

Minutes of Community Services Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 15 January 2013 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R J Thompson (Chairman)

Councillors:

R Bennett	M Robinson
S Carefoot	R Swarbrick
S Hore	G Scott
G Mirfin	J White
R Newmark	

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Director of Resources, Head of Engineering Services, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services and Waste Management Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillor I Sayers.

551 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Alcock, S Brunskill, J Hill, A Knox and L Rimmer.

552 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

553 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

554 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

555 FOOD FESTIVAL 2013

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Members to consider proposals for the provision of the Food Festival for 2013. He reminded Committee that they had received a report in September 2012 outlining issues associated with the provision of the Food Festival and that whilst recognising the success of the event, Members had expressed some concern about the overall financial performance. A similar discussion had taken place at Policy and Finance Committee and although both Committees agreed in principle to support the Food Festival, it was recognised that financial controls would have to be more robust in the future.

He reported that the most recent RPDE bid had been unsuccessful and so proposals now needed to be considered on how the event could take place whilst at the same time minimising the Council's exposure to financial risk. The Council's Corporate Management Team had concluded that the Council would have to take the lead in organising this year's event to give the additional capacity required and to oversee the financial management aspects. The festival would have to be run in partnership with the Food Festival Company as they had access to sponsors and volunteers that the Council did not. There would still be a requirement for some external event management but this should be reviewed in association with the capacity of the Borough Council officers to take over some event management functions. These issues had consequently been discussed with the Food Festival Company to determine roles and responsibilities and draft a realistic budget. The following conclusions were reached.

- The provision of a chargeable programme should be dropped as although it more or less broke even in terms of production costs, it did not generate the expected additional revenue.
- Park and ride should be staffed internally in order to reduce expenditure.
- The advertising budget would need to be reviewed to determine value for money from the promotional activities and the budget reduced accordingly.
- The role of Events Co-ordinator would be reviewed to determine which elements should remain and which could be carried out internally. The key support would be around the relationship with producers and identification of exhibitors and the identification of volunteers, promotion of the event to the wider food community, some marketing activities and some logistics prior to and on the day. The Council would take over the administrative functions, event plans and some marketing.
- The Event Co-ordinator would be directly responsible to the Borough Council as opposed to the Food Festival Company based on an agreed range of services and fee.
- The Food Festival Company would be responsible for attracting external sponsorship determining the level of sponsorship is difficult so the assumption is only a moderate increase from the previous event.

The provision of a chargeable area within the festival was also discussed with the Food Festival Company as it was felt this was the only way to increase the income paid by the customer and make the festival sustainable in the long term. Options were being considered with regard to this.

Members agreed that the event was successful and should be supported in order for it to be able to continue. Various issues were discussed with regard to the unsuccessful RDPE bid; charging to attend the festival; and where it should be 'staged'.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. agree to the Council's involvement and associated draft budget;
2. ask that officers give regular updates, particularly those relating to financial changes; and
3. agree to commission Lancashire Bites subject to agreement on the range of services required and the associated fee. Committee understood that this meant the suspension of Standing Order 29.

556

FACILITIES STRATEGY

The Director of Community Services submitted a report advising Committee on proposals to develop a facilities strategy in order to predict and accommodate future demand for sport/recreation facilities. The purpose of the strategy was to give an overall picture of likely future facility requirements based on a range of factors. The main factor however would be the increased demand through population growth tied into increased housing provision, and connection to the Core Strategy would therefore be extremely important. The requirement for evidence was a fundamental part of producing all new planning documents including the current Core Strategy and would be examined in detail by the Planning Inspectorate through the Examination in public process, that all draft plans are subjected to before they can be adopted.

In order to provide more detail to the public open space elements of the Core Strategy, Committee had formed a working group to carry out a review of existing provision and identify any gaps in provisions that may emerge as a result of future population increases and other associated factors.

