

Minutes of Economic Development

Meeting Date: Thursday, 20 January 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chair)

Councillors:

D Berryman	S Farmer
D Birtwhistle	S Fletcher
B Buller	M French
J Clark	G Mirfin
L Edge	R Thompson
R Elms	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning and Head of Leisure and Cultural Services

Not in attendance: Councillor S Carefoot

596 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bennett and S Hore.

597 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

Councillor G Mirfin declared that as a County Councillors he sits on LCDL which owns land in Ribble Valley.

598 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

599 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

600 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to agree a revised revenue budget for 2021/22 for this committee.

Committee were reminded that at this time of year the estimates are revised for the current financial year in order to predict the likely outturn on the budget. The budget this year had been particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Whilst committee income and expenditure may increase or decrease at the revised estimate, items such as budgeted core government funding and council tax precept remain fixed. As a result, any compensating movement is within earmarked reserves and general fund balances. Decisions and actions required as a result of committee meetings have been incorporated into the budget setting process.

Committee were informed that the difference between the revised and original estimate was a decrease in net expenditure of £20,330, or £33,150 after allowing for

movements on earmarked reserves. A summary of the reasons for the movements was provided for members' information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Agree the revenue revised estimate for 2021/22.

601

ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the draft revenue budget for approval by committee and then consideration at Special Policy and Finance committee.

The Council's three-year budget forecast had been presented to Policy and Finance committee in September 2021 when it predicted that there would be the following budget gaps: £82k in 2022/23, £139k in 2023/24 and £230k in 2024/25, after allowing for use of general fund balances.

Since that time there had been a number of significant changes affecting the budget. These included significant rises in inflation, an increase in national insurance contributions and implementation of a new pay line. Therefore, the budget gap for 2022/23 was estimated to increase to around £497k.

The provisional local government finance settlement announced in December 2021 was for just one year, with a national increase of 6.9% in Council's core spending power in cash terms between 2021/22 and next year. This is the fourth one-year settlement in a row.

Headlines for Ribble Valley include:

- Core spending power set to increase by only 0.2% (£11,000) next year from £6.849m to £6.860m.
- Business Rate Baseline funding level is £1.354m which is the same as the current year, however £111k compensation will be received due to the loss of income received by freezing the business rate multiplier.
- An allocation of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) of £215 despite RSG increasing nationally by 3.1% for inflation.
- Rural Services Delivery Grant of £113,250 – same as the current year.
- Lower Tier Services Grant of £60,754 up from £57,696.
- A new one off 2022/23 Services Grant has been announced worth £822m in recognition of services and includes costs of the increase in NI contributions. Ribble Valley will receive £93,368.
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) – the Government have allowed a new round of NHB allocations for 2022/23 which will not attract any legacy payments. They have also allowed the one remaining legacy payment of £464k which has been allowed for. Next year there will be a payment of £741k for 2022/23 along with the legacy payment of £464k = £1.2m.
- The Lancashire Business Rate Pool has received designation to continue.
- The Council Tax can be increased by £5.

Taking these things into account reduces the budget gap from £487k to £233k.

Members were reminded that the fees and charges for this committee had been approved at their last meeting, and the consequential impact had been incorporated into the service budgets.

Once all committees had approved their detailed estimates, the overall position would be considered by the Budget Working Group and recommendations in order to produce a balanced budget would be made to Special Policy and Finance committee, before being presented to Full Council, at which point the Council Tax for 2022/23 would also be approved.

The draft proposed budget for 2022/23 was set out for each service area, starting with the original estimate for the current year and the predicted changes including inflation, movements in expenditure, income, support services and capital charges.

The net expenditure for this committee had increased by £43,840. The main reasons were summarised for committee's information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the revenue original estimate for 2022/23 for submission to Special Policy and Finance committee.

602

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to approve the 2021/22 revised estimate for this committee's capital programme.

One capital scheme totalling £66,750 had been approved by Special Policy and Finance committee and full Council in February and March 2021 respectively. The scheme had been moved from the 2020/21 capital programme to the 2021/22 capital programme.

During the year there had been budget changes resulting in a capital programme of two schemes totalling £101,750. These had now been revised to reflect their progress and estimated full year expenditure for 2021/22 which resulted in a proposed revised estimate of £50,000, a reduction of £51,750 from the total approved budget. The reasons were highlighted for committee's information.

Progress was reported on the two schemes. Lancashire County Council has informed us that the gateway signs would be installed over the next 4 – 6 weeks.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the 2021/22 revised estimate of £50,000 for this committee's capital programme as set out, and
2. Approve the transfer of £51,750 of the Economic Development Initiatives capital budget from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

603

CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW AND NEW BIDS

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to consider the future capital programme for this committee following a review of the existing capital programme with proposed amendments and the submission of a new scheme bid.

For this committee, no capital schemes were previously approved for the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25, so no scheme reviews had been required.

New capital bids had been requested to be put forward for 2025/26 and 2026/27. For this committee there was one new bid for 2025/26 for £55,000 for the Clitheroe Townscape scheme which had been deleted from the capital programme in February

2018. If the bid was supported by committee, it would be considered alongside bids from all other committee by the Budget Working Group and Policy and Finance committee.

The Chairman informed committee that a request for additional match funding on this scheme may be made by Lancashire County Council and suggested that should the detail be received in time for the budget process, it also be considered.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the new capital bid for 2025/26 for the Clitheroe Townscape scheme and forward it to Policy and Finance committee to be considered alongside the bids from all committees as part of the Overall Capital Programme.
2. Consider a further request for additional match funding on this scheme when details are received from LCC.

604 FEEDBACK ON LONGRIDGE LEVELLING UP BID

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report updating members on our bid to the Levelling Up Fund.

She reminded committee of the background to the bid and the decision to submit a bid for Longridge Town Centre under the Regeneration and town centre investment theme of the fund. This application had been considered by a central appraisal team and feedback had been received. The bid submitted was a reasonably strong bid in a highly competitive and oversubscribed application process. It had scored well in respect of its strategic fit and value for money, however the weakest area was that of deliverability. Specific feedback with regards to this area had been provided.

There was currently no more information on the Levelling Up Fund other than that there would be another round in Spring 2022. Committee would be kept informed.

605 TOURISM UPDATE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information on the general progress on tourism activity, with particular reference to measures taken to support the visitor economy during the pandemic, as well as the priorities as we continue through recovery.

Members requested officers to look at installing electric charging points on Council rural car parks and Longridge, and to consider extending our promotional offering to include cycling and golf.

606 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

607 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items under this heading.

The meeting closed at 6.57 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Olwen Heap olwen.heap@ribblevalley.gov.uk.