

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL BUDGET POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9th FEBRUARY, 2023
AT NELSON TOWN HALL**

Councillor N. Ahmed (Chairman – in the Chair)

Councillors

*D. Cockburn-Price
S. Cockburn-Price
M. Hanif*

*K. McGladdery (Substitute)
A. Mahmood
D. Whipp*

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Z. Ali).

Also in attendance:

*Councillor M. Goulthorp
Councillor K. Salter*

Officers in attendance:

<i>Rose Rouse</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>
<i>Richard Gibson</i>	<i>Director of Resources</i>
<i>Howard Culshaw</i>	<i>Head of Legal Services</i>
<i>Jane Watson</i>	<i>Head of Democratic Services</i>



92. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded of the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct concerning the declaration of interests.

93. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

94. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 15th December, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95. CORPORATE PLAN 2023/2027

The Chief Executive submitted the draft Corporate Plan for 2023/2027 with a recommendation that this be referred to Council for approval.

The Council used a Performance Management Framework to ensure it was delivering on its priorities. Every quarter, progress would be reported on how the Council was implementing its

actions and milestones using a green-amber-red rating system. The reports would set out the reasons for slower progress and the actions the Council was taking to address this. The Plan had been produced following a number of engagement sessions and an online survey with Members, the business sector, partners and the wider community. These sessions had generated some key ideas to help inform the vision, priorities and actions which were set out in the Plan.

Differing views expressed with some areas of the Plan and there was a lengthy discussion where other suggestions were put forward for possible inclusion such as consideration of extending the bio diversity sites; a BID for Nelson; reference to bridleways; links to education and skills as well as Town and Parish Councils.

The Committee were reminded that the Plan was designed to be a programme of work that was strategic rather than a list of the day-to-day tasks. It was also noted that the Plan should be something that was achievable and not a list of items that were undeliverable.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Plan for 2023/2027 be recommended to Council for approval.

REASON

To ensure that the Council retains focus on its priorities and delivers good quality, accessible services.

96. STRATEGIC MONITORING REPORT 1st OCTOBER TO 31st DECEMBER, 2022

The Director of Resources submitted a report which provided performance monitoring information on the Council's Corporate Plan for the period 1st October to 31st December, 2022.

It was noted that the strategic motoring information was structured around the Council's four strategic objectives as set out in the current Corporate Plan. A summary of progress with actions in each of the strategic objectives was provided together with performance information relating to the 25 key performance indicators (attached to the report at Appendix A).

The report also provided an update on risk management arrangements and it was noted that the current Strategic Risk Register was now under review by the Corporate Governance Working Group and the Council's Performance Team.

In response to a question about the number of consultants the Council had engaged with over the past 12 months the Committee were advised that this information would be circulated to them. However, they were informed that consultants had been engaged to work on the Nelson Town Deal and Colne Levelling Up programmes. This was due to the difficulty there had been in recruiting for vacant posts which were needed to progress these major regeneration programmes.

RESOLVED

That progress made on the actions identified in the Corporate Plan (as shown in Appendix A attached to the report) be noted.

REASON

To inform the Committee of performance monitoring information relating to the Council's services.

97. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 – QUARTER 3

The Director of Resources submitted a report on the quarter 3 revenue and capital budget monitoring position for 2022/23.

It was noted that there was an overspend position with the revenue budget of £0.078m as at Quarter 3. This was in line with expectation as the pay award for 2022/23 was paid in December. The report provided details of budget pressures and risk areas were also highlighted and discussed. In particular reference was made to the transformation programme with differing views expressed into its effectiveness in relation to savings.

In relation to the capital programme a summary was provided for Quarter 3 with a total spend of £1.416m during that quarter. The report also provided updates in relation to the purchase of Halifax Road and the CPO process of the Pendle Rise shopping centre.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the quarter 3 position on the Council's Revenue Budgets for 2022/23 be noted.
- (2) That the quarter 3 position on the Council's Capital Programme for 2022/23 be noted.
- (3) That the write-off of debt totalling £8,199.06, as detailed in the report, be approved.
- (4) That Council be recommended to grant authority for the Chief Executive to purchase the Pendle Rise Shopping Centre (subject to Government approval and financial envelope of the Revitalised Nelson Business Case).

REASONS

- (1) ***To inform the Committee of the Council's quarter 3 position for both revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23.***
- (2) ***To comply with the Scheme of Delegation.***
- (3) ***To allow purchase of this strategically important site to allow the Revitalised Nelson project to proceed.***

98. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST (2023/24 TO 2025/26) WITH REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2023/24

The Director of Resources submitted a report which set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast for the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26. It set out a number of options for consideration and demonstrated the need to take action in order to reduce the revenues expenditure.

The report also set out the current budget position for the Council for 2023/24 and highlighted the existing gap in funding which would require the use of £1.044m of general fund balances. This was after a proposed increase in 2.99% in Council Tax for 2023/24.

The report highlighted that further savings through the review of external services would be needed to allow the Council to close this gap over the next three year forecast cycle. It was also acknowledged that there had been a number of external pressures on the Council's budgets which as well as the pay award included an increase into the employers pension contributions to Lancashire Pension Fund; an increase in external audit services; increase in insurance premiums; increase in utilities and fuel and contributions etc.