The strategy will assess current provision against existing and future demand in order to determine gaps in facility provision and whilst the strategy would embrace facilities across the borough, there would be a need to focus attention on key strategic sites linked to the main population centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. The report outlined the issues with regard to population growth, participation trends, capacity of existing facilities, geographical distribution of facilities and condition/capacity of existing facilities. The report went on to highlight that in order to ensure that future participation could be accommodated, the following facility types would have to be improved or increased.

- Swimming
- Grass pitches
- Synthetic pitches
- Sports hall
- Gym provision

Members discussed issues with regard to specific villages, borders with other authorities, Section 106 Agreements and the criteria of Sport England.

RESOLVED: That Committee request officers to draft a facilities strategy in conjunction with the working group for discussion at the next meeting of this Committee in March.

557 LEASE ARRANGEMENTS AT LANGHO FOOTBALL CLUB

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to consider extending leases on the Northcote Road and the Rydings sites at Langho to enable the club to apply for external funding. He informed Committee that Langho Football Club had identified the need to carry out extensive drainage works to the pitches as they had been experiencing difficulties in recent years. In addition, they have a desire to build a synthetic training surface along with improvements to changing rooms on the Northcote Road site which means they will need in the region of £250,000 to achieve all the improvements they have identified. Although they had already begun a series of fundraising activities within the club, they recognised that a significant amount of external funding would be required and the works would need to be phased over a number of years.

However, external funding bodies expect a security of tenure from applicants, particularly for larger grants and in the case of Sport England, the most likely funding source they would expect applicants to have at least a 25 year lease where the applicant does not own the land.

In order to give the club security of tenure and a reasonable timescale to make extending funding applications, they would probably need all three leases extending so they have 30 years to run from now. This would therefore mean the following extensions.

The Rydings – plot 1, 23 years – plot 2, 23 years
Northcote Road – 7 years

Any extension to the leases would of course include annual rent reviews.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to grant an extension to the three leases for Langho Football Club as outlined in the report.

558 PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to reconsider the proposal for the disposal of selected former public conveniences. He reminded them that they had considered a report in November 2012 at which they had approved the recommendations of the working group for the disposal of the closed toilets and a report on the proposed disposals was to be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee for their approval. The report had included a list of 8 former facilities for disposal or demolition. At the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee it had been highlighted by Members that the closure of one set of Council toilets in Gisburn and two of the three sets of facilities in Longridge were of particular concern and they subsequently resolved that the matter be referred back to Community Committee for their further consideration and to be able to investigate options for the improvement of the current provision of publicly accessible toilet facilities in Gisburn and Longridge.

The closure since February 2012 of the 8 of the 24 sets of facilities operated by the Council is contributing to a substantial reduction in the Council's annual expenditure that has been incorporated into the Council's budget provision. The reversal of any closure would lead to unbudgeted expenditure which because of the travel distance of Longridge and Gisburn from the operations depot at Clitheroe, would be disproportionately large. It was felt that more innovative local arrangements of operating a facility would need to be developed if a cost effective expansion of the current provision of public toilets was to be considered.

In relation to Gisburn, there is a proposal to address this position by offering the former Council toilet for sale to a local business that is known to be interested in purchasing the facility to make it available to their customers, with the condition that as long as the facility remains in use as a toilet, it is included in the community toilet scheme and hence still available for public use.

With regard to Longridge, the report listed the community toilet facilities within Longridge and the approximate availability of those facilities, some of which are of a far higher standard than those that were originally provided by the Council and are available over a wide range of hours. The Longridge Town Council had discussed the provision of public conveniences within the town centre and as a result, had confirmed that they did not seek to operate them. However, they resolved to propose to the Borough Council that a working group be set up comprising of officers of the borough and Town Councillors with the purpose of exploring local options for the improvement of the provision of publicly accessible toilets in Longridge. This invitation had been accepted and the Head of Engineering Services would meet with the group and report the findings to a subsequent meeting of the Community Services Committee. It was also noted that the Mayor had received a petition requesting the reinstatement of public toilets in Longridge at the Full Council meeting on 18 December 2012.

