

## Minutes of Policy and Finance

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 10 September 2024, starting at 6.30 pm  
Present: Councillor S Atkinson (Chair)

Councillors:

K Barnsley	S Hirst
S Bibby	S Hore
D Birtwhistle	K Horkin (from agenda item 7)
M Graveston	R Newmark
J Hill	S O'Rourke
M Hindle (from agenda item 5)	M Peplow

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Economic Development and Planning, and Senior Accountant.

### 260 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors L Jameson and J Rogerson.

### 261 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 262 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

Councillor S O'Rourke declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 – Voluntary Organisation Grant Scheme Review.

Councillors S Atkinson, S Bibby, M Graveston, S Hirst, and S Hore, declared an interest in Agenda Item 13 – Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). As this would result in the absence of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and potentially render the meeting inquorate for this item, those councillors who had applied in advance for a dispensation were granted one, namely Councillors Atkinson, Bibby, Hirst, and Hore, which would allow them to remain in the meeting.

Councillor D Birtwhistle declared an interest in Agenda Item 14 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

### 263 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed Terry Hill, who spoke on behalf of Whalley Educational Foundation in respect of agenda item 14 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for members to consider the Council's latest budget forecast and consider any advice to service committees.

In preparing the budget forecast both national and local circumstances were considered. The forecast would be particularly challenging because of major issues such as the new government approach to Local Government Finance, unknown Core funding levels and reviews of key funding streams, inflation levels and pay rises, cost-of-living impact on demand for services, and assumptions on interest rates. Any of these issues would have a major impact on the Council's budget and were rapidly evolving.

In creating the budget, a number of assumptions had been made.

The Budget for the current year had allowed for an average increase on the Council's paybill of 4%. Though the latest pay offer had not been accepted it may be that the pay contingency of £200k which had been set aside could be released.

In light of the volatility in energy costs, a contingency of £200k had been set aside in the 2024/25 budget, however, inflation had fallen and therefore it was anticipated that the contingency would not be required.

The current Bank of England base rate was 5%, with the next review on 19 September 2024. It was difficult to predict future levels of investment interest because of uncertainty over how quickly and how far interest rates would fall. The budget assumed average returns on investments over the life of the forecast based on interest rates of 3.44% for 2025/26, 3.14% for 2026/27 and 3.14% for 2027/28. The forecast also assumed the level of Council investments would be approximately £25m which would return an anticipated investment interest for 2024/25 of over £1.2m.

It was estimated the Council would retain £2.9m in business rate growth in 2024/25 and £2.5m in 2025/26, of which £2m would be used to support the revenue budget and £500k to fund the capital programme for each of the two years. The previous Government had been reviewing the Business Rate Retention Scheme and the new Government had indicated the same. This would be kept under close review.

For some time, the Government had indicated that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme was going to end. They had also stated that a consultation paper would be issued, however nothing had been issued therefore the future forecast assumed no NHB income beyond 2025/26 when it was estimated the Council would receive £650k.

In 2023/24 the Council received a one-off Funding Guarantee, which continued in 2024/25 renamed 'Funding Guarantee'. It was assumed that the Council would receive the Funding Guarantee or some other form of transitional protection over the life of the forecast to ensure a 2.5 minimum increase in Core Spending Power. However, it was stressed that this assumption was made in the absence of any information regarding key reforms.

Council Tax increases of 3% each year were assumed and a tax base increase of 1.5% each year for the life of the forecast. It was explained that a 3% Council Tax increase would generate approximately £130k each year and a 1.5 taxbase increase approximately £65k each year.

Based on all the assumptions the budget surplus and gaps for the next three financial years would be as shown:

	Budget Surplus/(Gap) £
2025/26	307k
2026/27	(52k)
2025/26	(214k)

The impact of any Government announcements on the Council's financial position would continue to be closely scrutinised in the months that followed.

The Budget Working Group had met on 2 September 2024 to consider the budget forecast and recommended that the Council continue with the current five-year capital programme and that service Committees consider their capital bids for the fifth year of the five-year capital programme.

