



MINUTES

Finance and Democracy Committee

Date:	Monday, 30 January 2023
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Vince Settle (Vice - Chairman) Councillors Peter Anthony, Peter Collins, Ellie Gaunt, Karen Henshaw JP, Matthew Lee, Linda Nulty, Richard Redcliffe, Roger Small, Michael Withers.
Officers Present:	Allan Oldfield, Tracy Manning, Ian Curtis, Paul O'Donoghue, Charlie Richards, Gemma Broadley, Philip Howarth, Sharon Wadsworth
Other Attendees:	Louise Jones and Graeme Ruse, Revenue & Benefits Shared Service.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman reflected on the passing of Councillor Kiran Mulholland and informed members that a book of condolence was now available.

Public Platform

There were no speakers under the Public Platform on this occasion.

Procedural Items

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.

Councillor Peter Anthony declared a personal interest on Item 8 "Lytham Institute - Charity Reporting" insofar as the Lytham Heritage groups use the meeting rooms at the Lytham Institute.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Finance and Democracy Committee meeting held on 21 November 2022 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council Procedure Rule 23(c):

Councillor Karen Henshaw JP for Councillor Elaine Silverwood

Councillor Matthew Lee for Councillor Liz Oades

Councillor Roger Small for Councillor John Singleton JP

Decision Items

4. Financial Forecast Update 2022/23 to 2026/27

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented an update of the Financial Forecast for the Council for the five years 2022/23 to 2026/27. He advised that the report included the Local Government Settlement, which was announced late December 2022 and took account of the latest reserve and balances position, revenue and capital spending forecasts and treasury management issues. It also identified and updated the financial risks and challenges facing the Council.

In his report, Mr O'Donoghue went on to highlight that New Homes Bonus allocation had been confirmed for a single year and was approximately half the amount received compared to the previous year. This would have a knock on impact on the distributions to the Town and Parish Councils. Overall there was a predicted revenue budget surplus for the current year and for 2023/24 followed by a more challenging outlook for subsequent years as the future funding regime for local government is subject to review.

Following a brief discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the implications of the updated financial forecast, and to also note that the update report would be presented to the Council meeting on 6th February 2023; and
2. To note that following the confirmation of the amount of New Homes Bonus grant to be received for 2023/24, allocations of a proportion of the grant to town and parish councils had been calculated in the total sum of £25,805 in accordance with the decision of the Finance and Democracy Committee on the matter at the meeting of 21st November 2022.

5. Council Tax Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy – 2023/24

Louise Jones, Head of Revenues and Benefits (Shared Service), introduced the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy for 2023/24 for approval. Ms Jones highlight that the policy was reviewed annually and had been updated to account for measures to support businesses announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement.

It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy (2023-24).

6. Council Tax Premiums 2024/25

Louise Jones, Head of Head of Revenues and Benefits (Shared Service), was invited to present the proposal to introduce additional premiums in respect of long term empty properties and on properties classed as second homes. It was highlighted that the proposed changes would be dependent upon the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Ascent by 1st April 2023.

Following a detailed discussion the Chairman proposed that the item be deferred until the March committee meeting to allow for further consideration. Councillor Buckley urged for members to submit and questions or queries to Ms Jones in advance of the next meeting.

It was RESOLVED to defer the item on Council Tax Premiums 2024/25 until the 20th March 2023 Finance and Democracy meeting.

7. Budget Setting – Fees and Charges 2023/24

Councillor Buckley introduced the report. In doing so she advised that each year, as part of the budget-setting process, the schedule of fees and charges for the coming year (for each of the services that the Council provides) are reviewed by budget-holders prior to the schedule being approved at the March Budget Council meeting.

The Committee considered the schedule of fees and charges for those activities within the remit of the Finance and Democracy committee as detailed in Appendix A of the report and RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Council the proposed schedule of fees and charges applicable for 2023/24; and
2. To note that the final fees and charges for 2023/24 would be approved by the Budget Council in March 2023.

8. Lytham Institute – Charity Reporting

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance, was invited to present the report that outlined the information that the Council, as trustee, was required to submit to the Charity Commission regarding Lytham Institute as part of the annual return that all charities were required to make.

Mr Curtis confirmed that a response from the Charity Commission on the object of the Trust was still being awaited.

The committee RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the Trustees Annual Report and Annual Accounts for the period to 31st March 2022 as shown at the appendices to the report for submission to the Charity Commission by the statutory deadline of 31st January 2023.

9. Grant of New Lease for Ribble Cruising Club

Philip Haworth, Estate and Asset Manager, was invited by the Chairman to introduce a proposal from the Ribble Cruising Club for the renewal of their current lease for a period of 50 years. The new lease would be on the same terms as the current lease and would provide the club with the confidence to undertake significant refurbishment works.

Following a detailed discussion it was proposed that a 21 year lease would be sufficient to provide the required assurance and security to the club to invest in the any refurbishment.

Following a show of hands it was RESOLVED to recommend that Fylde Council grants a new lease to Ribble Cruising Club for a term of 21 (twenty-one) years.

