

Minutes of Community Services

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 11 January 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor R Newmark (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	G Mirfin
D Birtwhistle	S O'Rourke
S Brunskill	S Rainford
R Elms	G Scott
S Fletcher	

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Director of Resources, Head of Engineering Services, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Not in attendance: Councillor S Carefoot

533 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for the meeting were received from Councillors S Atkinson, A Humphreys, M Robinson and J Schumann.

534 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

536 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed both Mr Burke and Mr Claydon to the meeting to speak on agenda item 9 – Clitheroe Town Wells.

Mr Burke made several requests of the committee when considering the outcome of the future of the town wells including references to a previously-submitted Freedom of Information request and legal advice received by the Council. Mr. Burke asked that the committee make a decision on the matter of the wells, rather than defer for new information to be considered.

Mr Claydon asked that committee consider further historical evidence that the Town Wells group would provide when the matter was brought before them again in March 2022.

Councillor Fletcher moved that agenda item 9 be brought forward in the agenda, seconded by Cllr Alcock. The committee voted in favour of this course of action.

CLITHEROE TOWN WELLS

The Chief Executive submitted a report reminding members that a petition had been received at Full Council on 12 October 2021 on behalf of the Clitheroe Town Wells group where it had been requested that three steps be taken, namely

1. To refer the petition to Community Services committee at the next available opportunity;
2. Consider two possible legal bases for making valid the ownership of the Heald and St Mary's wells; and
3. Consider the economic, community, heritage and tourism benefits of adopting the three wells.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed committee that Council had resolved to refer the petition to this meeting of Community Services committee for further consideration as requested.

However, the Council had since been contacted by representatives of the Wells group who had confirmed that they had compiled further significant historical information that they would wish to be considered before any decision was made. They had therefore requested that the matter be deferred to the Community Services committee in March 2022 to allow sufficient time for consideration and legal advice sought upon any implications the additional information might have in terms of ownership of the wells.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Defer consideration of the petition presented by Clitheroe Town Wells Group to Full Council on 12 October 2021 until the next meeting of the Community Services committee.

REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to agree a revised revenue budget for 2021/22 for this committee.

She reminded committee that at this time of year the estimates are revised for the current financial year in order to predict the likely outturn on the budget. The budget this year had been particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Whilst committee income and expenditure may increase or decrease at the revised estimate, items such as budgeted core government funding and council tax precept remain fixed. As a result, any compensating movement is within earmarked reserves and general fund balances. Decisions and actions required as a result of committee meetings have been incorporated into the budget setting process.

She informed committee that the difference between the revised and original estimate was an increase in net expenditure of £138,750, or £140,590 after allowing for movements on earmarked reserves. A number of substantial movements were summarised for members' information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the revenue revised estimate for 2021/22.

ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the draft revenue budget for approval by committee and then consideration at Special Policy and Finance committee.

The Council's three-year budget forecast had been presented to Policy and Finance committee in September 2021 when it predicted that there would be the following budget gaps: £82k in 2022/23, £139k in 2023/24 and £230k in 2024/25, after allowing for use of general fund balances.

Since that time there had been a number of significant changes affecting the budget. These included significant rises in inflation, an increase in national insurance contributions and implementation of a new pay line. Therefore, the budget gap for 2022/23 was estimated to increase to around £497k.

The provisional local government finance settlement announced in December 2021 was for just one year, with a national increase of 6.9% in Council's core spending power in cash terms between 2021/22 and next year. This is the fourth one-year settlement in a row.

Headlines for Ribble Valley include

- Core spending power set to increase by only 0.2% (£11,000) next year from £6.849m to £6.860m;
- Business Rate Baseline funding level is £1.354m which is the same as the current year, however £111k compensation will be received due to the loss of income received by freezing the business rate multiplier;
- An allocation of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) of £215 despite RSG increasing nationally by 3.1% for inflation;
- Rural Services Delivery Grant of £113,250 – same as the current year;
- Lower Tier Services Grant of £60,754 up from £57,696;
- A new one off 2022/23 Services Grant has been announced worth £822m in recognition of services and includes costs of the increase in NI contributions. Ribble Valley will receive £93,368;
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) – the Government have allowed a new round of NHB allocations for 2022/23 which will not attract any legacy payments. They have also allowed the one remaining legacy payment of £464k which has been allowed for. Next year there will be a payment of £741k for 2022/23 along with the legacy payment of £464k = £1.2m;
- The Lancashire Business Rate Pool has received designation to continue; and,
- The Council Tax can be increased by £5

Taking these things into account reduces the budget gap from £497k to £233k.

