August. A warning notice was appropriately displayed. It was noted that CCTV was covered by the town council's data protection and FOI policies.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

**(iv) Car park**

Pursuant to Woodleigh Working Group note 32(b)/Apr/16, when it was resolved that the town council should have priority use of the car park, further clarification was needed as to the extent, or otherwise, to which ATDC and CAB could utilise the car park for staff parking. It was noted that Members did not necessarily know when they would need to access the office and the car park was difficult to negotiate. It was suggested that lines could be painted to mark out bays. Members noted that from week commencing 5 September, CAB was reducing its opening hours and would only be operating from Woodleigh Mondays and Wednesdays.

**Resolved** – That the use of Woodleigh car park for staff parking be referred back to Woodleigh Working Group for further discussions with ATDC and CAB.

**(v) Woodleigh Working Group – 20 June 2016 – draft notes**

**Resolved** – That the draft notes be received.

**25. DEFIBRILLATOR UPDATE**

It was reported that following the recommendations of DCC Highways Officers that the cabinet should not protrude onto the footpath, a site visit was held on 25 August. It was proposed that the cabinet be mounted to the right of the Parish Hall door fronting Newgate, which was recessed. This would be considered by the Parish Hall Committee on 5 September. If approved, suitable internal electrical works would be arranged by the Parish Hall Committee to enable the cabinet and defibrillator to be installed by the town council. The Mayor's Charity had offered to pay for the installation of the defibrillator from 2015/16 fundraising.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;  
(b) That approval be given for expenditure of £312 installation costs to be offset by a donation from the Mayor's Charity.

**26. TRAINING**

It was reported that County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership was providing the following two courses in 2017:

**(a) Purdah: Everything you need to know**

February (date and time to be confirmed). Myth busting primarily aimed at members.

**(b) Everything you need to know about elections, induction of new councillors etc.**

1 March 6pm at County Hall. Primarily aimed at staff. Given that Council members were

up for re-election in May 2017, it was prudent that the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk both attend.

**Resolved-** (a) That the information be noted and;  
(b) That members express any interest in attending training to the office.

## **27. ASSET TRANSFER UPDATE**

Negotiations were continuing. Comments had been returned to the county council's solicitors regarding proposed clauses in the lease for Woodleigh Grounds, which would prevent the town council from taking over responsibility for managing public activities on the space requiring approval, up to and including ensuring compliance with the requirements of the SAG.

Other leases were, reportedly, in preparation once the Woodleigh Grounds lease was fully reviewed. DCC was currently responsible for maintaining the pathway to Woodleigh, which was dangerously slippery in wet weather.

There had been no resolution of the agreement between DCC and the funders of the development of Scar Top, regarding the freehold transfer of that area.

**Resolved** – (a) That the information be noted and;  
(b) That it be delegated to the Clerk to contact DCC regarding the dangerous condition of the pathway to Woodleigh.

## **28. STAFFING**

Pursuant to Minute 16/Jun/16, interviews for the post of Services Officer (Finance) were held on 14 July and Claire Atkinson was subsequently appointed and commenced employment with the town council on 8 August. The appointment was subject to a 13 week probation period. An induction and handover process was currently underway with retiring Services Officer (Finance), Jane Smith, whose last day in the office was 7 September.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

## **29. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (IN RESPECT OF CONTINUATION OF ITEM 28. & ITEM 30. BELOW)**

**Resolved** – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to at item 28. & 30, below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

## **28. STAFFING (CONTINUATION)**

Members were informed that the new Services Officer (Finance), Claire Atkinson, could not be added onto the payroll until after 9 September. Retiring Services Officer (Finance), Jane Smith, did not officially end employment with the town council until 30 September and would remain on the payroll until October. A payment in advance had been made with August payroll to Claire Atkinson, to be reconciled with October and November payflow submissions.

**Resolved** – That the information be noted.

### **30. PLAY AREA SAFETY SURFACING – QUOTATIONS FOR PERIMETER REPAIRS**

Submitted – a report considering the play area safety surfacing quotations for perimeter repairs and seeking to determine which company should be appointed to undertake works. It was reported that three quotations had been received to cut back shrunken wet pour and install 200mm band repairs in black. Safety surfacing repairs were covered with a 5 year guarantee.

Members were reminded that in 2014, regular play area inspections carried out by DCC and the annual inspection carried out by The Play Inspection Company, highlighted the deterioration and shrinkage of the safety surfacing at all play areas. It was recommended that the safety surfacing be repaired or replaced within the next few years. The town council resolved that a commitment of at least £2,500 be included in the 2015/16 Play Area budget and each year thereafter (Services Minute 27(b)(ii)/Oct/14 refers). It was further resolved that from 2015/16, any Play Area budgetary underspends be transferred into a Play Area Repairs and Future Provision Reserve Fund (Services Minute 27(b)(iii)/Oct/14 refers). Resources Committee and subsequently full Council approved this as part of the 2015/16 budget.

In December 2015, a letter of concern was received from a resident regarding the condition of play area safety matting at Marwood Drive. This issue was highlighted during the annual play area inspections in May 2015 and identified as a low risk, with suggested action to repair the perimeter of the safety surfacing to remove tripping points. Services Committee resolved that estimates be sought to repair the Marwood Drive play area perimeter safety surfacing in the first instance and that a rolling programme of play area safety surface repair be set (Minute 43(i)(a)&(b)/Dec/15 refers).

Members noted that there was a current claim against the town council for an alleged accident at Green Lane play area on 1 May 2015. This was being dealt with by the town council's insurers (Services Cmt Minute 6(ii)(b)/Jun/16 refers).

Councillor Kinch left the meeting before resolutions were passed.

**Resolved** – (a) That the report be noted and;  
(b) That Abacus Playgrounds be awarded the contract to carry out perimeter wetpour safety surface repairs to Marwood Drive, Green Lane and Bouch Way play areas at a total cost of £4,500 from Play Areas Repairs and Future Provision Reserve Fund and Bouch Way Play Area Earmarked Funds.