

Minutes of Health and Housing

Meeting Date: Thursday, 6 June 2024, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor M Hindle (Chairman)

Councillors:

J Alcock	R Ray
S Atkinson	M Robinson
T Austin	L Street
R Elms	K Spencer
S Farmer	N Stubbs

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive, Strategic Housing Officer and Head of Strategic Planning and Housing

65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors M Peplow, D O'Rourke and H McFall.

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

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

67 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

68 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

69 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report reviewing the final outturn of the 2023/24 capital programme for this Committee and seeking Member approval for the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2023/24 financial year to the 2024/25 financial year.

Members were reminded that the total approved budget for this Committee's capital programme of 10 schemes was £3,900,920. Later in the year the capital programme budget was revised to £1,243,830 in respect of 9 schemes. This followed a review of progress on all schemes in the capital programme and included moving budget of £2,652,580 on 5 schemes into the 2024/25 financial year.

Members were informed that actual expenditure on this Committee's capital programme was £805,670, which was 64.8% of the revised estimate budget. Of the 9 schemes in the revised capital programme 3 were completed in-year. The remaining 6 schemes were not completed in-year resulting in slippage from the 2023/24 financial year in to the 2024/25 financial year totalling £438,160.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the slippage of £438,160 as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report.

70

ADOPTION OF REVISED ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report seeking approval for the adoption of the amended Affordable Housing Allocation Policy following the consultation and review.

The Housing Strategy Officer (HSO) summarised the feedback that had been received along with the outcome of subsequent discussions between the housing team and Onward Homes. Further proposed changes to the allocation policy had been identified and these were outlined in the report. In particular the HSO highlighted:

- the proposal to increase the points awarded to those households with full homeless statutory duty to 50 to ensure that they are given sufficient priority.
- Clarification that the full disrepair points awarded by Environmental Health will only apply where action is being taken against the landlord to ensure that improvements are being to address the disrepair issues.

Members were also advised as to the proposed timescales for implementation of the new allocations policy.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and the schedule for implementation.
2. Note that a follow-up report providing an update following the implementation of the new policy is brought to a later Committee.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning to make editorial changes to the policy document which improve the clarity and readability of the document.

71

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND- CLITHEROE MARKET

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report seeking an endorsement from Committee in respect of moving forward with the Clitheroe Market Improvements.

The Chief Executive outlined the updated proposals for the market with the main change being that the flagstones within the bullring area will be replaced with a resin bound paving solution. It was noted that the financial impact of doing this would be an additional £100,000. Therefore, a request will be taken to the next Policy & Finance Committee to increase the UKSPF allocation for the market improvements to £250,000.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning held a meeting with the market traders earlier that day to discuss the updated proposals and obtain feedback. Members who had attended this meeting provided Committee with an update on the comments made.

Members agreed that it was a positive and cohesive scheme but wanted to ensure minimal disruption to stall holders whilst improvements are made. A suggestion was also made that the street furniture and signage should be kept traditional in design which would be in keeping with Clitheroe's heritage. It was agreed that this feedback would be passed to the Director of Economic Development and Planning.

72

AMENDMENTS TO THE LANDLORD AND TENANT SCHEME

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report proposing minor amendments to both the Landlord Tenant grant and the First Time Buyers grant within the Discretionary Private Sector Grant Policy.

The current policy limits the landlord/tenant grant offer to 2 and 3 bed properties, but there is also a need for apartments and flats for single person accommodation, particularly for low-income earners in the borough. It was proposed the policy be amended to include all types of affordable private rented accommodation including single person accommodation.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the proposed amendments to the policy to cover all types of properties covered within the Landlord Tenant Grant Scheme, (at the discretion of the LA).
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development and Planning to make editorial changes to the policy document which improve the clarity and readability of the document.

73

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing background to the Better Care Fund and setting out what RVBC currently offer as grants via the Better Care Funding.

The Housing Support Officer outlined that there had been various amendments made to the Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant policy over the last few years, so the document had been reviewed to ensure that the Council's offer is clear.

