

## Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 14 January 2021, starting at 6.30 pm  
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	B Holden
S Atkinson	A Knox
T Austin	R Newmark
D Birtwhistle	D O'Rourke
R Elms	D Peat
J Hill	M Robinson
M Hindle	R Sherras

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Acting Head of Environmental Health, Head of Financial Services and Senior Accountant

### 911 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

### 912 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 October 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 913 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

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

### 914 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IF ANY)

There was no public participation.

### 915 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2020/2021

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the revised revenue budget for 2020/21 for this Committee. The Director reminded members that the original estimate for this current financial year was set in March 2020 and at this time of year the estimates are revised in order to predict the likely outturn. This also assists in preparing original estimates for the coming financial year.

Members were advised that the budget this year had been particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic had also brought about wider pressures on service resources to the extent that there had been a lighter touch review of the budgets this year and the reporting is at a higher level than that usually provided.

Any impacts on fees and charges income due to Covid-19 were included within this Committee's estimates as was the estimated part-funding towards these losses from the government.

The proposed revised estimate budget for this Committee was £1,018,980, after allowing for movements in earmarked reserves. This is a decrease of £54,570 from the original estimate budget.

A comparison between the original and revised budgets for each cost centre was included for members information and the key movements were highlighted.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approved the revenue revised estimate for 2020/21 for this Committee.

916

#### REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2021/2022

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking member approval on proposals to increase this Committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2021. These fees and charges would operate for the duration of the 2021/22 financial year.

Members were reminded that the Council's fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process.

The Council's latest budget forecast allows for a 2% inflationary increase in the level of income raised from fees and charges and the review aimed to increase the budgeted income for 2021/22 by this amount when compared to this year's original budget estimate.

After applying this percentage increase, proposed charges had generally been rounded up to minimise any problems with small change. This inevitably impacted on the individual percentage rise for each separate charge, particularly when the current charge is low.

There were extremely high levels of uncertainty around income levels from the Council's fees and charges in light of Covid-19 and the impact this was having on use of the Council's services and facilities. In the current financial year, the government was partly compensating the Council for lost income at 75% of lost sales, fees and charges income – after first adjusting for 5% of total budgeted income. It was on the continuation of this, or alternatively the recovery of income levels, that the fees and charges had been set.

Following discussions between financial services, heads of service and budget holders, a proposed set of fees and charges for implementation from 1 April 2021 had been produced for this Committee for members to consider.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approved the fees and charges for this Committee for 2021/22 as outlined in Annex 1 of the report;
2. Requested officers to submit a general report to this Committee on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and their wider implications.

917

#### ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET - 2021/2022

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking members to agree a draft revenue budget for 2021/22 for this Committee for consideration at Special Policy and Finance Committee.

Committee were reminded that the Council's three-year budget forecast was last presented to Policy and Finance Committee in March 2020. At that time the following budget gaps had been predicted: £281,000 in 2021/22, £206,000 in 2022/23 and £337,000 in 2023/24, after allowing for the use of general fund balances.

At the time of producing the March forecast, the outcome of the Fair Funding Review, the potential changes to the New Homes Bonus Scheme and the implications of Business Rate Retention Reforms were unknown. The forecast was also made before the extent of the impact of Covid-19 in the current financial year was known.

Committee were informed that in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government had scrapped its plans for a multi-year spending review and had instead conducted a one-year review for 2021/22.

The key messages that came out of the 2020 Spending Review were highlighted to Committee.

At the Policy and Finance Committee in November 2020, members had agreed with the conclusion of the Budget Working Group that the Council should prepare its budget on the 2020/2021 base budget plus inflation and on the expectation that any variance due to the Covid-19 pandemic would be made good by the government.

The Budget Working Group would then consider the overall position once all committees had approved their detailed estimates and would then make recommendations to Special Policy and Finance Committee on 2 February 2021 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 for this Committee had been considered by Committee earlier in the agenda and had already been incorporated into the service budgets on the assumption that they would be approved without material change.

