

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 19 January 2012 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	J Holgate
S Brunskill	R Newmark
R Elms	E M H Ranson
R Hargreaves	M Robinson
B Hilton	C Ross
K Hind	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of Environmental Health Services, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Revenues and Benefits and Housing Strategy Officer.

651 APOLOGIES

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

652 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

653 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

654 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

655 REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no references from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

656 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2011/2012 AND ORIGINAL ESTIMATE 2012/2013

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree a revised budget for 2011/2012 together with a draft revenue budget for 2012/2013 for submission to Policy and Finance Committee. She reminded Committee that the grant settlement received confirmed the need for the Council to identify substantial savings in its base budget. The proposed budget within the report represented the base budget for this Committee taking into account a service

review savings proposals that had been approved previously at Policy and Finance Committee.

The revised budget for 2011/2012 was £127,970 lower than the original estimate. This reduction allowed for transfers to and from earmarked reserves; a comparison between the original and revised budget for each cost centre was shown with the main reasons identified.

With regard to the 2012/2013 draft revenue budget, the Director of Resources informed Committee that the three year forecast to Policy and Finance Committee in September highlighted the need for savings in the region of £635,000 in the 2012/2013 financial year. She informed Committee that the estimates included savings from the service review savings package agreed at Policy and Finance Committee on 22 November 2011 and also included provision for price increases of 2.5%. The estimates under each cost centre were detailed with relevant comments appended. The Director of Resources highlighted several of these for Committee to consider. The draft budget was also summarised both objectively and subjectively for Committee's information. She brought to Committee's attention that the net costs for this budget were projected to fall by £75,750 between financial years and gave the main areas of savings for this Committee, which included:

- Net savings of £34,000 has resulted in a reduction in support service costs to this Committee
- Government grants have increased as a result of the reinstatement of subsidy associated with the Council's management of benefit overpayments; the net effect of this amounts to an extra £35,350 this year; and
- A further saving has occurred as a consequence of service review savings of £10,000

The Head of Revenues and Benefits reported a change in the way business rates will be charged for Clitheroe Market. The Valuation Office Agency had recently reviewed the market and as such the cabin holders would now be liable effective from 31 January 2012. Each cabin had been assessed to have a rateable value of £1,000. However, most of the cabin holders would qualify for small business rate relief which the government had doubled to 100% until 1 April 2013 at the latest.

The Director of Resources suggested that the recommendation taken by this Committee in November 2011 to increase cabin rents was reversed and that the rents be frozen for two years to compensate for this change.

She reminded Committee that the other fees and charges for this committee that had been agreed in November 2011 would be applicable from 1 April 2012.

Councillors asked questions with regards to various issues included in the budget report.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the revised budget for 2011/2012; and
2. agree the revenue budget for 2012/2013 as amended for submission to the Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

657 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/2012 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMME 2012/2015

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to approve the revised programme for the current year and also the future three year capital programme for this Committee. She reminded Committee that the original capital programme for the current year included schemes at a total estimated cost of £280,000 and at its meeting in July 2011, slippage was approved totalling £119,230 which related to six capital schemes. A summary table showed the revised estimate being £393,280 with actual expenditure to date of £155,477. It was recommended that a sizeable amount of the current year's budget be transferred to the 2012/2013 financial year in relation to various grants in recognition that it was extremely unlikely these schemes were able to allocate and pay out their total grant pots before the end of this financial year.

With regard to the draft programme for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015, the Director of Resources informed Committee that in August 2011 the Budget Working Group had agreed a focus for the future capital programme based on the current life of the Council and split into categories of capital spend. The Heads of Service had been invited to submit scheme bids for this programme. Five new bids had been submitted for this Committee totalling £870,000. This programme would require further consideration by the Budget Working Group and by Policy and Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee approve the revised capital programme for 2011/2012 as set out in the report; and
2. the future three year programme for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 as set out in the report be recommended to special Policy and Finance Committee.

658 ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS HOUSING POLICY

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Committee to consider adopting the Addressing Housing Needs Housing Policy following a six week consultation period. In March 2011 Committee had agreed to broaden scope of the Affordable Housing Memorandum of Understanding to address wider needs issues. The document had firstly been considered by Planning and Development Committee followed by a six week consultation period. All comments received during this time had been acknowledged and considered. A summary of the responses and key messages taken from the consultation responses were included in the report. It was highlighted when the Memorandum was agreed in 2009, it had been used as a material planning consideration in securing

affordable units on any site over specified thresholds. The changes to the document had taken into account the recent social housing changes as reported to Committee and as such, sought to address not only the issue of affordability in the borough but also the identified housing needs of the elderly. The proposal was to seek 15% of units on sites over 30 units to be of a type to meet elderly requirements, ie lifetime homes standard.

Committee discussed the issue of both affordable housing and providing units to meet elderly requirements and felt that more could be done to accommodate this. However, it was felt that the proposed changes to the document would deal with this initially and could be used as a material condition for the purposes of determining planning applications.

RESOLVED: That Committee adopt the Addressing Housing Needs Housing Policy to ensure the most appropriate affordable units are delivered on sites and that it be treated as a material condition for the purposes of determining planning applications.

659 WARM HOME, HEALTHY PEOPLE FUND 2011/2012

The Chief Executive submitted a report notifying Committee of a successful bid for funding from the Department of Health. The fund was to support local authorities in the winter months to reduce the levels of death and morbidity in their local authority that are due to vulnerable people living in cold housing in partnership with their local community. The warm home packs include electric blankets, shawls, slipper vouchers, night lights and flask as well radiator reflector panels and internal draft proofing that would be offered to be installed by the Council. The Housing Strategy Officer informed Committee that the launch of the scheme was to take place on Thursday, 26 January in Clitheroe with satellite launches in Chipping and Slaidburn.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

660 GET BRITAIN BUILDING

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of a new fund Get Britain Building to unlock stalled sites that have planning permission. The programme was intended to address difficulties in accessing development finance faced by some householders and help bring forward marginal sites. Funding would be made available by the government for the programme on the basis that it is recoverable and would operate by making direct investments in specific projects through loans to address cash flow issues or take an equity state. The Strategic Housing Working Group would consider any applications received by the Ribble Valley Borough Council and each application would be reported to Health and Housing Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

661 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Health Working Group held on 4 January 2012 were circulated for Committee's information. Councillor Bridget Hilton raised concerns

about the current situation at Clitheroe Hospital regarding the use of beds for Ribble Valley/non Ribble Valley residents. She also corrected a point in the minutes regarding her appointment on the Shadow LCC Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive write to the East Lancashire Hospital Trust raising the Committee's concerns over the increasing use of Clitheroe Hospital for non residents of the Ribble Valley.

662 GENERAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information which included a flood protection grant update for Ribchester, Clitheroe market update, update on pest control income, private water supplies and food inspection.

663 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be Exempt Information Under Categories 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

664 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of three disabled facilities grants that had been approved. The report also outlined a list of grants approved for the financial year 2011/2012 for both disabled facilities grants and landlord/tenant grants. Updated figures were given in relation to these grants.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

665 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the affordable housing schemes in progress and proposed in the borough. These had been split into pre-application and applications submitted categories. Committee expressed concern about some of these projects that did not seem to be progressing.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. Christine Grimshaw, Chief Executive of Ribble Valley Homes be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

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