

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 10 June 2021, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor M Hindle (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	B Holden
S Atkinson	G Mirfin
I Brown	R Newmark
R Elms	D O'Rourke
S Farmer	R Sherras
J Hill	R Walsh

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

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor M Robinson.

55 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

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

57 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

58 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2020/21 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE 2021/22

The Director of Resources reported on the 2020/21 capital programme outturn for this Committee and sought approval for the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2020/21 financial year to the 2021/22 financial year.

Members were reminded that:

- A revised capital programme budget totalling £1,277,520 for six schemes had been approved by the Special Policy and Finance Committee in February 2021.
- The Committee had received reports monitoring progress of these schemes.
- Annex 1 to the report set out the Committee's capital programme outturn by scheme.

The actual expenditure on the 2020/21 capital programme was £679,007, which was 53.2% of the revised estimate budget and three of the six capital schemes had been completed in-year. Slippage totalling £595,170 had been requested for the remaining three schemes.

Members were informed that the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants 2021/22 funding allocation from Central Government was confirmed in May 2021. Thus, the Disabled

Facilities Grants scheme original estimate budget 2021/22 is now confirmed as £393,010.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approved the slippage of the following budgets into the 2021/22 capital programme:

- Disabled Facilities Grants, £567,500.
- Landlord/Tenant Grants, £15,900.
- Clitheroe Affordable Housing Scheme, £11,770.

59 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining the working groups under the remit of this committee and recommended that the Strategic Housing, Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the Dog Fouling working groups be re-established for the 2021/22 municipal year.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approved the continuance of the working groups under the remit of this committee as set out in the report, apart from the Dog Fouling Working Group which will comprise 2 Conservatives and 1 Liberal Democrat.

60 FIRST HOMES

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing members that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had announced a new affordable housing tenure, known as 'First Homes'.

The report noted that the First Homes scheme:

- Will be required on all new housing developments and that the Council had an opportunity to be part of a pilot scheme for delivery in 2021-22.
- Had a delivery, approval process and eligibility criteria that mirrored that of the Council's, therefore the Council were well placed to deliver the scheme.

The report also noted that in the first year of any First Homes pilot, developers would be able to bid for grant funding, enabling them to deliver First Home units in addition to other affordable units they were building.

Members were reminded that in the Ribble Valley discounted sale units had been delivered since 1990, when a discount of 15% had been applied and that over the years the discount had increased to 25% and to its current level of 40% in rural areas and 30% in the market towns of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Noted the new tenure First Homes will become part of the standard affordable housing offer on all new build sites and that the affordable housing policy will be amended to reflect this policy change.
2. Supported opportunities across the Borough to deliver additional First Homes affordable units as part of a pilot scheme.

61 FLY TIPPING - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive provided members with a verbal update on the issue of fly tipping in the borough and how the Council are tackling the problem

He referred to the increase in fly tipping and believed changes to the opening hours of Household Waste Recycling Sites and restrictions on opening during the pandemic had contributed to an increase in fly tipping in the Ribble Valley

Members were reminded that:

- Fly tipping is described as ‘the deliberate dumping of rubbish in an unauthorised place’ and that in 2018/2019 local authorities in England dealt with over 1 million fly tipping incidents.
- Nearly two thirds of fly tips involved household waste.
- The most common place for fly tipping was on pavements and roads, which accounted for almost half of total incidents in 2019/2020.
- Requests for removal of fly tipping come from a variety of sources including ward councillors, residents, and social media.
- The Council had 6 members of staff employed to deal with litter, weed spraying and emptying waste bins, as well as collecting fly tips, therefore it is often perceived that the collection of fly tips is at the detriment of other work.
- The Fixed Penalty Notice for fly tipping is £400 which can be reduced to £120 if it is paid within 7 days.

Members discussed the increasing fly tipping problem in some detail and the Chief Executive promised a more detailed report for the next meeting.

62 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2021/22

The Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the outside bodies that come under the remit of this committee and the membership on those bodies.

63 EMPTY PROPERTIES

The Director of Economic Development submitted a report informing members of the Council’s approach to responding to reports of empty homes.

Members were reminded that empty homes have a number of negative impacts on a neighbourhood, not least the fact that a home that could be occupied is not in use, which is a particular concern when the need for accommodation is so pressing.

The report noted:

- That where a property is identified as being empty and notified to the housing team, the housing team will try to contact the owner and establish the owners plans for the property and encourage them to get the property back in to use.
- The Council has a grant funding scheme available to work with owners to bring properties back in to use as an affordable rental property. Where this is taken up, it is a condition of the grant that the Council has nomination rights to the property for period of 5 years and that the rental levels are set at local affordable rents.
- That in recent years there has been less take up of the above grant however, it remains an opportunity to assist homeowners to return houses in to use and is always offered as an incentive.

64 COVID-19 - UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report providing members with an update on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Ribble Valley and the work undertaken by the Council in addressing the issues created by the pandemic.

A verbal report, which provided members with the very latest statistics on the pandemic was also presented.

Members were reminded that a similar report had been submitted to this Committee on the 18 March 2021.

Both the written report and the verbal update provided a range of statistics relating to the Ribble Valley including:

- Number of COVID-19 cases
- Number of tests by testing venue
- Contact tracing
- Enforcement action
- Levels of vaccination

The report noted that the Council:

- Is currently negotiating for an extension of the lease to continue to use the Edisford Road Car Park as a local testing site.
- Had established a lateral flow testing centre in the Council Chamber which had recently been relocated to a portacabin outside the main entrance to the Council's offices.
- Had opened two pop-up lateral flow testing centres one at Longridge Civic Hall and one at Whalley Village Hall.
- Had employed two full-time and one part-time members of staff in the roles of Local Contact Tracer and Community Hub Advisor.

65 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

66 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

67 GRANTS UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing members of the recent approvals relating to the following grant schemes:

- Disabled Facilities
- Landlord Tenant
- Affordable Warmth Capital Grants
- DEFRA/Property Resilience
- Ribble Valley Adaptation

The report noted that since the last committee meeting no grants had been approved for the Landlord Tenant Grant Scheme or the Affordable Warmth Capital Grants scheme.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Mike Hill mike.hill@ribblevalley.gov.uk.