



MINUTES

Finance and Democracy Committee

Date:	Monday, 22 January 2018
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillors David Donaldson, Neil Harvey, Karen Henshaw JP, Angela Jacques, Kiran Mulholland, Linda Nulty, Liz Oades, Richard Redcliffe, Vince Settle and Elaine Silverwood.
Councillors Present:	Councillor Sue Fazackerley MBE
Officers Present:	Allan Oldfield, Tracy Morrison, Paul O'Donoghue and Sharon Wadsworth
Other Attendees:	Two members of the public were present

A minute's silence was held in memory of Councillor Barbara Nash who suddenly and sadly passed away on 20th December 2017.

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.

There were no declarations on this occasion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Finance and Democracy Committee meeting held on 20 November 2017 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 24(c):

Councillor Karen Henshaw for Councillor Tony Ford.

Decision Items

4. Financial Forecast Update 2017/18 to 2021/22 (position as at January 2018)

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented the latest financial forecast that had been updated to reflect the impact of the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement that was announced on 19th December 2017.

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Mr. O'Donoghue took members through the key points arising from the Finance Settlement, being, confirmation of the continuation of the Lancashire Business Rate Pool for 2018/19, increase to the general Council Tax Referendum principle, confirmation of no change to the New Homes Bonus arrangements, revised scheme for the local retention of Business Rates and the announcement of a Fair Funding Review in April 2020.

Other local adjustments that had been made included the New Homes Bonus Distribution to Town and Parish Councils scheme that was approved at Council on 4th December 2017, an anticipated pay award of 2% per annum in each year from 2018/19, updated business rate income forecast and updated Council Tax base for 2018/19.

Mr. O'Donoghue concluded that despite the adjustments the forecast had not fundamentally changed and there remained a projected surplus for the current year and 2018/19, with deficits being projected for 2019/20 and beyond.

Following a brief discussion it was RESOLVED 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 5 February 2018.

5. Fully Funded Addition to the Capital Programme in 2017/18 – Disabled Facility Grant Additional Allocation 2017/18

Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources, presented the recommendation from the Environment, Health and Housing Committee for approval of a fully-funded addition to the Capital Programme in respect of additional funding for Disabled Facilities Grants in the amount of £91,882.

The housing team would use their best endeavors to spend the monies on the DFG scheme and wider social care projects before the end of the financial year 2017/18.

It was RESOLVED to approve a fully funded increase in the cost of the DFG scheme within the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 in the sum of the initial grant allocation of £91,882 (and any additional monies that may be allocated if the grant is not taken by all local authorities in England), fully-funded by the Better Care Fund/DFG grant.

6. Budget Setting – Consideration of Revenue Bid Community Projects Fund

Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources, introduced a report requesting the continuation of an existing scheme for allocating grants to support local Fylde groups of a voluntary or community based nature.

It was proposed for the Community Project Fund to continue having three bidding rounds throughout the financial year with £15,000 allocated to the larger Community Project Fund and £5,000 allocated to the smaller Discretionary Fund with a ceiling of £300 per application.

Following a detailed discussion on the principle, criteria and panel of the scheme it was RESOLVED to:

1. Support the application for an allocation of £20,000 revenue funding to the Community Projects fund in 2018/19, with £15,000 allocated to the larger fund and the remaining £5,000 allocated to the smaller fund with a ceiling of £300 per application and
2. Request a full review of the principle and criteria of the scheme to be brought back before the Finance and Democracy Committee for discussion.

3. Budget Setting – Fees and Charges 2018/19

Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, introduced a report which provided details of the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 for activities within the remit of the Finance and Democracy Committee.

He advised that some of the fees and charges were set through statute at a prescribed level, other services where the Council had a statutory responsibility only eligible costs could be recovered through the level of fees, and there were also discretionary fees and charges where the Council was providing non-statutory services.

With no further comment or questions the committee RESOLVED to:

1. Recommend to Council a proposed schedule of fees and charges applicable for 2018/19; and
2. Note that the final fees and charges for 2018/19 would be approved by the Budget Council in March 2018.

Information Items

4. Budget Setting – Revenue Budget 2018/19 – First Draft

The Committee were advised that the first draft of the Revenue Budget for 2018/19, specifically in relation to the service areas under the remit of the committee, was now available to view. Members were encouraged to contact the Chief Financial Officer, Senior Officers or budget holders if they had questions or required clarification.

5. Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18 – Position as at 30 November 2017

The committee received the Revenue Budget Monitoring report as at 30th November 2017. The committee commented on the reduction in crematorium and interment income, an explanation of which was provided in the commentary accompanying the report and by Mr. O'Donoghue.

6. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2017/18 – Position as at 30 November 2017

The committee received the Capital Programme Monitoring report as at 30th November 2017, with particular regard to those projects within the remit of the committee.

7. Mid-Year Performance 2017/18

The committee received the mid-year performance report for areas within the remit of committee. Two of the performance targets related to the average number of days for processing new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. Mr. O'Donoghue explained that the shared service had recently lost some experienced assessors which in turn had affected the processing times. He advised that some of the vacant posts had been filled and that a reduction in the processing times had already been achieved in December 2017. Mr. Oldfield confirmed that the adverse sickness figures were also back on target following management of long term sickness.

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