Councillor M Hindle entered the meeting during the report.

Members discussed the report and in particular the uncertainty in Government funding and impact this had on the Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree the Council's Budget Forecast.
2. Invite capital bids for financial year 2028/29 of the five-year capital programme, for consideration by Service Committees in early 2025.

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#### CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS GRANTS 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider the allocation of concurrent function grants for 2024/25.

It was explained that Concurrent functions were services provided in some parts of the Borough by the Borough or County Council, and in others by a Parish or Town Council. The report included those functions supported under the Council's concurrent function grant scheme. The Council had supported Parish and Town Councils with net revenue expenditure on those functions with reimbursement of 25% of the expenditure. It was noted at the meeting that further clarification had been received in regard to an application by Chipping Parish Council and therefore twenty-eight applications were to be considered for support, for which the 25% grant support amount requested totalled £25,916.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the payment of grants to parish and town councils under the grant scheme conditions and totalling £25,916.

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#### OVERALL CAPITAL MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report updating Committee of progress on the Council's approved 2024/25 capital programme for the period to the end of July 2024.

At the end of July 2024 £1,181,022 had been spent or committed. This was 14.9% of the approved overall capital programme budget for all Committees of £7,939,060.

A summary of progress on the sixty schemes in the capital programme at the end of July 2024 was as follows:

- Six schemes were fully complete
- Thirty schemes were on track and would be completed in-year
- Fourteen schemes had missed some key targets but were expected to be completed in-year
- Seven schemes were unlikely be completed in-year
- Two schemes were unable to be started or were no longer required in-year.

Further details on the operational progress of each of these schemes was provided in the report.

In a reference from Health and Housing Committee, it was explained that approval was sought for virement of £4,630 between the Temporary Housing Scheme and the Clitheroe Affordable Housing Scheme. The virement would allow works to be completed on a property that had been used as emergency temporary accommodation but was now vacant, in preparation to handover as an affordable rental unit. Estimates for the works indicated a total cost of £13,000 which was greater than the available budget of £8,370. Health and Housing Committee had approved the proposal to vire £4,630 of budget from the Temporary Housing Scheme (TEMPH) as it had been identified that the remaining costs under that scheme would leave an underspend.

It was raised at the meeting that a further reference from Community Committee sought approval to bring forward the capital budget for the replacement of the JCB Loadall from 2025-2026 to this financial year 2024-2025. The existing Loadall was in poor condition and cracks had been identified in the hydraulic lift during annual inspection. To repair the Loadall would take around six months, due to the nature of the repair and current workload of the supplier, and the costs were yet unknown. A budget of £135,000 was allocated in the 2025-2026 financial year to replace the existing Loadall therefore Community Committee supported the proposal that the budget be brought forward to 2024-2025 financial year, so a replacement may be purchased as soon as possible.

Councillor K Horkin entered the meeting during the report.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the virement for £4,360 between the Temporary Housing Scheme and the Clitheroe Affordable Housing Scheme, as requested by Health and Housing Committee.
2. Approve that £135,000 be brought forward from the 2025/26 capital programme to the 2024/25 capital programme to enable the purchase of a replacement JCB Loadall, as requested by Community Committee.

## REVIEW OF VARIOUS POLICIES

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to seek approval from Committee for the proposed changes that had been made to a number of policies following annual review, namely:

- Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy
- Corporate Debt Write-Off Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Minor changes had been made to the policies which were attached to the report with amendments shown in tracked changes for Members information.

Members raised concerns around measures some individuals used in order to avoid paying business rates and it was noted that, although the Council was responsible for the collection of business rates, these were set by central Government.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the proposed changes that have been made to the policies listed below, following an annual review of the same:

1. Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy
2. Corporate Debt Write-Off Policy
3. Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Councillor S O'Rourke left the meeting in respect of the next agenda item.

