

POLICY COMMITTEE

4th March 2014

Present – The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Foster in the Chair and Councillors, Barrett, Beck, Paul English, Green (substitute for Knowles-Fitton), Jaquin (substitute for Wheeler), Lis, Harbron, Heseltine, Ireton, Place, Sutcliffe, Turner and Welch.

Officers – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Corporate Head of Business Support, Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration, Finance Manager, Asset and Property Manager, Legal Services Manager and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Knowles-Fitton, Myers and Wheeler.

Start: 6:30pm

Finish: 8:32pm

Councillor Lis arrived at 6:34pm.

Councillor Harbron left the meeting at 7:59pm.

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 11th February 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman, subject to a minor amendment.

Minutes for Report

POL.580

PERFORMANCE MONITORING – QUARTER 3 2013/2014

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting an overview of the Council's performance between October and December 2013. Good progress had been made in respect of the Council Plan actions with 17 of the 27 having been assessed as on target. Nine projects were classed as behind schedule and one project to facilitate the development of business and employment sites in High Bentham had not started.

Resolved – That, the report is noted.

POL.581

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 3 2013/2014

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting the quarterly update of income and expenditure to the end of December 2013. The monitoring process had shown a projected underspend of £377k at 31st March 2014. The main factors that had given rise to a projected underspend related to various services across the Council including savings in employee costs and additional income streams such as the garden waste subscription scheme and the business rates retention schemes.

It was essential that the Council continued to maintain the general fund revenue balance at a prudent level in order to mitigate against the risk of unplanned expenditure and to cover day to cash flow variances. As at 1st April 2013, there was a balance of £1030k and it was expected that this balance would remain during 2013/14.

Resolved – (1) That the revenue budget monitoring position with savings of £377k as at 31st December 2013 is noted.

(2) That the £144k of the savings expected to be achieved this year as identified in Appendix B to the report now submitted that that these savings will be carried forward to support the 2014/15 budget and beyond, is noted.

Craven District Council

(3) That £10k of the savings achieved is transferred to the Insurance Reserve.

(4) That the additional income the Council forecasts it will receive under the Business Rate Retention and Small Business Rate Relief Schemes of £655k is noted.

POL.582 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – QUARTER 3 2013/2014**

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report advising Members of the quarterly capital programme position of the Council to the end of December 2013.

Against the approved 2013/14 capital programme of £1.842m, the current forecast was for expenditure of £1.450m. Because of the continued reliance on capital receipts to fund expenditure over the medium and long term it had been agreed that projects would not commence until the funding was in place and there was a forecast slippage of £195k.

The Council was forecasting that it would receive £1,357k in capital receipts during 2013/14 of which £880k would be required to support the capital programme which the balance carried forward to support future years. In addition, funding from various earmarked reserves, the receipt of £660k from the Sale of Granville Street and £150k from the Enabling Efficiencies Fund would also underpin the capital programme.

Resolved – That the capital budget monitoring position as at 31st December 2013 is noted.

POL.583 **LONGER TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2020/21**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report providing Members with additional information on the forecast financial position for the Authority over the next seven years. Further to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2014/15 to 2017/18 approved at the Policy Committee held on 11th February 2014, the Leadership Team wanted to see a Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS) produced in order to enable the Council to assess its financial sustainability over a ten year period. However, given the continuing volatility and uncertainty around Government funding the LTFS had been based on a seven year projection.

In summary, the LTFS has taken its starting point from the four year MTFS and, based on key income and expenditure assumptions, shows a sustainable financial position for the Council over the longer term. This, however, was dependent on achieving the current savings targets, or identifying alternative compensatory savings.

Resolved – (1) That, the longer term financial strategy covering the period 2014/15 to 2020/21, as set out in the report now submitted is noted.

(2) That the medium term financial strategy is extended to cover a six year period.

POL.584 **SKIPTON BUS STATION TOILETS**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to consider the future use of the toilet block building at Skipton Bus Station.

Following a redevelopment of the Bus Station in 2009, two self-cleaning unisex toilets were installed and a high specification 15 year maintenance contract with a break option after 5 years was agreed with Healthmatic. The actual cost of operating the facility in 2012/13 was £21,760 and it had been estimated that around 5,000 people per year used the facilities at a cost of 20p a time with a further 16,000 radar key holders who could access the toilets free of charge. In comparison,

Craven District Council

a minimum of 28,000 people used the Coach Street toilets and over 150,000 people used the toilets at the rear of Skipton Town Hall.

