

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 12 September 2017, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor K Hind (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	S Hirst
S Atkinson	A Knox
S Bibby	G Mirfin
A Brown	I Sayers
P Elms	D T Smith
M French	R Swarbrick
T Hill	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Head of Regeneration and Housing and Principal Policy and Performance Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillor M Fenton.

235 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor J Rogerson.

236 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

237 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

238 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

239 BUDGET FORECAST 2018/19 – 2020/21

Committee considered the report of Director of Resources in relation to the latest budget forecast and were asked to decide what action needed to be considered to meet the financial challenges that lay ahead. The report went through a number of key considerations. The latest budget forecast was based on many assumptions that were difficult to predict going forward; however nearly all our major income streams were currently undergoing significant and wide ranging reviews.

The Chief Executive outlined the assumptions that had been made with regard to pay, inflation and interest rates, local government funding and Council Tax as well as the base budget additions relating to waste management, planning fee

income and the new Director of Planning and Economic Development. The report gave a forecast summary for Members' information where the following assumptions had been made:

- i) Use of balances of £250,000 each year from general fund balances to leave £1.7m by 31 March 2021.
- ii) Interest receipts assumes £20k next year, £25k in 2019/20 and £30k in 2020/21.
- iii) Annual pay increases of 2%.
- iv) General inflation in line with the Bank of England target of 2%.
- v) The same levels of use of New Homes Bonus and Business Rates growth as currently:
 - New Homes Bonus (£793k).
 - Business Rate growth above our baseline (£276k).
- vi) An annual £5 increase in the Band D Council Tax per annum.
- vii) Full loss of income of £430k with regard to LCC cost sharing.
- viii) A 20% increase in planning fees (£109k) with a similar increase in planning expenditure.
- ix) £110k for the creation of the post of Director of Planning and Economic Development.

The report outlined that based on all the assumptions stated the budget shortfall for 2018/19 would be £774k for 2019/20 £956k and for 2020/21 £1,139m). This latest budget forecast provides a starting point for the budget setting process and the Budget Working Group would continue to work towards being in the position next February to agree a balanced budget. In the meantime the Budget Working Group had considered the Council's approach to setting of fees and charges for 2018/19 and rather than simply suggest they should be increased by inflation, had recommended that there should be a fundamental review. Any revenue growth items should also be funded from identified savings.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed with the Budget Working Group's advice to service committees regarding fees and charges.

240 ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2015/19 CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking approval of the Council's reviewed Corporate Strategy 2017 – 2019. The Strategy contains five corporate priorities to address issues that matter most to the borough which are deliberately limited to focus attention over the lifespan of the strategy. Each priority has a number of objectives that will help to achieve the priorities and the objectives are supported by key actions. Measures of success are also outlined which should allow progress towards the achievement of the priority and

objective to be monitored. The review of the strategy had concluded that some changes to the Council's objectives and actions were required to reflect the change in Council leadership and these had been made.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the reviewed Corporate Strategy 2017 – 2019.

241 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE UPDATE

The Director of Resources submitted a report updating Committee on the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The scope of the Peer Challenge is agreed with each Council and if required tailored to reflect local needs and specific requirements. There is a core component that looks at issues of leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience.

The Chief Executive and Principal Policy and Performance Officer had met with Neil Shaw – LGA Principal Advisor, to begin the scoping process and discussed timing of the challenge. The notes of the meeting were outlined in the report which included draft scope and focus, the timing of the Peer Challenge, the Peer team follow up and next steps.

It was confirmed that arrangements had begun to be made to have the Peer Challenge during the last 2 weeks in November or the first week in December.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the scope and timing for the Peer Challenge as outlined in the report.

242 LOCAL TAXATION AND COUNCIL TAX WRITE-OFFS

Committee were asked to approve the write-off of National Non Domestic Rate debts and Council Tax debts relating to 5 companies that had been dissolved. Reasonable steps by various means had been taken to collect these debts.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of £35,475.55 NNDR debts and £1,445.37 Council Tax debts and associated costs of £540 where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

243 REFERENCES FROM COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a reference from the Community Services Committee with regard to a request for additional capital scheme budget for 2 schemes, with both increases to be fully financed from revenue.

The 2 schemes were:

- increased £1,790 budget required for the off-street car parks – upgrade of payment system scheme; and
- increased £1,450 budget required for the replacement mower (Kabota) PN09SW0 scheme.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the request for the increased capital programme schemes totalling £3,240 with both increases to be fully financed from existing resources under the revenue budget.

244 CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18

Committee considered a report on the progress of the approved capital programme for the period to the end of July 2017 with regard to schemes which fall under the remit of this Committee. The two schemes previously referred to as a reference from Community Services Committee had now been included.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the additional capital budgets to Policy and Finance Committee of £1,790 for the off-street car parks upgrade of payment system scheme and £1,450 for the replacement mower (Kabota) PN09SW0 scheme.

245 CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18

Committee considered a report on the progress of the approved capital programme for the period to the end of July 2017 with regard to schemes which fall under the remit of this Committee.

The ICT infrastructure refresh scheme was complete but had over spent by £1,350 which could be financed from the ICT repairs and renewals earmarked reserve. The report outlined the capital schemes and gave an update from the appropriate officer on progress.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve £1,350 additional capital budget for the ICT infrastructure refresh scheme as funded by a contribution to capital resources from the ICT repairs and renewals earmarked reserve.