Included, for consideration, was three options which provided a reserves position over the period of the Forecast.

Option 1 – Status Quo

Option 2 – do minimum

Option 3 – working towards a balanced budget

It was suggested that for future year's a fourth option should be considered identifying a vision for the Council to move beyond a balanced budget.

The Committee were also presented with a list of proposed fees and charges for consideration.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Medium Term Forecast position for 2023/24 to 2025/26 and the savings required over the period of the forecast be noted.
- (2) That the General Fund Revenue Budget Requirement for 2023/24 be noted and considered further at the Council meeting on 23rd February, 2023.
- (3) That the proposed Fees and Charges for 2023/24 be noted and considered further at the Council meeting on 23rd February, 2023.
- (4) That the proposed increase in Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 of £289.92, being an increase of £8.42 (2.99%) on the current level of Council Tax be noted and considered further at the Council meeting on 23rd February, 2023.
- (5) That each service be required to operate within its budget for 2023/24 once approved and that these budgets be cash limited and subject to regular monitoring and control.
- (6) That the proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24, as shown in Appendix F attached to the report, be noted and considered further at the Council meeting on 23rd February, 2023.
- (7) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to determine the most appropriate method of financing the capital programme for 2023/24 to ensure the use of resources is optimised by the Council.

REASON

To comply with the statutory requirements to determine a balanced budget and council tax for the forthcoming financial year.

99. LANCASHIRE 2050 FRAMEWORK

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided an update on the work undertaken towards the development of strengthened joint working across Lancashire, a long-term strategic framework and the collective priority areas.

The next steps would be for Lancashire to move forward collectively with the engagement, support and agreement of all councils. This support would give Leaders a mandate to collectively move forward on the issues set out in the report and to engage with government, public and private sector partners to secure the best possible future for Lancashire and its residents.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the outline Lancashire 2050 strategic framework (attached to the report as Appendix 1) be noted as the strategic framework that will guide further development of shared detailed priorities and actions.
- (2) That it be noted that the Leader of the Council is working with Lancashire Leaders in line with the principles already agreed by Full Council in January, 2022 including that the Leader will make representations to that forum any matters arising from Full Council's consideration of this report.
- (3) That it be noted that any additional proposals will require further approval by Full Council at the appropriate time.

REASON

Leaders have identified that the work is now at a stage where it is important to secure the engagement and support of all members. A similar update report is therefore being presented to all 15 local authorities.

100. HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

The Chief Executive submitted a report which outlined the existing powers and resources available to the Council for improving private sector housing in Pendle and was designed to enable Members to review the Council's work in this area.

The report also provided an update on enforcement activity taken by the Environmental Health Residential Team in 2022/23 with regards to disrepair and enforcement in the area of private sector housing.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the action that has been taken by the Environmental Health Residential Team over the last 12 months to improve the privately rented properties in Pendle be noted.
- (2) That the Council be requested to review the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy following the proposed introduction of the Renters Reform Act.
- (3) That the Council be requested to undertake a Housing Stock Condition Survey to provide an accurate, up to date picture of the quality of the Borough's housing stock.

REASON

- (1) To ensure that the conditions in the private rented sector are managed and improved.**
- (2) The Renters Reform Bill is proposing strengthening of enforcement powers in order to improve Housing Standards enforcement. It is important to ensure that all implications of the Bill are considered and that the Enforcement Policy allows the Council to act in line with all available powers.**
- (3) The Housing Stock Condition Survey was last completed in 2009. A revised survey is now needed to fully understand the quality of the housing stock in order to inform future council planning.**

101. SUSTAINABLE AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Chief Executive submitted, for information, a report on sustainable and active travel following a request from Council in December, 2022.

Reference was made to there still being an opportunity for additional cycle routes to be put forward as part of the consultation on Pendle's Cycling Legacy Strategy 2016/21.

RESOLVED

That Area Committees be asked to consider putting forward additional cycle routes as part of the consultation on Council's Cycling Legacy Strategy 2016/21 at their next meetings.

REASON

To give Members the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

102. TENDERS

The Director of Resources submitted, for information, a report on tenders which had been received and accepted since the last meeting.

103. MATTERS REFERRED FROM AREA COMMITTEES

- (a) The Government's Frequently Flooded Allowance Programme and the Potential Benefit of Flood Alleviation in Earby**

At a meeting of the West Craven Committee on 3rd January, 2023 it was resolved "that £300 be allocated from the Earby and Coates allocation of the Area Committee Budget; funding be released from the Section 106 funding for flooding work in Earby; and the Policy and Resources Committee's Special Budget meeting be asked to consider including funding for the scheme in the Council's Capital Programme in the event that this funding be needed to allow the work to proceed.

The Director of Resources advised that any new capital scheme needed to be appraised prior to being added to the Capital Programme to understand the financial and non-financial risks associated with the scheme. No S106 funding had been identified for this scheme.

There was a lengthy discussion about flooding issues in Earby and the measures which had already been put in place to help alleviate flooding in the area.

The Committee were informed that a Panel Consultant was required to help progress a bid to the Government's Flooded Allowance Programme.

RESOLVED

That quotes be obtained to engage the services of a Panel Consultant and the results reported back to this Committee.

REASON

To assist with the bid to the Government's Flooded Allowance Programme.

Chairman _____