

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 17 January 2019, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	R Newmark
S Brunskill	R Sherras
P Dobson	D Smith
R Elms	R Swarbrick
L Graves	J White
K Hind	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Strategic Housing Officer, Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillor M Fenton and S Hind.

569 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Hargreaves, M Robinson and R Thompson.

570 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor S Hind was given permission to speak on this item and asked if there was any progress on Minute 424 relating to 18 Siddows Avenue, Clitheroe. The Strategic Housing Officer informed Committee that investigations were still proceeding with regard to this property and that the owner of the property had informed them that the sale was progressing.

Committee asked her to make contact with the mortgage lender in order to obtain more information and report back directly to Councillor S Hind.

571 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

572 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

573 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval of the revised Capital Programme for the current financial year for this Committee. The original Capital Programme for 2018/19 had been approved by Policy and Finance Committee in February 2018 and Full Council in March 2018, since then

regular reports have been presented to this Committee on progress with and any changes to the Capital Programme.

As a result of the above the total approved budget for this Committee's Capital Programme of four schemes was £887,420.

Following discussions on each of the schemes with budget holders, the revised estimate for this Committee's Capital Programme of three schemes was £891,240, an increase of £3,820 from the previously approved capital budget. The main changes to the budget at revised estimate stage were on the Disabled Facilities Grants and the Clitheroe Market Improvements schemes.

Additional funding for Disabled Facilities Grants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Onward Homes had increased the budget for this scheme by £178,820 to £771,340. £143,310 of this additional funding had only been confirmed after the written report for this agenda item had been sent to Committee Members, so a verbal update was reported to Members on this.

The Clitheroe Market Improvements Scheme remains on hold and it was recommended that the £175,000 budget be moved to 2019/20 at revised estimate stage, leaving the 2018/19 revised estimate at nil.

At the end of December 2018 £498,718 had been spent or committed. This equated to 56% of the revised estimate capital budget for this Committee.

For Disabled Facilities Grants, there had been significantly higher levels of referrals and grants approved this year than in previous years. Therefore, the grant approval process had been amended to ensure the total of grant approval commitments in-year was confined to the yearly Disabled Facilities Grants budget available.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the 2018/19 revised estimate of £891,240 for this Committee's Capital Programme.

574 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the Revised Revenue Budget for 2018/19 for this Committee. Members were reminded that at this time of year the estimates are revised for the current financial year in order to predict the likely outturn. This also assists in preparing the original estimates for the coming financial year.

The revised estimate was set through detailed discussions between the accountants and budget holders, which took into account actual income and expenditure so far in 2018/19, any changed circumstances or new budget areas and operational plans for the rest of the year.

Committee were informed that the revised budget for 2018/19 showed an increase in net expenditure of £34,840 to £993,390 after allowing for movements on earmarked reserves. A comparison between the original and revised budgets for each cost centre was included for Committee's information and the significant variances were highlighted.

Members asked questions with regard to various cost centre budgets, in particular Dog Wardens.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the revenue revised estimate for 2018/19.

575 ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a reporting asking Committee to agree the draft Revenue Budget for 2019/20 for this Committee for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee.

With regard to the Council's overall financial position, she reminded Members that in September the 4 year budget forecast had predicted budget gaps of £101k in 2019/20; £225k in 2020/21 and £426k in 2021/22.

She also reminded Members that 2019/20 was the final year of the multi-year grant settlement which we had signed up to and as such we had not expected our allocations to change from those previously announced. A negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2019/20 of £108,866 was anticipated.

On 13 December 2018 the Government announced the provisional financial settlement; for Ribble Valley this would mean:

- a negative RSG had been eliminated gaining us £109k.
- the Rural Services Delivery Grant had been increased back to the same level as 2018/19 gaining us £21k;
- the New Homes Bonus threshold remains at 0.4%.
- the Lancashire Business Rates Pilot Bid had been successful. A gain from this would be dependent on actual business rate growth but estimates suggest it could be in the region of £400k;
- the Government are returning to local authorities the levy account surplus, which would be £20k for Ribble Valley.

The Government had also announced consultations on the future of Business Rate Retention and the Fair Funding Review which may have a significant impact on our financial position beyond 2019/20.

The Budget Working Group would continue to meet over the coming weeks and would ultimately make recommendations to Special Policy and Finance Committee on 5 February 2019 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The proposed fees and charges for 2019/2020 had been considered by Committee in November and had been incorporated into the service budgets. Following in-depth service analysis and meetings between accountants, budget holders, Heads of Service and Management Team, the proposed draft budget for this Committee was now presented to Members.

