

Minutes of Community Services

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 5 January 2021, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor R Newmark (Chair)

Councillors:

L Edge	S Knox
S Carefoot	G Mirfin
S Atkinson	S Rainford
D Birtwhistle	M Robinson
J Alcock	J Schumann
T Austin	G Scott
A Humphreys	S O'Rourke

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Engineering Services and Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Director of Resources and Senior Accountant

Also in attendance: Councillor J Clark

869 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

870 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

871 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors S O'Rourke, M Robinson and J Schumann declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 – Review of fees and charges – in particular reference to car park charges.

872 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

873 REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining the revised revenue budget for 2020/21 for this committee. She reminded members that at this time of year the estimates are revised for the current financial year in order to predict the likely outturn. This also assists in preparing the original estimates for the coming financial year.

The budget this year had been particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and any impacts on fees and charges had been included within the estimates, along with the estimated part funding towards these losses from the Government.

The original budget for 2020/21 included provision for pay increase at 3% and price increase at 2%. As well as using data on past performance there had been detailed discussions with budget holders and heads of service on past service provision and on future plans which played an integral part in the budget setting process.

She informed committee that the revised budget for 2020/21 showed an increase in net expenditure of £177,900 more than the original estimate after allowing for transfers to and from earmarked reserves.

A comparison between the original and revised budgets for each cost centre was included for committee's information and the key movements were highlighted.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approved the revenue revised estimate for 2020/21.

(Councillors S O'Rourke, M Robinson and J Schumann declared an interest in the next item of business and left the meeting)

874

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking member approval on proposals to increase this committee's fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2021.

These proposals were the first stage in the review of this committee's budget for the forthcoming 2021/22 financial year.

The council's latest budget forecast allows for the 2% inflationary increase in the level of income raised from fees and charges and the review aims to increase the budgeted income for 2021/22 by this amount when compared to last year's original budget estimate.

After applying this percentage increase, proposed charges had generally been rounded up or down to minimise any problems with small change. This inevitably impacts on the individual percentage rise for each separate charge, particularly when the current charge is low.

There were extremely high levels of uncertainty around income levels from the council's fees and charges in light of Covid-19 and the impact this was having on use of the council's services and facilities. In the current financial year the government is partly compensating the council for lost income at 75% of lost sales, fees and charges income – after first adjusting for 5% of total budgeted income. It was on the continuation of this, or alternatively the recovery of income levels, that the fees and charges had been set.

Following discussions with financial services, heads of service and budget holders a proposed set of fees and charges for implementation from 1 April 2021 had been produced for this committee for members to consider.

The Director of Community Services reported that he had received a request from Clitheroe Health centre to waive car parking charges for those persons attending to receive vaccinations for Covid-19 under the government's vaccination initiative. He asked members to consider this request.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the level of fees and charges to be levied for this committee for 2021/22 as outlined in Annex 1 to the report.
2. Approve that no charge be levied on the Council Offices car park in Clitheroe for patients or their attendants while attending for Covid-19 vaccinations during the Government's vaccination initiative at the locations indicated (and

in Longridge should the same happen), and that a review be delegated to officers at the end of the current lockdown in February.

(Councillors S O'Rourke, M Robinson and J Schumann returned to the meeting)

875

ORIGINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking committee to agree the draft revenue budget for 2021/22 for this committee for consideration at Special Policy and Finance committee.

With regard to the council's overall financial position, she reminded members that in February the 3-year budget forecast had predicted the following budget gaps: £281 in 2021/22, £206 in 2022/23, £337k in 2023/24, after allowing for the general fund balances.

At the time of producing the February forecast, the outcome of the Fair Funding Review, the potential changes to the New Homes Bonus Scheme and the implications of Business Rate Retention Reforms were unknown. The forecast was also made before the extent of the impact of Covid-19 in the current financial year was known.

In the light of Covid-19 the government had scrapped its plans for a multi-year spending review, and instead conducted a one-year review for 2021/22. The key messages were highlighted to committee.

At the Policy & Finance committee in November 2020, members had agreed with the conclusion of the Budget Working Group that the Council should prepare its budget on the base budget plus inflation and on the expectation that any variance due to Covid would be made good by the government.

