

Minutes of Community Services

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 15 October 2024, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chair)

Councillors:

R Newmark	S Cowman
J Atherton	M Graveston
K Barnsley	D O'Rourke
I Brown	M Robinson
S Brunskill	G Scott
R Corney	L Street

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Engineering Services, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and Senior Accountant

Also in attendance: Councillors M French and S O'Rourke

324 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for the meeting were received from Councillors J Alcock and K Spencer.

325 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

327 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

328 FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report seeking member approval on proposals to increase this Committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2025. The proposals were the first stage in the review of the Committee's budget for the forthcoming 2025/26 financial year.

Service committees were asked at this time of year to review their fees and charges in order to achieve an overall increase in budgeted income of 2.5%, as assumed in the Council's Budget Forecast. The proposed list of fees and charges for this Committee's services for implementation from 1 April 2025 were attached to the report. The proposed fees and charges were based on a review undertaken by Financial Services, Heads of Service and budget holders. If Committee agreed to the

proposed fees and charges for implementation from 1 April 2025 then budgeted income for this Committee's fees and charges would increase in 2025/26 by 2.61%.

It was noted that following a recent change in VAT guidance by HMRC on the provision of leisure services by Local Authorities, the Council was now able to classify several of its leisure services as 'non-business' and charge for these services without the addition of VAT. In respect of fees and charges, the affected leisure fees where VAT was previously included have stayed at the same level for customers in 2024/25.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

Approve the 2025/26 fees and charges proposed for this Committee as attached to the report, for implementation from 1 April 2025.

329

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY (PPS)

The Director of Community Services submitted a report seeking Committee's approval of the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and to recommend it to Planning and Development Committee for inclusion as an evidence base document for the new Local Plan.

The PPS was a strategic assessment of outdoor playing pitches and courts that provided an up-to-date analysis of supply and demand for playing pitches (grass and artificial) for the local authority area. The PPS covered all sports that required an outdoor area to play their chosen sport, excluding cycling and athletics, and the strategy included an action plan for each of these sports with demand analysis of existing and future demand for facilities.

The report provided a mixed picture across the Borough, with generally good or adequate facilities for the sports consulted, with opportunities for the development of new courts for tennis and cricket. There was an identified over-use of grass pitches, and a priority need for more artificial surfaces. The full report was appended to the report and would be available on the Council website.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

Endorse the PPS and refer it to the Planning and Development Committee for inclusion as an evidence base document for the new Local Plan.

330

ASH DIEBACK RELATED TREE WORKS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report informing Committee about steps which need to be taken to address Ash Dieback (ADB) affecting trees on the Council's land.

The Council had been managing the impact of Ash Dieback in recent years on numerous Council owned sites across the Borough, removing trees where necessary using existing budgetary provisions. Three priority areas had been identified, namely, Crosshill and Salthill in Clitheroe and Whalley Moor Community Woodland. The remaining works would require specialist tree contractors in order to ensure safe removal and minimize the impact of felling operations on the existing networks of footpaths, biodiversity and infrastructure. It was recommended that Committee request a supplementary estimate from Policy and Finance Committee for the sum of £35,000 for felling the trees at the three sites, which was required without delay before the bird nesting season started the following year.

It was confirmed at the meeting that following approval the tree feeling project would be publicised to alleviate concerns in the Community.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve a request for a supplementary estimate from Policy and Finance Committee for the sum of £35,000 to fell the trees affected by Ash Dieback in Whalley Woodland, Salthill and Crosshill Nature reserves.

331

CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Community Services submitted a report seeking Committee approval for the outlined approach to the Council's investment in the Castle Grounds and to submit an expression of interest to the Heritage Lottery in the hope of attracting further major investment.

A number of projects were ongoing in relation to the Castle Keep and grounds. These included ongoing restoration works to the Castle Keep and a major refurbishment of the Castle Grounds, for which over 800k had been allocated from the Council's capital programme, a review of the museum, and smaller capital projects which had either been completed or planned for future years. The Council had also approached Historic England and the Heritage Lottery in regard to funding a major lottery project, for which the proposed expression of interest was attached to the report. It was hoped that a clear indication as to whether a lottery bid could be developed would be available for Committee at the next meeting.

The report provided an outline of both potential projects in order to seek Committee approval for the approach being taken. If the expression of interest was not successful then a fully costed programme for all the allocated capital funding would be presented to Committee for approval in January 2025.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the overall approach to the Castle Grounds Improvement Works as outlined in the report.
2. Approve the Expression of Interest as attached to the report being submitted to the Heritage Lottery.
3. Note that a further report will be brought to committee in January 2025 detailing the result of the Expression of Interest and proposed next steps.

332

CAPITAL MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the progress of this Committee's 2024/25 capital programme for the period to the end of August 2024.

At the end of August £714,196 had been spent or committed which equated to 29.3% of the full year approved capital programme budget for this committee of £2,435,990.

The position of the twenty-two schemes at the end of the first quarter was as follows:

- Six schemes were fully completed

- Thirteen schemes were on track with targets and would be completed within the financial year
- Two schemes were underway but unlikely to be completed within the financial year
- One scheme had missed some key targets but the overall end date would be met within the financial year

333 REVENUE MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information detailing progress of this Committee's 2024/25 revenue budget for the period April to August 2024.