246 OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2017

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee about referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman for the period 1.4.16 to 31.3.17.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

247 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REVIEW – FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing Committee with updated information on the ward boundary review being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. They had now published their final recommendations which would now become subject to a draft Order laid in Parliament. If accepted the draft Order would provide for new electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley Borough Council to be implemented at the local elections in 2019.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

- 248 OVERALL CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17
- Committee received an update report on the progress of the overall approved capital programme for the period to the end of July 2017.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 249 REVENUE OUTTURN 2016/17
- Committee considered a detailed report of the actual position for the revenue budget 2016/17 for this Committee
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 250 REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17
- Committee received a report showing the position for the first 4 months of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 251 OVERALL REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18
- Committee received a report outlining the position on the revenue budget for the current financial year up to the end of July.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 252 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING – 2017/18
- A report of the Director of Resources was submitted for Committee's information on the treasury management activities for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 July 2017 covering such areas as the Public Works Loan Board, borrowing requirements, temporary investments, Prudential indicators, Local Government Bonds Agency and approved organisation and recent events.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 253 TIMETABLE FOR BUDGET SETTING
- Committee received a report on the timetable for setting the budget for 2018/19.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
- 254 INSURANCE RENEWALS 2017/18
- Committee considered a report informing them of the insurance renewals for the period 20 June 2017 to 19 June 2018.
- RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

255 REVENUES AND BENEFITS 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.

256 2016/17 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

Committee considered a report outlining the year-end report of 2016/17 that detailed performance against our local performance indicators.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

257 BUDGET WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD 22 APRIL 2017 AND 12 JULY 2017

Committee received the minutes of the Budget Working Group meetings held on 20 April and 12 July 2017.

258 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Committee considered a report submitted by Councillor J White, the Armed Forces Champion. The report included details of the visit by the Mayor, Councillor Joyce Holgate to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and Councillor White be thanked.

259 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next items of business being exempt information under Category 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

260 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

Committee considered a reporting asking them to approve the writing-off of Council Tax debts of £3,091.86 plus £240 costs where it had not been possible to collect the amount due.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of these debts.

261 REFERENCES FROM COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - BERRY LANE MEDICAL CENTRE, LONGRIDGE

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a reference from Community Services Committee with regard to a proposal

received from Berry Lane Medical Centre, Longridge, to buy a piece of Council land to enable the centre to be expanded. The Director of Community Services gave a verbal update following the resolution of the Community Services Committee to inform the Policy and Finance Committee that this Committee was not opposed to a sale of this land for an appropriate amount if the proceeds could be used to significantly improve the remainder of the play area.

The Director of Community Services had spoken to the manager at the Medical Practice to convey this resolution and discussions were ongoing.

RESOLVED: That Committee defer making a decision with regard to the sale of the land at Berry Lane Medical Centre, Longridge until further information had been received.

262 REFERENCE FROM COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a reference from Personnel Committee regarding the appointment of a Director of Planning and Economic Development. Personnel Committee had considered a report regarding the job description, person specification and remuneration package of the Director of Planning and Economic Development along with the recruitment process, which included the appointment of a small Sub-Committee.

Committee considered the proposals of the Personnel Committee with regard to the person specification and the changes that had been made.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. agree the recommendation from Personnel Committee regarding the job description, person specification and remuneration package for the Director of Planning and Economic Development with the reinstatement of 'entrepreneurial experience and a can do attitude' as a desirable requirement being included in the person specification; and
2. appoint a small Sub-Committee comprising of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee, Chairman of Personnel Committee and one Liberal Democrat to be advised by the Chief Executive and Head of HR to oversee the recruitment and selection process of the post.

263 RIBBLE VALLEY HOMES – PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the proposed amalgamation of Ribble Valley Homes into Onward Homes. He reminded Committee that the Council had transferred their Council house stock in April 2008. An approach had now been received by the parent organisation Onward Homes, who want to amalgamate their existing six organisations into one single organisation, which they believe would be better placed to support both the Council and their tenants.

The Chief Executive had met with the Executive Director of Onward Homes who had provided additional information with regard to their proposal. Members

discussed the ramifications of the proposal may have on Ribble Valley residents and the fact that there would no longer be any Councillor representation on the Board.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the proposed amalgamation of Ribble Valley Homes with Onward Homes; and
2. request the Chief Executive to report to the next meeting of this Committee following further dialogue with Onward Homes.

264 RE-DEVELOPMENT OF CLITHEROE MARKET SITE – UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Members on the market area re-development project and asking them to agree actions taken to progress a development scheme. Following the meeting of the Market Working Group in July 2017 where they had expressed some reservations around the submission scheme (plan A being over-developed) the scheme had been discussed with Barnfield Construction. A subsequent meeting had been held to discuss the Council's position and Barnfield design team were reviewing the scheme to address the concerns of the Council.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee note the progress on the scheme together with the indicative timetable outlined in the report and endorsed the actions taken by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive;
2. Committee instruct the Chief Executive, Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee to negotiate Heads of Terms, a development agreement and future control of the site;
3. Committee appoint a negotiating and design team consisting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee (with substitutes as necessary) and appropriate officers;
4. all meetings held be Minuted; and
5. the Market Re-Development Working Group be consulted once the design is drawn up to ensure it has met the Council's requirements before it is presented to Policy and Finance Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.

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