

Minutes of Community Services Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 13 January 2015, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R J Thompson (Chairman)

Councillors:

J E Alcock	G Mirfin
R Bennett	R Newmark
S Brunskill	M Robinson
S Carefoot	I Sayers
A M Knox	G Scott

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Engineering Services, Head of Culture and Leisure Services, Director of Resources, Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillor S Hirst.

The Chairman introduced Adrian Harper who had taken over the post of Head of Engineering Services.

476 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Rimmer, R Swarbrick and J White.

Councillor J Hill was absent from the meeting.

477 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

478 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

479 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

480 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Director of Resources presented a report asking Committee to approve the Revised Capital Programme for the current financial year for this Committee. Three new schemes, a slippage scheme and a new scheme had been included in the capital budget for 2014/15 totalling £137,160. Each of the schemes in the Capital Programme had been discussed with budget holders and the programme had been revised to reflect their progress and estimated full year expenditure. Four of the five schemes would be completed in year and spend should be in line with the budgets approved. The budget for the installation of a 3G artificial pitch scheme, £47,000, had been moved to 2015/16 as this scheme was dependent

upon external funding that had not been forthcoming as yet. Expenditure to date on the other four schemes equalled 92% of the revised estimate.

The revised estimate for this Committee was calculated to be £90,160.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the revised Capital Programme for 2014/15 as set out in the report.

481 PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/2018

The Director of Resources submitted a report recommending a proposed future 3 year Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2017/18 for this Committee. The report reviewed the draft programme of schemes for the next 3 financial years based on the bids received from Heads of Service. This was bearing in mind the limited financial resources that are available to finance the Capital Programme. Heads of Service had reviewed the programme of provisionally approved schemes for 2015/16 and 2016/17 and suggested any amendments that were required to those schemes. They had also been asked to put forward bids for the 2017/18 Capital Programme. The total of all schemes submitted for the 3 year programme was £1,288,310.

The Director of Resources reminded Committee that all other Committees would also be receiving similar reports for the new scheme bids and that these would be finally considered alongside each other by the Budget Working Group and Policy and Finance Committee against the limited financial resources that were available to finance the Capital Programme.

Committee considered the various capital bids that had been submitted.

RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Policy and Finance Committee the future 3 year Capital Programme for this Committee's services as outlined in the report.

482 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree a revised Revenue Budget for 2014/15. Numerous variations to the budget had become apparent as the year progressed, particularly through the budget monitoring process. The revision of the estimates for the current financial year allowed a better assessment of the level of movement anticipated within earmarked reserves and balances and allowed a better forecast for the coming financial year. The 2014/15 budget included provision for price increases of 2.75% and a pay increase of 1%. The significant variances between the revised and original estimate were set out for Committee's information. The difference between the revised and original estimate is a decrease of £61,730 or £68,360 after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

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

ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree a draft Revenue Budget for 2015/16 for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee. The 3 year forecast to Policy and Finance Committee in September showed that significant reductions to the budget of £513k and £900k would be necessary for 2015/16 and 2016/17 based on our indicative grant allocation following a consultation in the summer and forecast future grant allocation reductions.

Our Provisional Settlement Funding Assessment announced on the 18 December 2014 is £2,240,595 for 2015/16. This was a reduction of 14% in our core Government funding. The Budget Working Group was meeting regularly to consider the Council's budget for next year and had suggested four options to address the budget shortfall:

- Whether the Council Tax should be increased for 2015/16.
- Examination in detail of underspends and overspends to ensure the base budget is accurate.
- Consider increasing the amount of New Homes Bonus used to finance the revenue budget.
- Examination of how much Business Rates growth can be realistically relied upon.

The draft Revenue Budget for 2015/16 had been prepared on the current levels of service allowing for a settled pay award of 2.2% spread over 2 years and price increases of 2%. The report outlined in detail the individual budget areas for this Committee along with comments on reasons for the main variances.

The draft budget was also summarised in two ways; cost of the service provided by the Committee and type of expenditure and income.

Fees and charges for this Committee had been agreed in October 2014 and had been increased by an average of 2%.

The Director of Resources informed Committee that the refuse collection and recycling estimates would be amended to reflect any decision taken with regard to cost sharing/the withdrawal of recycling credits.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the Revenue Budget for 2015/16 as outlined in the report to be submitted to Special Policy and Finance Committee subject to any further consideration by the Budget Working Group.