Due to the financial pressures faced by the Council, the maintenance contract was identified as a potential saving of £19,000 and therefore included in the income and savings plans forming part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Notice was given on 31st January 2014 to end the maintenance contract.

An options appraisal had considered various possibilities and three were considered to be viable ways forward in order to secure the required revenue budget saving of £19,000 in full and/or in part:

1. Redesign the internal layout of the toilet block building to increase the public convenience provision and create a small kiosk for commercial let.
2. Dispose of the property on the open market; and
3. Convert the building to a commercial unit in its entirety.

As there had been public conveniences on the site for a number of years regularly utilised by bus users, the preference was to retain a public convenience facility. Option 1 would enable a greater number of toilets to be provided which would address complaints regarding waiting times with scope to generate an income stream by providing a small kiosk for rent, thereby offsetting the maintenance costs.

Resolved - (1) That, the redesign of the internal layout of the toilet block building at Skipton Bus Station to increase the public convenience provision and create a small kiosk for commercial let is approved.

(2) That, a supplementary capital estimate of £49,000 to fund the works required to the internal layout of the building is approved.

(3) That, the current toilets are re-opened as soon as practicable and that arrangements are made for appropriate signage to be erected.

POL.585

**PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AT COACH STREET CAR PARK,
SKIPTON**

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking Members' approval for Craven District Council to make a contribution of £25,000 to Skipton Town Council who had taken over responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the toilets in 2009.

For several years, complaints about the condition of the toilets had been received, but repair works by the Town Council had not managed to resolve the problems due to the nature and age of the building.

In January 2014, the Town Council confirmed that they were considering a significant refurbishment of the toilets and had commissioned a detailed specification for the works at an anticipated cost of £80,000 - £90,000. As owners of the building, Craven District Council had been approached by the Town Council for a contribution of £25,000, subject to match funding by the Town Council. Further funding contributions were being sought from the Tarn Moor Estate and Skipton BID.

Skipton Town Council was aiming to complete the works before the Tour de France Grand Depart, particularly as Coach Street was at the heart of the spectator hub.

Resolved - (1) That, a contribution to Skipton Town Council of £25,000 from Craven District Council towards the refurbishment of the toilets at Coach Street Car Park, Skipton, is approved.

Craven District Council

(2) That, the Director of Services is authorised to instruct the Council's Legal Services to formalise lease arrangements with Skipton Town council for the Coach Street public conveniences.

(3) That, the lease referred to at (2) above, for a period of at least 10 years with an optional 5 year break clause from the date of the £25,000 contribution from Craven District Council is approved.

(As elected Members of Skipton Town Council, Councillors Paul English, Harbron, Heseltine and Jaquin declared a non-financial interest in the above item under Appendix B 1 (ii) (a) but no perception of conflict of interest.)

POL.586 **TRANSFORMATION OF BENTHAM TOWN CENTRE (PHASE 1)**

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The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report seeking Members' support for an appropriate scheme to improve the accessibility and quality of Bentham town centre at the junction of Main Street and Station Road.

~~The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration circulated for Members' perusal, an artist's impression of two proposed alternative schemes to realign the highway, one which involved the demolition of a building, creating a public open space area.~~

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Resolved – (1) That, support in principle is given in respect of the delivery of the project to improve the accessibility and quality of Bentham town centre at the junction of Main Street and Station Road as outlined in the report.

(2) That, delegated authority is given to the Director of Services in consultation with the Chairman of Policy Committee to submit a planning application and/or listed building consent for an appropriate realignment of the carriageway and creation of a new public space at the junction of Main Street and Station Road, Bentham

POL.587 **COMMUNITY GRANTS**

The Policy Committee were asked to agree a date for a special meeting of the Policy Committee to consider the recommendations of the Community Grants Sub-Committee with regard to core funding grant applications.

Resolved – That a special meeting of the Policy Committee is held on 17th March 2014 in order to consider and approve the recommendations of the Community Grants Sub-Committee.

Chairman

Policy Committee 4th March 2014