

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 21 January 2010, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Brunskill	M Robinson
M Fielding	C Ross
R Hargreaves	G Scott
K Hind	J S Sutcliffe
B Hilton	J Waddington
E M H Ranson	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Environmental Health Manager, Housing Strategy Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillor D Berryman.

725 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Rimmer and D Taylor.

726 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

727 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

728 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Parks who spoke with regard to the future development of Clitheroe Hospital. She informed the Committee how she had become involved with the proposed development and why she felt these services at the hospital were essential to the people of Ribble Valley. She was very concerned that the proposed redevelopment of Clitheroe Hospital had been suspended and raised a number of issues that she hoped would be dealt with by the Primary Care Trust. The Chairman thanked Mrs Parks for her contribution.

729 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CLITHEROE HOSPITAL

The Chairman welcomed Mr Steve Spoerry, Chief Executive of East Lancs PCT, Kathy Reade, Chairman of the East Lancs PCT and Victoria Robinson, Director of Corporate Services at East Lancs PCT. Mr Spoerry thanked the Committee for inviting him to attend the meeting. He started by informing Committee that the PCT existed to commission and fund NHS services in this area that were of good quality and compliant as well as accessible to the community. He informed

Committee that a considerable amount of work had gone into looking at the services at Clitheroe Hospital and that the NHS had an ongoing programme of renewing and rebuilding premises throughout the East Lancs PCT area. However, in Summer 2009 the Board of Trust had suspended work on the capital programme pending a review. They had a general concern about affordability with the amount of additional funding that they were expected to receive in future years having fallen and with a much tighter financial situation generally, a closer look was being taken at simply replicating buildings as being the answer, or whether something better should be considered. He informed Committee that work was currently being carried out on budgets as to what could usefully be developed for Clitheroe and the other two sites that had been put on hold (Colne Health Centre and Great Harwood Health Centre).

He told Committee that he recognised the importance of the services at Clitheroe Hospital which included a capacity of 30 beds – 15 for recovery and medical support and 15 for active intervention in recovering; these were mainly used for elderly persons. He acknowledged that it was important that in the future there was merit in being cared for close to home within the community from which people come and that the other services carried out at Clitheroe Hospital including dentistry and x-ray should continue to be provided locally to avoid unnecessary journeys. He also recognised the geographical position of the Ribble Valley that would need to be taken into account in meeting the needs locally. He did however inform Committee that there were no cast iron plans to close Clitheroe Hospital or curtail the range of services available there, although he did not have clarity about the redevelopment.

He informed Committee that the Board of the PCT would receive a paper on the capital budget at their March meeting where they would look at the whole picture and consider what sort of redevelopment should take place at Clitheroe Hospital.

He recognised that a lot of people had taken part in working groups with regard to the proposed development at Clitheroe Hospital and was grateful for their input as this often produces a better design and community commitment. He insisted that this time spent had not been wasted. He also informed Committee that the costs of rurality was a real issue in that it is more expensive and takes longer to see fewer patients and that this is taken into account when funding is received.

Committee Members asked various questions of Mr Spoerry which included: whether the developing ideas in health services had precipitated the reconsideration of this development proposal; if 21st century services should include a proactive health and wellbeing facility; whether Ribble Valley is getting its fair share of finance; the transparency of costs/budgets of the PCT and the length of time it would take for the PCT to make a decision about the proposed development and exactly what the Ribble Valley would get.

Mr Spoerry confirmed that the Government did have a new emphasis on prevention and intervention. He informed Committee that the redevelopment of Clitheroe Hospital might be a “slippage issue” but that service delivery, cost effectiveness did need to be considered.

With regard to Ribble Valley receiving their fair share of finance, he explained that funding was broken down into population and done on a per capita basis that was then adjusted for health status of the population with the intention that every part of England gets a fair share of resources. Members queried whether this was true of Ribble Valley who seemed to get less than other parts of East Lancashire. Mr Spoerry explained spending in Ribble Valley was actually more than the formula amount.

Members asked about the finances of the PCT and where information was available.