10. Fully Funded In Year Budget Increase – UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Charlie Richards, Head of Regeneration Projects, provided an overview of the Government new £2.6billion investment programme titled UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). As part of the funding allocation process, the Council prepared and submitted an Investment Plan in August 2022 had been approved by the UKSPF Partnership Group. Fylde's allocation of UKSPF monies amount to £2.6m, to be defrayed over 3 financial years until the end of 2024/2025.

The approved Investment Plan brings together a cross section of key stakeholders including representatives from businesses, elected members, education and skills, and the community sectors.

Councillor Buckley thanked Charlie Richards and his team for putting together the successful Investment Plan.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Council, approval of a fully funded addition to the Councils Capital Programme in 2022/23 in the sum of £82,500 to the 'UK Shared Prosperity Funding' scheme, to be met from external funding provided by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
2. To recommend to Council, approval of a fully funded addition to the base revenue budget in the sum of £258,288 for 2022/2023, to be met from external funding provided by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
3. Subject to approval by Council as above, the Finance and Democracy Committee noted that a retrospective drawdown expenditure report would be brought to a future meeting of the new scrutiny committee structure to detail the actual project spend as detailed within the Investment Plan.

11. Fully Funded Revenue Budget Increase – Holiday, Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

The Chairman, Councillor Buckley, introduced a report that detailed the amount of funding allocated to Fylde to deliver the HAF programme in 2023 and to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £27,000 in 2022/23 that was funded from the specific Holiday, Activity and Food Programme grant that had been allocated to extend the delivery of the scheme in Fylde over the 2022/23 Christmas period.

Councillor Nulty raise that there were children in need of free school meals that did not necessarily meet the set qualification criteria. Tracy Manning, Deputy Chief Executive, provided assurance that the scheme worked closely with pastoral teams within schools to identify any child in need of support.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To approve a revenue budget increase of £163,498, fully funded from specific HAF grant, for the delivery of the HAF programme in Fylde in 2023/2024;
2. To approve an additional fully funded revenue budget increase of £27,000 in 2022/2023, funded from the specific HAF Programme grant.

12. Fully Funded Revenue Budget Increase – Education Contribution Relating to Section 106 Agreement for Development Land Moss Farm, Cropper Road, Westby

The Chairman presented a report for a request to transfer Section 106 funds, that had been paid to Fylde Council by the developer of the Land to the rear of Moss Farm, Cropper Road, to Lancashire County Council, in their role as local Education authority. The contribution was towards the provision of additional primary school places to serve the needs of the development in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £160,000 in 2022/23 to be met by Section 106 monies held by the Council towards the improvement of local primary school places (application reference 12/0717) and that the sum of £160,000 be paid to Lancashire County Council for the provision of additional school places at Heyhouses Endowed Church of England Primary School in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

13. Fully Funded Revenue Budget Increase – Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Chairman presented a report following the award of £33,224, from MHCLG New Duties funding, to undertake new Part IV duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Fylde Council intended to continue to work in partnership with Wyre Council and Fylde Coast Women's Aid (FCWA) to extend the project for a further 12 months.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To approve a fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £33,224 to be met by MHCLG New Duties funding (£2,768 2022/23 and £30,456 in 2023/24 to continue Part IV duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

14. Fully Funded Revenue Budget Increase – Community Cost of Living Grants

The Chairman introduced the report that detailed the budget allocation to Fylde of £80,000 from to administer in grants to community sector organisations during the period of January to March 31st, 2023 as part of the commitment to tackling the cost-of-living crisis. The grant had been passed to the council by the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, and the council's officers were working closely with the Board to award grants to community organisations.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £80,000 in 2022/23 fully funded from NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board for community grants to be awarded to community organisations within Fylde for the period of January to March 2023

Information Items

15. Lytham Institute – Charity Commission Note

The information report provided details of correspondence that had been received from the Charity Commission that required to be circulated amongst the trustees. The council is the sole trustee, and the committee has responsibility for discharging its functions as trustee.

16. Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme -Update

The information item provided details of how the discretionary funds had been allocated.

17. Squires Gate Station Access Update

To update was received on the progress towards obtaining ownership of the land required to form a level, accessible route onto Squires Gate Station platform.

18. Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling

A progress update on processes and procedures being re-introduced post pandemic relating to customer engagement and feedback including the management of reporting on complaints handling was provided to the committee for information.

Gemma Broadley, Head of Corporate Services, welcomed suggestions as to which services members would like to be included in the “How did we do” surveys.

19. Mid-Year Performance 2022/23

The report provided details of the key performance outcomes for the first half of the financial year 2022/23. Performance is reported against the targets set for the year and commentary was provided by performance exception.

20. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2022/23 - Position as at 30th November 2022

The Committee received an update on the approved Capital Programme of the Council as at 30th November 2022 and specifically for those schemes under the remit of the Committee.

21. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 - Position as at 30th November 2022

The Committee received an update on the General Fund Revenue Budget of the Council as at 30th November 2022 and specifically for those areas under the remit of the Committee.

22. Budget Setting – Revenue Budget 2023/24 – First Draft

The information report provided an update on the first draft of the revenue budget for 2023/24 (made available via a link).

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