The Budget Working Group would consider the overall position once all committees had approved their detailed estimates and would then make recommendations to Special Policy and Finance committee on 2 February 2021 in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 had been considered by committee earlier in the agenda and had already been incorporated into the service budgets on the assumption that they would be approved without material change.

Estimates had been prepared on current levels of service allowing for pay increase at 2% and price increases at 2%. The budget for each cost centre within the report was presented individually showing the original estimate, inflation, movements in expenditure, income, support services and capital which then culminated in the draft original estimate for 2021/22.

The report detailed individual budget areas under this committee and comments were provided on the key variations.

The net expenditure for this committee had decreased by £36,740 from £4,171,480 to £4,134,740 after allowing for associated movements on earmarked reserves. The main reasons for the net decrease were summarised for committee's information.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the revenue original estimate for 2021/22 and submit it to the Special Policy and Finance committee.

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking committee's approval of the revised estimate for this committee's capital programme for the current financial year. The original estimate for 2020/21 had been approved by Policy and Finance committee in March 2020.

In March 2020, 8 capital schemes with a total approved budget of £1,614,000 had been approved. This included 6 new schemes for 2020/21 and budget for two 2019/20 schemes that had been moved from the 2019/20 capital programme to the 2020/21 capital programme.

Since then the following changes had been made:

5 capital schemes were not completed by 31 March 2020 and had unspent budget available at that date. The total unspent balance of £13,360 on these schemes known as slippage had been moved into the 2020/21 capital budget, after slippage requests from the budget holders were approved by the Director of Resources;

One new scheme, replacement of works vehicle (toilet van) was added to the 2020/21 capital programme after agreement between the Head of Environmental Services, Director of Resources and Chief Executive in March 2020.

As a result of the above, the total approved budget for this committee's capital programme of 12 schemes was £1,627,360.

Following discussions on each of the schemes in the capital programme with budget holders, the proposed revised estimate was £381,370, a reduction of £1,245,990 from the total approved budget. The reasons for this reduction were outlined to committee with the largest one being £1,230,000 for the installation of a second parking deck on Chester Avenue car park which still needed a feasibility study carrying out before and further decisions were taken.

The Director of Resources reported that the expenditure and commitments to the end of November 2020 represented 82.8% of the revised capital programme for this committee. Of the 10 schemes in the revised capital programme, 5 schemes had been completed by the end of November 2020. The report outlined the current progress on the schemes with the largest remaining budgets.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the 2020/21 revised estimate of £381,370 for this committee's capital programme as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
2. Approve the move of the following capital budgets for 2020/21 to 2021/22:
Play Area Improvements 2020/21 - £40,000
Installation of a second parking deck on Chester Ave car park - £1,230,000
and;
3. Recommend to Policy and Finance committee the approval of the following additional scheme budgets:
Replacement of Pickup Ford Ranger PK60 HKN - £5,130
Edisford Sports Complex - £5,820
Replacement of CCTV System - £2,800
Replacement of Works Vehicle (Toilet van) YP66 PZF - £14,560

CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2021/22 - 2024/25

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking members to consider the proposed future four-year capital programme (2021/22 to 2024/25) for this committee for recommendation to Policy and Finance committee.

The future capital programme is reviewed and updated each year. In recent years, the council has been setting a proposed and fully funded five-year capital programme each year. However, given the additional burdens caused by and priority focus on Covid-19 issues throughout 2020, Budget Working Group had streamlined the capital programme budget update process for this year. This involved moving to a four-year capital programme only, covering 2021/22 to 2024/25, and there being no new capital bids for 2025/26 (year five).

A review and update of the four-year capital programme had therefore taken place and had resulted in a proposed four-year programme of £3,436,900 that was set out in the report for members to consider and approve.

Members asked questions and discussed specific items in the programme.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

1. Approve the proposed four-year capital programme (2021/22 to 2024/25) for this committee as set out in Annex 1 to the report and
2. Recommend to Policy and Finance committee the same proposed four-year capital programme for this committee.

CCTV CAPITAL SCHEME - REQUEST FOR FURTHER CAMERAS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking for approval for the proposed installation of further CCTV cameras in addition to those within the existing capital scheme subject to approval of Policy and Finance committee.