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## VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION GRANT SCHEME REVIEW

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider amendments to the voluntary organisation grant scheme criteria, and to consider a new grant application for Clitheroe Torchlight under the 2024/25 funding.

The report set out the current process for the grant scheme which was administered by this Committee and an explanation of some of the problems encountered recently with applications for this grant scheme and also the Recreation and Culture Grants Scheme, administered by Community Committee.

It was proposed that the closing date of the scheme along with the Recreation and Culture Grants Scheme, return to being at different dates to draw distinction between the two schemes and remove any confusion. It was also proposed that the wording of the grant criteria be amended to remove any ambiguity for applicants, the key points being:

- The Voluntary Organisation Grant scheme would not support organisations whose main objectives were the provision of service of a recreation and culture nature.
- Making it clear in the Recreation and Culture Grant scheme that the Council would not support recreation and culture applications of a revenue nature.

It was also proposed to change the online application process to allow for pre-screening questions that would attempt to prevent applications from organisations that could apply under the Council's other grant schemes. The suggested scheme amendments were attached with the report for Member's information.

Members were asked to consider an application requesting £2,500 which had been received outside of the normal round of applications, in respect of Clitheroe Torchlight, which was being coordinated by the Clitheroe Chamber of Trade. The Voluntary Organisation Grant allocations had previously been made for the 2024/25

financial year when the application process closed which had resulted in an unallocated budget of £47,470.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve amendments to the grant scheme as proposed in the tracked changes as attached to the report.
2. Approve the additional application under the 2024/25 budget as received in respect of Clitheroe Torchlight for the value of £2,500.

Councillor S O'Rourke returned to the meeting.

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MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider the membership of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund working group under the remit of this Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25.

The report explained that it had been requested that Cllr S O'Rourke be added to the membership as a Liberal Democrat representative. It was also suggested at the meeting that Cllr S Hirst be added as a further Conservative group representative to maintain political balance.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Agree that a Liberal Democrat group representative and further Conservative group representative be added to the Membership of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund working group under the remit of this Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25, with the membership now as follows:

Councillors S Atkinson, S Hore, S Hirst, L Jameson, J Rogerson, M Peplow, and S O'Rourke.

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BROADCASTING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider the broadcasting of Council and Committee meetings and the varying options available.

At present there were no facilities in the Council Chamber or Committee rooms to enable the recording or live streaming of meetings, and there was currently no legal requirement to do so. Some authorities recorded and/or broadcasted their meetings in order to make these available to the public on their respective websites.

The report noted that the current government had committed to reconsidering the ability to hold hybrid Committee and Council meetings with an evidence-based approach following a request from the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADS) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG).

The Council's Democratic Services Team had investigated the options available for Committee to consider, which were attached to the report. It was also noted that some equipment in the Council Chamber was now obsolete and required replacing.

Members raised different opinions and felt it was important to maintain accountability and transparency. It was suggested that the Council await potential changes to

legislation from central Government before spending the large amount required to install the necessary equipment, to ensure this was fit for purpose. Members noted the intermittent issues with the microphones and other equipment and invited a capital bid in order to replace existing equipment as required.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to defer the decision until the current Government have reconsidered the ability of Members to attend meetings remotely, and
2. Request that a capital bid is submitted for consideration for the replacement of equipment as required.

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#### 2023/24 ONE CARBON WORLD AGREEMENT

The Chief Executive submitted a report to inform Committee that the four year One Carbon World UN Climate Neutral Now programme and grant funding for the Carbon Neutral Gold Standard scheme had ended, and to request the renewal of the OCW agreement for a further year to cover reporting period 2023/2024 at a cost of £1,500.

OCW was a not for profit organisation and global resource partner helping to support the delivery of the UN Climate Neutral Now Initiative providing advice and support to help organisations reduce their carbon footprint. The report explained that in 2023 the Council had officially achieved the OCW Carbon Neutral International Standard for the third year in a row.

