

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 6 September 2016, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	S Hore
S Bibby	A Knox
P Elms	G Mirfin
R Hargreaves	J Rogerson
T Hill	D T Smith
K Hind	R J Thompson

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Head of Regeneration of Housing.

Also in attendance: Councillors M Fenton, S Hind, S Knox, M Robinson and J White.

209 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M French and I Sayers.

210 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Reference was made to Minute 67 – Representatives on Outside Bodies and the fact that Ribble Valley Homes were undergoing a reorganisation.

Reference was also made to Minute 64 – Lancashire County Council Proposed Neighbourhood Centres Consultation, where the Deputy Leader reported that despite a comprehensive response being submitted by the Working Group there had only been limited success.

211 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no pecuniary and non-pecuniary declarations of interest.

212 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following members of public attended the meeting to speak on Agenda Item 9, Clitheroe Market Redevelopment Area – Progress Report.

Derek Russell informed Committee that he lived on King Street and was married to a market trader and was also actively involved in the community. His main concern was having a robust evidence base and asking for guarantees about a further consultation being independent and that the findings would be honoured and accepted.

Louise Clough is the operator at the Inn at the Station and informed Committee that he business would be directly affected by the build, both when it was completed and during the works. She felt that there wasn't a demand for a hotel with 60 rooms and that this would affect many businesses not just in Clitheroe town but wider afield. She also felt that parking was a major issue but acknowledged that a redevelopment of the market site was needed.

Maureen King informed Committee of her concerns having shopped on Clitheroe market for more than 50 years. They included parking, a venue for the food festival, compensation to stallholders and the necessity for another hotel when one has recently been given planning permission.

David Metcalf(e) who has a stall on the market thought that the Council were trying to put an out of town retail site in the town centre without adequate infrastructure which specifically included parking. He felt that the market traders had not been consulted about what they wanted as in his opinion a market hall is not it.

Helen Smith, a proprietor of a shop on New Market Street, informed Committee that in a market town an indoor market was not appropriate and that Clitheroe should remain as a shopper's destination with an open market and bespoke shops. She also referred to car parking as an issue and submitted a petition.

213

CLITHEROE MARKET REDEVELOPMENT AREA PROGRESS REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the progress with the market area redevelopment project. He reminded Committee that the proposal to consider the redevelopment of the market site was a main conclusion from work undertaken in preparing the Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan. This was both part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and a tool to inform economic development and regeneration activities in regard to Clitheroe. The report outlined the procurement process for the development partner and the progress since the appointment of Barnfield.

The Chairman informed Committee and the members of the public present at the meeting that the consultation that had taken place was that of a pre-application one by Barnfield and that a further Council-led consultation was now intended. Members of the Committee discussed the issue of further consultation with regard to the redevelopment of the market site and felt it was only right to have more consultation to give people the opportunity to put forward their views and concerns about the redevelopment of the market.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the progress on matters set out in the report and agree to extend consultation on the proposals for the Clitheroe market redevelopment area;
2. authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Market Working Group, to implement arrangements for further consultation as appropriate; and

3. increase the number of representatives on the Market Working Group to 6 to include representatives of all parties.

214

BUDGET FORECAST 2017/18 TO 2020/21

Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources in relation to the latest budget forecast and were asked to decide what action needed to be considered to meet the financial challenges that lay ahead. The report went through a number of key considerations. She reported that the latest budget forecast was based on many assumptions that were difficult to predict going forward, however nearly all our major income streams were currently undergoing significant and wide ranging reviews. These included business rate retention, new homes bonus and government grants (needs assessment).

She outlined the assumptions she had made with regard to pay, inflation and interest rates, local government funding and Council Tax. She gave a forecast summary for Members' information where the following assumptions had been made:

- i) An increased use of balances to £300,000 each year from 2017/18 resulting in general fund balances of just over £1.5m by 31 March 2021.
- ii) A fall in interest receipts, the forecast assumes £10k next year, £15k in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and £20k in 2021.
- iii) A 1% increase in the Council Tax Base per annum.
- iv) An increase each year in Band D Council Tax of 2%.
- v) Council Tax surplus/deficit to broadly break even.
- vi) Business rate growth retention; the use of £263k from business rate growth each year.
- vii) The ending of the recycling and waste collection cost sharing agreement with the County Council in 2018.

The Director of Resources was hopeful that the Government would publish their outcome on the new homes bonus consultation in the next few weeks. The Budget Working Group would be considering the budget forecast at their meeting on 14 September 2016. The Chairman informed Committee that part of the efficiency plan going forward would include an appraisal of the management structure.

RESOLVED: That Committee considered the budget forecast and asked the Budget Working Group to recommend what action to take.

215

LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

Committee were asked to approve the write-off of National Non-Domestic Rate Debts relating to five companies that had been dissolved or gone into liquidation.

Reasonable steps by various means had been taken to collect these debts. The Director of Resources made particular reference to one large debt recommended for write-off and the background surrounding it.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing off of £90,009.03 of NNDR debts where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

216 CIVICA ICON SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the requirement to upgrade the Civica Icon Payment System in order to continue to meet the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCIDSS) and to seek approval to complete the upgrade in early 2017. Civica had informed its customers that they would only support operating versions of their software that were less than 2 years old and that customers must upgrade to version 16 of the software by 31 March 2018 to maintain PCIDSS compliance.

