

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES BOARD

25 March 2013

Present: Councillor Moore in the Chair

Councillors Butcher, Davis N Dirveiks, Forwood, Johnston, Smith and Winter.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Holland.

Councillors B Moss and Pickard were also in attendance.

82 **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared at the meeting.

83 **Minutes of the Resources Board held on 28 January 2013**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28 January 2013, copies having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record subject to the addition of Councillor Butcher in the list of those present, and signed by the Chairman.

84 **Land at Waverton Avenue, Warton**

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) sought approval for the transfer of land at Waverton Avenue in Warton from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund, in order that the use of the land for allotments could be protected in the future.

Resolved:

That, in order that the use of the land for allotments be protected in the future, the transfer of land at Waverton Avenue in Warton from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund be approved.

85 **Review of Grounds Maintenance Service for Council Sheltered Schemes**

The Assistant Director (Housing) reported on a review of the grounds maintenance service delivered to Council sheltered schemes and flats.

Resolved:

- a That the review of the grounds maintenance service to sheltered schemes and flats be noted; and**
- b That the request for a growth bid for the grounds maintenance pilot scheme of £20,832 for 2013/14 only be agreed.**

86 Asbestos Management Plan – Housing Division

The Assistant Director (Housing) provided the Board with information about the Council's duties with regard to managing asbestos in its housing stock and the proposed new arrangements to undertake the relevant surveys required to manage asbestos in domestic and non domestic premises.

Resolved:

- a That the proposal to employ two agency members of staff for a period of two years to undertake asbestos surveys be approved; and**
- b That a growth bid of £74,900 for 2013-14 and 2014-15 be approved to cover the costs of employing the agency employees.**

87 Adoption of a Revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) requested that the Council adopts a revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy (DHP) to reflect the changes in Housing and Council Tax Benefit as well as the wider welfare reforms that take effect on 1 April 2013.

Recommended:

That the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) policy as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) be approved.

88 Adoption of an Updated Prosecution and Sanctions Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) requested that the Council adopts the updated Prosecution and Sanction Policy which was necessary due to changes introduced as part of the wider Welfare Reform agenda and to reflect up to date practices.

Recommended:

That the Fraud Prosecution and Sanctions Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) be adopted.

89 Adoption of a Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) requested that the Council adopts the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy which was necessary due to a recent National Local Ombudsman decision in which its recommendations stated that all Councils should have a stated policy around adopting local Council Tax discounts.

Recommended:

That the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) be adopted.

90 Corporate Debt Strategy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) sought approval for a revised Corporate Debt Strategy, originally adopted by the Board in July 2007, which outlined how the Council would approach customers who owed multiple debts to the Council.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Debt Framework as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) be adopted with immediate effect.

91 Internal Audit – Performance for Third Quarter 2012-13

The Deputy Chief Executive reported on the progress made by the Council's Internal Audit function against the agreed plan of work for 2012-13.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

92 Financial Inclusion Activity Update

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) updated Members on the Financial Inclusion activity undertaken by the Council and its partners in the last twelve months.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

93 Minutes of the Housing Sub-Committee held on 4 February 2013

The minutes of the Housing Sub-Committee held on 4 February 2013 were received and noted.

94 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

95 Irrecoverable Local Taxation and Housing Debts

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) detailed the amounts recommended for write off, in accordance with the write off policy agreed by the former Finance Sub-Committee in September 2000.

Resolved:

- a That the write off of 7 balances over £1,500, totalling £21,051.30 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be approved;**
- b That the write off of 42 balances over £1,500, totalling £292,359.87 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be approved;**
- c That the write off of 4 balances over £1,500, totalling £65,803.23 in respect of overpaid Housing Benefit be approved;**
- d That the write off of 1 balance under £1,500, totalling £384.52 in respect of unpaid Council Tax be noted;**
- e That the write off of 15 balances under £1,500, totalling £5,746.89 in respect of unpaid Non Domestic Rates be noted;**
- f That the write off of 103 balances under £1,500, totalling £14,428.28 in respect of overpaid Housing Benefit be noted;**

- g That the write back of 1 balance totalling £529.88, in respect of unpaid Council Tax be noted; and**
- h That the write back of 1 balance totalling £58.26 in respect of overpaid Housing Benefit be noted.**

96 Adoption of an Updated Write Off Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) sought approval for an update to the Council's "Write Off Policy" that was adopted in September 2000, to ensure consistent practices were followed in respect of those debts administered within the Community Services Division.

Recommended:

- a That the updated Write Off Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) be approved;**
- b That the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) delegated authority to write off debts be increased to £5,000 in respect of Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments with effect from April 2013; and**
- c That the Financial Regulations be updated to reflect the revision in delegated authority.**

97 The Arcade

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) updated Members on the discussions and correspondence with Atherstone Town Council around the conditions of sale of The Arcade and Members were asked to consider a way forward.

Resolved:

- a That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director (Streetscape) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of Resources Board to negotiate and agree the conditions of sale of The Arcade; and**
- b That should such agreement not be reached within one month from the date of this Board, The Arcade be placed for sale on the open market.**

98 Sale of Land

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) updated Members on progress to date with the sale of land adjacent to 40 Kiln Way, Polesworth and the Board was asked to consider the latest revised offer.

Resolved:

That the revised offer set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape) for the plot of land adjacent to 40 Kiln Way, Polesworth be accepted.

J Moore
Chairman