The report set out the OCW grant proposal for 2023/24, which would result in the Council receiving a carbon footprint emissions summary for 2023/24 along with recommendations on how to reduce and off-set the Council's carbon footprint. The OCW carbon grant contributed 70% towards the total cost of £5000, therefore the remaining cost of £1,500 would fall on the Council.

It was suggested that for future years Officers would research other options to provide assurance to the Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to renew the One Carbon World proposed agreement at a cost of £1,500 for a further year to cover the period 2023/2024.
2. Approve that officers research and provide other options for future years, including details of organisations that calculate emissions, to provide assurance to the Council that our Carbon Neutral claim is robust and credible.

Councillor M Graveston left the meeting in respect of the next agenda item.

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#### RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF)

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report updating Committee on the full applications received into the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) grant scheme.

A summary showing the status of the approved applications under the REPF scheme was provided for information. A total of £413,093 of REPF grant funding had been

allocated to date which left an unallocated amount of £20,587 which had to be allocated and defrayed by 31 March 2025.

The working group had recommended a number of applications for approval which if approved would result in an overspend of £263,318. It was suggested that any overspend was funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and that progress of schemes should be closely monitored in consultation with the UKSPF working group, as the March 2025 deadline for both schemes approached.

Members were pleased to see that the fund was oversubscribed and noted the large amount of work that went into the projects by both communities and Officers. Members agreed to support the schemes recommended by the working group, with the exception of an additional amount requested by Rimington Recreation Association. It was suggested that a contingency be set aside to fund overspend from the UKSPF and REPF funds and that overallocation would ensure that the available money was fully utilised. The importance of closely monitoring the approved projects was noted, as the projects must be completed by the end of March 2025 in order to receive the funding.

**RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:**

1. Support the applications recommended by the UKSPF working group, with the exception of an additional allocation to Rimington Recreation Association, with the approved allocations as follows:

	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>
1.	Wilpshire Wanders FC	Converting disused tennis courts into additional playing fields	£48,000
2.	Chipping and District Memorial Hall	Solar panels and battery storage	£23,304
3.	Mellor Parish Council	Supply and fit playground equipment	£41,803
4.	Wilpshire Parish Council	Supply and fit playground equipment	£20,918
5.	Grindleton and Sawley Parish Councils	Gigabit Internet Scheme	£50,000
6.	West Bradford Village Hall	Creation of disabled access to the rear of the building with installation of two patio	£20,233



		doors.	
8.	Langho Football Club	Drainage, 3G pitch and lighting	£50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£254,258</b>

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning to assess completion dates on all the new projects and agree funding with the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the UKSPF and Budget Working Groups.
3. Confirm that applications into the REPF are closed.

Councillor D Birtwhistle left the meeting in respect of the next agenda item.

Councillor M Hindle declared an interest in the next item of business and left the meeting.

Councillor M Graveston returned to the meeting.

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#### UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF)

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report to update Members in respect of the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and to seek approval for some of the use of the Council's UKSPF allocation.

A total of £1,618,757 of UKSPF funding had been allocated to schemes to date for which updates were provided. Details of the further schemes and allocations for Committee to consider were included in the report, which would result in an unallocated amount of £17,283 which had to be allocated and defrayed by 31 March 2025.

Under the previous agenda item, a number of projects under the REPF scheme had been supported which if they proceed would result in REPF being oversubscribed. It was suggested that some of the remaining UKSPF could be utilised to fund any REPF overspend. The Director of Economic Development and Planning would therefore assess completion dates on all projects and agree funding with the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the UKSPF and Budget Working Groups. It had also been suggested that a contingency be set aside to fund overspend from the UKSPF and REPF funds.