Taking the issues of Gisburn and Longridge out of the equation left the five sets of closed facilities on the original list still requiring action at Brungerley, Clitheroe, Mellor, Newton in Bowland, Waddington and Woone Lane, Clitheroe. Whilst it was recognised that the loss of a Council facility was rarely universally welcomed, the disposal or removal of these five sets of facilities should be pursued so that the residual property based charges and the inherent risks of having boarded up buildings and facilities was removed.

Councillor Sayers was given permission to speak on this item.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the measures described to investigate options for the improvement of the current provision of publicly accessible toilet facilities in Gisburn and Longridge to be pursued and that the outcome be reported to the next meeting of the Community Services Committee;
2. approve the disposal of the three sets of former toilets at Mellor, Newton in Bowland and Waddington with a report on the proposed disposals

being submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee; and

3. approve the demolition and landscaping of the sets of toilets at Woone Lane and Brungerley, Clitheroe.

559

KERBSIDE COLLECTION OF MIXED FOOD AND GARDEN WASTE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report advising Committee that £750,000 funding had been secured through the weekly collections support scheme to introduce the kerbside collection of mixed food and garden waste.

The application for funding had begun in May 2012 and was completed in three stages from the submission of an expression of interest to a detailed outlined bid and finally by the submission of a final bid in August 2012. To meet the conditions for funding the offer needed to improve the kerbside recycling service we currently provide to our residents, whilst committing to the retention of weekly collection of residual/general waste for at least the next five years. The grant sought totalled £750,000 to provide capital finance for the purchase and delivery of approximately 15,000 x 240 litre wheeled bins, two split bodied collection vehicles and all appropriate publicity and promotional costs.

It is proposed that all 140 litre wheeled bins provided to gardened properties for the recovery of garden waste be replaced with larger 240 litre wheeled bin. This would allow householders to include certain types of compostable food waste with their garden waste. To ensure that the service was provided to all domestic properties within the Ribble Valley and to keep costs to a minimum, the recovered 140 litre wheeled bins would then be redistributed to non gardened properties to recover their food waste for composting. The conditions for funding would thereby be met by extending the range of recycling collection services to our residents.

Formal confirmation from the DCLG that the application had been successful for the whole amount of £750,000 had been received on 22 November 2012.

It was not anticipated that the provision of a larger wheeled bin would have an adverse effect on the efficiency of the collection service or require any additional resources, but would improve this Council's overall waste management performance. Officers were planning to introduce the larger wheeled bins and the redistribution of the recovered wheeled bins in June 2013.

Members considered the policy of householders being able to opt out of having a larger green bin or not having a green bin at all.

Extensive publicity and promotion would be undertaken to ensure that householders receive sufficient information on the improvements and benefits of the changes to the collection service.

Councillor I Sayers was given permission to speak on this item. Members asked specific questions as to how the service would work.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the Council policy that will allow householders with gardens to 'opt out' of the provision of a larger green wheeled bin or for non garden properties to 'opt out' of the provision of the 140 litre green wheeled bin for their food waste.

560 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/2013

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to approve the revised capital programme for the current financial year for this Committee. The original capital programme for the current year included schemes at a total estimated cost of £221,000. Additionally, £185,080 from the budget from 2011/2012 was moved to the 2012/2013 financial year at the time of setting the revised estimate for 2011/2012. In addition, £51,290 known as slippage had been transferred into this financial year along with further approvals to the capital programme of £68,220 which gave a total approved budget of £525,590.

A table outlining the revised capital programme for 2012/2013 was submitted for Committee's information. It was anticipated at this time that all of the capital schemes would be completed by the end of the financial year, as expenditure to date already totalled £434,160.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the revised capital programme for 2012/2013 as set out in the report.

561 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013-2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to approve the proposed future three-year capital programme 2013-2014 to 2015-2016 for this Committee for recommendation to the Policy and Finance Committee. The report was based on the bids that had been received from Heads of Service which included schemes previously requested for 2013-2014 and 2015-2016. Heads of Service had been asked to put forward schemes which were the absolute basic requirement to keep the Council's services running. A list of these schemes and how each particular scheme links to the Council's ambitions were shown in a summary table of the financial impact for each financial year. It was noted that at this stage, these were only potential bids that would also require further consideration by the Budget Working Group and by Policy and Finance Committee.

