

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 29 November 2012 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	E M H Ranson
C Conner (6.40pm)	M Robinson
B Hilton	C Ross
K Hind	N Walsh
R Newmark	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Head of Financial Services and Housing Strategy Officer.

502 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill, Hargreaves, J Holgate and L Rimmer.

503 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Ranson asked for an update on minute 332 regarding the garages at Riddings Lane, Whalley. The Chief Executive reported that Ribble Valley Homes had served notice on the tenants of the garages and had also exercised their option to buy the site. It was currently being valued.

Councillor Robinson referred to minute 334 and raised the issue of Section 106 Agreements and issues surrounding these.

504 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

505 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

506 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval on the proposals to increase the Committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2013. This was the first stage in the review of the Committee's budget for the forthcoming 2013/2014 financial year. The Council's latest budget forecast allowed for an overall 2.5% increase in the level of income raised from fees and charges. In September 2012 a report was taken to the Budget Working Group in

order to get a steer on the level of increase that should be sought in the review. At this meeting, the guidance to service committees was that all charges should be reviewed and increased in line with 2.5% but with the suggestion that for Community Services Committee all car parking charges remain unchanged. A proposed set of fees and charges for implementation from 1 April 2013 had been produced for Committee which gave an indication of potential income.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the proposed charges for implementation with effect from 1 April 2013 as outlined.

507 ALTERATIONS TO BOILER GRANT POLICY

The Chief Executive submitted a report proposing changes to the current boiler replacement scheme to ensure all vulnerable households (over 65 years) at risk of living in cold properties can access the grant. The Council had approved a scheme to offer grant assistance towards installation, replacement or repair of boilers utilising the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund, which was made available to households over 65 years old in receipt of an income related benefit and offered 50% towards the cost of work. However, problems had been encountered with enquiries received from households who were not eligible due to the benefit to requirement but were not in a position to be able to afford the works themselves. It was suggested that the policy be altered to accommodate more vulnerable households.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to amend the policy so that households in receipt of benefits will receive 100% of the cost of the works up to a value of £2000 per application and that households not in receipt of an income related benefit should be means tested and a maximum of 50% grant be offered up to a value of £1000 per application.

508 PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Committee to consider a proposed agreement between ourselves and Public Health Lancashire (Lancashire County Council) regarding the delivery of health and wellbeing. He informed Committee that the partnership agreement was one aspect of a number of changes that would occur when, as part of the national health reforms public health is transferred to upper tier local authorities. It was recognised that many aspects of public health are delivered by other organisations, particularly district councils and the agreement represented a proposal on how the county council will work with its district partners to deliver the new public health offer. The draft agreement had been developed by a working group and was still in its preliminary stages and was currently being consulted upon.

He highlighted the main concerns within the proposed agreement in that it was too heavy on governance tended to focus on existing approaches and was somewhat pre-determined. There was concern that by signing up to the agreement in its current state, that the Borough Council maybe committing to changing the way we work or taking on additional roles and responsibilities without an understanding of how these maybe resourced.

This view seemed to reflect that of other district partners and although the general principle of an agreement was accepted, it was felt that the document should be more like a memorandum of understanding outlining the principles and benefits of joint working, rather than a formal document.

RESOLVED: That Committee request the Head of Cultural and Leisure Services in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committee respond to Public Health Lancashire along the lines outlined in the report.

509 FLAT ABOVE THE OVER 60S CLUB, TOWNELEY ROAD, LONGRIDGE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report outlining to Committee the condition of the flat above the Over 60s Club, Towneley Road, Longridge and seeking Committee's approval to improve the property and bring it up to the decent homes standard. The freehold title of the building is owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, although Ribble Valley Homes manage the day to day running of the property. The report outlined the improvement work that was required to the accommodation for which the estimated cost was between £12,000 - £14, 500.

RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Policy and Finance Committee the approval of the replacement of the kitchen, bathroom and associated improvement works to the flat above the Over 60s Club, Towneley Road, Longridge.

510 CAPITAL MONITORING 2012/2013

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information relating to the progress of the approved capital programme for the period April to October 2012 with regards to schemes which fall under the responsibility of this Committee. A total of three new schemes had been approved by Policy and Finance Committee at their meeting in February 2012. Additionally, budget had been moved from 2011/2012 into 2012/2013 along with some slippage. The approved budget totalled £608,610 and to date 36% of the annual capital programme had been spent. The main variations were highlighted with reasons.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

511 REVENUE MONITORING 2011/2012

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the position for the period April to October 2012 of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned. At the present time, there was an overall overspend of £141,731 on the net cost of services; the main variations had been extracted for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

512 WARM HOMES HEALTHY PEOPLE FUND

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of a successful bid to the Department of Health for the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund

2012/2013. After the success of last year, the same community groups had been consulted and agreed a bid which covered four key areas.

- Energy advice and utility boll clinics
- Gas safety checks and emergency repairs
- An active ageing programme
- Warm home packs

Confirmation had been received that the grant would be £54,200 which needs to be committed by March 2013.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

513 CHANGES TO HOMELESSNESS LEGISLATION

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the changes to the homelessness legislation and the impacts on the service and service users. The principal effect of the legislative changes introduced in the Localism Act is to amend the way in which the duty on local authorities to secure accommodation under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 can be brought to an end with offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector. These changes will allow local authorities to end the main homelessness duty with a private rented sector offer without the applicants consent. The new power will give local authorities freedom to make more efficient use of their stock and better use of good quality private sector accommodation that can provide suitable accommodation for households accepted as homeless.

As a related issue, it was felt it would be useful to have the Head of Revenues and Benefits attend a future meeting to explain universal credits.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

514 GENERAL REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Committee considered the general report of the Chief Executive which had been submitted to Committee for information and included the following items.

Flood protection grant update – Ribchester
Flood inspection update
National food hygiene rating scheme update
Hanson Cement Liaison meeting
Dog warden service update
Drinking water 2011 – Chief Inspector's report
Radioactivity in food and environment 2011

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

515 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP GROUP

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Group meetings held on 10 October and 14 November 2012 were submitted for Committee's information.

516 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 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

517 REQUEST TO REUSE HOMEBUY GRANT

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Committee to consider a request received by an applicant to reuse an existing Homebuy grant to enable them to move to a larger property. In 2006 the Borough Council had run a Homebuy scheme to assist first time buyers access the market. One of the successful applicants had now approached the Council requesting that the deposit be used to allow a move to a larger property. Although the original Homebuy policy did not allow for this eventuality, Committee felt that this was a valuable use of the deposit which allowed the applicant to purchase a suitable family sized property.

RESOLVED: That

1. the request be approved; and
2. the Housing Working Group be asked to review the Homebuy policy with a view to including the recycling of grant monies in certain circumstances.

518 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of four disabled facilities grants, three landlord/tenant grants and one boiler replacement grant that had been approved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

519 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted an update on the affordable housing schemes in progress and proposed in the borough. These had been split into applications which had been submitted and were either approved or waiting determination subject to Section 106 Agreements being completed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

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