A capital budget request for £60,000 had been submitted and approved for a CCTV upgrade for the existing cameras in Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge. However, following consultation with the Police, two extra cameras were identified as being required at Whalley Road, Clitheroe and in the Castle grounds overlooking the bowling green café, that had been included as provisional items should funds be available together with the replacement of the Whalley internet connection.

The main part of the contract had been completed. The extra camera on Whalley Road was still awaiting permission from LCC and Electricity North West. Increased costs meant that there was not sufficient budget for the camera by the bowling green café and a further one has subsequently been identified as being required at the barrier at Edisford riverbank.

Members considered the request in the light of the vandalism that had taken place at these sites.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

1. Approve the proposed cameras at the Castle Grounds Bowling Green Café and at the Edisford Riverside Barrier at a total cost of £10,930, and
2. Ask that Special Policy & Finance committee consider the increased cost of these additional cameras in the revision of this committee's capital budget for 2020/21.

RIBBLE VALLEY CCTV

The Director of Community Services submitted a report outlining the history and current status of the CCTV system and asking for guidance on how to respond to demands for expansion of the system.

He informed committee that the current scheme comprises 34 cameras. 7 in Longridge, 3 in Whalley and 25 in Clitheroe. All cameras are monitored in the CCTV suite by one contracted operative at any time over 24 hours per day 7 days a week.

In Clitheroe there is also a stand-alone system located at the Castle toilets, and following requests from parish councils to the CSP for funding, two systems were installed at car parks in Sabden and Chipping.

In recent months more parish councils had made enquiries about the provision of CCTV systems and the CCTV suite in Clitheroe had reached the point where a decision was required regarding the monitoring practices/number of operatives.

Members had a lengthy discussion about the merits of the CCTV system and the use that the Police made of the images. It was felt that the system should be expanded but needed more exploration before deciding on more cameras in the suite or stand-alone systems.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

1. Request a further report from officers to include information on the creation of a new CCTV suite to allow more personnel to monitor and the expansion of CCTV coverage based on stand-alone systems;
2. Support in principle any bids for CSP or PCC funding for stand-alone systems; and
3. Ask officers to request a report from the local police and Police Crime Commissioner on the use of CCTV coverage over the last 2 years in Ribble Valley in their duties.

REVIEW OF REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing information regarding issues where access to some properties in the Ribble Valley was restrictive and therefore causing collection problems, and to seek support for a review of current practice and future policy.

The background to the different type of vehicles used for refuse collection including recyclable materials was outlined along with some of the issues that were being experienced with unadopted shared driveways, narrow tracks and potholed private roads. Issues around reputation had also been experienced whilst a specific vehicle was off the road for repair and its replacement was unable to collect recyclable material.

Committee were reminded that the Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows for local authorities to determine how and where waste must be placed for collection, and although this was a power to be used carefully, the proposal would be to negotiate with the affected properties to resolve the issues.

Members discussed the issues surrounding size of vehicles, end of lane collections and the impact on recycling. Members requested that they be kept informed of negotiations during any review.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

Support the review of refuse collection points taking place and where deemed necessary support officers in their decision to adopt the means of collection that suits the location.

881 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information giving an update on the Council's health and well-being initiatives which are primarily funded through external sources.

882 CASTLE GROUNDS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information giving an overview of the recent and planned work in the Castle grounds.

883 LITTER AND DOG BINS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information on current issues being experienced with litter and dog bins throughout the Ribble Valley. Officers had already begun the process of reviewing what was currently in place and a further report would be presented to committee with recommendations for improvement.

884 TRANSITION TO ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information on the ban on petrol and diesel vehicles in 2030 and the effect it would have on the Council when purchasing/leasing vehicles.

885 GENERAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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

886 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

A report was submitted for information from Cllr T Austin, the Council's representative on the outside body, Lancashire Waste Partnership.

887 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That by virtue of the next item of business being exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

888 CATERING TENDERS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing an overview of the Council's catering contracts.

He informed committee that the contracts were due to be put out to tender for operators at The Atrium, the Bowling Green Café and the Edisford Riverbank concession. The report outlined the background to all three venues and the type of contract that would be available for tender.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE

Approve officers seeking tenders for all three sites on the basis outlined in the report.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

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