



# MINUTES

## Finance and Democracy Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, 23 September 2019
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Vince Settle (Vice-Chairman)  Councillors Alan Clayton, Eleanor Gaunt, Brian Gill, Gavin Harrison, Matthew Lee, Ed Nash, Linda Nulty, David O'Rourke, Richard Redcliffe, John Singleton JP.
<b>Other Councillors Present:</b>	Councillor Sue Fazackerley MBE
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Tracy Manning, Paul O'Donoghue, Ian Curtis, Darren Bell, William Fisher, Maria Marcella, Andrew Loynd, Phil Haworth and Katharine McDonnell.
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Two members of the public were present

### Public Platform

There were no speakers on this occasion.

#### 1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

#### 2. Confirmation of Minutes

Under Procedure 15 a challenge to the minutes had been submitted. The Chairman advised that a challenge was in relation to the accuracy of the minutes only. In challenging the minutes, Councillor Brian Gill proposed an amendment to the minutes, seconded by Councillor Linda Nulty. The amendment was debated, voted upon and lost.

It was therefore RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Finance and Democracy Committee meeting held on 22 July 2019 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(Councillor Gill requested that his decision to abstain from the vote was recorded).

#### 3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 23 (c):

Councillor Gavin Harrison for Councillor Peter Anthony

Councillor Brian Gill for Councillor Peter Collins

Councillor Matthew Lee for Councillor Liz Oades

Councillor Alan Clayton for Councillor Elaine Silverwood

Decision Items

4. Business Rates Retention and Pooling Arrangements 2020/21 and Support for the Greater Lancashire Plan

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented the report on Business Rates Retention and Support for the Greater Lancashire Plan.

By way of background Mr O'Donoghue advised that the council was a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool, which comprised of a group of Local Authorities. Under the pooling arrangements, all the councils in the pool combined all their funding calculations including the calculations relating to tariffs and top-ups. As a result of being in the pool the council was able to retain £567k in 2018/19 and £598k in 2017/18 of business rate growth that would normally have been paid as a levy to central government.

Mr O'Donoghue advised that as part of the settlement for 2018/19 the government had announced a plans to introduce 75% business rate retention from 2020/21. Groups of authorities were invited to take part in pilots of the new arrangements. Lancashire Business Rates Pool had been accepted into the pilot for 2019/20.

A necessary element for application to the pilot was for the pool to demonstrate that through the additional growth arrangements the pool would achieve economic development and growth benefits across the participating authorities. To that end the Lancashire Pool agreed that the additional growth in retained business rates would be top sliced with 5% set aside into a resilience fund and a further 25% set aside to create a Lancashire wide Strategic Economic Growth and Financial Sustainability Fund (SEGFSF).

An opportunity for economic development was through the development of the Greater Lancashire Plan. As the SEGFSF would not be established until June 2020, once all business rate growth was known, the constituent authorities of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool were requested to provide funding in advance of the business rate growth to help fund the development of the Greater Lancashire Plan.

Mr O'Donoghue advised that if the committee were in support of the proposal, the funding would come from the council's Funding Volatility Reserve. The funding would be returned to the Reserve once the business rate growth was known in June 2020.

During the course of debate on the matter, the committee raised a number of questions. In response, Mr O'Donoghue advised that the amount of funding requested from each of the pool members was pro rata to the estimated level of business rate growth.

The committee commented that Fylde's participation in the pool had been beneficial.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the continuation of Fylde Council participation in the current Lancashire Business Rates Pool for 2020/21 onwards, on the assumption that the pool remains in existence, along with participation in the '75% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme' should that be a further option available in future years;
2. Note that once the one-year settlement for 2020/21 is announced in the autumn of 2019, subsequent updates to the Financial Forecast of the Council will be amended to reflect the latest information and expectations in respect of future levels of business rate income to the Council; and
3. Approve a fully funded revenue budget increase in the sum of £20,261 for 2019/20, to be met from the Funding Volatility Reserve, to support the development of a Greater Lancashire Plan, subject to the unanimous approval by the relevant Lancashire Leaders (in their capacity as the Governing Body of the

Lancashire Business Rates Pool) to the development of the plan from the release of the monies held in the Lancashire Strategic Economic Growth and Financial Sustainability Fund.

5. Community Asset Nomination: The Miller Arms, Singleton

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance, advised that the council had received a nomination for the inclusion of the Miller Arms in Singleton in its list of assets of community value. He explained that for the property to be considered, the committee needed to determine that it met the criteria for inclusion.

He advised that if the committee considered that the land was of community value and its current use, or use in the recent past, would (or had) further(ed) the social wellbeing or social interest of the local community, and that the continued use of the land would further the social wellbeing or social interest of the local community, then the two part statutory test for a community asset would have been fulfilled.

Mr Curtis advised that whilst a pub was usually considered to further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community, the Miller Arms also had a prominent food offer and a restaurant was less likely to meet the test, therefore the committee needed to consider to what extent the Miller Arms was a community pub.