The Director of Resources reminded members that the fees and charges for this committee had been approved at their last meeting, and the consequential impact had been incorporated into the service budgets.

Once all committees had approved their detailed estimates, the overall position would be considered by the Budget Working Group and recommendations in order to produce a balanced budget would be made to Special Policy and Finance committee, before being presented to Full Council, at which point the Council Tax for 2022/23 would also be approved.

The draft proposed budget for 2022/23 was set out for each service area, built up over a number of stages including inflation, movements in expenditure, income, support services and capital, culminating in a draft original estimate.

In the original estimate for 2021/22 it was planned that this committee take £32,430 from earmarked reserves to support its expenditure in future years. It was now proposed to take £55,330 in 2022/23. The reasons for this were outlined.

The net expenditure for this committee has increased from £4,134,740 by £371,750 to £4,506,490 after allowing for associated movements on earmarked reserves. The main reasons were summarised for committee's information.

There had also been 14 requests for growth items totalling £104,640. Committee were asked which they felt they supported to be put forward for further consideration by Policy and Finance committee.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the revenue original estimate for 2022/23 and submit this to the Special Policy and Finance committee, and
2. Support the growth items as set out in the report with the addition of Apprentice Mechanic at the Depot.

540

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to approve the 2021/22 revised estimate for this committee's capital programme.

Five schemes totalling £1,555,000 had been approved by Special Policy and Finance committee and full Council in February and March 2021 respectively. This included three new schemes and two that had been moved from the 2020/21 capital programme to the 2021/22 capital programme.

During the year there had been several budget changes resulting in a capital programme of twelve schemes totalling £1,808,900. These had been revised to reflect their progress and estimated full year expenditure for 2021/22 which resulted in a proposed revised estimate of £591,360 for twelve schemes, a reduction of £1,217,540 from the total approved budget. The reasons were highlighted for committee's information with the main one being the Installation of a Second Parking Deck on Chester Avenue Car Park scheme (£1,215,000) being moved to the 2022/23 financial year.

Of the twelve schemes in the proposed revised capital programme:

- Two were complete,
- Nine were currently expected to be completed in-year (with four being weather dependent), and
- It was unclear whether one scheme would be completed in-year.

Members discussed the Installation of a Second Parking Deck on Chester Avenue Car Park scheme in detail and agreed the scheme should be renamed Clitheroe Town Centre Car Park scheme.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the 2021/22 revised estimate of £591,360 for this committee's capital programme as set out, and
2. Approve the transfer of £1,215,000 budget from 2021/22 to 2022/23 for the Clitheroe Town Centre Car Park scheme.

541

CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW AND NEW BIDS 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to consider the future capital programme for this committee following a review of the existing capital programme with proposed amendments and the submission of new scheme bids.

For this committee there had originally been 23 schemes approved for the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25, totalling £1,833,900. Following a review of these schemes proposed amendments to 9 had been identified, totalling £77,000. These were outlined for information.

New capital bids had been put forward for 2025/26 and 2026/27. For this committee there had been 32 new bids including one for 2022/23, totalling £10,580,950. Any bids going forward would be considered alongside all other committee bids by the Budget Working Group and Policy and Finance committee.

External funding would be sought wherever possible.

Councillor Berryman was given permission to speak on this item and encouraged committee to support the provision of decent facilities.

Members particularly supported the bid for the replacement of Ribblesdale Pool, and acknowledged that officers would be prudent when it came to replacing vehicles.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Confirm the schemes in the existing capital programme;
2. Request £77,000 of additional funding from Policy and Finance committee for those schemes where estimates have changed; and
3. Approve all the new capital bids as outlined in the report to be forwarded to Policy and Finance committee to be considered as part of the Overall Capital Programme.

