

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

4th November 2025 at 4.30pm

Held at 5.00pm in Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In attendance: Cllr Harker (Chair), Siddle, Wilkinson, Wilson & Zair

Also, In attendance: Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk & Mrs Vicki Booth, Assistant Town Clerk

PRC037/25 - Apologies for Absence – Cllr Wilson no apologies received from Cllr Gray

PRC038/25 - Declaration of Interests - No declarations of interest were made.

Resolved: Cllr Wilkinson declared an interest in the Bishops Press.

PRC039/25 - Action Log from Previous Meeting – each action was reviewed and discussed as required.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

PRC040/25 Public Participation – no members of the public were in attendance.

Resolved: that no members of the public were present.

PRC041/25 – Finance

- i. **Bank Account Update** – the Clerk gave an update regarding the closure of Nationwide which is still in process and once complete the funds will be moved to other accounts as previously reported.

Resolved: that members note a new signatory was required once the final councillor has been appointed. Balances and projections of interest to be tabled at the next meeting.

- ii. **Budget Planning and Precept Preparation for 2026/27** – the Clerk

Discussion re increase of members allowance.

That the capacity for allotments is suitable providing some of the low-level admin is removed from the senior staff's capacity.

Discussed the budget for events.

Discussed lighting columns inspection requirements again next year.

Some assumptions were made on the precept being the same as 2025/26 with zero increase.

Questions over events regarding priority events and what can be delivered on various budgets.

Income streams such as bank interest were discussed.

Resolved: that members discussed the budget planning detail and are waiting for the indicative base for an accurate forecast.

iii. **Authorisation of Payments** – the payment report was discussed.

Resolved: that members approved the payment report.

PRC042/25 – Audit Prep – the Clerk is currently seeking quotes to appoint a new internal auditor for the forthcoming year.

Resolved: that members note that quotes are still being sourced.

PRC043/25 – Corporate

a) **Mobile Phones** - the Clerk gave an update regarding the purchasing of new handsets.

Resolved: that members agreed the increase in the new handsets and contracts for 3 staff and handset only for the allotment officer. That members agree that options need to be sourced for members laptops to be upgraded.

b) **DCC Consultation**

- a. Budget proposal 2026/27 & Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2029/30
- b. Exceptions to the empty and unfurnished properties and second homes council tax premium
- c. High Street Rental Auction Bishop Auckland

Resolved: that members agreed with a&c but discussed the removal of the second paragraph of item b. and then approved for submission.

PRC044/25 – Planning – that members reviewed the application

Resolved: that members noted there was no response required on the current applications.

Exclusion of Press and Public In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

PRC045/25 – Asset Management

a) **Sale of De-designated Land Update** – the Clerk gave an update on the offers that have been made and requested members to advise the next steps.

Resolved: that members requested a response be made on the agreed discussion.