

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 11 June 2013, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

R Elms	G Mirfin
T Hill	N Ranson
B Hilton	J Rogerson
K Hind	D T Smith
K Horkin	R J Thompson
A Knox	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services.

87 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Hill, S Hore and A Yearling.

88 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

89 MATTERS ARISING

a) Minute 745 – Longridge CCTV

The Chief Executive gave an update on this matter. The Police and Crime Commissioner had replied saying that, whilst they could not provide extra funding towards this matter, they would probably view favourably the use of the £10k already provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner to Community Safety Partnerships.

b) Minute 754 – Meals on Wheels and Luncheon Clubs Update

Councillor Elms asked whether there was any funding available for a newly-established Luncheon Club at Slaidburn. The Chief Executive advised that the Club should write in to the Director of Resources with their request.

c) Minute 743 – Members' Allowances

Councillor Mirfin pointed that Ribble Valley Borough Council had the third lowest Members allowance rate in the North West and the seventh lowest

in the country. He felt that this should be benchmarked against similar sized rural areas and publicity should be given to these low rates.

90 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

91 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

92 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to appoint Members to the following two working groups as set out below:

(a) Budget Working Group: 5 Conservatives
1 Liberal Democratic
1 Independent

(b) Economic Development Working Group: 5 Conservatives
1 Liberal Democrat
1 Independent

93 STAN THE VAN – FUTURE FUNDING

The Head of Cultural and Leisure Services referred to his report on the performance of Stan the Van and requesting a 12 month extension to the existing agreement.

He reminded Members that Stan had been commissioned in partnership with Rossendale and Pendle Councils to deliver advice/services predominately to rural communities. Start-up costs had been funded via a grant from the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) with on-going running costs covered by the three partners.

He further reported that Stan would come to the end of its initial contract at the end of September. Whilst Stan had not had a great volume in terms of footfall, it had achieved the necessary performance to satisfy NWIEP outcomes and had helped support a number of Ribble Valley residents who otherwise may not have been able to access such support. A breakdown was provided in terms of enquiries received. Members were reminded that Stan operated on a rota that had allocated five days over a 3 week period in blocks of 2 and 3 days with one week free. It was also pointed out that in the early days it visited as many locations as possible and this had gradually been refined to ensure that it visited communities where the footfall had been the greatest.

It was recognised that Stan had not been always used to its full potential and Members commented on this particular portion of the report. In particular they felt that greater use could be used in future of this facility particularly in rural

areas and in particular in connection with voluntary and third sector organisations.

The report went on to point out that if Stan was extended there was an opportunity to change the emphasis to deal with more important issues facing the Council such as the roll-out of the new green bin service, changes to waste paper collections and promoting the work of Health and Housing Committee around the Ribble Valley Year of Health and Wellbeing.

Details were also given in relation to how the future funding of this facility could be achieved.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the contents of the report and agree to use the project underspend of up to a maximum of £27,080 to extend Stan for a further 12 months from September 2013;
2. ask CMT/Heads of Service to develop proposals to raise the profile of Stan and extend the range of services on offer; and
3. endorse the identification of other external funding to enhance the range of services on offer in particular those that will contribute to the Council's Year of Health and Wellbeing.

94

CAPITAL OUTTURN 2012/13

The Head of Financial Services submitted his report which sought approval of the slippage of capital schemes from the 2012/13 financial year to the 2013/14 financial year and to review the final outturn on the Capital Programme for 2012/13 for this Committee.

The Capital Programme for the Policy and Finance Committee consisted of 8 schemes. These were a combination of new schemes approved as part of the Capital Programme, schemes with slippage from 2011/12 and additional approvals. A summary of budget approvals, actual and approved slippage was provided for Committee. Overall 66% of the revised estimate had been spent but the largest proportion of the estimate that was underspent at the end of the year related to the economic development initiative scheme. This was due to a project that was being pursued no longer being viable and subsequent projects not being brought forward. This scheme was therefore included in the slippage from this Committee. For this Committee there were two schemes with identified slippage for 2013/14 as follows:

Economic development initiatives	£100,000
Server and networking infrastructure	£5,570

Giving a total slippage of £105,570.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the request for slippage as shown at Annex 2 and approve the slippage of £105,570 into the 2013/14 financial year.