STONEBRIDGE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – LONGRIDGE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to consider a proposal for the disposal of the existing public conveniences at Stonebridge in Longridge and the provision of alternative conveniences.

The Council currently provides a set of public conveniences at Stonebridge adjacent to The Bonds of Longridge Petrol Station at Longridge. These facilities do not match the more modern internal conditions of all of the other public toilets

provided by the Council. Bonds Garage were currently engaged by the Council to clean the facilities and the Council's involvement was limited to funding the cleaning operation, the maintenance of the facilities and the provision of toilet requisites.

The garage owner had expressed an interest in purchasing the toilet block with the intention of demolishing the block and incorporating the area into a refurbishment of the former car sales room and fuel sales counter area in order to provide a convenience store to be operated in conjunction with the existing fuel station. The proposal includes new toilet facilities within the convenience store and the garage owner states that these would be available for public use when the store is open. The Longridge Town Council support this proposal. The incorporation of the new toilet facility within the convenience store would create an improved accessible facility at no cost to the Council.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the sale of the existing toilet block to the garage proprietor at the market value on the understanding that the site is to be incorporated into a convenience store to be operated in conjunction with the fuel/petrol station and that a new single sex fully accessible toilet facility would be incorporated at ground level in the new convenience store and be made available to the public as part of the Ribble Valley Community Toilet Scheme.

485 PENDLETON CAR PARK – SURRENDER OF LEASE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to consider the surrender of the Leases for the Council operated free car park at Pendleton. The Council currently provides a free off-street car park located between the Pendleton Village Hall and the Swan with Two Necks Public House at Pendleton. The car park is made up of two areas each being leased to the Council on 25 year Leases at rents of 1 peppercorn per annum for one area and at £50 per annum for the other. The Council does not own any of the car parks. Both of the 25 year Leases expired on 1 January 2015 and occupation by the Council of the areas would continue as the Leases are "holding over".

It was now felt that it would be appropriate for the Council to formally surrender the Leases and that the landlords be informed accordingly which would mean the Council's liability would cease for the upkeep of the car park and the ongoing maintenance and NNDR charges.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Leases with Pendleton Parish Council and Dutton Brewery Limited for their successors be formally terminated.

486 REVIEW OF LANCASHIRE WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report seeking a decision from Committee on whether this authority should take part in a Lancashire County Council funded review of Lancashire District collection services. He reminded Committee that notification had been received from the County Council that they had taken the decision to withdraw recycling credit payment from 1 April 2014 although this had been deferred until 1 April 2015 due to the lateness of advising districts. Similarly notification had also been given to districts that the cost sharing payment would not be extended past April 2018.

In response to concerns expressed by the districts at the prospects of severe reductions in compensatory recycling payments, the County Council had offered to work with District Councils to explore how waste collection costs in Lancashire could be reduced to meet the future reduction in resources by funding an independent review of waste collection services. Ribble Valley had not yet made a formal commitment to taking part in this review as concern had been expressed that it should also include waste disposal and treatment arrangements. The report outlined the draft scope that would mean sharing commercially sensitive information and would concentrate on reducing a countywide waste collection cost base.

The Director of Community Services reminded Members that the provision of a weekly collection of residual/general waste was important to the residents of Ribble Valley and that any potential cost savings may warrant changes to the collection frequencies/systems.

The Director of Community Services also informed Committee that a letter had been received from the Chief Executive of the County Council asking districts who have not yet confirmed their intention to take part in the review, to respond one way or the other by 23 January 2015, which would preclude any chance of the concerns outlined in the report being recognised in the review process.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the report; and
2. inform the Lancashire County Council that the Ribble Valley Borough Council was not in a position to commit to this review at the present time due to the rural nature of Ribble Valley and other circumstances.

487 MUSIC AND FOOD EVENT IN CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report outlining a request received from Lancashire Bites for a food and music event in Clitheroe Castle Grounds on May Day Bank Holiday 2015. This would coincide with the Ribble Valley Jazz Festival who would provide music for the event should it receive permission. The proposal would be to extend the Jazz Festival until the Monday and combine music and a market over the weekend. The plan is to have a temporary fence around the whole of the castle field enclosing around 50 stalls selling artisan food and drink from across the north, food demonstrations, a music tent, a beer tent and additional toilets. There would be a charge for people to get into the area which would include access to the music and the stalls/demonstrations. The event is deemed commercial and the standard charge for this event whose only comparator available is that of the fair at the Clitheroe Food Festival who were charged £1,500 plus clean-up costs and a £500 bond.

