

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 9 June 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor D Peat (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	M Hindle
S Atkinson	G Mirfin
T Austin	D O'Rourke
I Brown	M Robinson
S Farmer	R Sherras
K Fletcher	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Senior Accountant and Strategic Housing Officer.

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors R Elms, J Hill and B Holden.

75 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

76 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

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

77 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

78 APPOINTMENT TO WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking committee to consider the reappointment of the working groups under the remit of this committee and decide upon the membership.

The question of whether the Dog Fouling Working Group would be continued was raised by a member of the committee.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the following working groups and the membership for the 2022/23 municipal year

Strategic Housing Working Group - Councillors D Peat, M Hindle, A Brown, R Sherras, M Robinson.

Health & Wellbeing Partnership – Councillors D Peat, S Atkinson, S Farmer, T Austin, M Robinson, I Brown.

CAPITAL OUTTURN 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report reviewing the final outturn of the 2021/22 capital programme for this committee and seeking member approval for the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2021/22 financial year to the 2022/23 financial year.

Actual expenditure on this committee's 2021/22 capital programme was £391,039 which was 37.3% of the revised estimate budget.

Two of the four schemes in the revised capital programme were completed in-year. Slippage of £657,620 into 2022/23 was requested to fund expenditure in 2022/23 on the other two schemes.

In response to queries from members, committee were informed that the Disabled Facilities Grants processes were regularly reviewed to try and ensure they were as efficient as possible.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the slippage of the following budgets into the 2022/23 capital programme:

1. Disabled Facilities Grants, £645,850.
2. Clitheroe Affordable Housing Scheme, £11,770.

HOMEWISE GRANT PAYMENT

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report requesting approval of the 2022/23 annual grant payment to Homewise.

Homewise, a Registered Charity, have been providing a service dedicated to improving homes and the quality of life of older and vulnerable people in the borough since 2014. They have helped people remain warm, safe and secure in their own homes, offering a handy person service, minor adaptations service and memory matters service assisting households with dementia and enabling them to remain in their own home as long as possible.

The report set out the requirements of Homewise as a Provider under the agreement and confirmed the monitoring information that will be provided quarterly to the Council.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve payment of the annual grant of £5,760 to Homewise to ensure continuation of the valuable service.

MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

There were no minutes from Working Groups.

HOMES FOR UKRAINIANS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing Committee on the Homes for Ukraine initiative.

The report detailed the Government's scheme which provided an opportunity for UK residents to help support Ukraine refugees fleeing the conflict and move to the UK under a sponsorship arrangement.

The HFU scheme was launched in March 2022 and allowed sponsors to register to support someone known to them, or alternatively to register to support a family which would be matched with people seeking to leave the Ukraine. The report confirmed the scheme was uncapped in terms of numbers, and once sponsors and guests had met standard security checks the guests would be issued a visa enabling them to live and work in the UK for up to 3 years.

The report confirmed the Council's role in delivering the scheme which involved undertaking checks on sponsor accommodation and administering the £350 "Thank-you" payments to sponsors. The government had also provided funding to local authorities to help support the additional workloads generated by the scheme.

At the meeting it was confirmed that the current number of inspected properties in the Ribble Valley totalled 37, and of those 22 had received guests.

There was discussion around the barriers to guests such as transport due to rural locations, and communication issues due to language barriers. It was noted that guests themselves have been providing translation services, and sponsor's generosity has extended to helping guests with transportation as required. In addition, the Clitheroe Ukrainian Support Project has been established in the area to provide community-based support. They are operating a hub, pop up shop and have arranged all kinds of support from uniform grants to English lessons.

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ASYLUM TRANSFORMATION

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report informing Committee on the Government's proposals for asylum dispersal.

The report noted that the Government had announced changes in the way that asylum dispersal would be managed. Moving away from individual authorities determining assistance in the dispersal of asylum seekers who have entered the country and moving to an approach where the number of asylum seekers to be accommodated in an area would be determined by regional agreements.

Members had previously agreed to support up to 5 families in properties within the Ribble Valley. The properties were acquired and operated by the Government's accommodation agents Serco.

The revised asylum dispersal model came into effect on 13 April 2022. The Home Office had started a process of consultation and engagement with local authorities to agree the local model for the region, which they expected to be in place by 15 July 2022.

The report explained the key principles set out by the Home Office to be considered as part of the consultation. The next step was the commencement of regional share workshops due to start on 6 June 2022.

The report indicated that the development of regional plans would be monitored, and Members informed as details emerged.

CLITHEROE MARKET IMPROVEMENTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for Committee to consider the potential options that the Council has in undertaking improvements to the existing Clitheroe Market.

The report reminded members that in 2019 Committee considered options in revamping the existing market using the existing allocated capital fund of £175,000. The report detailed the options considered, and the improvements that had been actioned prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic and confirmed that £78,600 remained in the budget for improvements.

In March 2021 Committee resolved that Officers investigate options to replace the existing stalls with modern market cabins and consider options for improving the visual appearance of the bin storage area.

Following investigation and feedback from several companies and market traders, the report proposed that external advice was sought from a company that specialised in market improvements and developments, noting the benefits that this would provide.

Members were reminded that the Market Liaison Group had been re-established between officer and traders, and that the next meeting had been held earlier that day. The report noted the suggestions that had been put forward by a market trader following the previous meeting.

It was suggested that the market development should come under the remit of the Economic Development Committee.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Agree to:

1. Officers seeking quotes from companies who specialise in improving and developing markets, with a track record of successful outcomes, to establishing a strategic way forward for enhancing Clitheroe Market.
2. Authorise Officers to procure the services of the cheapest quote (or the one which is the most economically advantageous) up to a value of £20,000.

FOOD SERVICE PLAN

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of progress towards achieving the delivery of the Council's Food Safety Recovery Plan in line with the Food Standard's Agency's expectations.

The report noted that the FSA had acknowledged and taken into account the considerable impact on local authorities' resources during the pandemic and had issued guidance and advice in a Recovery Plan setting out its expectations of local authorities covering 2021-2024.

The report explained the general principles to be applied during this period and the Recovery Plan Expectations.

Committee were updated on the Ribble Valley Borough Council Recovery Plan and progress of Phase One and informed of the activities planned under Phase Two in line with the FSA's guidance.

Members were also updated on the Council's staffing resources in the food team and reminded that the service had experienced a prolonged period of reduced staffing levels due to difficulties recruiting to vacant posts.

86 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

87 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.

88 GRANTS UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for information on recent approvals for two Disabled Facilities grants, eight Ribble Valley Adaptation grants, and one First Time Buyer Energy Efficiency Grant. No new landlord/tenant capital grants had been approved since the last committee report.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Rebecca Tait rebecca.tait@ribblevalley.gov.uk.