

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 18 March 2021, starting at 6.30 am
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	B Holden
S Atkinson	A Knox
T Austin	R Newmark
D Birtwhistle	D O'Rourke
R Elms	D Peat
J Hill	M Robinson
M Hindle	R Sherras

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

Also in attendance: Councillors

1053 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

1054 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

1055 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

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

1056 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

1057 JOINERS ARMS - ROOF RENEWAL AND RENOVATION WORKS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report seeking approval to bring forward the proposed roof renewal scheme at the Joiners Arms to 2021/22 and to recommend a new capital scheme in 2021/22 for renovation works to make two flats at Joiners Arms available for use again.

Members were reminded that the Joiners Arms Clitheroe is the Council's homeless hostel and provides a mix of self-contained and shared facility flats to provide emergency temporary accommodation for those in need.

Since being back in Council management in 2017, repairs, maintenance and refurbishments have been undertaken to keep the building compliant and operationally fit for purpose. However, the need to replace the roof and carry out other renovation works had been identified as significant capital projects. Possible further work had also been identified in relation to the render of the rear of the building.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the move of the Joiners Arms Roof Renewal capital scheme from the 2023/24 capital programme to the 2021/22 capital programme, with a revised budget of £42,200, and refer this to Policy and Finance Committee for final approval.
2. Approve a new capital scheme for the renovation of flats 1 and 2 at Joiners Arms, with a budget of £13,540 funded from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant earmarked reserve and refer this to Policy and Finance Committee for final approval.
3. Agree that work to re-render the rear elevation is undertaken as part of the roof renewal project and included in the tender specification as an addition to the capital scheme in the interests of efficiency, subject to the costs returned from the tender process.

1058

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-2022

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing members of the schemes which have been approved for inclusion in this Committee's 2021/22 Capital Programme.

Members were reminded that at its meeting in January the Committee proposed a four-year capital programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 to the Special Policy and Finance Committee. Following recommendations by the Special Policy and Finance Committee, on 2 March 2021 the Full Council approved the four-year capital programme.

This Committee had a capital programme for 2021/22 of five schemes, totalling £639,640.

It was highlighted that the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme budget is currently an indicative amount, so the actual scheme budget will be confirmed when the 2021/22 grant allocation from central government is notified to the Council.

1059

REVENUE MONITORING 2020-2021

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing members of the progress of the 2020/21 revised revenue budget as at the end of January 2021.

The comparison between actual expenditure and the revised estimate budget for this Committee at the end of January 2021 shows a net overspend of £33,340, after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

The largest overspend to date is the Housing Benefits rent allowance net overspend of £65,680 which will be broadly funded by increased Housing Benefits subsidy grant income at year-end. Thus, no significant overspend is expected at year-end.

It was also noted that there is a high level of outstanding debt on invoiced income in some service areas as a result of Covid-19

1060

GREEN ENERGY GRANTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning Resources submitted a report informing members of the current energy efficiency projects in the borough.

Members were reminded that the Government announced a Green Homes Energy Scheme as a package of support promoted to help with installing energy efficient improvements in residential homes.

The report noted that there have been two main elements to the scheme; one delivered by way of vouchers and independent installers and one known as the Local Authority Delivered Scheme (LAD) which the Council is more directly involved in.

1061 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing members of the current status of the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to the Ribble Valley.

Members were reminded that following the Chief Executive's presentation to the Health and Housing Committee on 14 January 2021, it was considered important to provide regular updates to members and to highlight any Council initiatives.

The report set out details of a number key statistics; including the number of COVID-19 cases in the borough and the number of residents who had been vaccinated with at least 1 dose.

1062 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES (IF ANY)

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

1063 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

1064 REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing members of the work undertaken by the Environmental Health Team since the onset of the first lockdown on 23 March 2020. The report highlighted staffing level issues in the department, which has had a negative impact on the work undertaken by the Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Note the work that has been undertaken by the Environmental Health team during a difficult last 12 months, and to recognise that there are potential serious shortcomings in the service currently provided due to the lack of qualified EHO's in the team.
2. Authorise a full review of the Environmental Health team be undertaken as a priority following the Head of Service's anticipated return to work in May. This review will focus on vacant posts, retention of existing staff and consider all other options including a potential restructure of the team.
3. Refer to the Policy and Finance Committee to see if funds are available for the above review to be carried out by outside consultants.
4. Agree to appoint a dog fouling working group consisting of Councillors; Alcock (chair), Newmark, Birtwhistle, Austin and Robinson.

1065 CLITHEROE MARKET - RENTS UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for consideration by members as to whether the Council should provide a reduction in rent in the 2020/2021 financial year to any of the market traders because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members were reminded that the Market has been open throughout the various national lockdowns and local restrictions, however some of the cabins have had to close due to the nature of their business.

The report provided details of the support grants provided to each of the businesses and the amount of rental arrears owed by some of the businesses.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree not to offer rent reductions to any of our Market Traders.
2. Agree to progress the collection of rent arrears in a consistent and sympathetic manner.

1066

HOUSING GRANTS - UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing Committee of recent grant approvals for the following schemes:

- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Landlord Tenant Grants
- Affordable Warmth Capital Grant
- Emergency Assistance Grant (COVID-19)
- Property Resilience Grants (Floods)

The meeting closed at 8.25 am

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