

Minutes of Policy and Finance

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 22 June 2021, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Atkinson (Chair)

Councillors:

D Berryman	M Hindle
S Bibby	S Hore
A Brown	K Horkin
S Fletcher	D Peat
M French	R Thompson
J Hill	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Director of Community Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Principal Policy and Performance Officer

Also in attendance: Councillors G Mirfin and R Walsh

93 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors J Clark, S Hirst and A Knox and the Director of Economic Development and Planning.

94 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor S Fletcher declared an interest in agenda item 7 – Voluntary Organisation Grants Citizens Advice Bureau; Councillor S Hore declared an interest in agenda item 20 – Longridge Assets; and Councillor Horkin declared that he had various businesses in the Borough.

96 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

97 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining the working groups under the remit of this committee and recommending that they all be re-established for the 2021/22 municipal year.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the continuance of the following working groups and their membership –

- Voluntary Organisation grants – Councillors S Atkinson, S Hore, A Brown and M French
- Budget Working Group – Councillors S Atkinson, S Hore, S Hirst, D Peat, A Brown, J Rogerson, J Hill and S Fletcher

- Longridge Assets – Councillors R Thompson, J Clark, J Rogerson, S Hirst, S Rainford and S Fletcher
- Climate Change – Councillors J Clark, S Bibby, D Berryman, S Atkinson, J Hill, S Fletcher and R Thompson

98

CAPITAL OUTTURN 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report showing the 2020/21 capital outturn for this committee and seeking member approval for the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2020/21 financial year to the 2021/22 financial year.

In February 2021 the total approved budget for this committee's capital programme of seven schemes was £158,310 of which £105,510 on four schemes was approved to move into the 2021/22 financial year following a review of progress on all schemes.

Three of the seven capital programme schemes totalling £124,022 were completed in year which equated to 78.3% of the revised estimate budget.

The remaining four schemes totalling £34,280 had not been completed and approval was therefore sought to move them into the 2021/22 financial year.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the slippage of the following budgets into the 2021/22 capital programme –

- Dewhurst Road, Langho – resurfacing works - £3,850
- Redesign of Corporate website - £12,000
- Replacement PCs - £10,000
- Financial system upgrade - £8,430

Councillor S Fletcher declared an interest in the next item of business and took no part in the debate or vote.

99

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION GRANTS - CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to consider the performance monitoring information for the period January to March 2021, the 12-week action plan detailing their aims to increase their outreach across Ribble Valley, and whether to approve the first quarterly instalment of the voluntary organisation grant for 2021/22 to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Members were reminded that quarterly payments of the grant totalling £52,500 was subject to the Council receiving satisfactory monitoring information and reassurance that they would extend their services to Longridge.

Members considered the information received from the Citizens Advice Bureau that outlined their monitoring performance information and action plan showing how they aimed to increase their services and extend their promotional activity across the Ribble Valley.

Members asked that the Citizens Advice Bureau be invited to the next meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Accept the monitoring information and action plan supplied by the Citizens Advice Bureau and approve payment of the first quarterly instalment of their grant totalling £13,125.

100

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the annual review of the financial regulations and review of the contract procedure rules in respect of the references to regulations following the end of the transition period as a result of the UK's exit from the EU.

A full review of the existing financial regulations had been carried out and no changes were required. These would now need the approval of Council.

Following the review of the contract procedure rules, although the requirements of the regulations were largely unchanged as the EU regulations had been brought into UK law, references to EU had to be deleted and amended. A tracked change document was included for members information.

*** RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Recommend to Council acceptance of the reviewed (without change) Financial Regulations and revised Contract Procedure Rules.

101

REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEE

102

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - WASTE TRANSFER STATION CAPITAL

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to consider a request from Community Services committee in respect of a jointly funded capital scheme for concreting the floors at the Waste Transfer Station.

The scheme would require an additional capital budget of £24,000 in the 2021/22 financial year, £12,000 of which would be funded from Lancashire County Council and £12,000 from this Council from the Capital Earmarked Reserve, supported by income from the sale of vehicles in year.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the request for additional capital budget of £24,000 in respect of the concreting of the floor at the Waste Transfer Station, to be funded from a £12,000 contribution from Lancashire County Council and £12,000 from this Council, from the Capital Earmarked Reserve, supported by income from the sale of vehicles in year.

103

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - PLAY AREAS CAPITAL SCHEME

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to consider a request from Community Services committee in respect of the improvement to the play area sites at Kestor Lane, Longridge and Clitheroe Castle, Clitheroe.

Community Services committee had considered the request for an additional capital budget of £30,000 for the Kestor Lane site, and £32,660 for the Clitheroe Castle site, to be fully funded from S106 monies received in respect of the two sites.

Members were also reminded that the resolution of Community Services committee included supplying a more comprehensive report on all play areas under the control of the Borough Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the request for additional capital budget of £30,000 in respect of Longridge Kestor Lane and £32,660 in respect of Clitheroe Castle site, being fully funded by S106 monies.

104

BOUNDARY COMMISSION PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW 2023

The Chief Executive submitted a report presenting committee with information about the Boundary Commission's review of Parliamentary constituencies within England.

