

Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 2 April 2019, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Atkinson (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	G Mirfin
A Brown	J Rogerson
M French	I Sayers
K Hind	D T Smith
S Hirst	R Swarbrick
A Knox	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services and Principal Policy and Performance Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillors M Fenton and S Hore.

740 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Bennett and T Hill.

741 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 January 2019 and 5 February 2019 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

742 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

Councillors A Knox and J Rogerson declared an interest in Agenda item 5 – Concurrent Functions Grant Applications 2018/19 and Councillors A Knox, J Rogerson and I Sayers all declared an interest in Agenda item 8 – Voluntary Organisation Grants 2019/20.

743 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

744 CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS GRANT APPLICATIONS 2018/2019

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee to consider the allocation of Concurrent Function Grants for 2018/19. She reminded Members that in November 2017 this Committee had considered a revised Concurrent Function Grant Scheme which combined the previous Parish Lengthsman Scheme with the Concurrent Function Grant Scheme.

Under the revised scheme Concurrent Function Grants continued to be paid to parishes at 25% of eligible concurrent function expenditure. For those parishes previously in receipt of a separate Parish Lengthsman Grant, transitional protection arrangements had been put in place.

Given that the intention of the combined scheme was to ensure fairness and equality in the processing of grant claims across all parishes, it was recommended that if during the transition phase a circumstance should arise where the amount of Parish Lengthsman Grant payable under the transitional arrangements was less than what would be payable under the Concurrent Function Grants Scheme ie less than 25% of total net lengthsman expenditure, then the higher of the two amounts would be processed for the grant claim.

An annual revenue budget allocation for the combined grant scheme in 2018/19 had been approved of £31,280. In October 2018 all Parish Councils were sent a Concurrent Function Grant application form for 2018/19 and invited to apply. 24 applications had been received with eligible net revenue expenditure totalling £87,929.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve payment of grants to Parish Councils as detailed in the report totalling £26,029; and
2. agree that where transitional arrangements were in place, the amount payable to Parish Councils in future years should be no lower than 25% of total eligible net Parish Lengthsman expenditure, subject to the cost of the overall scheme not exceeding available budget.

745

COMPLIANCE WITH SURVEILLANCE CAMERA CODE OF PRACTICE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report informing Members about actions taken by the Council to comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner wrote to the Council in 2015 requesting the completion of a self-assessment tool regarding the Town Centre CCTV system. The tool was intended to help CCTV managers understand where they were complying with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and where improvements were needed to be made. The form was completed and submitted but the associated third party accreditation was never applied for.

The Commissioner had now written again trying to encourage authorities to apply for the Third Party Certification Mark for the Town Centre CCTV Schemes. This also included other surveillance camera systems in place; that must also be compliant with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and pay due regard to the Surveillance Camera Code. All camera systems processing personal data must also be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the requirements under GDPR.

The Commissioner had also asked that the Council identified a Senior Responsible Officer to deliver a corporate approach to the Council's responsibilities arising from the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the Senior Responsible Officer being the Head of Engineering Services, Adrian Harper; and

2. approve officers continuing with the process of Third Party Accreditation for the Town Centre CCTV Scheme.

746 CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019/2020

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval for the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategy for the 2019/20 financial year.

The report outlined that Local Authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Service and to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

It is a key principle of the Code of Practice on Treasury Management that public service organisations should put in place comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their treasury management activities. The Prudential Code imposed on Local Authorities clear governance procedures for the setting and revising of a range of Prudential Indicators that are designed to deliver accountability in taking capital financing, borrowing and treasury management decisions.

The Council had previously produced a Treasury Management Strategy but there had now been new requirements under the Prudential Code for the Council to also produce a new Capital Strategy; due to the cross-over requirements between the two policies, one combined Capital and Treasury Management Strategy had been produced. The Strategy was enclosed for Committee's consideration.

*** RESOLVED: That Committee recommend to Council the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy as set out in the report. ***

747 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES 2019/2020

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to review, approve and adopt the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices for 2019/20.

The Treasury Management Policies and Practices document governs the way we manage our investments. It is reviewed on an annual basis to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code. The Code identifies 12 areas where statements of treasury management practices should be developed to implement the full requirements of the Code.

The Treasury Management Practices are split in to key principles and schedules which cover the detail of how the Council will apply the key principles in carrying out its operational treasury activities.

Since the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices were approved in March 2018, there had been a number of minor

updates made to the Schedules within the document which had been highlighted accordingly.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. formally adopt the Treasury Management Policies and Practices document as outlined in the report, incorporating:

- Treasury Management key principles;
- Treasury Management Policy Statement;
- Treasury Management clauses;
- Treasury Management practices and schedules; and

2. recommend to Council the Treasury Management Policies and Practices 2019/20.

Councillors A Knox, I Sayers and J Rogerson declared an interest in the next item of business and left the meeting.

748 VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION GRANT APPLICATIONS 2019/2020

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to approve the allocation of Voluntary Organisation Grants for 2019/20 as recommended by the Working Group.

