

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 8 November 2018 at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	M Robinson
P Dobson	R Sherras
R Elms	D Smith
L Graves	R Swarbrick
K Hind	R Thompson
R Newmark	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Environmental Health Services, Strategic Housing Officer, Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillor S Hind.

422 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill, R Hargreaves and J White.

423 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

424 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 270 – 18 Siddows Avenue, Clitheroe

The Strategic Housing Officer appraised Committee on recent information received with regard to this property. An email had been received from the owner of the property informing them that the sale had proceeded and the property was now in the ownership of a letting/property management company, although this was yet to be registered by the Land Registry. Further evidence of the sale has been requested from the registered owner.

The Strategic Housing Officer and Head of Regeneration and Housing informed Committee of the steps which could be taken, considering the alternative situations which would apply if the property had been sold, or if it had not been sold, and informed Committee that a report would be brought to them on any progress or lack thereof.

Councillor S Hind was given permission to speak on this item.

425 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

426 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

427 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report, supported by the Draft Homelessness Strategy for 2018/21, which took into account the significant changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This increased the range of duties imposed on the Council, and the range of client groups served.

The Draft Strategy addressed four key factors:

- Improve the housing advice information and support available;
- Prevent homelessness in the borough.
- Improve provision and suitability of temporary accommodation and reduce the length of time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Increase housing options for households and types of affordable secure housing options.

Members considered the impact of Universal Credit on housing needs and supply, and the possible role of the Council as a Registered Provider.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve that the draft Homelessness Strategy goes out to consultation; and
2. approve that any amendments proposed would be included within the Strategy and the Strategy will then be brought back to Health and Housing Committee for approval.

428 PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

The Chief Executive submitted a report advising Committee of changes to the legal framework and seeking to increase charges for the Council carrying out its duties with regard to private water supplies.

The Private Water Supplies (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 had added further categories to the number of supplies to be tested compared to previous regulations, and had increased the number of parameters to be checked. The Council was allowed to make reasonable charges for risk assessments and sampling, but the cost of analysis by United Utilities had increased due to the increased number of tests to be conducted.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. note the changes to the legislation covering private water supplies; and
2. approve the Private Water Supplies Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

429 IMMIGRATION HOUSING INSPECTIONS FOR UK ENTRY CLEARANCE

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing and advising Committee of the standards required for UK Entry Clearance in relation to the suitability of properties. Prior to the UK Immigration Authority approving an application from a person abroad to live in the UK, confirmation was required that the proposed accommodation was safe and suitable for human habitation, and that it was not statutorily overcrowded with the arrival of the additional occupant(s).

This work has already been undertaken and a fee had been approved. Committee were informed of the inspection procedure and the minimum standards that had to be met.

RESOLVED: That Committee note and approve the standards required by the Environmental Health Team for UK entry Immigration Inspections.

430 EXTENSION TO MANDATORY HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING

The Chief Executive submitted a report, advising Committee of the review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Mandatory Licensing regime and that the range of properties falling under the scheme had now been extended.

Previously the regime had only applied to properties of three or more storeys. The system now covered all properties with five or more occupiers, living in two or more households and sharing amenities, regardless of the number of storeys. This brought a number of properties in the Ribble Valley in to the system, for which fees had to be charged for processing the original application, and also for subsequent compliance monitoring.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the proposed fees for HMO Licensing as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

431 ANIMAL WELFARE AND LICENSING

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the introduction on the 1 October 2018 of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, which brought a number of existing licensing regimes under one broad set of regulations and introduced additional powers to suspend, vary and revoke licenses. The change to the regime required more complicated inspections by an appropriately qualified person, appointed to inspect on each application received. Current staffing arrangements would be able to cover such inspections during the initial period to October 2021, but, from that date forward, the Inspector would be required to hold recognised qualifications to a specified level.

