

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 28 January 2014, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Hill	G Mirfin
T Hill	E M H Ranson
B Hilton	J Rogerson
K Hind	D T Smith
S Hore	R J Thompson
K Horkin	A Yearling

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services.

568 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Elms and A Knox.

569 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

570 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

571 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

572 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Director of Resources sought Committee's approval for the Revised Capital Programme for the current financial year for this Committee.

She reported that no schemes for this Committee were included within the original Capital Programme for this year, however not all planned expenditure for last year had been spent by the end of the financial year and a balance of this, totalling £105,570 had been transferred into this financial year.

She reported briefly on the latest position on the three schemes in the current year's programme:

1. economic development initiatives - £100,000;

2. server and network infrastructure - £5,570; and
3. public sector network compliance - £16,430.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Revised Capital Programme for 2013/14 as set out above.

573 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/17

Committee were asked to approve the proposed future three year Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2016/17 for this Committee.

It should be noted at this stage that there were only potential bids that would require further consideration by the Budget Working Group and by this Committee who would want to make sure that they were affordable both in capital and revenue terms. Members then considered the forward programme which listed the following four schemes:

1. Council Offices – reroofing scheme - £167,500;
2. asbestos abatement scheme - £12,000;
3. Council Offices window and roof light replacement - £88,900; and
4. Council Chambers – seating renewal - £11,250.

She commented that the level of the Council's capital resources available to fund the future Capital Programme would be insufficient to finance all bids being put forward. It should also be noted that the bids represent only those that have been submitted with regard to this Committee's services. Other Committee bids would be considered at the Special Policy and Finance Committee in 2 weeks' time.

RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Special Policy and Finance Committee a future 3 year Capital Programme for this Committee services.

574 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2013/14

Committee were asked to agree a revised Revenue Budget for 2013/14 for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee.

The Director of Resources commented that the original estimate had been approved in March 2013 but since then a number of virements between budget heads which had taken place.

Overall the total net budget for the Council had not changed but at a Committee level this had the impact of increasing or decreasing the budget levels on a number of service cost centres for which this Committee results in a net increase in the budget. She then commented on the revised budget which was £54,650 higher than the restated original estimate. This was reduced to £32,240 after

allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserved. Committee then considered a comparison between the original and revised budgets of each cost centre.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Revenue Budget for 2013/14 and submit this to Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

575 ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

The Director of Resources asked Committee to agree the draft Revenue Budget for 2014/15 for consideration by Special Policy and Finance Committee.

She reminded Members that our provisional settlement funding assessment was £2,603,416 for 2014/15 and £2,204,012 for 2015/16. In comparison our current year's allocation is £2,961,659 which represented a reduction of 12% and 26% respectively.

Committee were then asked to consider various cost centres in relation to the draft Revenue Budget for this Committee. The report highlighted where variations had occurred and gave reasons for those variations. Net costs to this Committee had increased by £27,160 after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves. Again the main reasons for these variations were provided for Committee.

Fees and charges for this Committee had been agreed in November 2013 and had been increased by 2.75% or more if the increase could be sustained.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 and submit this to the Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

576 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources sought Committee's approval to write-off a National Non-Domestic Rate debt. This was one case where the company had gone into liquidation and therefore the Council needed to write-off this particular debts.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of £9,683.85 of NNDR debt where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

577 PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive in relation to proposals being consulted on by Lancashire County Council in relation to the withdrawal of certain bus subsidised services.

In December 2013 Lancashire County Council announced a proposal to withdraw funding from subsidised bus services during evenings and on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The deadline for this consultation had been Friday, 17 January 2014,

and with the approval of Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee a response had been submitted to Lancashire County Council within that timescale. Members then discussed this matter in some detail and expressed their concern at the proposals and its impact on village life.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the reply sent by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee; and
2. ask the Chief Executive to contact the Sparse Organisation to enlist their help in the Council's campaign to oppose these particular cutbacks.

578 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2013/14

Committee considered a monitoring report of our treasury management activities for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013. The report highlighted that in recent years the profile had been raised for treasury management function and highlighted the potential serious risks involved. It was pointed out that the Council borrowed any money it required to fund its capital spending plans from the Public Works Loan Board and on a daily basis our cash flow position was monitored. The report dealt with borrowing requirements, investments, Prudential indicators and approved organisations.

RESOLVED: That Committee note the report.

579 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

The Director of Resources informed Committee of the Council's position on the following areas:

1. National Non-Domestic Rates.
2. Council Tax.
3. Sundry Debtors.
4. Housing Benefit performance.
5. Housing Benefit and Council Tax support fraud.
6. Housing Benefit overpayments.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

580 ADDITIONAL APPROVALS OF CONCURRENT FUNCTION GRANTS

Committee were informed that there were two further payments of grant that had been made to Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley and Chipping Parish Councils under the concurrent function grant scheme.

Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley had submitted a claim for revenue expenditure of £2,455.90 which included grass cutting and playground repairs. Based on the grant rate of 25% this would equate to £613.97 in grant funding.

Chipping Parish Council had submitted a claim of £770 which included maintenance of parks and play areas. Again based on the 25% grant rate this equated to £192.50 in grant funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

581 BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Committee received the minutes of Budget Working Groups dated 22 October and 26 November 2013.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

582 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES – RIBBLE VALLEY CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

Committee received a comprehensive report from Councillor L Rimmer, one of its representatives on the Ribble Valley Citizens' Advice Bureau.

RESOLVED: That

1. Councillor Rimmer be thanked for her report; and
2. the report be noted.

583 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business to be discussed being exempt information under Category 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

584 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources sought Committee's approval to write-off a Council Tax debt relating to an individual. It was reported that this was one case where a debtor had gone away and it had not been possible to trace them and therefore the Council needed to write-off that Council Tax debt.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of £1,268.49 Council Tax debt where it had not been possible to collect the amount due.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm.

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