The comparison between actual and the original estimate budget showed an underspend of £19,542 after allowing for transfers to/from earmarked reserves. Detailing information on the variances was attached to report for Committee's information.

334 2023/2024 YEAR-END PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee about the year-end report for 2023/2024 detailing performance against the Council's local performance indicators.

Analysis showed that of the 8 key performance indicators (KPIs) that could be compared to target:

- 37.5% (3) of the KPIs met target (green) and were on track or had improved
- 62.5% (5) of the KPIs were either awaiting data due later in the year or targets had not been set.

Further detailed information was provided in the report.

335 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information providing an update on a variety of developments across Community Services including the priorities for the coming year, UK Shared Prosperity Fund Schemes, EV charging points, the Platform Gallery, Salthill play area, the Castle Museum, and free Christmas parking.

336 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

There were no minutes from working groups.

337 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

338 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

339

RIBBLESDALE POOL FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Director of Community Services submitted a report updating Committee on the findings of a feasibility study into future options for Ribblesdale Pool, and to seek Committee approval to further develop possible design options and funding options for a new leisure facility whilst retaining the option of a refurbishment if a new facility proved unaffordable. Strategic Leisure who carried out the study were in attendance to present their findings to Committee.

The current pool had surpassed its expected life span therefore maintenance and running costs were high. However, a new facility would require considerable investment, and it was uncertain whether it would be affordable. Members posed questions to Strategic Leisure and supported the recommendations in the report.

A comprehensive report by Strategic Leisure covering all the findings of the study would be finalised and presented in full to Committee as part of a final recommendation in the new year.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to developing preferred funding options for a new facility along with clarification on the final proposed facility mix.
2. Agree to initial discussions commencing with Roefield and Sport England to further develop the proposal.
3. Agree to a five-year investment plan being developed for the existing pool in the event that a new facility proves unaffordable.

340

FUTURE DELIVERY MODEL FOR THE COLLECTION OF FOOD WASTE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report to seek Committee approval for a future food waste collection model and agree to the necessary procurement, which would only be instigated once further confirmation of revenue funding was provided by government. The new service would start in April 2026 in line with government legislation. The report also requested approval not to introduce a commercial waste collection service until April 2026 in alignment with the domestic food waste collection.

Significant work had been undertaken to establish a model that minimised the number of bins per household, however due to waste disposal limitations outside the Council's control, an additional food waste bin would be required. The report provided Committee with an overview of the many complexities and risks involved in introducing a food waste collection service in April 2026, and provided recommendations which would allow the Council to be ready to progress implementation once further certainty on funding was received.

Members discussed practical concerns with regard to the proposed food caddies and it was noted that take up would be optional however the Council would publicise and encourage take up wherever possible.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree the food waste collection model as outlined in this report.
2. Delegate the procurement of four vehicles as detailed in the report to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Chair of the Committee. This will only be actioned once further certainty on revenue funding is received and the model is known to be affordable.
3. Agree that a letter be sent to DEFRA requesting an urgent indication of the Council's revenue funding allocation, so that the capital procurement can proceed without financial risk.
4. Delegate the purchase of kitchen caddies and kerbside caddies to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Chair. To be undertaken through a consortium with other Lancashire authorities led by Blackburn with Darwen council, all caddies will be grey and branded "Lancashire Waste Partnership".
5. Agree that a sample survey of residents be undertaken to establish likely take up of the food waste service.

341

CLITHEROE MUSEUM AND ATRIUM CAFE - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing Committee with the results of an options appraisal for the future operation of Clitheroe Castle Museum.

The museum had been operated by the LCC Museums Service since its refurbishment in 2009. LCC had informed the Council of a cost increase which has been agreed by Policy and Finance Committee for one year whilst a review on the museums operation was undertaken. The study had now been completed which had determined the options for running the museum and it was recommended that Committee consider a re-negotiation of the current arrangements with LCC to include a number of additional development activities. Members were also asked to provide their views on the Atrium café which had been closed since Covid. A consultant could not be found to undertake a soft market test at an acceptable price, and feedback from local operators had determined that the current space was too small for a full dining offer.

Members discussed the Museum options and felt that the LCC Museums Service remained best placed to run the museum on the condition that the suggested improvements in the report could be agreed. Members put forward requests for input into museum content and suggested a combined Museum board with LCC. In regard to the Atrium Café, Members discussed options for the space in its current form and were reluctant to add the Stewards Gallery to the offering for food and beverage operation. Members suggested that the option to operate it as an art, cultural, and educational space was explored if a final attempt to find a commercial operator proved unsuccessful.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to the re-negotiation of the current arrangements with LCC to seek improvements as laid out in this report.
2. Agree to a report being presented to committee in January 2025 to finalise either a new contract with LCC or an action plan to take the museum back in house.

3. Support that commercial options for the Atrium be explored one last time but excluding the Stewards Gallery. If no commercial provider can be found, then an option to use the Atrium as an expanded cultural space should be developed.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Rebecca Hodgson 01200 414408 rebecca.hodgson@ribblevalley.gov.uk.