

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 24 March 2015 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	S Hore
R Elms	J Rogerson
T Hill	D T Smith
K Hind	R J Thompson
B Hilton	A Yearing

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services and Head of Regeneration and Housing.

Also in attendance: Councillor I Sayers.

674 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Hill, K Horkin, A Knox and G Mirfin.

675 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2015 and 10 February 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

676 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J Rogerson, S Hore and A Yearing all declared an interest in item 6 – Voluntary Grants 2015-2016.

677 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

678 DRAFT CYCLE OF MEETINGS

Committee received a report asking them to consider the proposed meeting cycle for Committees for the municipal year 2015-2016.

Members were informed that consideration had been given to various issues that had resulted in the summer cycle being condensed as far as possible to avoid July and August and the first cycle of meetings being put back one week to accommodate the Parliamentary and Borough Council elections on 7 May 2015.

Members then discussed the draft timetable and suggested the 6 October Council meeting be brought forward one week.

*** RESOLVED: That the timetable as now amended be submitted to the Annual meeting on 19 May 2015 for final approval. ***

679 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS (PART 4 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION)

Committee received a report seeking to amend the Council's Standing Orders to reflect guidance received from central government, the consequential changes adopted to the Council's procedures and to ensure that they remain up to date.

Since the Council's standing orders were last amended, the Department for Communities and Local Government had published guidance entitled 'Open and Accountable Local Government – A Guide for Press and Public on Attending and Reporting Meetings of Local Government'. The report had been brought to Committee on 27 January 2015 explaining in detail the content of this guidance and Committee had approved a protocol for public participation at Council and Committee meetings and a protocol for filming and recording at Council meetings.

In light of this the Monitoring Officer considered that the Council's standing orders should be amended to reflect this guidance and the contents of the protocols.

Committee were reminded that article 11.3 of the Council's Constitution provided that the Council would only approve changes to the Constitution after consideration of the proposal by the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the changes outlined in the report above shown in Appendix 1 to the report; and

*** 2. Refer the suggested changes to Full Council with a recommendation for their approval. ***

680 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME UPDATE

The Director of Resources provided an update report informing Members on progress with the independent review of Members' Allowance Scheme and to agree the current Members' Allowance Scheme for 2014/2015 should continue until the outcome of the review by the independent panel was considered by a future Committee. Members were reminded that at this time of year, the Council would normally approve a scheme of Members' allowances for the forthcoming financial year. However, the Council had set up an independent panel to carry out such review which would come into effect from the new municipal year. To date the panel had met a number of times, interviews several Councillors and had sent questionnaires to all Members, the response to which they were currently considering. The outcome of the review would be reported to this Committee in June and any recommendations would need to be considered by this Committee and ultimately approved by Full Council in July.

It would be practical therefore for the current scheme of allowances to remain in force until the new scheme was approved and adopted by Council. Following receipt of the independent panel's report, the Director of Resources suggested that a small working group of Members be formed to consider the matter further.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. agree that the current scheme of Members' allowances for 2014/2015 be extended pending the outcome of the review of the independent panel; and
2. appoint a working group to consider the independent panel's report on Members' allowances. That panel to be decided at a later date.

681 VOLUNTARY GRANT APPLICATIONS 2015/2016

Committee considered the allocation of voluntary organisation grants for 2015/2016 as proposed by a working group of this Committee. The criteria for applications was set out for Members' information. The Council had received 24 applications requesting support of £164,423. The applications as submitted exceeded the funding available by £60,573. After careful consideration of all grant applications received, the working group recommended the grant allocations as shown at Annex 2 to the report.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the allocation of grants as proposed by the Voluntary Grant Sub-Group as set out at Annex 2 to these minutes totalling £103,850.

682 RETURNING OFFICER'S SCALE OF FEES 2015/2016 BOROUGH AND PARISH ELECTIONS

Committee were asked to agree the adoption of the Returning Officer's scale of fees in connection with Borough and Parish Council elections taking place on 7 May 2015 and any other local elections or referendum that might arise in 2015/2016. The details of those fees were set out within the report and covered items such as Returning Officer's fees, Deputy Returning Officer, Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks, training sessions, issue and opening of postal votes and count and general clerical fees.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the Returning Officer's scale of fees for 2015/2016 Borough and Parish elections as set out in Section 4 of the report.

683 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Director of Resources sought Members' approval to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/2016 financial year. She reminded Members that local authorities were required to work on specific elements of their treasury management activities; these included treasury management strategy or in the treasury management policies and practices that were determined by the Treasury Management Code of Practice and the Prudential Code. The 2010

DCLG Investment Guidance for England and Wales and the requirements of international financial reporting standards.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy covered the following areas:

- The current treasury position
- The review of the prospects for interest rates
- The Council's borrowing and debt strategy
- The Council's investment strategy
- Capital programme financing strategy
- Limits of treasury management activities and prudential indicators
- Current debt portfolio position
- Annual investment strategy

*** RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Full Council the Treasury Management Strategy as now set out in Appendix 1 to this report. ***

684 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES 2015/2016

The Director of Resources asked Committee to review, approve and adopt the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices for 2015/2016.

