



EXECUTIVE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Tuesday, 24th July 2012

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillors Julie Cooper (in the Chair), Howard Baker, John Harbour, Shah Hussain, Andy Tatchell and Mark Townsend

OFFICERS

Steve Rumbelow	-	Chief Executive
Nick Aves	-	Director of Resources
Mick Cartledge	-	Director of Community Services
Mike Cook	-	Director of Economic Regeneration
Tom Forshaw	-	Head of Chief Executive's Office
David Wilcock	-	Head of People, Law and Regulation
Paul Gatrell	-	Head of Housing and Development Control
Simon Goff	-	Head of Green Spaces and Amenities
Sharon Hargraves	-	Head of Customer and IT Services
Caroline Lee	-	Head of Revenues and Benefits
Mike Waite	-	Head of Corporate Engagement
Imelda Grady	-	Democracy Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors Margaret Brindle, Janet Brown, Ida Carmichael, Saeed Chaudhry, Mathew Isherwood, Arif Khan, Wajid Khan, Jennifer Knowles, Peter McCann and Jeff Sumner

32. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 25th June 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33. Minutes of the Individual Decisions

The Minutes of the following individual decisions made since the last meeting were noted;

Minute No. 7 - Customer Services Apprenticeship

Minute No. 8 - Business Administration Apprentice Posts

34. Public Question Time

Mr Mohammed Uddin, Mr Hadiz Ali and Councillor Wajid Khan addressed the Executive under the Council's Right to Speak Policy regarding the proposed Shah Jalal Mosque at Burleigh Street.

Councillors Jennifer Knowles and Arif Khan addressed the Executive under the Council's Right to Speak Policy regarding the agenda item on The Empty Homes Clusters Programme.

35. Order of the Agenda

Purpose To consider item 14 The Empty Homes Cluster Programme earlier on the agenda.

Reason for decision In order that the matter be dealt with immediately after the representations made under the Right to Speak Policy

Decision That item 14 be brought forward to the first item of public business.

36. The Empty Homes Clusters Programme

Purpose

- (1) To seek locations of the clusters where empty homes will be targeted to be brought back into use (Appendices 1-3).
- (2) To put in place the necessary delegations needed to effectively deliver the programme.
- (3) To seek approval to drive a partnership forward that intensively tackles a group of empty homes collectively on a street by street approach (Appendix 4).
- (4) To provide additional staffing capacity to deliver the programme (Appendix 5)
- (5) To seek approval for the Empty Homes Clusters Programme and to revise the budget for the Empty Homes Programme as detailed in the 2012/13 Housing Capital Investment Programme.

Reason for Decision

- (1) The Empty Homes Clusters Programme gives the opportunity to address the empty homes in the proposed areas, bringing them back in to use, and through working with our partners addressing other associated problems to make the cluster locations desirable places to live.

- (2) The cluster locations that have been chosen all have high numbers of

empty homes and fall within the boundaries laid down in the bidding criteria from the Homes and Communities Agency.

- (3) Delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Development Control in consultation with the Leader is required to ensure the programme is delivered to the challenging timescales. All funding for this programme must be committed by March 2014, with this in mind Officers will determine which empty homes within the cluster locations are most suitable for intervention and the type of intervention required whilst being mindful of the funding criteria stipulated by the HCA. These properties will then be discussed and agreed with the Leader. Officers are currently developing the criteria that will determine the selection of individual properties and the intervention applied and these criteria will be subject to approval by an Individual Member Decision.
- (4) To ensure delivery of the programme further staff will be needed. This will include an Empty Homes Officer, Project Administrator and a Technical Officer who will work within the Housing and Development Control Unit.
- (5) To ensure The Empty Homes Clusters Programme is delivered and that the cluster locations are transformed into desirable neighbourhoods the Housing and Development Control Unit requires assistance through their partnerships with other agencies and Council Units.
- (6) To ensure the required budget to deliver the first year of the programme is included in the Housing Investment Programme for 2012/13.
- (7) An amendment to recommendation 6 was made to show that the increase in the budget would be met from the Homes and Community Agency grant.

