

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 13 January 2022, starting at 7.00 pm
Present: Councillor B Holden

Councillors:

J Alcock	K Fletcher
I Brown	G Mirfin
S Farmer	R Newmark
J Hill	R Walsh

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Regeneration and Housing and Head of Financial Services

562 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors S Atkinson, R Elms, M Hindle, D O'Rourke, J Schumann and R Sherras.

563 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

565 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

566 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.

Committee were reminded 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.

Committee were informed that the difference between the revised and original estimate was a decrease in net expenditure of £342,530, or £356,470 after allowing for movements on earmarked reserves. A detailed summary of the reasons for the movements was provided for members' information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the revenue revised estimate for 2021/22 as set out in the report.

567

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.
- The Council Tax can be increased by £5.

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

Members were reminded 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 add £42,320 to earmarked reserves to support its expenditure in future years. It was now proposed to take £500 in 2022/23. The reason for this was outlined.

The net expenditure for this committee has increased from £1,095,450 by £50,230 to £1,145,680 after allowing for associated movements on earmarked reserves. The main reasons were summarised for committee's information.

There had also been two requests for growth items totalling £273,190. Committee were asked which 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 as set out in the report to be submitted to Special Policy and Finance committee, and
2. Support the following growth items
 - Alternative System for Dog Waste/Litter Bin Emptying – staff costs, fuel costs and vehicle maintenance costs - £258,190.
 - Joiners Arms Standard Fittings for Hostel Flats – furniture and fitting costs and lost rent income - £15,000.

568

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 capital schemes totalling £639,640 had been approved by Special Policy and Finance committee and full Council in February and March 2021 respectively. This included four 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 eight schemes totalling £1,336,560. These had now been revised to reflect their progress and estimated full year expenditure for 2021/22 which resulted in a proposed revised estimate of £1,049,100, a reduction of £287,460 from the total approved budget. The reasons were highlighted for committee's information.

Of the four schemes in the proposed revised capital programme:

- Two were currently expected to be completed in-year (although one must wait for the completion of the other before work can commence), and
- The other two were ongoing grants schemes.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the 2021/22 revised estimate of £1,049,100 for this committee's capital programme;
2. Approve the transfer of the following capital budgets from 202/22 to 2022/23:
 - Landlord/tenant grants - £186,740
 - Clitheroe Market Improvements - £78,600
 - Replacement of Pest Control Van PK13 FJP - £13,800
 - Replacement of Dog Warden Van PE64 EYC - £13,500
 - Joiners Arms Roof Renewal - £42,200
3. Recommend to Policy and Finance committee the approval of additional budgets on the following capital schemes in 2022/23, subject to additional funding being identified:
 - Replacement of Pest Control Van PK13 FJP - £2,200
 - Replacement of Dog Warden Van PE64 EYC - £2,500

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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 three schemes approved for the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25, totalling £1,259,700. Following a review of these schemes an amendment was proposed to the Disabled Facilities Grants, totalling £138,000 over three years. This on-going grant scheme is included as an indicative value on the understanding that the actual scheme budget for each year would be set to match the actual Central Government grant funding received in that year. This equates to a £46,000 increase each year for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively.

New capital bids had been requested to be put forward for 2025/26 and 2026/27. For this committee there had been six new bids including one for 2022/23, totalling £2,170,740. Any bids supported by committee would be considered alongside bids from all other committee by the Budget Working Group and Policy and Finance committee.

Members were reminded of the additional revenue impact that new capital schemes would commit the council to, in particular the Alternative System for Dog Waste/Litter Bins Emptying scheme, which had recurring annual revenue costs of £258,190.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Confirm the schemes in the previously approved capital programme;
2. Request £138,000 of additional budget from Policy and Finance committee for the changed estimates on the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme between 2022/23 and 2024/25. This proposed increased budget is on the basis that it is fully financed by Central Government Disabled Facilities Grants finding each year; and
3. Approve all the new capital bids and consequential additional revenue cost for 2022/23, 2025/26 and 2026/27 to be forwarded to Policy and Finance committee to be considered as part of the Overall Capital Programme.

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APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY PROPER OFFICERS

The Chief Executive submitted a report advising committee of the transfer of health protection roles and responsibilities from Public Health England to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) with effect from 1 October 2021.

He also asked for committee's approval of an amendment of the scheme of delegation regarding the appointment of 'proper officers' for the purpose of the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 ("the Regulations").

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the authorisation of Consultants in Health Protection/Consultants in Communicable Disease Control employed by the UKHSA Northwest for the duties stated in the report to act on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council.

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HOMELESSNESS - OVERVIEW

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing committee with a general update and overview on all the various grant awards available to the housing needs service. Endorsement was also sought for the continuation of a joint management approach of the Longridge unit of temporary accommodation at 23 Wellbrow Drive through a Licence Agreement.

The Agreement ensures all maintenance issues are still the responsibility of Onward but all rent is paid direct from Ribble Valley Borough Council and therefore any void costs must be covered by the homeless service budget. The unit is essential for addressing temporary accommodation demand in Longridge and demands are such that voids are minimal.

The report outlined the various sources of grant funding available to the Council to address homelessness issues. These included:

- Homeless Prevention Grant Winter Exceptional Top Up Allocation 21/22
- Accommodation for Offenders – MHCLG Grant
- Homeless Prevention Grant 20/21
- Rough Sleeping Initiative 20/21
- Protect and Vaccinate 2021/22 allocations

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the continued use of 23 Wellbrow Drive, Longridge under a Licence Agreement;
2. Agree a total budget for the property as per Appendix 1 to recommend to next Policy and Finance committee; and
3. Note the various grant schemes available along with their limitations in terms of usage.

572

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

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EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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GRANTS - UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing members of the recent approvals for Disabled Facilities Grants and Landlord Tenant Grants.

It was noted that no new Landlord/Tenant grants had been approved since the last Committee report and that a review of the grant scheme is being undertaken and will be the subject of a future report to this Committee.

The meeting closed at 19:00

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