Members were updated at the meeting that the UKSPF working group had met earlier that day and recommended that the feasibility study proposed at 9.1.7 be removed from the project scope and be considered under alternative funding options. The working group had also recommended that, following the works to Castle Street, further footpath resurfacing be completed on Market Place. The footway layout would remain as is and the cost was yet to be confirmed. LCC had advised the work could be completed in the new year, within the UKSPF deadline. Following queries at the working group meeting, the Director of Economic Development and Planning had clarified information and updated Members in respect of the Barrow Village Hall project.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to support the following projects with UKSPF funding:
  - 1.1 Barrow Village Hall - an additional £41,000
  - 1.2 Barrow Car Park- an additional £26,100
  - 1.3 Salt Hill Play Area- £100,000
  - 1.4 Brungerley Park- £150,000 as a reserve project
  - 1.5 Charging Points- Edisford- £29,118
  - 1.6 Charging Points- Longridge- £32,586
  - 1.7 Whalley Education Foundation Car park- £27,600
  - 1.8 Primrose Nature Reserve- £7,500
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning to assess the additional work in order to extend the resurfacing of the footway down to Market Place in Clitheroe and prepare a report to review the costs in conjunction with UKSPF and Budget Working Groups.
3. Confirm that applications into the UKSPF are closed.

Councillors D Birtwhistle and M Hindle returned to the meeting.

274 REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES

There were no items under this heading.

275 REVENUE OUTTURN 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the outturn for the financial year 2023/24 in respect of the revenue budget for this Committee. There had been a number of variations in both income and expenditure during the year that had given rise to an overall underspend of £79,097 on the net cost of services. After transfers to and from reserves the overall underspend was £56,874.

276 OVERALL REVENUE OUTTURN 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the overall revenue outturn for the year ending 31 March 2024.

The final outturn on the general fund revenue account was a surplus of £176,686 rather than the £4,990 surplus forecast at the revised estimate. There had also been £1,969,808 (revenue only) added to earmarked reserves at year end rather than the revised estimate forecast of £1,590,127, details of which were provided in the report. After allowing for capital transactions of taking £1,301,385 from earmarked reserves, the overall net movement added to earmarked reserves was £938,423. The Collection fund showed an overall net surplus of £1.831m.

277 REVENUE MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the position for the period April to July 2024 of this year's revenue budget for this committee.

The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure showed an underspend of £153,142 for the April to July period of the financial year 2024/25. After allowing for

transfers to and from earmarked reserves there was an underspend of £163,962. The main variances were explained in the report.

## 278 OVERALL REVENUE MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the overall revenue position for the current financial year for the period to the end of July 2024.

There had been an overall net underspend to the end of July 2024 of £188k on service Committee net expenditure. The underspend position was likely to remain in the areas of staffing vacancies (although there were some compensating areas of increased cost), reduced energy costs, and lower fuel costs. Added to this, there was a likely overachievement on investment income, which was £104k ahead of budget at the end of July 2024. Therefore, the overall net variance to the end of July 2024 was £292k. Further detailed information on the variances was provided in the report.

## 279 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 July 2024. At the end of July 2024 £76,458 had been spent or committed on the main Policy and Finance Committee schemes, equating to 11.4% of the capital programme. Of the ten schemes in the capital programme at the end of July 2024:

- Four schemes were currently on-track to be completed in-year
- Two schemes had missed some key targets but were anticipated to be completed within the financial year
- Two schemes were underway but unlikely to be completed within the financial year
- Two schemes were unable to be started in year or were no longer needed in this financial year

Progress on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund schemes was also reported. At the end of July 2024 £141,199 had been spent or committed, equating to 13.2% of the capital programme for these schemes. Of the nineteen schemes at the end of July 2024:

- One scheme was fully completed
- Ten schemes were currently on-track to be completed in-year
- Eight schemes had missed some key targets and but were anticipated to be completed within the financial year

## 280 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the 2023/24 treasury management operations and the outturn calculations of the council's capital and treasury management prudential indicators. Through careful investment of sums in line with the council's treasury management strategy the level of risk in the investments had been kept to a minimum. The Bank of England's base rate had increased significantly during the financial year, resulting in a marked increase to the amount of income received from investments when compared to the both the original revenue budget estimate and prior year returns. Debt and investment transactions undertaken during the 2023/24 financial year were within

authorised prudential limits and approved treasury management policies and practices.