It was felt that although there would be some implications for local residents and users of the Castle, there would be a positive economic impact for the town and the wider area, in addition to adding to the culture offer available to residents and visitors alike.

The event had not yet been considered by RV SAG as the organiser could not commit further finances to the event planning until a decision was made on whether it could be staged.

Members considered the request and the implications it would have on both local residents and the food festival proposed for August.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the request for the music and food event in Clitheroe Castle Grounds on May Day Bank Holiday 2015 in principle subject to the normal licence approvals and confirmation by the Ribble Valley Safety Advisory Group of the event organisers arrangements at the rate of £1,500 plus clean-up costs plus £500 bond.

488 MANAGEMENT OF EVENTS ON THE HIGHWAY

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information on the intended withdrawal of Police support in providing traffic management for certain events that are staged or encroach upon the public highway and also advising Members of the subsequent intended development by Lancashire County Council of a policy for the management of events on the highway.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

489 CAR PARK WORKING GROUP

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information on the progress of the Council's Car Park Working Group; the purpose of which was to consider the provision and operation of the Council's off-street car parks across the borough. The notes of the two meetings that had been held were included for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

490 AUDIT OF PLATFORM GALLERY AND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information outlining the results of a follow-up audit carried out at the Platform Gallery and Visitor Information Centre. This audit had resulted in an assurance level of 2 where the Council can place reliance on the arrangements and controls in place.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

491 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report informing Committee on recent developments with the Open Space Working Group, wedding partnership launch, Platform Gallery, Ribblesdale Pool and sports development.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

492 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

493 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be exempt information under Category 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

494 EVENTS IN CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to consider a fourth day being added to a music event in the Castle grounds during 2015 where approval had already been given for 3 days. An event of 4 days would clearly have a significant economic impact for the town and the wider area for accommodation providers and business who could service the audience but would also have an impact on local residents including disruption to Eshton Terrace during load in/out. The event had not yet been considered by RV SAG because the promoter could not commit further finances to the event planning until a decision was made on whether it could be staged.

Committee carefully considered the request to increase this music event to 4 days from the already approved in principle commitment of a 3 day festival.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree that the music event be limited to 3 days as previously approved in principle not to be held on a Bank Holiday and that the promoter be asked to produce a programme of nuisance mitigation measures for the next meeting of this Committee.

495 OPTIONS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF RECYCLING CREDITS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report requesting Committee to consider the options available to this authority following the proposal by Lancashire County Council to cease recycling credit payments and to consider the options available.

The report reminded Committee that earlier decisions taken had approved the delivery of the separate waste streams recovered through the 3 stream wheeled bin collection service to the County PFI Waste Technology Park. However it had not been possible to resolve the financial and operational issues with the County Council on their exclusivity demands for our mixed paper and cardboard and we continued to make separate arrangements for the collection and sale of this material. Members were aware that the collection of waste paper and cardboard was part of the Council's in-house collection service with the change of collection aligned to the wheeled bin collection day.

With the County Council's notification of the cessation of recycling credit payments from 31 March 2015 a cost sharing had been offered to Ribble Valley but on different terms than currently offered to all the other Lancashire districts. Having taken Council's opinion it was now necessary to make a decision as to the way forward from 1 April 2015.

Discussions had taken place involving the Leader with other Member and Senior Officers of this Council and the Leader and Senior Representatives of the County Council. The report outlined the details of the options available which included:

- challenging the County Council's decision to cease recycling credit payments;
- entering cost sharing; and
- changing collection arrangements for paper and cardboard.

Committee were also reminded that the cost sharing agreement would end in 2018 with the expectation that there would be no other financial support offered by the County Council.

Committee considered and discussed the various options as outlined.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the report; and
2. are minded to approve a cost sharing agreement subject to satisfactory contractual agreement being reached and delegate to the Chief Executive and Director of Community Services in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of Committee authority to negotiate the agreement with a view to concluding this matter to the benefit of the Ribble Valley Taxpayers.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

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