

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 16 June 2015, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	A Knox
S Bibby	G Mirfin
R Elms	M Robinson
T Hill	J Rogerson
K Hind	I Sayers
S Hore	R J Thompson

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Director of Community Services.

78 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Hargreaves and D T Smith

79 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

80 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

81 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

82 BRIEFING ON THE REMIT OF POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The terms of reference for the Policy and Finance Committee were circulated for Committee's information. The Director of Resources informed Committee that this Committee served a dual role in that it is a service committee in its own right but also a policy committee for the whole Council with a strategic and corporate overview.

83 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive asked Committee to confirm arrangements and membership for the working groups under the remit of this Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee appoint the following working groups:

- Budget Working Group – 6 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat;

- Economic Development – 6 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat;
- Market Redevelopment – 3 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat.

84

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on members' allowances following their review of the current scheme and to make recommendations regarding the new scheme to Full Council on 14 July 2015.

The Council is required to agree and publicise its members' allowance scheme each year and have an independent review at least every four years. It had been agreed at Policy and Finance Committee on 24 March 2015 that the current scheme would be extended until the outcome of the review of the independent panel was considered. It was also agreed that a small working group be formed to consider the panel's report. In doing so the Council must have regard for the recommendations made by the panel.

The independent panel had met a number of times and also interviewed a number of Members as part of their review. A full report of the panel setting out their findings and recommendations was included with the report.

The working group had met to discuss the report and its findings in detail. They agreed the general thrust of the findings to increase the basic allowance significantly and substantially reduce special responsibility allowances with some adjustments.

On receipt of the independent remuneration panel's report the Council must make it available for public inspection. A notice must be publicised in the local press describing the main features of the panel's recommendations and specifying the amounts of each allowance.

Members discussed the recommendations of both the independent remuneration panel and the working group. It was suggested that the scheme should be effective from 1 August 2015 rather than being backdated to May 2015. It was also acknowledged that the scheme meant an overall reduction in the total cost of allowances.

RESOLVED: That

- *** 1. it be a recommendation to Full Council on 14 July 2015 to agree a revised scheme of Members' Allowances as per the Independent Panel's report but with the amendments suggested by the Working Group and set out in the table below; ***

Basic Allowance	Current	Independent Panel Recommendation	Working Group Recommendation
	Annual Amount	Annual Amount	Annual Amount
	£	£	£
All Councillors	2,952	3,718	3,500

Special Responsibility	Current		Independent Panel Recommendation		Working Group Recommendation	
	Multiplier	Annual Amount £	Multiplier	Multiplier	Annual Amount £	Multiplier
Leader	x 5	14,760	x 3½	13,013	x 4	14,000
Deputy Leader	x 3	8,856	x 2	7,436	x 2½	8,750
Leader of Opposition	x 3	8,856	x 1½	5,577	x 2	7,000
Chairman of Planning & Development Committee	x 2½	7,380	x 2	7,436	x 2	7,000
Chairs of Community Services, Personnel, Health & Housing Committees	x 2	5,904	x 1	3,718	x 1½	5,250
Chairs of the Licensing and Accounts & Audit Committees	x 2	5,904	x ½	1,859	x 1½	5,250
Vice Chairs of Committees	x 1	2,952		500	n/a	500*
*Vice Chair of Planning & Development	x 1	2,952		500	n/a	1,000

and

2. the independent remuneration panel be thanked for their work in formulating proposals for a revised scheme.

85 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources sought Committee's approval to write-off two National Non-Domestic Rate Debts (NNDR) totalling £3,804.95 relating to Cattermole's Ltd and Lancashire Pubs (Myerscough) Ltd. The Director of Resources informed Committee that as a matter of law there is an obligation to take reasonable steps to collect business rate debts; this is done by various means however, there are some cases where debtors leave their property with arrears and no forwarding address or are declared bankrupt, insolvent or cease trading. Of the two cases referred to one had been dissolved and the other gone into liquidation.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the writing off of £3,804.95 where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

86 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS (PART 4 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION)

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking Committee's approval to amend the Council's Standing Orders. The Local Government Act 2000 provides that

ever local authority is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing its Standing Orders which is very much a living document.

In March 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government wrote to the Chief Executive informing him that new regulations would come into force on 11 May 2015 and that Councils would be required to modify their Standing Orders at the first ordinary meeting of the Council after that date.

The purpose of the regulations was to simplify and localise the disciplinary process for the most senior officers of the Council. They remove the requirement that a designated independent person be appointed to investigate and make a binding recommendation on disciplinary action against these staff. The decision would now be taken transparently by Full Council who must consider any advice views or recommendation from an independent panel, the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal and any representations from the officer concerned.

*** RESOLVED: That Committee approve the amendments as outlined in the report and refer them to Full Council for their approval. ***

87 REFERENCE FROM COMMITTEE

The Director of Resources referred to a request from Health and Housing Committee to agree to the approval of additional capital budget of £2,730 to be added to the slippage on the Clitheroe Cemetery extension capital scheme to allow for the provision of headstone foundation beams. This request had been submitted by the Chief Executive to the recent Health and Housing Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the request for the additional capital budget of £2,730 for the provision of headstone foundation beams in the Clitheroe Cemetery extension.

88 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014/15

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the final outturn of the Capital Programme 2014/15 for this Committee. The Economic Development Initiative Scheme had already been moved into 2015/16. The Public Sector Network Compliance Scheme had been completed in year and within budget and expenditure on performance reward grants have been brought into the Committee's capital expenditure accounts at year end.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

89 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the schemes which had been approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme for this Committee for the 2015/16 financial year. This included four approved schemes totalling £471,400.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

90 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

Committee considered a report which covered the following areas:

- a) National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR);
- b) Council Tax;
- c) Sundry Debtors;
- d) Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Performance;
- e) Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Fraud.

The Director of Resources highlighted to Members that the collection rate for NNDR for 2014/15 at 31 March 2015 was 98.23% and the collection rate for Council Tax was 98.83%.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

91 OVERALL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2014/15

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information with details of the capital programme outturn for all Committees for the year ending 31 March 2015. During the year the Council spent £380,811 on 11 capital schemes which was 94% of the revised estimate. No schemes had overspent; 2 schemes had their budget moved into 2015/16 at revised estimate stage; and slippage on 3 schemes totalling £30,147 had been requested from the Health and Housing Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

92 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES 2014/15

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the 2014/15 treasury management operations. The report outlined the following topics:

- Public Works Loan Board;
- borrowing requirements;
- temporary investments;
- Prudential indicators;
- Local Government Bonds Agency.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

93 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2015/16

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing the Committee of the Outside Bodies that come under the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee and their membership.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

94 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be Exempt Information under Category 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

95 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources submitted a report requesting the approval to write-off a Council Tax debt relating to an individual. There was one case of a Council Tax write-off and one for NNDR both relating to the same individual.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of a total of £6,441.03 NNDR debt and Council Tax debt where it has not been possible to collect the amount due.

The meeting closed at 7.08pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (414430).