

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 17 March 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor M Hindle (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	K Fletcher
S Atkinson	G Mirfin
I Brown	R Newmark
R Elms	M Robinson
S Farmer	R Sherras
J Hill	R Walsh
B Holden	

In attendance: Head of Regeneration and Housing and Director of Economic Development and Planning

Also in attendance: Councillors

746 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor D O'Rourke.

747 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

748 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

749 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

750 IMPROVEMENTS TO CLITHEROE MARKET

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report outlining the potential options the Council has in undertaking further improvements to the existing Clitheroe Market.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning reminded members that in September 2019 they had agreed to some improvements in respect of revamping the existing market using the existing allocated capital fund of £175,000, that had all been actioned prior to the Covid-19 pandemic except the removal of the stalls from the bullring. There was £78,000 remaining in the budget.

She outlined the issues and suggested a way forward with the bull ring area as a key area for future improvements. She highlighted the options that had been examined including removing all the bull ring stalls, improving the visual appearance of the existing stalls and replacing the existing stalls with timber cabins.

As the Clitheroe Food Festival is scheduled, none of the stalls would be removed until after this event, so there is some time to consider the best option for the market improvements.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning informed members that four temporary market stalls had been purchased and LCC had been contacted to establish whether these could be erected on Castle Street for one day to promote Clitheroe market with a similar event in Longridge.

She also drew members attention to the poor state of the bin storage area which would be investigated.

Members discussed the options outlined and agreed that timber cabins to replace the stalls in the bull ring might be a good choice. It was also raised that the market area being the responsibility of Health and Housing committee instead of Economic Development or Planning seemed incongruous.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to officers investigating the options of replacing the existing stalls with modern market cabins and to report the findings back to a subsequent committee; and
2. Agree to officers considering options for improving the visual appearance of the bin storage area.

751

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUTED SUMS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report requesting committee to look at options to pursue in respect of the use of receipted commuted sum monies to deliver additional affordable home to address the housing needs of the borough.

Members were reminded that where possible in seeking developer contributions the affordable housing was provided on the application site, however, where it could be robustly justified an off-site contribution in lieu of on-site provision was accepted.

Over the last 5 years there had been 7 sites where a commuted sum had been agreed and collected as opposed to on-site delivery of affordable housing.

Members had approved the use of the commuted sum from Barnacre Road, Longridge to purchase 2 units in Longridge that were both affordable and now managed by Mossacre St Vincent's, and subsequently also the purchase of a property in Clitheroe for two commuted sums from Clitheroe Road, Barrow and Peel Park Ave, Clitheroe.

With regard to the remaining off-site affordable housing commuted sums there was £2,059,850.34 available that had yet been committed. The £1.6m relating to the development of Dilworth Lane, Longridge would be the subject of a separate proposal at a later date, however the report outlined options for the other monies available in Chatburn, Barrow and Chipping.

Members discussed the meaning of 'affordable' and how the equity share option would work in allowing people to get onto the housing ladder, as well as the Council building their own houses.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Ask officers to explore the equity share option to enable residents of the Borough to get a first step on the housing ladder which is similar to schemes provided by Central Government and agree the principles of the scheme policy as outlined in the report. The policy will be brought back to the next committee for information;
2. Agree to utilising the receipted commuted sums as follows
 - a) Land at Chatburn Old Road, Chatburn – deliver an Equity Share option for first time buyers in Chatburn
 - b) Land at East of Clitheroe Road, Barrow and Peel Park Ave, Clitheroe – deliver an Equity Share option for first time buyers in Barrow
 - c) Land at Church Raike, Chipping and Buildings and Land at Dog and Partridge, Hesketh Lane, Chipping – on receipt of all the commuted sums from the two schemes: deliver an Equity Share option for first time buyers in Chipping.
3. Refer the above to Policy and Finance committee for 2022/23 budget approval.

752

HOMELESS STRATEGY 2021- 2024

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report presenting the updated draft Homeless Strategy 2022 – 2025 for approval for consultation with all relevant partners.

The document set out the priorities for the service and addressed the key areas of housing need which should be informed by consultation. A housing forum would be arranged to give partners an opportunity to discuss and consider the content.

Members were impressed with the document but asked that there be an executive summary included and perhaps some statistical information about the homeless persons presenting to the Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree the Homeless Strategy 2022 – 2025 to go out to consultation, the response from which is considered by the Director of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the chair and vice chair of this committee and subject to there being no issues that warrant further consideration by members that the strategy be adopted, and
2. Delegate to the Director of Economic Development and Planning authority to undertake any technical updates and amendments to assist interpretation, clarity or accuracy where there is no change to policy intent.

753

PROPOSED REVISED LANDLORD TENANT GRANT POLICY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report outlining a revised renovation grant policy and introducing a renovation grant offer to first time buyers. This had followed a review of the landlord tenant grant scheme for which there was a budget of £236,000 in the 2022/23 financial year.

In considering the options around the renovation grants, taking into account the significant reduction in take up of the landlord tenant grant scheme, several issues and concerns had been identified and revisions suggested. These were outlined in detail in the report with specific reference to landlords, LHA rate and first-time buyers and a new draft policy was included for consideration.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the revised discretionary private sector grant policy for a 12-month trial period;
2. Approve the use of the Central Lancashire LHA rate for a 12-month trial period;
3. Confirm officers trialling a First Time Buyers Grant for a 12-month trial period, this to be referred to Policy and Finance committee, and
4. Delegate a review of the above three changes to officers to report back to a future committee following the 12-month period.

754 REVENUE MONITORING 2021-22

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing committee with information relating to the progress of the 2021/22 revenue budget as at the end of January 2022.

The comparison between the actual expenditure and the revised revenue estimate for this committee at the end of January 2022 shows a net underspend of £81,750 after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

The largest underspend to date is the Housing Benefits rent allowance payments underspend of £41,769. This was likely to be broadly matched by reduced Housing Benefits subsidy grant income at year-end, meaning there was unlikely to be a significant underspend at year-end.

755 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing members of the schemes approved for inclusion in this committee's 2022/23 capital programme.

This committee has a capital programme for 2022/23 of six schemes totalling £782,540. The Disabled Facilities Grants scheme budget is currently an indicative amount. The actual scheme budget would be confirmed when the 2022/23 grant allocation from central government was notified to the Council. Additional budget approval would be required for the Joiners Arms Roof Renewal scheme in 2022/23 once the final scheme cost was confirmed. Any slippage on schemes in the 2021/22 capital programme would be reported to committee.

756 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

757 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.

HOUSING GRANTS UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for information on recent approvals for seven Disabled Facilities grants and seven Ribble Valley Adaptation grants. No new landlord/tenant capital grants had been approved since the last committee report.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Olwen Heap 01200 414408 olwen.heap@ribblevalley.gov.uk.