Committee were informed that Civica had announced a discount for customers that placed an order before 30 September 2016 in order to upgrade their equipment.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the purchase of the upgrade of the Civica Icon Payments System.

217 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REVIEW – COUNCIL SIZE

The Director of Resources submitted a report reminding Committee that the Boundary Commission had commenced a review of the Borough Council and that as part of the first stage of the review the Council needed to agree on the future Council size. The report outlined the issues the Commission considers when looking at Council size. These included governance and decision making; scrutiny functions; representational role of Councillors; and the future.

Following the submission of the Council's size proposal, the Local Government Boundary Commission would reach a decision on Councillor numbers after which the Council would need to submit its response to the consultation on the warding of Ribblesdale Valley.

RESOLVED: That Committee

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1. recommend to Council that they approve the submission to retain 40 Elected Members to the Boundary Commission; and ***
 2. form a Working Group comprising of 7 Members including all party representation to work on the response to the warding consultation.

218 REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – THE REDEVELOPMENT OF RIBBLESDALE POOL CHANGING ROOMS AND RECEPTION

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a reference from the Community Services Committee with regard to a potential

loss of £70,000 income to Ribblesdale Pool as a consequence of the capital scheme to redevelop the changing rooms and reception. This capital scheme had been added to the programme outside the normal budget process to take advantage of a potential Sport England grant of £150,000 towards a total scheme of £209,000. Upon approval the remaining £59,000 was to be financed by the Council using earmarked reserves. Following a more detailed assessment it had become apparent that the scheme could not be completed in the originally anticipated timeframe and instead may take up to 3 months. The potential revenue impact particularly from lost income due to the extended closure period was calculated to be in the region of £70,000.

Community Services Committee had discussed alternatives for keeping the facility open and had asked that the potential loss of income be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee and that officers examine carefully the options available for temporary changing accommodation with a view to keeping access open if financially, technically and safely possible.

The Director of Community Services gave an update on the progress with regard to the options available and reported that this was proving difficult to achieve. He suggested that when the contract was put out to tender potential contractors would be asked to submit two prices; one to include the works under normal circumstances and one to include the works under an accelerated programme.

RESOLVED: That Committee accept that there would be a potential loss of £70,000 income to Ribblesdale Pool during the redevelopment works and approve the course of action to invite double headed tenders to include an accelerated programme of works.

219 OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2016

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee about referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman for the period 1.4.15 to 31.3.16.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

220 CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17

Committee considered a report on the progress of the approved capital programme for the period to the end of July 2016 with regard to schemes which fall under the remit of this Committee

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

221 OVERALL CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17

Committee received an update report on the progress of the overall approval capital scheme for the period to the end of July 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

222 REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16

Committee considered a detailed report of the actual position for the revenue budget year ended 31 March 2016 for this Committee

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

223 OVERALL REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16

Committee received on the overall revenue outturn for the year ending 31 March 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

224 REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17

Committee received a report showing that position for the first four months of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

225 OVERALL REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17

Committee received a report outlining the position on the revenue budget for the current financial year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

226 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

A report of the Director of Resources was submitted for Committee's information on the treasury management activities for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 July 2016 covering such areas as Public Works Loan Board, borrowing requirements, temporary investments, Prudential indicators, Local Government Bonds Agency and approved organisations and recent events.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

227 TIMETABLE FOR BUDGET SETTING

Committee received a report on the timetable for setting the budget for 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

228 INSURANCE RENEWALS 2016/17

Committee considered a report informing them of the insurance renewals for the period 20 June 2016 to 19 June 2017.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

229 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

Committee considered a report which covered the following areas:

- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR);
- Council Tax;
- Sundry Debtors;
- Housing Benefits and Council Tax support performance;
- Housing Benefit overpayments; and
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

230 2015/16 YEAR-END PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Committee considered a report outlining the year-end report of 2015/16 that detailed performance against our local performance indicators.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

231 BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Committee received the minutes of the Budget Working Group meetings held on 1 February 2016 and 26 June 2016.

232 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Committee considered a report submitted by Councillor Jim White, the Armed Forces Champion. The report informed Members about the National Memorial Arboretum and asked them to consider to support the dedication of a tree on behalf of the residents of the Ribble Valley in May 2017. The report outlined details regarding the Memorial Chapel, the tree planting and the provision of plaques. Councillor White also indicated that he would be willing to organise a private trip for Councillors to be scheduled to coincide with the dedication ceremony.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. support the proposal for the Ribble Valley Borough Council to arrange the dedication of a tree at the NMA on behalf of Ribble Valley residents at an approximate cost inclusive of a plaque of £840 and that the Mayor and Mayoress should attend the dedication to represent the Ribble Valley; and
2. that the funding for the dedication of a tree at the NMA be approved and added to the budget.

233 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Category 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

234

LOCAL TAXATION AND HOUSING BENEFIT WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval to write-off certain National Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax and Housing Benefit debts relating to individuals where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing off of £2,968,12 Council Tax debts; £12,027.19 NNDR and £6,828.14 Housing Benefits debts, where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (425111).