

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 22 October 2015 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Brunskill (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	R Hargreaves
P Dobson	J Holgate
P Elms	R Newmark
R Elms	R Sherras
M Fenton	J White
L Graves	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Strategic Housing Officer, Senior Accountant.

367 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Hore, M Robinson and K Hind.

368 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

369 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

370 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

371 COSY HOMES IN LANCASHIRE (CHIL) PROJECT

The Chief Executive submitted a report requesting Committee approval to make a £4,000 contribution towards delivery of the Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHIL) scheme. This payment by the Council would be a contribution, along with the other 14 local authorities in Lancashire, to the starting, marketing and administration costs for the pilot scheme. The total funding available for Lancashire committed to the scheme is over £6 million, mainly comprised of £3.5 million from Scottish and Southern Energy in respect of energy efficiency measures, and £2.2 million from the Department of Energy and Climate Change's Central Heating Fund. This is required to be used on work to reduce energy bills and increase the thermal comfort of homes, leading to a reduction in cold related illness and associated general practitioner and hospital visits. The scheme would be more straightforward than the current complex provision by the private market, and would reduce exposure for vulnerable individuals to rogue contractors. The Council's Energy Advice Officer would participate in the scheme, and seek to ensure maximum benefit for the Ribble Valley, especially

taking into account the nature of the housing stock and the particular needs of residents. Members were concerned that the scheme be advertised as widely as possible, including through general practitioners and community centres where possible, and by communication to Parish Councils, including through the Parish Councils' Liaison Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve Ribble Valley Borough Council make a £4,000 contribution towards funding delivery of the CHIL pilot across all Lancashire authorities.

372 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Members' approval to increase Committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2016. These proposals were the first stage in the review of this Committee's budget for the forthcoming 2016/2017 financial year. The review takes place on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process. The Council's latest budget forecast allows for a 1.5% increase in the level of income received from fees and charges. This forecast currently shows a potential budget deficit for 2016/2017 of £263,000 after taking £200,000 from general fund balances. Therefore, service committees were requested to consider raising their fees and charges in line with the 1.5% target.

Budget holders and Heads of Service have worked with financial services to raise most of the fees and charges in line with the 1.5% increase, rounded up to minimise any problems with small change where appropriate.

Just two sets of fees and charges were set on a different basis to this, as follows:

- Five existing water sample analysis charges have been set only to recover the estimated direct laboratory fees and employee costs associated with these checks, in line with national requirements to cover only these costs.
- One new water sample analysis charge, 'request/multi bacteriological', has been set to recover the direct laboratory fees associated with these extra laboratory tests.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the charges as set out in Annex 1 to the report for implementation with effect from 1 April 2016.

373 CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BIDS AND REVIEW 2016/2019

The Director of Resources submitted a report recommending the proposed future three year capital programme 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 for this Committee. The Heads of Service had been asked to review the programme of provisionally approved schemes for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 and suggest any amendments that were required. This review identified no suggested amendments to the schemes already approved. The Clitheroe Market Improvement 2016/2017 scheme would be reviewed again after final plans were announced for the separate market development scheme.

Heads of Service had also been asked to put forward new bids for the 2018/2019 capital programme. Two bids, totalling £211,000 had been received.

It was noted that other Committees would also be receiving similar reports for the new scheme bids and they would all be finally considered alongside each other by the Budget Working Group and the Policy and Finance Committee against the limited financial resources that are available to finance the capital programme.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the future three year programme for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 as outlined in the report; and
2. recommend to Policy and Finance Committee this future three year capital programme for this Committee's services.

374 RIBBLE VALLEY HOMELESSNESS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The Chief Executive submitted a report requesting that Committee note recent developments in homelessness case law and approve the Ribble Valley Homelessness Temporary Accommodation Policy 2015. Under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1988, the Council may have a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation if there was reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need. Following recent guidance from the Supreme Court, the Council is required to demonstrate fairness and transparency in allocation of accommodation. It was considered that the current procedures met the existing and future requirements for temporary accommodation and allocation, and the proposed policy document reflected the current arrangements.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Ribble Valley Homelessness Temporary Accommodation Policy as set out in the appendix to the report.

375 CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information, relating to the progress of the approved capital programme for the period April to September 2015 with regard to schemes which fall under the responsibility of this Committee. There was a total of three capital programme schemes for this Committee, with total planned capital spend for the current year of £268,877. To date, just under 49% of the annual capital programme for this Committee had been spent or committed. The main variations to date were disabled facilities grants and landlord/tenant grants. In both cases, the budget is likely to be fully committed for the 2015/2016 financial year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

376 REVENUE MONITORING 2015/2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the progress on the 2015/2016 revenue budget as at the end of September 2015. There was an overall net underspend of £119,472 on the net cost of services, after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves. The main areas of

variation, including a net underspend to date on Housing Benefit rent allowance payment, were summarised for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

377 GENERAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

In the absence of the Head of Environmental Health Services, there was no report, but the Committee received the minutes of the Hanson Cement Liaison Committee meeting on 24 September 2015.

378 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

379 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be an Exempt Information under Categories 1 and 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

380 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of three disabled facilities grants and one boiler replacement grant, and attention was drawn to the waiting list for disabled facilities grants, which was expected to become longer. There was discussion about the allocation of grants, and the Strategic Housing Officer explained that legislation required approval of eligible applications, up to the maximum amount of £30,000, on the basis of approval in date order of receipt. There was further discussion on the possibility of recycling equipment that was no longer required in a particular property, with the difficulty being identified for relocation of stairlifts in properties in the Ribble Valley due to the nature of the housing stock.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

381 UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the affordable housing schemes in progress and proposed in the borough. The minutes of the Housing Working Group held on 21 September 2015 were included for Committee's information. There was discussion about the evolving arrangements for provision of accommodation for asylum seekers through SERCO, which was due for review by the Committee after six months in January 2016. It was emphasised that these arrangements only relate to asylum seekers and central government decisions on refugees were awaited.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).