With regard to transparency, he informed Committee that the PCT had a duty to publish accounts and discuss their finances in public and that he would endeavour to supply information regarding spending in Ribble Valley.

With regard to knowing when a decision will be made he reiterated that there was a board meeting at the end of March but that in the meantime there was no intention to withdraw any services at Clitheroe Hospital as there is a duty to meet the clinical need.

He promised Committee that he would keep the people of Ribble Valley informed on the progress.

Kathy Reade supported Mr Spoerry and he informed Committee that as Chairman of the Trust she has a duty to "hold the PCT to account" that she would endeavour to keep local people involved and part of the solution.

The Chairman thanked Mr Spoerry, Kathy Reade and Victoria Robinson for attending the meeting and expressed the hope that this should be the start of regular liaison with the PCT on this important issue of the redevelopment of Clitheroe Hospital.

730 REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no references from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

731 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMME 2010/15

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to approve the revised programme for the current year and to consider the future 5-year capital programme for this Committee. A table of schemes was highlighted with the original costs compared to the revised estimates and the unfinished schemes were highlighted.

A booklet was included showing possible schemes for 2010/15 for this Committee in detail. This included ambition links, performance efficiency and consultation, key dates, environmental impact, financial implications, risk assessment, consequences if the scheme is delayed or deleted and impact of proposed schemes on the 5-year capital programme. The Director of Resources informed Committee that this was a draft programme at this stage and would

require further consideration by the Budget Working Group and the Policy and Finance Committee in order to make it an affordable programme. She reminded Committee that traditionally the housing capital programme had been financed from the Government allocations received but that it was likely in the future that the housing capital programme would be treated in the same way as other committees, particular following the transfer of the housing stock.

Committee asked various questions with regard to specific schemes including the disabled facilities grants and the additional land at the cemetery.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the revised capital programme for 2009/10 as set out in the report; and
2. recommend the future 5-year programme for 2010/11 to 2014/15 as outlined to the Policy and Finance Committee.

732 REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10 AND ORIGINAL ESTIMATE 2010/11

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree the revised revenue budget for 2009/10 and consider a draft revenue budget for 2010/11 along with the proposed fees and charges. She informed Committee that the revised revenue budget for 2009/10 was £57,950 higher than the original estimated estimate and highlighted the main reason for these variations.

With regard to the 2010/11 draft revenue budget, the Director of Resources reminded Committee that there were a number of potential problems that could have a significant impact on the budget which included the economic downturn on service income levels, the level of investment income received, public sector funding, pension fund contributions, increase in national insurance contributions, pay awards and the transfer of administration of concessionary travel scheme to upper tier authority. The estimates have been prepared on the current levels of service and included provisions for pay and pay increases of 1.5%. She reminded Committee that when considering savings they should be mindful that whilst the savings required for 2010/11 may appear modest based on the assumptions in the budget forecast, substantial savings would be required from 2011/12 onwards.

She talked Committee through each service heading in some detail and highlighted any major changes in the budget. She also reminded Committee that the service plans were in the process of being reviewed and that as part of those reviews, growth and savings were in the process of being identified. A review of the fees and charges operated by the Committee had also been undertaken and were possible the exercise had included a comparison of charges to those operated by neighbouring authorities and where applicable a private sector.

The net costs to this Committee had increased by £122,070 between the years and highlighted the main factors that had caused this were highlighted.

Committee discussed several budget heads that fall under this Committee and expressed concern regarding increases in recharges from grounds maintenance and other changes in support service recharges. This was with particular reference to the changes to the dog warden and pest control service and Clitheroe Cemetery.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the revised revenue budget for 2009/10;
2. approve the proposed fees and charges as set out in the report; and
3. agree the revenue budget for 2010/11 for submission to the next Policy and Finance Committee.

733 CONSULTATION PAPER ON ENCOURAGING LANDLORDS TO RELEASE LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the consultation paper which sets out draft guidance to encourage landowners to bring forward sites for affordable housing. In the Government's 2007 housing green paper "homes for the future – more affordable, more sustainable" it recognised the challenge for local delivery bodies to engage with rural people and communities to better identify rural affordable housing needs. However it also recognised that one of the blockages to this was the provision of land and as such there were recommendations that would encourage landowners to bring forward land for rural affordable housing. This included allowing landowners to nominate someone such as a family member or employee to meet the local connections and housing need criteria, providing the property was subject to the same Section 106 criteria as developments of other affordable homes to be affordable in perpetuity to meet local needs and to look at ways in which landowners could retain some interest/income from the release of land.