Decision

- (1) That approval be given to the focus of the Empty Homes Clusters Programme as set out in the report and attached as Appendix 1 Gannow Lane Area, Appendix 2 Brennand Street Area and Appendix 3 Trinity Area.
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Housing and Development Control in consultation with the Leader to select and approve the empty homes within the proposed cluster locations for intervention.
- (3) Where empty properties are to be selected for acquisition and refurbishment that delegated authority be granted to the:

-Head of Finance and Property Management to enter into

- negotiations to acquire the empty home by agreement.
- The Head of People, Law & Regulation to complete the conveyance process to acquire the empty home.
- The Head of Facilities Management to tender the refurbishment works for the empty homes in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders Procedures.

- (4) That the partnership working within the council and other agencies as detailed in Appendix 4 be noted
- (5) That approval be given for the creation of three new posts to the Council's establishment. These posts will be an Empty Homes Officer, Project Administrator and Technical Officer. The salary grading of these posts will be approved by an Individual Member Decision following the Job Evaluation Process.
- (6) That the Empty Homes Programme budget be revised as detailed in the Housing Investment Programme 2012/13 from £1,454,243 to £2,000,000. This increase will be met from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) grant. The remaining HCA allocation and matched funding from the Council of £3,391,458 to be included in the 2013/14 Housing Investment Programme under the Empty Homes Programme.

37. Localised Support for Council Tax
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Purpose To seek authority from the Executive to commence a public consultation exercise with a view to developing and preparing a local scheme for Council Tax Support which will be placed before full Council for approval and implementation prior to 31st January, 2013.

Reason for Decision From April 2013, the Council will become responsible for a local council tax support scheme which will replace the current national council tax benefit scheme. The Council must enter into a full public consultation in order to meet critical timescales and develop and adopt a final scheme by January 2013. This will be a decision by full Council.

Options considered –

- Option 1 – is to limit the Council Tax Benefit entitlement by applying a percentage reduction to all claims at the end of the calculated assessment i.e. the final benefit awarded figure. This achieves proportional equality across all working age claimants who would all have benefit reduced by the same percentage. Indicative calculations suggest a 20% reduction would achieve the overall savings required.
- Option 2 - is very similar but applies the overall reduction at the beginning of the calculation rather than the end effectively placing a cap on the maximum amount of council tax on which a claim can be calculated. For claimants on full benefit the outcome would be

identical to option 1. However, this option reduces CTB for those who do not receive full benefit at a higher rate. For this reason, a smaller percentage reduction of 17.5% may be achievable. However, those claimants in receipt of part benefit are often those in work or those who are disabled. This option would result in a higher overall percentage reduction in benefit entitlement for those claimants and this may be considered to disadvantage those groups.

- Decision (1) That approval be given to move forward on the understanding that members preferred approach would be Option 1 to apply a percentage benefit reduction at the end of the calculated assessment for all working age claimants. A final policy decision will be made by full Council prior to 31st January, 2013 following the results and evaluation of the consultation exercise and further equalities impacts analysis.
- (2) That the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management, be authorised to embark on a public consultation exercise for a draft scheme for Council Tax Support

38. Strategic Risk Register

- Purpose To seek approval for the Strategic Risk Register for 2012-13.
- Reason for Decision The Executive has responsibility for approving the Strategic Risk Register as part of the Councils Risk Management Strategy. Management of the principal risks faced by the Council is essential to corporate governance.
- Decision That approval be given to the Strategic Risk Register 2012-13.

39. 2011-2012 Capital Programme – Outturn Position

- Purpose To report to Members on the performance of the 2011/2012 capital investment programme and present the financing of capital expenditure incurred during 2011/2012.
- To recommend to Full Council, a revised 2012/2013 capital budget after incorporating reverse slippage and carry forward commitments from 2011/2012.
- Reason for Decision To report to Members the final capital outturn position for 2011/2012.
- Decision To provide budget provision within the 2012/2013 capital programme, for those schemes contractually committed during 2011/2012 where work has slipped into 2012/2013 and approve the budget adjustments for those resources originally identified within the 2012/2013 capital programme having been utilised early to finance expenditure incurred within the outturn position for 2011/2012, termed “reverse slippage”.

Decision (1) That the final position on capital spending and financing for 2011/2012 be noted; and

(2) That Full Council be recommended to approve a revised capital budget for 2012/2013 totalling £14,022,028 as outlined in Appendix 8 to the report.

40. Thompson Park; HLF Parks for People Lottery Bid

Purpose To seek authority of the Executive to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Parks for People' programme.

Reason The authority of the Executive is required to submit a grant application that for exceeds £50,000.