281 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a monitoring report for information on the treasury management activities for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 July 2024. This included temporary investments, interest on investments, prospects on interest rates, local government bonds agency, borrowing, borrowing requirements, prudential indicators, approved organisations, recent events and exposure to risk.

282 TIMETABLE FOR BUDGET SETTING

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the timetable for setting the 2025/26 budget. The timetable was considerably detailed and clearly indicated who was responsible for which actions. This would be monitored in order to meet the deadlines required.

283 REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT

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

284 INSURANCE RENEWALS 2024/25

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the insurance renewals for the period 20 June 2024 to 19 June 2025 and provide a summary of the claims made and settled.

The Council's insurance renewal was undertaken in line with arrangements in place under the existing contract. There had been an increase in costs beyond that allowed for within budget. This was largely due to motor cover and property damage premiums. The increased costs would be reflected at the Revised Estimate.

285 OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing committee of the Annual Review letter from the Local Ombudsman. The letter related to the year ending 31 March 2024 where the Ombudsman had investigated no complaints in respect of the Council during that period. The letter also referenced the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and its implementation by 2026. The Council would address this going forward and a separate report would be brought back to Committee.

286 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

The minutes of the following working group meetings were submitted for Committee's information:

- (i) Minutes of UKSPF Working Group 22 February 2024
- (ii) Minutes of Budget Working Group 11 April 2024
- (iii) Minutes of UKSPF Working Group 13 May 2024

287 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

288 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

289 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND AND RURAL PROSPERITY FUND

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report seeking approval for an exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the Pump Track at Longridge, which was partly being delivered by UKSPF.

Amendments had been made to the scheme to specifically address comments received following a public engagement session in March 2024. The amendments increased the cost of the scheme and, along with the new requirement to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment and potential required actions, this would take the cost of the project to over £100k. Committee approval was therefore sought for an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of tendering requirements which apply to projects with a value above £100k. Granting the exemption would allow the project to proceed with the identified preferred contractor without undertaking a formal tender exercise.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve an exemption to the Council's Contract Procurement Rules in respect of the Longridge Pump Track Project.

290 REFERENCE FROM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S ESTABLISHMENT

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of changes to the establishment that had been approved by Personnel Committee, and to agree those were added to the base budget.

Several establishment changes had been approved by Personnel Committee on 28 August 2024. Whilst there were budget implications for these, for 2024/25 they were fully funded from salary savings in year, resulted in savings, or had already been approved into the budget in the past. For 2025/26 the Payroll Officer and Apprentices would need to be added to the base budget. At the top of the grade the Payroll Officer post would be an extra cost of £25,503. The two apprentice posts would also need to be added to the base budget from 2025/26 onwards at a cost of £46,440 (assuming the maximum cost).

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Agree the Payroll Officer and two new Apprentice posts are added to the base budget.

291

REFERENCE FROM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – APPROVAL FOR TWO QUALIFICATION COURSES

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider two requests for additional budgets to fund training courses as agreed by Personnel Committee.

The first being a request for a supplementary estimate of £6,450 in 2024/25 and a further £6,450 in 2025/26 for the Economic Development and Planning training budget. This would enable a Planning Assistant (Development Management) to undertake a part-time 2-year post-graduate Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) accredited planning degree. It was proposed this was funded from the Neighbourhood Planning Reserve.

The second request was for a labourer within the Works Admin Team to undertake a 2-year HNC in Construction Management at a cost of £4,500 per year with a total cost of £9,000. It was proposed this was met from the salary savings arising from the vacant Building Surveyor post within the Engineering Section.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve a revenue supplementary estimate of £6,450 in the 2024/25 for the part-time (2-year) post-graduate Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Accredited Planning Degree, to be funded from the Neighbourhood Planning Reserve.
2. Approve an additional budget of £4,500 in the current year and £4,500 in 2025/26 to fund the HNC in Construction Management course to be met from in year salary savings.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

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