



# Minutes

## FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE

<b>Date:</b>	Monday, 20 June 2016
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members:</b>	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Roger Small (Vice-Chairman)  Councillors David Donaldson, Tony Ford JP, Angela Jacques, Kiran Mulholland, Linda Nulty, Liz Oades, Richard Redcliffe, Vince Settle, Elaine Silverwood, Richard Taylor.
<b>Other Councillors Present:</b>	Councillor Susan Fazackerley
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Allan Oldfield, Paul O'Donoghue, Sharon Wadsworth
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Rob Green, EDC Support Officer and David Holmes, Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Blackpool Council 2 members of the public

### Public Platform

There were no speakers on this occasion under the public platform provision.

#### 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 6 June 2016 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

#### 3. Substitute members

There were no substitutions on this occasion.

### Decision Items

#### 4. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Revenue, Capital Programme & Treasury Management Outturn Position for 2015/16

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented the MTFS Outturn report for financial year 2015/16. He outlined the major variations between the latest approved budget and the actual outturn position drawing the committee's attention to the relevant appendices in the report. He advised on the impact these variations had on the Council's reserves and explained to the

committee each of the recommendations set out in the report relating in turn to the Revenue, Capital, and Treasury Management outturn position. Mr O'Donoghue confirmed that any minor variations may still be identified these would be reported in future MTFS updates.

With regards to the accounting for Business Rates income Mr O'Donoghue advised members that the Council was required to make adequate provision to meet the estimated cost of any rating appeals made by businesses. Following specialist advice on the historic outstanding appeals based upon this list of appeals supplied by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) it was recommended that a further contribution to the Collection Fund Deficit Reserve was made to ensure that Fylde's share of the collection fund deficit could be met when due.

Mr O'Donoghue responded to questions regarding the Business Rates Collection Fund and the potential level of appeals and the Council's liability. He explained how the collection fund operated with payments to preceptors and collections from businesses within the borough.

An undertaking was provided to Councillor Oades to provide members of the committee with a breakdown of the favourable and adverse variances arising from the Fylde Waste Schemes as shown in Appendix B of the report.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the General Fund Revenue Outturn Expenditure and slippage as set out in Sections 2 to 5, and Appendix C (revenue budget slippage items);
2. Approve the transfers to earmarked reserves as set out in paragraphs 2.4, 2.7 & 2.9 and as summarised in Table 1;
3. Approve the Capital Outturn as set out in sections 6 to 9, the capital slippage detailed in Appendix E, and the proposed capital financing as set out in Table 5;
4. Approve the Treasury Management Annual Report as set out in sections 10 to 12 and the actual Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix F; and
5. Approve the virement of £100,000 from the 2016/17 planning appeals budget to the planning enforcement budget to fund any required enforcement activity at Fairfield Road, Hardhorn.

5. Blackpool Airport Corridor Enterprise Zone: Business Rate Relief Policy

Rob Green, EDC Support Officer, and David Holmes, Revenue & Benefits Shared Service, from Blackpool Council were invited to present the report proposing a Business Rate Relief Policy for the Blackpool Airport Corridor Enterprise Zone.

In 2015 the government announced the creation of two new Enterprise Zones on the Fylde Coast; the first for the Blackpool Airport Corridor Enterprise Zone which overlaps the Blackpool and Fylde borough boundaries; and the second for the Hillhouse Energy and Chemical Enterprise Zone, fully within the borough of Wyre.

Mr Green expressed the benefits in having a joint business rate relief policy, to be operated consistently across both zones, in that it would avoid unnecessary competition between the two zones and limit the displacement of businesses. The Enterprise Zones came into effect on the 1st April 2016 and it was proposed that businesses that met the specific qualifying criteria could receive business rates relief of up to £275,000 over a five-year term, subject to European state aid limits.

Mr Green clarified that the award of business rate relief would be cost neutral to Fylde Council as we would be compensated for any business rate income foregone as a result of granting reliefs through the business rate calculation and distribution methodology.

The authority to grant discretionary business rate relief would rest with the billing authority for that area and the application of the policy would be carried out by the Section 151 officer (in Fylde that being the Chief Financial Officer).

Following a brief discussion it was RESOLVED to approve the Blackpool Airport Corridor Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief Policy as attached at Appendix A of the report.

#### 6. Proposal to Consider Borough Wide Weed Treatment Using Mechanical Removal

Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive Officer, introduced the proposal for the introduction of an in-house borough wide weed treatment process using mechanical removal as an alternative to chemical spraying. This was in response to Lancashire County Council's reduction in public realm payments and challenges faced in maintaining the current standards of service delivery.

Mr O'Donoghue clarified for members the financial and accounting arrangements involved.

