

Minutes of Economic Development Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 23 January 2020, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	M French
D Birtwhistle	M Hindle
I Brown	S Hore
B Buller	G Mirfin
R Elms	J Rogerson
S Fletcher	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Head of Financial Services and Planning Policy Assistant.

Also in attendance: Councillor A Knox.

549 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Baxter and D Berryman.

550 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute 375 – A copy of the presentation on Rural Broadband was requested by members.

Minute 376 – An update was requested with regard to the Economic Plan and Rail Improvements.

551 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

552 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

553 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/2020

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 2019/20 had been approved by Policy and Finance Committee in February 2019 and since then regular reports had been presented to this Committee on progress with the Capital Programme.

In February 2019 one new capital scheme with a total approved budget of £20,000; since then there had been an addition to the original estimate – one 2018/19 capital scheme had not been completed by 31 March 2019 and had unspent budget of £81,750 and had therefore been transferred into the 2019/20 Capital Programme budget.

As a result of this the total approved budget for this Committee's Capital Programme of two schemes was £101,750.

Following discussions on each of the schemes in the Capital Programme with budget holders, the revised estimate is £20,000, a reduction of £81,750 from the total approved budget, with the £81,750 scheme being moved to the 2020/21 financial year.

The Head of Financial Services reported that at the end of December 2019 there had been no spend on the one scheme in this Committee's Revised Capital Programme but that the scheme was on track to be completed in year.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Revised Capital Programme of £20,000 for this Committee as set out in the report.

554 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2019/2020

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the revised revenue budget for 2019/20 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 original budget for 2019/20 included provision for pay increases at 3% and price increases at 2%. As well as using data on past performance, there had been detailed discussions with budget holders and Heads of Service on past service provision and on future plans which played an integral part in the budget setting process. The Head of Financial Services informed Committee that the revised budget for 2019/20 showed an increase in net expenditure of £9,360 more than the original estimate.

A comparison between the original and revised budgets for each cost centre was included for Committee's information and the significant variances were highlighted.

The difference between the revised and original estimate was an increase in net expenditure of £9,360.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the revenue revised estimate for 2019/20.

555 ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to agree the draft revenue budget for 2020/21 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 four-year budget forecast had predicted the following

budget gaps; £0k in 2020/21, £372k in 2021/22, £410k in 2022/23 after allowing for the use of general fund balances.

She also reminded Members that 2019/20 was the final year of the multi-year grant settlement from the Government. The Government had also announced a delay to the implementation of 75% business rate retention and the Fair Funding Review until April 2021.

On 20 December 2019 the Government announced the provisional financial settlement; for Ribble Valley this would mean

- A Business Rate Baseline of £1,354,393
- Our negative Revenue Support grant will be reset to zero
- New Homes Bonus allocation of £1,758,302
- Rural Services Delivery Grant of £107,921
- Revocation of the Lancashire 75% Business Rate Pilot but designation of a new Lancashire 50% Business Rate Pool

The Budget Working Group would continue to meet over the coming weeks and they would ultimately make recommendations to Special Policy and Finance Committee on 4 February 2020 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

There had been in-depth service analysis and meetings between accountants, budget holders, Heads of Service and Management Team. The proposed draft budget was now presented to Members.

Estimates had been prepared on current levels of service allowing for pay increases at 3% and price increases at 2%. The budget for each cost centre within the report was presented individually showing the original estimate, savings, inflation, variations to the standard budgeted inflation, unavoidable changes to service costs, support services and capital charges, which then culminated in the draft original estimate for 2020/21.

The report detailed individual budget areas under this Committee and comments were provided on the main variances.

The draft budget was 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 £22,370 from £288,990 to £311,360. The main reasons for the net increase were summarised for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree the revenue original estimate for 2020/21 and submit this to Special Policy and Finance Committee.

556 BOUNDARY SIGNS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report outlining the proposals for installation of larger boundary signs.

The issue of signs was originally raised at this Committee in relation to brown tourism signs that led to reports on gateway signs and subsequently a capital

budget bid was made and agreed for the installation of new boundary signs based on the new gateway signs which the Department for Transport and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport introduced.

The Borough Council currently has a number of boundary signs on a range of roads from the A59 to B roads which are all of a similar format, with the Coat of Arms and welcome to the borough in words.

Committee were informed that if a sign is replacing an existing sign, Department for Transport approval is not required, only permission from Lancashire County Council has to be sought. However the Lancashire County Council as the Highway Authority, set the guidelines based on Department for Transport rules for safety on the highway and on a road with a 60mph limit the minimum distance from the carriageway is 0.45m.

It was proposed that the two boundary signs on the A59 be replaced with larger welcome signs which replicate what is there now but on a bigger scale.

There was also the need to replace an existing sign which was damaged at Sabden Road, Simonstone with the same standard size sign.

The replacement of these signs could be completed by the end of March 2020 subject to gaining the required permissions from Lancashire County Council and supplier delivery timescales.

There was some discussion on the proposed wording on the signs and the consensus was that they should remain the same as they are now.

Committee were informed that nobody other than Lancashire County Council have statutory legal powers to interfere with road signs.

Councillor Allan Knox was given permission to speak on this item.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the installation of two new welcome signs as outlined in the report and the replacement of the one damaged existing sign at Simonstone.

557 EMPLOYMENT LAND MONITOR

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing information regarding employment land availability across the Ribble Valley.

The report outlined the existing port folio in terms of commercial stock available and the approved applications for planning permissions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

558 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

The meeting closed at 7.03pm.

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