The Treasury Management Policies and Practices document governed the way in which the Council managed its investments. It was reviewed on an annual basis to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee review, resolve and formally adopt the Treasury Management Policies and Practices document as attached at Annex 1 incorporating the Treasury Management Key Principles which are:

- Treasury Management Policy Statement
- Treasury Management clauses
- Treasury Management Practices and Schedules

*** 2. Recommend to Full Council the Treasury Management Policies and Practices 2015/2016. ***

685 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

The Director of Resources sought Committee's approval to write off two National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) debts totalling £13,030.87.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the writing off of £13,030.87 where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

686

VILLAGE AMENITY GRANT – QEII PLAYING FIELDS PROJECT, WHALLEY

Committee received a progress report on the QEII Playing Fields project which was granted funding through the Village Amenities Grant Fund.

Members were reminded that issues had arisen with one of the large capital projects at QEII Playing Fields. The charitable trust which govern the playing fields was approved a grant of £10,000 towards the cost of a new multi-use games area, youth shelter and green gym. £3,500 of the allocation had been paid in March 2015 leaving an outstanding amount of £6,500.

Previously, Members had agreed that QEII Playing Fields Charitable Trust should be given an additional three month period beyond March 2014 in which to claim grant funding due to the size of the project and its significance to Whalley. However the project had stalled as the development of the MUGA was refused planning permission. Following additional work and resubmission of the application, permission had been granted in November 2014.

The Trust had now secured offers of funding to complete the project and the plan to start building at the end of the football season in April 2015, with the plan to reopen in August 2015 for the start of the new football season.

RESOLVED: That Committee confirm that due to the size and significance to Whalley, that the large capital project of QEII Playing Fields Charitable Trust be given until 31 August to finalise the project and to claim the grant from the Council.

687

TOUR OF BRITAIN CYCLE RACE

The Head of Cultural and Leisure Services made a presentation informing Members of the arrangements which were being made in respect of stage 2 of the Toru of Britain cycle race which would be hosted by Ribble Valley and Pendle and which would run from Clitheroe to Colne on Monday, 7 September 2015.

He gave details of the route, the road closures which would be necessary including the system of rolling road closures, which would hopefully help keep some vital traffic flowing.

He pointed out the massive potential that this event would have for tourism and attracting visitors to the area and the logistical problems involved in staging this event. Dialogue was ongoing with businesses, local schools and residents about the likely impact on the day.

Members then asked a number of questions about the road closures and their duration, getting maximum publicity for the area and the way Ribble Valley Borough Council could maximise the potential to put the Council on the map.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

688 RIBBLE VALLEY COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Committee were provide with an update on progress against the Community Strategy for Ribble Valley which was adopted in October 2014.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

689 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

Committee considered a report which covered the following:

- a) National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR)
- b) Council Tax
- c) Sundry debtors
- d) Housing benefit performance
- e) Housing benefit fraud
- f) Housing benefit overpayments

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

690 LUNCHEON CLUBS

Committee received an update report on the emerging luncheon club's project following the decision to provide a small grant scheme for the purpose and the request to keep Members informed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

691 BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Committee received the minutes of the Budget Working Group held on 14 January 2015.

692 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES – COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Councillor Sayers was given permission to address the meeting. He informed Members that Lancashire County Council had just announced that it was awarding a newly formed consortium, Lancashire community transport a supply contract for the next three years with an option of a further two years after that. Little Green Bus was part of this consortium. He also informed Members of the amount of funding which Little Green Bus had attracted over the past 12 months and he referred to the inequalities which community transport suffered compared to the normal public transport infrastructure.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Sayers be thanked for his report.

693 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Categories 1 and 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

694 DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Committee received an update report on various development sites across the borough.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

695 RIBBLE VALLEY HOMES – PROPOSAL RE TAYLOR STREET, CLITHEROE

Committee considered a request from Ribble Valley Homes to relax one of the conditions in the stock transfer agreement relating to a proposal at Taylor Street, Clitheroe.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to the proposal from Ribble Valley Homes subject to the necessary legal agreement being entered into.

696 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS 2014/2015

Committee received a report detailing the number and nature of formal complaints received by the Council from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

697 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

Committee considered a report asking them to approve the writing-off of a Council Tax debt totalling £1,701.44.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of £1,701.44 Council Tax debt where it had not been possible to collect the amount due.

698 LAND AT RIDDINGS LANE, WHALLEY

The Chief Executive presented a report which asked Committee to agree to dispose of the former garage site at Riddings Lane, Whalley.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the sale of the land at Riddings Lane, Whalley to Atkinson Morley Construction Ltd for £160,500.

The meeting closed at 7.31pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (425111).

ANNEX 2

RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION GRANTS 2014/15

Organisation	Recommended Grant 2015/16 £
Shopmobility and Information Centre	£5,300
Hodder Valley Agricultural & Horticultural Society Limited	£250
Carers Link - Hyndburn & Ribble Valley	£2,000
Home-Start Pendle & Ribble Valley	£3,000
Ribble Valley Citizens Advice Bureau	£60,000
Crossroad Care - Ribble Valley	£15,000
Little Green Bus	£5,000
Goosnargh and Longridge Agricultural Society	£250
Chipping Show Limited	£250
Rotary Club of Clitheroe – Clitheroe Community Bonfire and Fireworks	£500
Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue	£2,000
Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition	£500
Ribble Valley Dementia Alliance	£990
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	£800
Gisburn Festival Hall	£1,760
Ribble Rivers Trust (allocation to cover 2 year project)	£5,000
Longridge Field Day Events	£500
Whalley Pickwick Festival	£750
Total Grants	£103,850

Attach Appendix 1