It was also highlighted that RVBC were now utilising private Occupational Health Therapists (OT's) to carry out initial home assessments for people who wanted to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant. This has been funded by the Better Care Fund. As of March 2024, there had been 16 people on the waiting list for an initial OT assessment and this was delaying the provision of necessary assistance to residents. It was noted that with the use of private OT's, the waiting list had been significantly reduced and the feedback of the service had been positive.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Note the use of private Occupational Health Therapists funded by the Better Care Fund.
2. Note the process for both the Home Safety and Home Energy Efficiency Grant and the Neurological Disorder Assistance Scheme Grant.

3. Approve the removal of the number of items which can be delivered via an RVA.
4. Approve the amended Policy title and wording which clarifies the Council offer via the Better Care Fund (Appendix 6 of the report).

74 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL GRANT TO HOMEWISE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report requesting Committee approve the annual grant payment to Homewise towards provision of the Home Improvement Service in the borough.

Homewise have provided home improvements, affordable warmth and memory matters advice along with a home improvement service in the borough since 2014. They are a trusted organisation, and it was noted that Council officers recommend their services on an almost daily basis.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve payment of the annual grant of £5,760 to Homewise, subject to signing the 24-25 Agreement in line with the provisions in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

75 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Committee to consider the reappointment of the working groups under the remit of the Health & Housing Committee and their membership. The two active working groups under the remit of this Committee were highlighted.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the continuance of the strategic housing and health and wellbeing partnership working groups for the 2024/25 municipal year, each being made up of five members consisting of two Conservatives, one Liberal Democrat, one Labour and one Independent Group Councillor.

Strategic Housing – Councillors M Hindle, S Atkinson, M Robinson, R Ray and L Street

Health and Wellbeing Partnership – Councillors M Hindle, T Austin, M Robinson, N Stubbs and L Street

76 HOMES FOR UKRAINE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION GRANT

Committee noted the contents of the information report submitted by the Director of Economic Development and Planning updating Committee on the Homes for Ukraine Community Integration work.

77 PEST CONTROL INCOME 2019 - 2023

Committee noted the information report submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on the income generated by the pest control service over the financial years 2019 to 2023.

It was noted that the combination of expanding the types of treatment undertaken by the pest control service and running a media campaign had seen a greater uptake of the service and a significantly increased income in 2023.

78 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

There were no minutes from working groups.

79 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

80 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

81 REQUEST TO WAIVER LAND CHARGE REQUIREMENT

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report presenting to Committee a request from a DFG applicant to waiver registering a charge of a disabled facilities grant.

The implications of the request were discussed, and Members felt that registering the charge would protect the public purse along with the person who was benefiting from the grant. However, it was noted that if within 10 years the family did wish to move, the Council would not necessarily seek repayment depending on the circumstances.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Refuse the request to waiver the requirement to register the Disabled Facilities grant and top-up charge.
2. RVBC to write an explanatory letter to the family.

82 UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUTED SUMS

Committee noted the information report submitted by the Director of Economic Development and Planning which provided an update on the commitment of the affordable housing commuted sum monies collected from sites across the Borough.

Discussion took place around the Homes England funding requirements for all providers delivering affordable housing through one of Homes England's affordable homes programmes. Members were reminded that in 2016, the Government had removed all local connection priority in the allocation of properties funded by Home England. Whilst the rural parishes were protected from this issue, it has had an impact on the remainder of the borough.

It was noted that the new Homes England funding round is soon to be announced for 2026/2031 and it was hoped that sufficient lobbying from rural districts will ensure that local connection for all grant funded affordable units will be supported within the next round. It was agreed that a letter urging Homes England to change funding rules would be drafted by the Council's Housing Strategy Officer on behalf of the Chair of

Health and Housing and the Officer would raise this matter with colleagues across Lancashire to identify whether they have similar concerns.

83 CURRENT HOMELESSNESS AND REFUGEE CASES UPDATE

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing Committee with information about the level of homelessness and refugees in the borough. The contents of the report were noted by Members.

84 GRANTS UPDATE

Committee noted the report submitted by the Director of Economic Development and Planning informing Members of recent approvals for Disabled Facilities Grants and Landlord Tenant Grants.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Jenny Martin 01200 413214 jenny.martin@ribblevalley.gov.uk.