Decision

Decision That the Head of Green Spaces and Amenities be authorised to prepare and submit a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Parks for People' programme.

41. Brun Valley Forest Park

Purpose To seek approval to the release of the capital programme budget that is allocated in the 2012/2013 programme for the Brun Valley Forest Park.

Reason Approval of the Executive is required to release budgets that are identified for in the Council's capital programme.

Decision

Decision (1) That approval be given to the release of the capital programme budget of £50,000 for the Brun Valley Forest Park.

(2) That the Head of Green Spaces and Amenities be authorised to procure the proposed works in accordance with Standing Orders and to accept the most economically advantageous tenders.

(3) That the Head of Green Spaces be authorised to progress an application for a Woodland Improvement Grant of £85,000 from the Forestry Commission.

42. Homelessness Programme

Purpose To seek Executive approval to increase the Housing and Development Control's Revenue Budget to incorporate the additional Homelessness grant income received from Communities and Local Government and to allow the Council to utilise these funds during 2012/2013 in preventing homelessness.

Reason To allow the continued and improved delivery of the Burnley Prevention of for Homelessness Strategy.

Decision

Decision That approval be given to the increase in the homelessness budget from £127,470 to £175,470, and the detail of the programme as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

43. Vacant Properties Financial Assistance Policy

Purpose To seek approval to a Loans Policy that will help facilitate the delivery of the Borough's Empty Homes Programme.

To obtain delegated authority for the Head of Housing and Development Control to approve, pay and administer the loan repayment scheme in accordance with the policy.

Reason for Decision It is important that the Council has a clear policy on Empty Home Loans, setting out the purpose of the financial assistance, when loans will be allocated, what the conditions of the loans are and how they will contribute to the Council's Strategic objectives.

The policy will ensure loan applicants and Officers are aware of how this financial assistance will be delivered ensuring a consistent approach is adopted.

Burnley has over 2089 empty properties, 560 of which have been empty for over 2 years. Whilst the Empty Homes Clusters Programme will address a significant proportion of these empty homes it is important that the Council have an on-going long term budget to tackle further empty homes and the problems associated with them. Recycling the re-paid loans into the Housing Investment Programme will achieve this. In addition through the funding criteria from the Homes and Communities Agency innovative ways of generating future income and evidence of how this will be recycled was an important element of the funding allocation.

Decision

- (1) That approval be given to the Loans Policy for Empty Homes attached as Appendix 1 to the report .
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing and Development Control to approve loans and administer a loan repayment scheme in accordance with the policy.
- (3) That the repaid loans money be recycled back into the Housing Capital Investment Programme to ensure that there is an on-going budget to address further long term empty homes.

44. Vacant Properties Disposal Policy

Purpose To adopt a revised Council Disposal of Empty Homes Policy.

Reason for It is important that there is a clear method for reselling the empty homes that will be acquired by the Council through the Empty Homes

Decision Programmes. The policy will ensure that residents and key stakeholders are aware of what they can expect during the re-sale of empty homes. It is also important for Officers to refer to it when dealing with re-sales to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the authority.

Decision That approval be given to the revised Policy for the Disposal of Empty Homes as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

45. Desktop Virtualisation

Purpose To provide members with an overview of the 2012-14 Desktop Virtualisation programme.

To seek approval for the release of £56,000 allocated in the capital budget 2012-2013 for the desktop virtualisation pilot.

Reason for Decision The IT Systems and Telephony Transformation Programme and outline timescales were approved by the executive back in November 2010. The transformation programme included the following key project areas – The replacement of Telephony and Transfer to VOIP, Virtualisation and replacement of key application servers, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).

The replacement of the Telephony and transfer to VOIP as well as virtualisation of key application servers has been delivered successfully. What remains is desktop virtualisation. It was agreed that desktop virtualisation would be delivered in 2 stages. The first stage being a pilot/proof of concept (2012-13) followed by a full rollout the following year (2013-14).

Decision That approval be given to the release of £56,000 allocated in the Capital budget for the desktop virtualisation pilot.

46. Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)

Purpose To seek approval to procure a new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM).

Reason for Decision The move to a new CRM, will enable the council to meet the challenge of improving its on line service offering; develop an improved understanding of the customers who use council services and support future budget savings in 2014/15.

Decision That approval be given for the procurement of a new Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) in line with standing orders for contracts and that the Head of Customer & IT Services be given delegated authority to accept the most economically advantageous tender.