

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 7 June 2016 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	A Knox
S Bibby	G Mirfin
P Elms	J Rogerson
M French	I Sayers
R Hargreaves	D T Smith
T Hill	R J Thompson
K Hind	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Regeneration and Housing and Principal Policy and Performance Officer.

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor S Hore.

60 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Reference was made to Minute 683 – Grants to Voluntary Organisations where Members of Committee felt that the distribution of grant aid across the various voluntary groups should be examined next year.

Reference was also made to Minute 682 with regard to Ribble FM and the fact that this radio station had now been launched.

61 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no pecuniary and non-pecuniary declarations of interest.

62 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

63 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

The appointment of working groups under the remit of this Committee were confirmed and approved.

RESOLVED: That the following working groups be set up:

- Budget Working Group (6 + 1)
- Economic Development Working Group (6 + 1)
- Market Redevelopment Working Group (3 + 1)
- Combined Authority Working Group (6 + 1)

64 LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES CONSULTATION

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Members of Lancashire County Council's consultation on proposed neighbourhood centres and the proposed closure of other properties along with the cessation of services. The report outlined the definition of the neighbourhood centres, those which were proposed to continue and those proposed for closure along with details regarding the proposals being put forward for consultation. It was felt it would be useful to know the full extent of the services being cut and to establish whether a lower level service in an alternative venue could be considered and whether some of the rented premises could be continued to be used or whether it was a plan to sell the properties. The Lancashire County Council have started a 12 week consultation which runs until Sunday, 14 August 2016.

RESOLVED: That Committee form a working group (5 + 1) to consider the Lancashire County Council's proposals for neighbourhood centres and delegate to the Chief Executive an appropriate response to the County Council's consultation.

65 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2015/2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report to review the final outturn of the 2015/2016 capital programme for the Policy and Finance Committee and to seek Member approval for the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2015/2016 financial year to the 2016/2017 financial year. The capital programme for this Committee consisted of 4 schemes totalling £471,400 of which actual expenditure amounted to £256,237. The Director of Resources highlighted the main reasons for the underspend, which included a retention figure on the Council Offices re-roofing and replacement windows and rooflights contract; no expenditure on the economic development initiatives and minimal expenditure on the Clitheroe Townscape Scheme.

Members were particularly disappointed with regard to the Clitheroe Townscape Scheme and the withdrawal of funding from the Lancashire County Council.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the slippage of the budget into the 2016/2017 financial year for:
 - Council Offices re-roofing and Council Offices replacement windows and rooflights - £17,500
 - Economic Development Initiative - £100,000
 - Clitheroe Townscape Scheme - £55,000; and
2. note the withdrawal of funding of £60,000 from Lancashire County Council for the Clitheroe townscape Scheme and agree a report should be brought to a future meeting of this Committee setting out how the remaining budget could be utilised for this scheme.

66 REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEE

There were no references from Committee.

67 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2016/2017

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the Outside Bodies that are under the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee and their membership.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

68 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information which covered the following:

- National Non-domestic Rates (NNDR) – the Director of Resources drew Committee's attention to the Discretionary Rate Relief for Rural Businesses. This was following the announcement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the temporary doubling of Small Business Rate Relief would become a permanent feature of the business rates system. As a result some rural businesses who qualify for Mandatory Rural Rate Relief are worse off than similar businesses situated in non-rural areas. This occurs due to an anomaly in legislation that prevents rural businesses who qualify for Mandatory Rural Rate Relief from getting Small Business Rate Relief. In order to support our rural communities, it had been decided to grant Discretionary Rate Relief so that rural businesses are no worse off than similar businesses in non-rural areas.
- Council Tax
- Sundry Debtors
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Performance
- Housing Benefit Overpayments

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

69 OVERALL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2015/2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing Members with details of the capital programme outturn for all Committee's for the 2015/2016 financial year. During the year, the Council spent £940,596 on 16 capital schemes and performance reward grants. 12 of the 18 capital schemes were completed in year and were either on budget or within budget. The report outlined the main reasons for the £240,404 underspend.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

70 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES 2015/2016

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the 2015/2016 Treasury Management operations. The report outlined the following topics:

- Borrowing Requirements
- Investments

- Prudential Indicators
- Local Government Bonds Agency

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

71 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

72 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

73 LAND AT BARROW BROOK

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Committee on progress with land at Barrow Brook and to confirm actions for the next steps with regard to acquisition of the site. He updated Members on the issues outstanding with regard to the purchase of this land and the terms offered to the Council for the site.

RESOLVED: That the Council do not proceed with the acquisition of the site at Barrow Brook.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

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