95 NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES WRITE-OFF

The Head of Revenues and Benefits sought Committee's approval to write-off National Non-Domestic Rate debts where it had been impossible to collect the amounts owed.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the writing off of £5,596.35 of NNDR debts where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

96 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

The Head of Revenues and Benefits presented his report to Committee which covered the following areas:

- National Non-Domestic Rates.
- Council Tax.
- Sundry Debtors.
- Housing Benefit performance.
- Housing Benefit fraud.
- Housing Benefit overpayments.

A Member asked a question in relation to the impact which the new Council Tax collection arrangements had had on the Ribble Valley community and the Head of Revenues and Benefits reported that the impact had been quite small.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

97 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Members received an update report on economic development which covered the following topics:

- Economic development overview.
- Ribble Valley Employment Land Study 2013.
- Ribble Valley Service Centre Health Checks.
- Village Amenities Grant Fund.

- Lancashire Enterprise Partnership including:
 - i) Lancashire Enterprise Zone;
 - ii) Regional Growth Fund; and
 - iii) Growing Places Fund.

- Business support initiatives.
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).
- Town centre and business groups.

- Other activities/projects.
- The economic climate.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

98 OVERALL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2012/13

The Head of Financial Services gave Committee details of the Capital Programme Outturn for all Committees for the year ending 31 March 2013.

He reported that during the year the Council had spent £1,100,522 on capital schemes. The main areas of expenditure included:

- replacement of two refuse collection vehicles;
- purchase of a module to assist with the transition of the localisation of Council Tax support;
- expenditure on remodelling the Customer Service Area, Level C Reception area and the Platform Gallery; and
- renovation and disabled facilities grants.

He further commented that the capital accounts for 2012/13 had now been closed and the schemes with slippage had been considered by the appropriate Committees for their approval. There were 11 schemes with slippage into 2013/14 and as a consequence this would increase the number of schemes in the capital programme for the current financial year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

99 RIBBLE VALLEY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERS – UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which gave an update on the current work of the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership.

In particular the report referred to the CSP funding, its priorities for 2013/14 and suggested areas of expenditure where that funding could be used to best effect.

He also referred to on-going work at a strategic divisional level looking at triggering health funding to help combat violent crime.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

100 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2013/14

Committee received a report which detailed the various outside bodies which came under the remit of this Committee. Representatives would in future be encouraged to provide reports back giving Committee an update on the work of the body they sat on and drawing attention to any current issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

101 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next items of business being 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.

102 NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE WRITE-OFFS

The Head of Revenues and Benefits submitted a report detailing individuals who had either gone away or who had been made bankrupt. Committee were therefore asked to write-off those NNDR debts where it had been impossible to collect the amount owing.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off £10,545.97 of NNDR debts where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

103 REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES – COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – COLLECTION OF WASTE PAPER AND CARD

Committee considered a request from Community Services Committee for the approval of a supplementary estimate for the current year's revenue budget. A further request was also being made for the addition of a new capital scheme in the current financial year's Capital Programme.

Both of the above requests were to facilitate the provision of the collection of waste paper and cardboard in house, rather than through an external provider. This was due to the service provision by the Council's current supplier Viridor Waste Management coming to an end. Members then discussed the report in considerable detail and asked a number of questions of the Director of Community Services.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. agree to the request for a supplementary revenue estimate for the funding of the Viridor operation for 3 months of the year, April, May, June of £30,000 and if existing budgets prove inadequate, approve a further supplementary revenue estimate of £15,900 for the in house operation for the remaining 9 months of the year; and
2. agree to the approval of a capital scheme into the current financial year's capital programme for the purchase of two second-hand refuse vehicles totalling £24,000.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (414430).