Estimates had been prepared on current levels of service allowing for the nationally agreed pay award (average increase 2.8%) and price increases at 2%. The budget for each cost centre within the report was presented individually showing the 2018/19 original estimate, savings, inflation, variations to the

standard budgeted inflation, unavoidable changes to service costs, support services changes, and capital charges changes, which then culminated in the draft original estimate for 2019/20.

The draft budget was also summarised in two ways; one over the cost of the service provided by the Committee (objective) and the other over the type of expenditure and income (subjective).

The net expenditure for this Committee is estimated to increase by £84,840 to £1,043,390 after allowing for associated movements on earmarked reserves. The main reasons for the net increase were explained for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the revenue original estimate for 2019/20 and submit this to Special Policy and Finance Committee.

576 APPROVE ADOPTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2018-2021

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report requesting Committee to approve the Homelessness Strategy 2018 to 2021. Committee were reminded that at their meeting in October 2018 the draft Homelessness Strategy was presented and it was agreed that it should go out to consultation until 31 December 2018. The document had been discussed at the Homeless Steering Group and the strategy had been amended to reflect all comments received and it was now proposed the current document be adopted.

Members asked various questions with regard to the document with particular reference to affordable houses, the current consultation on CIL/Section 106.

RESOLVED: That Committee adopt the Homelessness Strategy for 2018/21 and instruct the Chief Executive to prepare an annual monitoring report on the completed actions for this Committee.

577 SETTING A MAXIMUM VALUE FOR AFFORDABLE DISCOUNT SALE PROPERTY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report proposing a maximum value for affordable discount sale units developed in the borough in order to ensure the units meet the affordable housing definition.

The cost of housing compared to household income ratio is frequently used in research into housing affordability. In Ribble Valley the high house prices compared to income levels is often used to support affordable housing delivery and to highlight the difficulties households face in order to access home ownership.

Home ownership had become increasingly difficult to access, particular for first time buyers as house price growth had outstripped growth in wages. The decline in the affordability of home ownership together with pressure on the social rented sector had prompted growth in private renting as private rents rise the private rented sector had experienced its own affordability issues. Access to social housing was also constrained by lack of supply.

It was now proposed to set a maximum value of an affordable discount sale housing unit in the borough. Using the definition of affordable housing for discount sale property “to address the housing needs of those households unable to access the housing market” could be challenged where there is no upper values set for the sale of discount sale units and hence why there is a proposal to set a maximum value. The proposal was for a value to be set which would be calculated using the following formula – the average weekly full time income in the borough x 1.5 = for weekly household income x 52 for the annual income x 4 for which is the standard mortgage calculation. This would equate to a maximum value of £188,729. This would therefore be fixed as the upper limit that any affordable discount sale unit could be sold for at first sale. It was proposed that this formula would be included in the Section 106 definition of discount sale.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. accept the proposal to introduce a formula as the maximum value of a discount sale affordable property;
2. agree that the proposed formula be consulted upon for a period of 6 weeks, in particular with mortgage lenders; and
3. The Director of Economic Development and Planning report back to this Committee with recommendations following the consultation.

578 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for Committee’s information on an independent review of disabled facilities grant process that had been commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care. The review looked at how the DFG currently operates and makes evidence base recommendations for the future.

The overall aim was to support more people of all ages to live in suitable housing so that they can stay independent for longer and make the case for more joined up action across health, housing and social care.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

579 LCC HOUSING WITH CARE AND SUPPORT STRATEGY 2018 – 2025

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing Members that Lancashire County Council had produced a Housing with Care and Support Strategy 2018 – 2025 and that the document was currently out for consultation. The Borough Council had been invited to take part in the consultation which would be a key document to assist the development of new housing and support options for adults.

The draft document proposes the development of an extra care scheme in the borough and in every borough in Lancashire; also a shift in the model for adult with learning difficulties.

The Housing Strategy Officer reported that a response to the draft consultation would be sent through to Lancashire County Council once the question over the revenue costs of the scheme was addressed. Should any Members wish to add comments they should be sent to her by 20 January 2019.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

580 NOTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP DATED
6 DECEMBER 2018

The notes of the meeting held on 6 December 2018 were noted by Committee.

581 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies.

582 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be Exempt Information under Categories 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

583 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted details of eight disabled facilities grants, one adaptation grant and five affordable warmth grants. No landlord and tenant grants had been approved since the last report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

584 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for Committee's information with the minutes of the Strategic Housing Working Group held on 21 November 2018.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

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