

Minutes of a meeting of the **Policy and Strategy Committee** held at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **Tuesday 25th March 2014** at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Golightly (Chairman) and Councillors Anderson, Blackburn and Lethbridge.

Also Present: David Anderson, (Town Clerk)

PS.21/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L. Zair.

PS.22/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

PS.23/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

PS.24/13 PARISH PLAN

Detailed discussion was given to the options to undertake and prepare a Parish Plan. It was noted that the parish planning process involved obtaining, in a wide range of ways, the communities views on issues that affect the area. Every resident in the Council's area should be given an opportunity to put their views forward.

It was usual for an organisation independent to the local council to undertake the research to ensure that it is impartial, objective and truly reflected community views.

Once the research has been undertaken the Town Council would then prepare a short to medium term action plan as a response to community needs and aspirations.

A parish plan would demonstrate that a local council had consulted with local communities and was aware of its needs and wishes. It is therefore a valuable resource when applying for grant funding.

An allocation of £5,000 had been included in the budget for 2014/15 for the production of a parish plan. This may however be supplemented by a grant of up to £10,000 from Awards for All.

Sarah Robson, Durham Community Action (formerly Durham Rural Community Council) had previously attended a meeting of the Committee to advise on the production of a Parish Plan. It was suggested that Durham Community Action be approached to ascertain whether it could assist in the production of a Parish Plan within the budget allocation and assist with a grant application.

RECOMMENDED: That Durham Community Action be approached to ascertain whether it could assist in the production of a Parish Plan within the budget allocation and assist with a grant application.

PS.24/13 CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to the following sections for inclusion in the Councils Constitution:

Members Allowances Scheme
Employee Code of Conduct
Protocol for Member/Officer relations

Signed:
Chair

In relation to the Members Allowances Scheme it was suggested that the mileage allowance rate should be set at 45p per mile, which was below the amount which National Insurance would be payable for the first 10,000 miles. It was noted that the current level of mileage allowance set by the National Joint Council was between 46.9p and 65p depending on engine size.

It was also suggested that the car Mileage Claim form be amended to allow bus and taxi fares to be claimed where appropriate.

RECOMMENDED: That the documents be submitted to Council for approval.