542

OPEN SPACE USE

The director of Community Services submitted a report seeking a recommendation from committee for the control of activities on and above the Council's open space areas. This included the use of drones, metal detecting and personal trainers running their own exercise classes on Council land.

Where formal permission is sought for an activity on Council owned land a contract is issued, with insurance cover and agreement to conditions of use. This is not usually the case with the activities mentioned, and no provision is made, therefore, to mitigate or eliminate any impact on other users of the open space, and upon the Council's insurance liability.

Officers therefore proposed the limited circumstances when these activities would be acceptable and what would be required for them to be allowed.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the proposals set out in the report with regard to use of drones, metal detecting and fitness classes on Council owned land; and
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Community Services to prepare and carry out the relevant consultation upon the above policies.

543

TAAF UPDATE AND DELEGATION

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking committee to consider a scheme of delegation for the delivery of the project and commissioning of services from Together an Active Future (TaAF) funding to facilitate development of the work.

He reminded committee of the background to the TaAF funding and the approach to it and purpose of it. The objective of the pilots being to change thinking and develop new ways of working, with sustainability being a requirement.

For Ribble Valley, the themes are Mental Well-being, Rural Impact on Physical Activity, Schools and how they can help Physical Activity and Creating Connection Between Partners.

There is a requirement from Sport England that each area has a mechanism by which funding decisions can be made. It was suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, chaired by Cllr Hindle would be a suitable vehicle to provide the governance for the project. This group would consider the schemes for commissioning that arise from the consultation work in the Pathfinder and Accelerator phases of TaAF, with the approval of these decisions being delegated to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Community Services committee and reported retrospectively to committee.

Councillor Berryman was given permission to speak on this item.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the delegation for project commissioning to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Community Services as outlined.

544

CAR PARKING UPDATE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report updating members on current car parking issues and electric charging.

He reminded members that the Car Park working group had received a study outlining the position with capacity on short stay car parks in Clitheroe Town Centre, which was close to capacity at peak times.

Possible options had been discussed and a feasibility study carried out on the provision of a deck on Chester Avenue car park. This had since been discarded as a suitable site, and another site was now being considered and a feasibility report prepared.

Regarding electric charging points, 14 had been installed on council car parks and officers were in the process of investigating the introduction of charging points at the council offices and depot.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Ask officers to continue to investigate how additional parking can be delivered for Clitheroe, and ask Policy and Finance committee to retain provision in the capital programme for new parking facilities (although not on the Chester Avenue site), and
2. Support officers in pursuing the introduction of more charging points in the council car parks.

545

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing members with an update on recycling performance.

Performance on recycling of paper and cardboard had decreased particularly in the months either side of the Covid lockdown. Reasons for this were suggested. It was felt by officers that a new promotion of the paper collection would help reinstate the levels before Covid.

Members discussed the decline in paper recycling and how it might be increased again.

Councillor Berryman was given permission to speak on this item and commented upon the excellent recycling performance of green waste which had increased to 40% for the first half of 2021/22.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Ask officers to implement a strategy to promote the collection of paper to the levels before Covid and discourage the disposal of contaminants in the recycling stream, and
2. Ask officers to implement within the current financial year.

546

TOOTLE HEIGHTS QUARRY TUNNEL, LONGRIDGE

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing members with some background information on the Tootle Heights quarry tunnel in Longridge regarding the maintenance responsibilities for its various parts.

Investigation works were continuing into the state of the tunnel and the necessary works required to keep it safe.

547

CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing an update on the Clitheroe Food Festival and the preparations being made for 2022. This included the availability of the car park at Clitheroe Auction Market, the use of an event management company and marketing of the event.

548 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information updating committee on a variety of developments in sports, arts and community development and performance of the Platform Gallery.

549 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

550 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

551 ANNEX TO AGENDA ITEM NO 6

There was no need to move into Part 2 as this item was part of agenda item 6 and had been covered in Part 1 without specific reference to it.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm

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