The Boundary Commission had the task of reviewing all the Parliamentary constituencies in England in line with the latest strict parameters, in particular regard to number of electors in each constituency whilst retaining 650 constituencies overall.

There was a proposal to reduce the number of constituencies in the North West from 75 to 73. The Boundary Commission had regard generally to existing constituencies as far as possible and used wards or electoral divisions as the basic building blocks for designing the constituencies.

The report included maps showing the current Ribble Valley Parliamentary constituency, the new proposed constituency and the three Ribble Valley wards listed in the proposals to be added to the new Hyndburn constituency.

Responses to the consultation proposals were required within an eight-week period of the publication of the initial proposals (Monday 2 August 2021), followed by a further six-week period where comments could be submitted on those responses made. There was also an opportunity during the six-week period to make representations at public hearings. The final recommendations of the Boundary Commission would then be made in a formal written report to the Speaker of the House of Commons which would be laid before Parliament to go through the procedure of implementation.

The ward councillors for the proposed displaced wards informed the committee of the adverse reaction received from their constituents. However, it was recognised that it was a difficult exercise to equalise democracy across the 650 constituencies.

Councillor Mirfin was given permission to speak on this item and highlighted the need for constituents to have a sense of 'belonging'.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Delegate the formulation of a response to the Boundary Commission for England to the Chief Executive in consultation with a Task and Finish group comprising Councillors S Atkinson, S Hore, D Peat, M Hindle, J Hill, S Fletcher and R Thompson.

105

OVERALL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report for information on the capital outturn for all committees for the 2020/21 financial year.

Actual expenditure on the Councils' capital programme in 2020/21 was £1,196,240 which was 62.1% of the revised estimate budget. Of the 27 schemes in the 2020/21 revised capital programme, 15 had been completed in-year, 12 were in progress but

not completed at year-end and slippage of £724,770 had been requested on these 12 schemes.

106 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

The Director of Resources submitted a report for information on debts outstanding for business rates, council tax and sundry debtors. It also updated committee on benefits performance, including benefits processing times and overpayment recovery.

107 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a monitoring report for information on the treasury managements activities for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 May 2021. The report outlined the following topics: temporary investments; interest on investments; local government bonds agency; borrowing; borrowing requirements; Prudential indicators; approved organisations, recent events and exposure to risk.

108 CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

The Director of Resources submitted a report for information with an update from the Climate Change working group. Following receipt of the report from One Carbon World, the draft Climate Change Strategy had been updated. The Strategy will outline the actions the Council intends to take to ensure the target of being carbon neutral by 2030 is reached. The working group continued to work on the Strategy which would be presented to committee for approval in due course.

109 MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKING GROUP - 1 FEBRUARY 2021 AND 22 MARCH 2021

The minutes of the Budget Working Group meetings held on 1 February 2021 and 22 March 2021 were submitted for committee's information.

110 MINUTES OF LONGRIDGE ASSETS WORKING GROUP - 15 MARCH, 13 APRIL AND 2 JUNE 2021

The minutes of the Longridge Assets working group meetings held on 15 March 2021, 13 April 2021 and 2 June 2021 were submitted for committee's information.

111 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2021/22

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

112 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

113 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That by virtue of the next items of business being exempt information under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

Councillor S Hore declared an interest in the next item of business and left the meeting.

114

LONGRIDGE ASSETS

The Chief Executive submitted a report regarding ongoing discussions with the current leaseholder of Longridge Civic Hall.

Committee were informed of the latest position and the issues being discussed.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to take the action set out in the report.

Councillor S Hore returned to the meeting.

115

BUSINESS GRANTS UPDATE

The Director of Resources submitted a report for committee to consider the latest position in relation to the Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) Scheme. The report set out the amounts paid to date; the ARG awarded to the Council and the potential second top-up if our allocation was fully spent by 30 June 2021.

The decision to award further grants in order to unlock the second top-up was delegated at the previous meeting of this committee to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Budget Working Group.

At the Budget Working Group meeting on 14 May 2021, a number of options to award further funding were considered. It was agreed to offer a similar grant to the 'Restart Grant' for LRSG closed businesses to ARG recipients and, to pay a top-up to the Restart Grant to Strand One recipients in the non-essential retail sector.

All existing grant recipients who were potentially eligible for the Restart Top-up and ARG Top-up grants had been contacted and asked to complete an online form, which included subsidy allowances declarations, in order that payment of the new grants could be paid. Reminders had also been sent out where forms had not been completed.

The Director of Resources informed committee that since the report had been written further top-up grants had been paid out and also the deadline for accessing the second top-up had been extended to the end of July 2021. The total ARG paid out was £1.658m compared to our allocation of £1.759m.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Delegate the decision relating to any remaining ARG funding still outstanding at the 15 July 2021 to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Budget Working Group.

116

SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE OFFS

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking committee's approval to write off four sundry debtor invoices relating to debtors that were either insolvent or deceased with no estate where debts were considered irrecoverable.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the writing off of four sundry debts totalling £11,349.34

The meeting closed at 7.46 pm

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