A Member Working Group had considered the applications received and made recommendations to this Committee regarding the allocation of funds to voluntary organisations on an annual basis. The group had met on 18 March 2019.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate that the purpose of the grant sought is to provide services or facilities that will meet the needs of communities in the Ribble Valley or directly benefit our residents. 20 applications had been received requesting total support of £162,892. A summary of the applications was included for Committee's information. The voluntary organisation grant budget for 2019/20 was £111,310.

The Working Group had agreed to recommend supporting 20 voluntary organisations across the borough with a total allocation of £105,500. The group had recommended holding back approximately 5% of the funds available for any new applications that may arise during the year.

Councillor S Hore was given permission to speak on this item and again raised concerns that the Citizens' Advice Bureau dominates the grants application and recommended allocations equalling approximately 50% of the budget.

Members discussed the applications received and in particular that of the Citizens' Advice Bureau and although it was recognised that the Citizens' Advice Bureau have an important role to play, it was also felt that the Council should receive regular updates on their work with measurable targets in order for the Council to be sure that the grant was well spent.

The Chairman also reminded the Committee that the Foundation for Ribble Valley Families currently received their premises rent free. The Committee

discussed the rental for the former physiotherapy centre to the Foundation for Ribble Valley Families. They were minded that the existing subsidised rental would be extended for 12 months subject to agreement and that in accordance with the Working Group's recommendation, the first call on the grant of £5,000 would be to meet the central cost.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the allocation of grants as recommended by the Voluntary Organisation Grant Working Group as set out at Appendix 1;
2. approve that the agreed grant amount for the Citizens' Advice Bureau be paid quarterly in advance subject to satisfactory monitoring information being received and approved by this Committee. The CAB be advised that they cannot rely upon this level of grant in future years; and
3. ask the Chief Executive to negotiate a Licence for the Foundation for Ribble Valley Families for a further 12 months, enabling them to share the premises with other organisations for a contribution towards their costs.

Councillors A Knox, I Sayers and J Rogerson returned to the meeting.

749 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

Committee were asked to approve the writing-off of Council Tax and Business Rate debts relating to two cases where a company has been dissolved; two cases where the company had been liquidated and one where the company had ceased trading. Reasonable steps by various means had been taken to collect the debt.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the writing-off of £727.25 Council Tax and £15,604.86 Business Rates where it had not been possible to collect the amounts due.

750 REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEE

- a) Community Services 2019/2020 Capital Programme – Further Scheme Approval Request

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider a recommendation from Community Services Committee to improve the inclusion of a further capital scheme within the 2019 capital programme. Community Services Committee had resolved to recommend approval of the following additional budget for 2019/2020 to Policy and Finance Committee - £11,500 for the replacement of leased car parking van KR16 HFT scheme to be funded by contributions to capital resources from the car park administration revenue budget. This Committee was therefore requested to approve the additional 2019/2020 capital budget as recommended by Community Services Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the additional capital budget for 2019/2020 - £11,500 for the replacement of leased car parking van KR16 HFT scheme to be funded by contributions to capital resources from the car park administration revenue budget.

b) Personnel Committee – Capacity of HR Section

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking them to consider a request from Personnel Committee to agree to the approval of additional revenue budget of £11,950 in 2019/2020 for an additional post of Senior HR Administration Officer within the HR section in order to address capacity issues. At its meeting Personnel Committee had approved the request to approve the proposal to significantly increase the capacity of the HR section by creating a new full time post of Senior HR Administration Officer; approve the necessary changes to the Council's establishment and recommend to Policy and Finance Committee to agree the financial implications and budgetary provision.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the request for the additional revenue budget of £11,950; and
2. approve the use of restructuring earmarked reserve to fund the additional revenue budget in 2019/20.

751 DRAFT MEETING CYCLE 2019/2020

The Chief Executive submitted a report requesting Committee's consideration of the proposed meeting cycle for Committees for the municipal year 2019/2020. This was subject to final approval at the Annual Meeting on 14 May 2019.

All meetings commence at 6.30pm with the exception of the first cycle of meetings where it was proposed the meetings should start at 6pm to accommodate a Committee information briefing, particularly for new Members on the Committee at the start of each meeting.

The Chief Executive indicated that the scheduled date of the first Planning and Development Committee on 23 May 2019 may need to be changed should European Elections be held in the United Kingdom.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the draft meeting cycle as outlined for ratification at the Annual Meeting on 14 May 2019.

752 ANNUAL REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS (PART 4 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION)

The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining a minor revision to the Council's Standing Orders (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution) to which ensured clarity. The Council's Standing Orders are reviewed on an annual basis and are the rules which govern the conduct and proceedings of the Council's meetings. Following the review just one area had been identified as requiring a change to the drafting to ensure clarity of meaning of completeness. This related to Standing Order 26.26 where Members were entitled to attend meetings of Committees or Sub-Committees of which they are not Members and may speak with the permission of the Committee or Sub-Committee. To bring Standing Order 26.26 in line with the Council's practice as at Standing Order 13.11 relating to Members speaking at Council, there needed to be a time limit imposed of not

more than 5 minutes except with the consent of the Committee or Sub-Committee.