Following a short debate and a number of questions regarding the review process, to which Mr Curtis was able to provide clarification, it was RESOLVED to;

1. Agree that the Miller Arms, Singleton is land of community value, in that in the opinion of the authority the actual use of the building furthers the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community and it is realistic to think that there can continue to be use of the land which will further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community; and

2. Accept the nomination to include the Miller Arms in the council's list of assets of community value.

6. Beach Terrace Café, Inner Promenade

Phil Haworth, Senior Technical Services Officer, advised that Heads of Terms had been agreed with the existing tenant of the Beach Terrace Café to accept a surrender of the current lease, which had 14 years remaining, and the grant of a new 15 year lease to Beach Terrace Café Limited. He explained that the process had started as a simple rent review. The review had revealed a breach which the tenant was not able to rectify as it involved an extension onto further land.

Mr Haworth advised that in discussion with the tenant and legal services, it had been agreed that the best solution was for the surrender of three separate leases and to create a new lease. He further explained that the rent had been uplifted to reflect the value of the land and a further increase would occur in 2025. In agreeing to surrender the old leases and take a new lease, an additional year had been added for the tenant.

Following a brief discussion, it was RESOLVED;

1. To accept a surrender of the existing Lease, Supplemental Lease and Deed of Variation and Option;

2. To approve the grant of a new 15 year Lease from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019;

3. To approve a rent of £12,000 p.a. for the first 3 years of the new Lease, thereby reviewed/increased in accordance with the Consumer Prices Index for years 4 to 6; and

4. To approve a rent of £20,000 p.a. for years 7 to 9 and thereafter 3 yearly reviews to increase in accordance with the uplift in the Consumer Prices Index.

7. Town Hall Wedding Venue Update

Tracy Manning, Director of Resources, provided an update on the delivery of the wedding service at Fylde. She advised that since the service launched in 2018, there had been eleven services to date, with a further five planned.

She advised that the service provided a modest income stream to the council but had surpassed expected income in its first year, and was becoming increasingly popular.

The committee congratulated the team for their professionalism and friendliness, and the obvious care with which the ceremonies were delivered. The team were also congratulated on their social media presence which had helped market the service.

Questions were asked of the capacity to manage given the increasing popularity of the service, and balancing the operational needs of the day to day function of the Town Hall. William Fisher, Customer Services Manager, advised that the team were mindful and used a number of measures to mitigate the impact on the function of the Town Hall, whilst delivering a high quality, private ceremony. The team believed that it was possible to hold a ceremony a week with no detriment on service delivery.

It was RESOLVED;

1. To note the success of the trial period for the Town Hall being used as a wedding venue, and
2. To approve its continued use going forward, at a cost set within the fees and charges schedule annually, with seven day a week use, subject to operational use taking priority on weekdays.

8. Fully Funded Addition to the Capital Programme – Charging Infrastructure for Electric Taxis

Andrew Loynd, Technical Support Manager, requested that the committee approved the recommendation of the Operational Management Committee to agree a fully-funded addition to the capital programme for a charging infrastructure for electric taxis.

He advised that following a successful bid, alongside Lancaster City Council, to the Department of Transport, the council was due to receive £105k to provide for the installation of 4 rapid charging points. He advised that these would be installed across the borough, to provide a mini network to provide confidence to the taxi trade, that a change to electric vehicles would be commercially viable. He further advised that the charging points would be in place for a minimum of 10 years.

It was RESOLVED

1. To approve a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £105,000 for the provision of taxi charging points, to be met by a grant from central government for this purpose in the same amount; and
2. Subject to (1) above, to approve the expenditure of £105,000 for the provision of taxi charging points to an appointed contractor subject to appropriate procurement exercise being completed by Lancaster City Council in conjunction with associated district authorities.

9. Fully Funded Addition to the Capital Programme – Weeton Village Hall

Tracy Manning, Director of Resources, requested that the committee approve the recommendation of the Tourism and Leisure committee to agree a fully-funded addition to the capital programme for public open space improvements at the Village Hall, Weeton.

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She advised that the funding was from s106 monies relating to the Meadow View development. The contribution would enable open space improvements at the Village Hall including improvements to the play area.

It was RECOMMENDED to approve a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £6,875, to be met from section 106 monies received from the Meadow View development, Weeton. The monies would be paid to Weeton Parish Council to carry out play area improvements at the Village Hall, Weeton on condition that the Parish Council first enter into an agreement with Fylde Council (i.e. prior to release of funds) and agree to provide details of how the funds have been used before the section 106 agreement expiry date of 1 June 2020.

Information Items

The following information items were received and noted by the committee.

10. Electoral Review

The committee received information regarding a forthcoming electoral review to be undertaken by the Boundary Commission. Representatives of the Boundary Commission would be visiting the council in February 2020 to meet with councillors and officers to provide information regarding the process.

11. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring – Position as at 31 July 2019

The committee received information regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget monitoring, position as at 31 July 2019.

12. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2019/20 – Position as at 31 July 2019

The committee received information regarding the Capital Programme monitoring, position as at 31 July 2019.

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