

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 16 January 2020, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	B Holden
S Atkinson	A Knox
T Austin	R Newmark
D Birtwhistle	D O'Rourke
R Elms	D Peat
J Hill	
M Hindle	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of Environmental Health Services, Housing Strategy Officer and Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillors B Buller and S O'Rourke.

498 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Robinson and R Sherras.

499 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 7 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

500 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

501 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

502 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report to approve the 2019/20 revised estimate for this Committee's capital programme.

The original Capital Programme for 2019/20 had been approved by Special Policy and Finance Committee and Full Council at their meetings in February 2019 and March 2019 respectively. Since then regular reports had been presented to this Committee, including any irregular changes to the Capital Programme. As a result, the total approved budget for this Committee's Capital Programme of 6 schemes was £1,371,650.

Following discussions on each of the schemes with budget holders the revised estimate for this Committee's Capital Programme was proposed as £1,254,710, a reduction of £116,940 from the total approved budget. The main reasons for these changes were:

- Clitheroe Market Improvements – £118,000 is required to cover the costs of the work to be undertaken in year and £57,000 was recommended to be moved to the 2020/21 financial year.
- Landlord Tenant Grants – 3 applications are anticipated in-year with an estimated cost of £58,300. It was recommended that this budget is reduced to £58,300, with £59,940 moved to the 2020/21 financial year and £16,000 be transferred to the Longridge Affordable Housing Scheme.
- Longridge Affordable Housing Scheme – Estimated scheme costs had increased by £16,000. This was because the combined purchase of prices of the two properties were higher than budgeted for and the Council was required to pay stamp duty. Given this, it was recommended that £16,000 is transferred from the Landlord Tenant Grants Scheme to cover the increased budget required on this scheme.

The Senior Accountant outlined current progress on all capital programme schemes in the proposed revised estimate.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the 2019/20 revised estimate of £1,254,710 for this Committee's Capital Programme, as set out in Annex 1;
2. approve the move of the following capital budgets from 2019/20 to 2020/21:
 - Clitheroe Market Improvements - £57,000
 - Landlord/Tenant Grants - £59,940
3. approve the transfer of £16,000 Capital Budget in 2019/20 from the Landlord/Tenant Grants Scheme to the Longridge Affordable Housing Scheme.

503 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report to agree a revised Revenue Budget for 2019/20 for this Committee.

Members were reminded that at this time of year the estimates are revised for the current financial year in order to predict the likely outturn. This also assists in preparing the original estimates for the coming financial year.

The difference between the revised and original estimate was a decrease in net expenditure of £21,380 and a decrease in net expenditure of £15,970 after allowing for movements in earmarked reserves.

The Senior Accountant highlighted significant variances and detailed information for each cost centre as included for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve this Committee's revised Revenue Estimate for 2019/20.

ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report to agree the draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21 for this Committee, for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee.

With regard to the Council's overall financial position she reminded Members that in September the four-year budget forecast had predicted gaps of £0k in 2020/21, £372k in 2021/22, £410k in 2022/23, after allowing for the use of general fund balances.

She also reminded Members that 2019/20 was the final year of the multi-year grant settlement and from 2020/21 the Council was expecting substantial Local Government finance reforms. However, in September the Government wrote to all Councils announcing a decision to delay the implementation of 75% Business Rates retention and the fair funding review until April 2021. They also announced that 75% Business Rates pilots will come to an end at the end of March 2020 with no new pilots planned for 2020/21.

Members were informed that the future of the New Homes Bonus Scheme remains uncertain and whilst legacy payments will be honoured, the scheme for 2020/21 is still for discussion with Ministers. The Council currently relies on £1.105m to fund the revenue budget each year and also uses some of the allocation to fund the Capital Programme.

Funding to remove negative RSG will continue for 2020/21.

The Budget Working Group would continue to meet over the coming weeks and would ultimately make recommendations at the Special meeting of Policy and Finance Committee in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The proposed fees and charges for 2020/21 had been considered by Committee in October 2019 and had been incorporated into the service budgets included in the original estimates. Following in-depth service analysis and meetings between accountants, budget holders, Heads of Service and Management Team, the proposed draft budget for this Committee was now presented to Members. Estimates had been prepared on current levels of service in the main allowing for pay increases at 3% and price increases at 2%.

The net expenditure for this Committee was estimated to increase by £30,160 after allowing for associated movements on earmarked reserves.

The Senior Accountant summarised the main budget changes detailed cost centre and information was also provided for Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the revenue original estimate for 2020/21 to be submitted to Special Policy and Finance Committee.