*** RESOLVED: That Committee approve the change to Standing Orders as outlined with a recommendation to Council for their approval. ***

753 INDEPENDENT PANEL REPORT ON REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' allowances following their review of the current scheme and to make recommendations regarding the new scheme to the Full Council.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) 2003 required the Council to establish a scheme of Members' allowances in accordance with these regulations. The Council is also required to agree and publicise its Members' allowance scheme each year and have an independent review at least every 4 years. The Council in revising the existing scheme must have regard to the recommendations made by the panel.

The independent panel had met a number of times and also interviews the three Councillors who were group leaders as part of their review.

In summary the panel recommended no major changes to the scheme – no changes to the level of the annual basic allowance and no changes to the majority of the special responsibility allowances. However, the panel recommended the removal of special responsibility payments made to the Vice Chairman of Committees and instead proposed a payment of £100 to be paid as a one-off for each meeting chaired due to the absence of the Chairman for the entire meeting. They also recommended minor changes to the payment of travel and subsistence allowances.

The Council must make available for public inspection the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel as well as a notice being published in the local press describing the main features of the panel's recommendations and specifying the amounts of each allowance.

Once the Council had approved the scheme for Members' allowances it also must make arrangements for its publication with an indication of any differences from the recommendations in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council is also required to publish the amount of allowances paid to each Member as soon as practicable at the end of each financial year.

Members discussed the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and felt that they could not accept the recommendation regarding special responsibility payments made to the Vice Chairman of Committees being reduced to £100 as a one-off payment for any meeting chaired due to the absence of the Chairman for the entire meeting. It was felt that the Vice Chairman contribute far more to the position than just chairing a meeting in the absence of the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That

1. it be a recommendation to Council that having considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' allowances Committee approve the scheme as outlined with the exception of the Special Responsibility allowance for Vice Chairmen which should be retained at the current multiplier; and
2. Committee thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work in formulating proposals for a revised scheme.

754 RETURNING OFFICER'S SCALE OF FEES 2019/2020 BOROUGH AND PARISH ELECTIONS

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Committee to agree the adoption of the Returning Officer's scale of fees in connection with the Borough and Parish Council Elections taking place on 2 May 2019 and any other local elections or referenda that might arise in 2019/2020.

The representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Council to appoint an officer of the authority as Returning Officer to undertake various statutory duties in relation to election procedures. The Returning Officer for Ribble Valley Borough Council is the Chief Executive and is held personally responsible for the organisation and conduct of every election held within the Borough.

For national elections and referenda the fee paid to the Returning Officer and the cost of the election itself is set by the government and regulated by the relevant Returning Officer's Fees and Charges Order. However, for local elections the Council set scale fees which the Returning Officer should not exceed. For Parish Council elections the Council agreed many years ago not to recharge the cost of administering these elections to Parishes but for the Borough Council to bear the cost. The report outlined the scale of fees for 2019/2020 including those for the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks, training sessions, issuing and opening of postal fees and the count and general clerical fees. The Council's overall budget for the Borough and Parish Elections on 2 May 2019 was £120,000. The actual cost of the elections would ultimately depend on the number of contested seats.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the Returning Officer's scale of fees for 2019/2020 Borough and Parish Elections as set out in the report.

755 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/2020

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the schemes which had been approved for inclusion in the Committee's 2019/2020 capital programme. For this Committee there were five approved schemes totalling £196,250.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

756 REVENUE MONITORING 2018/2019

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the position for the period April 2018 to February 2019 of this year's revised revenue

budget as far as this Committee was concerned. The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure shows an overspend of £61,863 after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

It was noted that there was a massive underspend on the luncheon clubs and officers were asked to report back to this Committee at a later date.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

757 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

Committee considered a report which covered the following:

- 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.

758 BUDGET WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Committee received the minutes of the Budget Working Group meetings held on 7 November 2018 and 17 January 2019.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

759 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

760 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following item of business be exempt information under Category 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

761 LOCAL TAXATION WRITE-OFFS

Committee considered a report asking them to approve the writing-off of Council Tax debts relating to two individuals where it had not been possible to collect the amount due.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the writing-off of £6,468.91 of Council Tax debts plus £180 costs where it had not been possible to collect the amount due.

The meeting closed at 7.58pm.

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

APPENDIX 1

Organisation Name	Recommended Grant for 2019/20
B4RN for the Hodder Valley	£1,000
Carers Link Lancashire	£2,000
Chipping Show	£500
Citizens Advice Bureau Ribble Valley	£52,500
Clitheroe Community Bonfire & Fireworks	£750
Clitheroe Garden Club	£50
Goosnargh & Longridge Agricultural Show	£500
Hodder Valley Agricultural & Horticultural Society	£500
Home Start In East Lancashire	£4,000
Lancashire's Best Kept Village Competition	£500
Little Green Bus	£10,000
Longridge Field Day Events	£500
Ribble FM	£500
Ribble Valley Crossroads Care	£15,000
Ribble Valley Shopmobility and Information Centre	£7,500
Ribble Valley Talking Newspaper	£500
Royal Lancashire Agricultural Society	£750
Sabden Holme Committee	£250
The Foundation for Ribble Valley Families	£5,000
Whalley Educational Foundation	£3,200
Total	£105,500