Fees were chargeable for such inspections and Committee's approval was sought for an interim basis for the fees charged in the current year, together with the principle for review in March 2019 once the extent of the workload involved in the system had been assessed.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. authorise the Chief Executive and the Head of Environmental Health Services to appoint a suitably qualified person to act as an Inspector for the purpose of enforcing the regulations in Ribble Valley Borough Council's area;
2. authorise the Chief Executive and Head of Environmental Health Services to issue any applicable notices and grant, suspend, vary, revoke or reinstate licenses under the regulations; and
3. approve the interim approach to charging fees in the current year before new fees are considered at Health and Housing Committee in March 2019.

432 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Members' approval to increase Committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2019. These proposals were the first stage in the review of the Committee's budget for the forthcoming 2019/20 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 2% inflationary increase on the level of income received from fees and charges. This forecast currently shows a potential budget deficit for 2019/20 of £101,000, after taking £250,000 from general fund balances. Therefore, service committees were requested by the Budget Working Group to consider raising the fees and charges at least in line with the 2% target.

Budget holders and Heads of Service had worked with Financial Services to set the proposed fees and charges. Many of the fees and charges had been increased in line with the 2% inflationary increase, rounded up where appropriate.

Certain fees were highlighted, where new fees were being introduced or increases were significantly different to the suggested 2% increase. These included animal welfare licences, houses in multiple occupation licences, private water supply testing and analysis, and the fees for Clitheroe Cemetery. Members considered the proposed increased fee for interment of a child under 16 years old, and determined that there should be no increase from the fee set for 2018/19.

The review also identified some fees and charges that required amending or introducing with immediate effect in 2018/19, mainly as a result of changes in nationally prescribed regulations.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve

1. the charges as set out in Annex 1 to the report for implementation with effect from 1 April 2019, save that there be no increase in the fee for interment of a child under 16 years old; and
2. the amended and new 2018/2019 fees and charges proposed for this Committee in Annex 1, for immediate implementation.

433 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW AND NEW BIDS

The Director of Resources submitted a report recommending the future five year Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2023/24 for this Committee. This reviewed the existing schemes approved by Full Council in March 2018 for 2019/20 to 2022/23, together with new capital scheme bids from Heads of Service for 2023/24.

One change was suggested for 2019/20 to 2022/23. The indicative value of the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme for each year between 2019/20 and 2022/23 was to be set at £320,000, based on the current year's funding from central government.

Four proposals had been received for 2023/24, being Landlord/Tenant Grants at £50,000, Disabled Facilities Grants at £320,000, Drainage to the new section of Clitheroe Cemetery at £68,700 and Joiners Arms Roof Renewal at £43,900. It was also requested that the Drainage to the new section of Clitheroe Cemetery scheme be brought forward to 2019/20. The scheme bid would reduce to £63,500 if brought forward.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the proposed five year Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 and recommend this to Policy and Finance Committee.

434 CAPITAL MONITORING 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing Committee with information relating to progress of the approved Capital Programme for the year to date. At the end of September 2018, 40.5% of the annual Capital Programme for the Committee had been spent or committed.

The Clitheroe Market Improvements Scheme was on hold, awaiting final plans for the Clitheroe Market Re-development Scheme, whilst spend and commitments made against the ring-fenced budgets for the three housing capital grant schemes is ongoing in-year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

435 REVENUE MONITORING 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the progress of the 2018/19 Revenue Budget as at the end of September 2018. There was an overall net overspend of £39,185 on the net cost of services, after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves. The main areas of variation on this overspend were summarised for Committee's information.

The main area related to an in-year mismatch between expenditure and grant income for Housing Benefits Rent Allowances. This is likely to be rectified by year-end, as the Rent Allowance payments for the year as a whole would be reflected in more Rent Allowance subsidy grant income received at year-end.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

436 NOTES OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP DATED 19 SEPTEMBER 2018

The notes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018 were noted by Committee.

437 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There not reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

438 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.

439 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of 16 disabled facilities grants and 5 affordable warmth grants. No landlord and tenants grants had been approved since the last report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

440 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information with the minutes of the Strategic Housing Working Group held on 18 September 2018 and details of approvals and completions of affordable housing from 1 January 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Nicola Hopkins on 01200 414532.