REQUEST ADDITIONAL RIBBLE VALLEY ADAPTATION FUNDING

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report to request a further allocation of £70,000 from the overall Disabled Facilities Grants budget is allocated for the delivery of discretionary Ribble Valley adaptations.

In March 2019 Committee approved a budget of £80,000 would be allocated to allow for the delivery of discretionary Ribble Valley adaptations. In September 2019 a further £50,000 was allocated to allow delivery to continue.

As at this point there was a waiting list of 15 RVA's, 3 of which were highlighted as urgent cases. Since September all of those on the waiting list have been approved and the works are either complete or are currently underway.

In order to continue to be able to process RVA's in the same efficient timeframe for those households who require adaptations, there is a request for a further £70,000 to be allocated to the RVA budget. Therefore the total budget for RVA's in the 2019/20 financial year will be £200,000 of the total Disabled Facilities Grants budget of £706,489.

Councillors asked various questions on the report with particular reference to the source of the funding and commented on the importance of the Ribble Valley Adaptation Funding to allow residents to live at home and reduce pressure on the frontline NHS.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve a further £70,000 to be allocated for expenditure on Ribble Valley adaptations.

506 CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Chief Executive submitted a report to provide an overview on the Christmas Market activities undertaken in 2019 and the proposal for 2020. The Head of Environmental Health Services noted that despite inclement weather the 2019 Christmas Markets were seen as a success due to the high capacity of footfall generated during the Christmas period and that income of £787 was generated to the Council as a result of the events being hosted.

An amendment was proposed to correct the date of next year's market and to set a provisional cost of pitches for vendors.

Members discussed various aspects of the report and asked questions relating to which dates the Christmas Market would be open and the ambition for future events.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. provisionally approve the dates of 5, 12, 19 December 2020, running from 9am to 4pm;
2. recognise the success of Christmas 2019 and continue this into the financial year;
3. set a provisional cost of £15 including VAT per pitch.

507 DOG WARDEN SERVICE

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update Members on the current Dog Warden service provision. Members were reminded that the Dog Warden service previously employed 2 part-time members of staff to make a full-time

post. These members of staff previously focussed on welfare, education and enforcement.

Since October 2019 an additional part-time member of staff had been employed to assist the current Dog Wardens. There had been a clear remit to the Dog Wardens that they had to provide a visible and high-profile enforcement campaign.

In previous years there had been a decline in the amount of welfare and educational responsibilities due to the lack of resources within the department. The service dedicates itself to its statutory duties of dealing with dangerous and stray dogs and also enforcement activity. With the employment of the additional part-time Dog Warden the service would now run both an educational welfare aspect as well as enforcement until April 2020.

Members were updated on the recommendation to recruit a joint Pest Control/Dog Warden post to further improve the service.

Councillors discussed various aspects of the report and asked questions relating to management of waste in areas not looked after by the Council, bodycams for the Wardens and requested statistics for future reports. Members also requested press releases to advertise enforcement of dog fouling, the importance of keeping dogs on leads with particular reference to lambing season and other aspects of the Dog Warden Policy.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. reaffirm the Dog Warden Policy;
2. acknowledge the additional resources given to tackle irresponsible dog ownership.

508 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

509 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be an Exempt Information under Categories 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

510 CLITHEROE CEMETERY

The Chief Executive submitted a report to inform Members of the current cemetery provisions and reaffirm the regulations for Clitheroe Cemetery.

The Head of Environmental Health Services updated Members on the current provisions at Clitheroe Cemetery and highlighted that current provision is estimated to last for approximately 2 years.

Members discussed various aspects of the report and asked questions relating to drainage on the site future expansions and the commitment to retain 30 plots for Muslim burials.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. reaffirm the development of the existing area of the Cemetery as non-denominational subject to the previous commitments to set aside 30 plots for Muslim burials;
2. note that the existing burial provision will last for approximately 2 years;
3. agree to undertake a site visit to enable Members to better appreciate the issues; and
4. agree in principle the development of Phase II of the extension to the cemetery and authorise officers to prepare a detailed fund scheme and obtain costings to enable the scheme to be included in capital bids.

511 UPDATE ON GRANT APPROVALS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report to inform Committee of recent approvals for 8 Disabled Facilities Grants and 6 Ribble Valley Adaptation Grants.

The Housing Strategy Officer also noted an amendment to the report correcting the address of one of the awards.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

512 MINUTES OF STRATEGIC HOUSING WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Strategic Housing Working Group meeting held on 6 November 2019 were circulated for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm.

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