As previously reported, funding had also been confirmed from the government for the bid for the retention of weekly collection of residual waste and this would be incorporated into the budget. Following the success of this bid, it was proposed to move one of the previously approved schemes from the 2014-2015 financial year to 2015-2016 (£200,000). The scheme is for a replacement refuse vehicle and was possible following the successful grant application for BID 7, which also allowed the reprogramming of the remainder of the refuse collection vehicle fleet replacement.

The Director of Resources updated Members on the latest position with BID 7 for the retention of the weekly collection of residual waste. The Head of Engineering Services raised the potential need to forward the purchase of the vehicle

currently scheduled in the 2014/15 financial year to 2013/14. This was to allow the purchase of the vehicle in advance of a necessary engine change from Euro 5 to Euro 6 in order to avoid an increase in price. This would probably be known in March 2013.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the future three year programme for 2013-2014 to 2015-2016 as outlined in the report subject to the potential rescheduling of the vehicle to 2013/14 from 2014/15 for recommendation to the Policy and Finance Committee.

562 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2012-2013

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree a revised revenue budget for 2012-2013 for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee.

The original estimate for this current financial year was approved in March 2012 and at the time of setting the current year's budget, the government had announced substantial reductions in the level of funding that it would provide two local authorities from 2011-2012 and into 2012-2013, with no indication of what level of funding would be provided in the longer term. Based on the information known at the time, a full service review was undertaken in 2011 in order to identify areas of potential saving. All of those put forward were considered and approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 22 November 2011. Following the grant settlement in December 2011, the amount of savings needed for 2012-2013 were £635,000 which was fully achieved from the service review savings identified.

The revised budget was £34,690 lower than the original estimate. A comparison between the original and revised budgets for each cost centre was shown with the main reasons identified. The Director of Resources informed Committee that it was pleasing to note that Community Services Committee's share of the £635k savings had been more than achieved.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the revised budget for 2012-2013 for submission to the Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

563 ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2013-2014

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree the draft revenue budget for 2013-2014 for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee. She informed Committee that the government announced its provisional grant settlement for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 on 19 December 2012 and that the headline changes to our funding shows a reduction in our spending power of 1.3% with a further reduction of 3.2% the year after. However, when a comparison is made between the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 grant settlements on a like for like basis, the cash reduction in our grant is £288,000 and a further £377,000. This was particularly disappointing when it had looked a few months ago as if rural authorities including Ribble Valley would have been treated more favourably in this settlement. The rural

services network and SPARSE group were campaigning vigorously to get the settlement changed. The Budget Working Group would be meeting over the coming weeks to examine the overall budget position and would ultimately make recommendations to Policy and Finance Committee on 12 February 2013.

To allow a better comparison of the budget to the original estimate within this report, the budget that was originally approved in March 2012 had been restated to show the movements that were needed following the service reviews. The estimates had been prepared on the current levels of service and allowed for pay and price increases of 2.5%. Any pay award for local government would be agreed nationally and whilst this was still being negotiated indications are that any settlement would be nearer 1%.

The report detailed the individual budget areas under this Committee along with comments and reasons for the main variances. The draft budget was also summarised in two ways; one over the cost of the service (objective) provided by the Committee and the other over the type of expenditure and income (subjective).

The net costs for this Committee would increase by £50,670 for which the main variances had already been highlighted.

The Director of Resources reminded Committee that fees and charges had been agreed in November 2012 and would be applicable from 1 April 2013.

Members asked questions with regard to various issues included in the budget report.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the revenue budget for 2013-2014 as outlined for submission to the Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

564 HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FUNDING 2013-2014

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information advising them that healthy lifestyle funding for the financial year 2013-2014 had been confirmed. £91,168 would be received from the Lancashire County Council and East Lancashire CCG for services that we provide over the next 12 month period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

565 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact John Heap (414461).