

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 27 October 2015, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	G Mirfin
R Elms	M Robinson
T Hill	J Rogerson
K Hind	I Sayers
S Hore	D T Smith
A Knox	R J Thompson

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

382 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Alcock and R Hargreaves.

383 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Director of Resources gave an update on Minute 246 relating to business rate pooling in Lancashire.

384 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Rogerson declared an interest in agenda item 5, Concurrent Function Grants.

385 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

386 CONCURRENT FUNCTION GRANTS

The Director of Resources submitted a report requesting Committee's approval of the allocation of concurrent function grants for 2015/16. She reminded Committee that the concurrent grant scheme which was approved a number of years ago by this Committee gives grant assistance for those parishes and town councils who provide services in their areas which elsewhere are provided by the Borough Council. An annual revenue budget allocation had been approved of £20,000. Support was set at a rate of 25% of eligible net revenue expenditure. Parish Councils had been invited to apply for a grant and to date 19 applications had been received with revenue expenditure to be supported totalling £57,734. All grant applications must supply supporting documentation such as copy invoices before approval could be given.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the allocation of grants as proposed in the report totalling £14,316 for 19 Parish and Town Councils; and
2. agree to the payment of the approved grants in a single instalment rather than two instalments as outlined in the original grant scheme.

387 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval on proposals to increase this 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 2016/17 financial year. The Council's latest budget forecast allows for a 1.5 increase in the level of income raised from fees and charges and this review aims to increase budgeted income for 2016/17 by this amount as a minimum. After applying this percentage increase, proposed charges have generally been rounded up or down to minimise any problems with small change which inevitably impacts on the individual percentage rise for each separate charge. The current budgeted income to be received from fees and charges which are set by this Committee is £179,300. A 1½% increase on this total would therefore generate £2,690. Discussions had been held between budget holders and financial services to enable the budget holder to propose a set of fees and charges for their services. The proposed set of fees and charges are set out for Committee's information.

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

388 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Director of Resources submitted a report on Treasury Management activities for period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015. The report also sought Member approval on the review of the maximum limits per institution. The report outlined the investments that were held as at 30 September 2015 along with the approved organisations that have Fitch credit ratings.

With regard to the review of counter party limits, the Director of Resources reported that a certain times of the year there can be an influx of resources available for investment which had occasionally left the Council close to meeting the maximum that can be invested with all approved bodies. The limits were currently set at £1.5m maximum to be invested with each of the approved banks and building societies and a maximum of £5m with the United Debt Management Office. She was now proposing that this limit be increased to £1.75m in order to allow greater flexibility in the day-to-day treasury management activities.

*** RESOLVED: Recommend to Full Council that the maximum investment limits for approved banks and building societies be increased from £1.5m to £1.75m. ***

389 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a recommendation to Council the acceptance of updated financial regulations and

contract procedure rules. These are key components of the Council's Constitution and Corporate Government Arrangements and apply to every Member and officer of the Council and anyone acting on the Council's behalf. The report highlighted the main changes that had been made to the Financial Regulations around clarifying interpretation of some of the elements.

- There is further highlighting of the importance of reviewing any new services or processes and ensuring that adequate controls are put into place (Section 2: Internal Controls).
- Requirement wherever financial information is requested from or provided to the Council and the Director of Resources must be consulted (Section 3: Accounting).
- There has also been a tightening up around the arrangements for virements and their approval. This is to ensure that expenditure is never incurred prior to any approval to transfer budgets. Also further clarification around supplementary estimates and additional capital approvals (Section 6: Budgetary Control).
- Further details have been given around partnership arrangements and the bidding for external funding. This is to help ensure that the financial implications and risks are fully considered (Section 9: External Funding and Partnership Arrangements).
- Some additional points have also been added around the collection of income and the banking of the same (Section 10: Income).
- The procedures around the disposal of assets have been clarified a little more and also reference given to the security of information and the Council's Information Governance Framework (Section 13: Security and Inventories).

*** RESOLVED: That Committee

1. recommend to Full Council the acceptance of the revised Financial Regulations; and
2. recommend to Full Council acceptance of the revised Contract Procedure Rules.

390 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BIDS AND REVIEW 2016 – 2019

The Director of Resources submitted a report recommending the proposed future 3 year Capital Programme 2016-17 to 2018-19 for this Committee. The Heads of Service had been asked to review the programme of provisionally approved schemes for 2016 and 2017-18 and suggest any amendments that were required. This review had identified one scheme which would reduce the overall Capital Programme by £11,500 relating to a replacement server for Revenues and Benefits.

Heads of Service had also been asked to put forward new bids for the 2018/19 Capital Programme. 6 bids totalling £232,450 had been received. It was noted

that other Committees had also be receiving similar reports for the new scheme bids and that 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.

Members asked several questions with regard to several of the new bids and the necessity of these to be maintained in the programme.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the future 3 year programme for 2016/17 to 2018/19 as outline in the report; and
2. recommend to Policy and Finance Committee a future 3 year Capital Programme for this Committee's services to include the additional bids.

391 PREVENT DUTY

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the new duties around Prevent. The Prevent Strategy was published by the Government in 2011 and was part of an overall counter terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent Strategy was to reduce the threat in the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The report outlined how the Prevent Duty applies to specified authorities of which Ribble Valley Borough Council was included as a district council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

392 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016/17

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the Council Tax Base for the next financial year 2016/17. The provisional Council Tax base for 2016/17 is 22,024. The final Council Tax base would be determined between 1 December 2015 and 31 January 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

393 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

Committee considered a report which covered the following areas:

- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR).
- Council Tax.
- Sundry Debtors.
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Performance.
- Housing Benefit Overpayments.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

394 REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16

Committee received a report showing the position for the first 6 months of this year's Revenue Budget a far as this Committee was concerned.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

395 OVERALL REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16

Committee received are report detailing the position of the Overall Revenue Budget for the current financial year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

396 CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16

Committee considered a report on the progress of the approved Policy and Finance Capital Programme for the period April to September 2015.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

397 OVERALL CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16

Committee received an update report on the progress of the overall approved Capital Programme for the period April to September 2015.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

398 MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Committee received the minutes of the Economic Development Working Group that had been held on 17 August 2015.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

399 MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Committee received the minutes of the Budget Working Group held on 13 August 2015.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

400 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor J White had submitted a report for Committee's information updating them on the changes to Section 4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Armed Forces Community Covenant that had taken place over the last 12 months.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

401 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Category 3 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 19072 the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

402

EMPLOYMENT LAND

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Committee on progress with the acquisition of a site set out in the report for Industrial Development.

The District Valuer had been negotiating on the Council's behalf and agreement had been reached with the landowners involved at a value set out in the committee report.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee agree to pursue the acquisition of the site in question at the value set out in the report and the matter be dealt with as quickly as possible; and
2. the Director of Resources be asked to identify the funding to facilitate this.

403

CLITHEROE MARKET REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Chief Executive informed Committee that there would be a special meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee on Monday, 30 November 2015, to consider the next stage of this project.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

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