Following questions raised by members that were responded to in full by Mr Oldfield it was RESOLVED to:

1. Approve a capital budget increases for vehicle purchases of £56k in 2016/17, £76k in 2019/20, and a reduction of £16k in 2020/21, whilst noting that the additional financing costs would be met in full from the revenue budget for weed spraying from 2016/17 and future years;
2. Authorise the expenditure for the purchase of two Nilfisk City Ranger ride on sweepers with weed ripper attachments, to carry out the removal of weeds across Fylde.

#### 7. Universal Credit Update

Allan Oldfield introduced the report that detailed the current progress of the implementation of Universal Credit in Fylde and the funding arrangements for reimbursement for the support provided by council staff to claimants.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Note the current progress of the roll out for Universal Credit.
2. Approve the negotiation with the Department for Works & Pensions (DWP) of the continuation of a Delivery Partnership Agreement to run from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 in respect of ancillary services relating to the continuing roll-out of Universal Credit,
3. Authorise the Director of Resources to enter into any future agreements of this nature that the DWP might seek.

#### 8. Freckleton Memorial Gardens Community Project

Mr Oldfield presented the report detailing the community project that The Friends of Freckleton Memorial Gardens have been working on in partnership with Fylde and Lancashire County Council officers.

The project has followed the ten stage process of the community parks improvement programme, which included a comprehensive consultation exercise, the production of an agreed Masterplan and funding strategy. Officers had assisted the Friends group with a number of external funding bids, in addition to their own fund raising and a grant from Freckleton Parish Council. Council approved a capital contribution of £50,000 to the Friends of Freckleton Memorial Park, at the Council meeting on the 30 March 2015, to be fully funded from the Councils Capital Investment Reserve.

Members wished to pass on their thanks to Mark Wilde and his team for their help and expertise provided to the group.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Agree that the Council acts as accountable body for the additional capital budget in the sum of £122,350, fully funded from various external grants and Section 106 contributions as detailed within the report.
2. Approve a fully funded capital budget increase to the 2016/17 capital programme of £122,350, to be fully funded from the various external grants and Section 106 contributions as detailed in the report which would give a total capital budget of £172,350.
3. Authorise the proposed expenditure in respect of the scheme to undertake improvements to Freckleton Memorial Gardens as detailed within the report. The approved Capital Programme for 2016/17 included part funding for this scheme in the sum of £50,000 funded from the Capital Investment Reserve.
4. Agree the letting of the contract for the design and build of new play facilities and associated improvement works to Wicksteed playgrounds in the sum of £172,350, subject to the funded budget increase of £122,350 to the 2016/17 capital programme, being approved by the Finance and Democracy Committee.

9. Funded Budget Increase for Healthy New Town Pilot

The report provided details of the grant that has been secured from NHS England by the Healthy New Town partnership responsible for the Whyndyke Farm pilot. The partnership had secured Phase 1 funding of £149,817 that would be used to deliver the objectives of the Healthy New Town pilot. Fylde had been asked by the partnership to act as the accountable body and employing authority for the grant from NHS England.

The Committee RESOLVED:

1. to support the recommendation of the Environment, Health and Housing committee to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase in the sum of £149,817 in 2016/17 from NHS England to support the Healthy New Town pilot project,
2. to support the recommendation from the Environment, Health and Housing committee and approve that the Council act as the accountable body for the Healthy New Town initiative.

10. Assets of Community Value: Listing Reviews

Under the Localism Act 2011 the Finance and Democracy committee has the delegated authority to decide whether to include land or buildings on its list of assets of community value, following receipt of a valid community nomination. If land or a building is included on the list, its owner could ask for that decision to be reviewed.

Regulations require that the review be carried out by “an officer of the authority of appropriate seniority who did not take any part in making the decision to be reviewed”.

Following a brief discussion it was RESOLVED to:

1. Delegate to the Director of Resources the power to appoint an officer to carry out any review of a decision to include land or buildings in the council’s list of assets of community value; and

2. Delegate to the Director of Resources the power to decide whether a review should be by way of an oral hearing or written representations and to make any other decisions relating to the procedure of a review.

11. Elected Member Development Strategy and Working with Councillors with Disabilities Policy

Mr Oldfield presented the report on behalf of the Member Development Steering Group following the review of the Elected Member Development Strategy. The changes to the strategy complemented the Corporate Plan and was now presented in a 'one page' format.

As part of the actions for the Equality of Opportunity objectives the Member Development Steering Group had given full consideration to the Working with Councillors with Disabilities Policy.

The policy set out the arrangements that were in place to assist councillors, who have a disability, with the aim of complying with the duties in the Equality Act 2010 and was based on best practice.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To approve the revised Elected Member Development Strategy.
2. To approve the 'Working with Councillors with Disabilities' policy document.

Information Item

12. Year End Performance 2015/16

The report provides details of the key performance outcomes for the financial yearend 2015/16. Performance is reported against the targets set for the year and commentary is provided by performance exception.

An undertaking was given at members request for more information on the performance indicator PM68: Proportion of Council Tax collected.

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