

Kirkbymoorside Town Council – Priorities

1. The top priorities for Kirkbymoorside Town Council are:
 - a) To represent and support citizens in their dealings with larger public authorities, and to press such authorities to meet their obligations to the town and people of Kirkbymoorside. Prime examples of this at present are discussions over plans for new housing development, and the need to campaign for a continuation of library services.
 - b) To seek and promote schemes that will give benefits to the town and people of Kirkbymoorside. This may involve (usually modest) financial grants, or it may involve using council resources to coordinate activity. An example would be the council taking overall responsibility for the Sports Field, in support of the individual sports clubs. There are many other possibilities. The Town Council also acts as an official consultee on many matters.
 - c) To efficiently and economically provide a range of services. Examples include provision of play areas, street lighting, the new Moorside Room and the management of Manor Vale.

2. In pursuit of these priorities, the council seeks to act so as to promote:
 - a) Democratic accountability, so that expenditure of money and effort are directed according to local opinion.
 - b) Openness, so that wherever possible the people of the town are fully informed about the council's activities and nothing is kept secret unless absolutely necessary.
 - c) Clarity, so that the people of the town can understand what the council is doing and are not swamped with bureaucratic nit picking.

3. Subsidiary considerations are:
 - a) The council must act lawfully taking reasonable and proportionate measures to follow the spirit of legislation.
 - b) The council must use appropriate financial procedures whilst maintaining easily understood records appropriate to the scale of its activities.
 - c) The council must not allow its internal procedures to overwhelm its core purposes, outlined above.

Implications of acting efficiently and economically

Kirkbymoorside is a small town with an active council. All such councils face a problem, which stems from the employment of a clerk. Having a clerk is a tremendous advantage, because a good clerk will ensure that the council's policies are put into practical effect and will exercise firm control over costs. There is, though, an employment cost and this can be a sizeable proportion of the total expenditure for a small council.

The current situation is that the larger towns in Ryedale (Pickering, Malton, Norton) have lower Band D equivalent tax charges than Kirkbymoorside, while Helmsley's is significantly higher (based on 2014-15 figures, the latest available). This is to be expected, but the council is mindful of the need to maintain strict control on costs.

Taking this consideration into account and bearing in mind the council's priorities, there is an impact on council members. It is the council's policy that the purely administrative costs of running the council (support for meetings and such like) should be kept under control, and reduced whenever possible. This is a councillor responsibility just as much as it is the clerk's responsibility. The council will consider alternative ways of working if they will reduce administrative costs.

Given these factors, the clerk is authorised to refer requests from individual council members in cases where they would involve significant additional work over and above that necessitated by the council's agreed policies. Reference will be made to the staffing committee for workload aspects or to the whole council for policy aspects of requests.

Councillors should be aware that their requests may be deferred in this way, although this does not in any way affect the right to request an agenda item for a council meeting, or the legal right councillors have to access council documents needed for the pursuit of their duties.