The draft revenue budget estimates for this Committee had been prepared on current levels of service allowing for pay increases at 2% and price increases at 2%. The budget for each cost centre within the report was presented individually showing the original estimate, inflation, movements in expenditure, income, support services and capital, which then culminated in the draft original estimate for 2021/22.

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

Committee was informed that approval of the original estimate budget for 2021/22 of £1,095,450 would see an increase in net expenditure of £21,900 compared with the original estimate budget for 2020/2021 after allowing for movements in earmarked reserves. The main reasons for the changes were summarised for committee's information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approved the revenue original estimate for 2021/22 for this Committee and submit it to the Special Policy and Finance Committee.

918

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking approval of the 2020/21 revised estimate for this Committee's capital programme.

In February and March 2020, three capital schemes with an original estimate budget of £513,940 had been approved. This included new annual budgets for two on-going grants schemes and also budget for two schemes that had been moved from the 2019/20 capital programme to the 2020/21 capital programme.

In addition to the original estimate other budget changes and approvals have been made in 2020/21. As a result, the total approved budget for this Committee's capital programme of six schemes was £1,446,220. This was set out in Annex 1 of the report.

Following discussions with budget holders on each of the schemes in the capital programme, a revised estimate of £1,277,520 was proposed for this Committee, which is a reduction of £168,700 from the total approved budget. The main reasons for the revised estimate budget changes were set out for Committee's information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approved the 2020/21 revised estimate of £1,277,520 for this Committee's capital programme, as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
2. Approved the move of the following capital budgets from 2020/21 to 2021/22:
  - Landlord/Tenant Grants, £136,740.
  - Clitheroe Market Improvements, £78,600; and
3. Approved the transfer of £5,000 capital budget in 2020/21 from the Landlord/Tenant Grants Scheme to the Longridge Affordable Housing Scheme.

919

CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2021/2022 TO 2024/2025

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking members to consider the proposed future four-year capital programme (2021/22 to 2024/25) for this Committee.

The future capital programme is reviewed and updated each year. In recent years, the Council has been setting a fully funded five-year capital programme each year. However, given the additional burdens and priority focus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic throughout 2020, the Budget Working Group had streamlined the capital programme budget update process for this year, moving to a four-year capital programme, covering 2021/22 to 2024/25, and there being no new capital bids for 2025/26 (year five).

After a review of the previously approved 2021/22 capital programme schemes and a review of the progress of schemes in the current year's capital programme, a proposed four-year capital programme of £1,943,240 for this Committee was proposed. Annex 1 of the report showed the schemes included in the proposed four-year capital programme.

## RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

1. Considered the proposed four-year capital programme (2021/22 to 2024/25) of £1,943,240 for this Committee, as set out in Annex 1 of the report.
2. Recommended to Policy and Finance Committee the proposed four-year capital programme (2021/22 to 2024/25) for this Committee, as set out in Annex 1 of the report.

920

## REVISED ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report proposing amendments to the Council's housing allocations policy.

The Report noted that on average there is between 900-1,000 households registered on the housing register. Therefore, a fair and transparent allocations policy is essential to ensure the correct priority is given to each and every household.

The propose amendments include changes to contact details and general changes in operational procedures. In addition, the report noted two key proposed amendments, these related to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and amendments to the awarding of points to households fleeing domestic violence.

## RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agreed to the proposed amendments to the allocations policy and that the new policy as shown in Appendix 1 of the report is adopted and implemented.
2. Requested officers have regard to the circumstances of members/former members of the armed forces when considering the allocation of points and that this is clarified as appropriate in the policy document.

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## REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (IF ANY)

There were no reports from outside bodies.

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## EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

### RESOLVED

That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

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## GRANTS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Director of Economic Development and Planning informing the Committee of the grants that had been approved as at 30 November 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact committee clerk Mike Hill; on 01200 414485 or email [mike.hill@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:mike.hill@ribblevalley.gov.uk).