The report set out the consultation questions and suggested responses.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report; and
2. approve the consultation responses as set out.

734 PENNINE LANCASHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY 2009/29

The Chief Executive submitted a report which included a copy of the Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy requesting Committee to endorse its contents and the inclusion of Ribble Valley within the strategic document. The Housing Strategy Officer informed Committee that Ribble Valley had been identified as the lead authority for achieving Policy AIM13 – Developing Affordable Housing in Rural Areas and that the inclusion in this strategy was important in demonstrating our commitment to working together as a sub-region and in partnership with all Pennine Lancashire Authorities.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve Ribble Valley's inclusion in the document and commitment to achieving the actions identified in the Delivery Plan.

735 RIBBLE VALLEY HOMES – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND THE VAT SHELTER

The Director of Resources submitted a report updating Committee on the latest position of the VAT shelter, which was set up following the transfer of our housing stock to Ribble Valley Homes. She informed Committee that there was a predicted shortfall in receipts over the first five years of operation of £219,000. This was partly due to the temporary change in the VAT rate to 15% but also due to a lower capital programme value achieved by Ribble Valley Homes. A system of monthly monitoring had also been put into place to ensure more timely information was received by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

736 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Director of Development Services submitted a report for Committee's information which included an update on Pandemic Flu. The minutes of the Environment Agency Liaison Meeting a dog-fouling update, food safety update, an Event Safety Advisory Group update and 'Radioactivity in Food and the Environment' 2008.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

737 HEALTH PROMOTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

Councillor Bridget Hilton gave a verbal update on the SMYLES programme which although was due to end in 2011 because of the progress and good work that had been made, a strategy was being formed for it to be able to continue. She also updated Committee on the oral dental health committee in that there had been a big improvement to access to NHS dentistry over the past 2 years including an increase in dental students. She felt it would be a good idea to get more information out about dental health care via the Parish Council Liaison Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

738 REPORTS ON REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports.

739 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be an Exempt Information Under Category 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

740 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the development of affordable units in the borough. He informed Committee that Primrose Lodge had been successful in a Kickstart bid and the affordable units would be delivered working in partnership with Contour Housing Association which would result in 31 affordable units on the site. He also updated Councillors on various other sites.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

741 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of three disabled facilities grants and two home improvement loans which had been approved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

742 PURCHASE OF LAND FOR CLITHEROE CEMETERY

The Director of Development Services submitted a report updating Committee with regard to the purchase of additional land for Clitheroe Cemetery, Waddington Road, Clitheroe. He informed Committee that a report would be presented to the forthcoming Policy and Finance Committee asking for support to purchase additional land.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

743 REQUEST FOR AIR QUALITY MONITORING CAPITAL BID

The Director of Development Services submitted a report seeking Committee's support and a recommendation to Policy and Finance Committee to make financial provision for a mandatory air quality survey. He informed Committee that in May 2009 Environmental Health undertook and completed the mandatory 3-year air quality Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) for the Borough. Following the completion of this DEFRA had validated the report and confirmed that a detailed assessment was required for the annual mean and daily PM10 objectives in and around Bankfield Quarry, Clitheroe. As such it was now necessary to arrange to undertake suitable monitoring and this would require the leasing of a suitable monitoring unit for a 3 month period. Financial provision was needed to undertake this work.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report; and
2. recommend to Policy and Finance Committee that additional financial provision to enable this monitoring to be undertaken be made.

744 REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of a request from Ribble Valley Homes for a contribution towards a disabled adaptation. The Housing Strategy Officer gave the details of the adaptation and of the work that was required to make the property suitable.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to make a contribution of £5,000 towards the adaptation at 9 Vale House Close, Whalley, subject to Ribble Valley Homes funding the balance of £25,000.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).