

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD: 28 JANUARY 2016

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 8.15pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Furey (Chairman) Savage (Vice Chairman)

Ashcroft	Nixon
Bullock	Oliver
Cotterill	Pendleton
Delaney	Pope
Greenall	D Westley
Mrs Houlgrave	Whittington
Kay	

Officers: Assistant Director Planning (Mr J Harrison)
Deputy Borough Treasurer (Mr M Kostrzewski)
Assistant Solicitor (Mr N Astles)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

36. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

37. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2, Members noted the termination of membership of the Committee of Councillor Davis and the appointment of Councillor Oliver for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups. The permanent appointment of Councillor Pope was also noted.

38. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Councillors Ashcroft, Mrs Houlgrave, Kay, Pope and Whittington declared an interest in item 9 'General Revenue Account Budget 2016-17' and item 10 'Medium Term GRA Capital Programme' in relation to Parish Council matters, in view of their membership of the Parish Council.*
2. Councillor D Westley declared an interest in relation to agenda item 9 'General Revenue Account Budget 2016-17' and item 10 'Medium Term GRA Capital Programme' as a Member of Lancashire County Council (LCC) as did Councillor Furey as his wife works at a school in Skelmersdale.*

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3. The following Members declared disclosable pecuniary interests/pecuniary interests in relation to item 11 'Housing Account – Revenue and Capital programme for the reasons indicated:
 - Nixon and Pendleton (relative is a tenant of rented Council accommodation)
 - Delaney and Nixon (tenant of a Council flat/house)but were entitled to speak and vote by virtue of an exemption.*
4. Councillors Bullock declared an interest in relation to relevant lines in item 9 'General Revenue Account Budget 2016-17' and item 10 'Medium Term GRA Capital Programme' in view of his appointment by the Council to West Lancashire Community Leisure Trust Board.*
5. Councillor Pendleton declared an interest in relation to relevant lines in items 9 'General Revenue Account Budget 2016-17', item 10 'Medium Term GRA Capital Programme' and 'item 11 'Housing Account – Revenue and Capital Programme' in respect of his role in relation to Tanhouse Community Enterprise.*
6. Councillor Whittington also declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to relevant lines in item 9 'General Revenue Account Budget 2016-17' due to his wife being a Trustee of Lancashire West Citizens Advice Bureau.

*By virtue of a dispensation granted by the Standards Committee all Councillors who have disclosable pecuniary or pecuniary interests in relation to relevant lines in the budget may participate and vote in the budget debates but not engage in discussions about matters which affect those interests.

40. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2016 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Cabinet held on 12 January 2016.

Questions and comments were raised in respect of the following items:

Minute 76 (Funding of Voluntary & Other Organisations Working Group) – deferred item – scrutiny / call-in arrangements.

Minute 78 (Skelmersdale & Up Holland (Re)Cycle to Work Scheme) – nominated supplier grants; advantages/disadvantages of scheme; wider advertisement.

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RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 January 2016 be noted.

43. CALL IN ITEMS

There were no items under this heading.

44. GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2016-17

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer that provided a summary of the current General Revenue Account budget position.

The Deputy Borough Treasurer attended the meeting, provided an overview and clarification on issues raised referencing details as set down in the report.

In discussion questions were raised in respect of:

- New Homes Bonus and long-term empty properties brought back into use - analysis
- Business Rates – future proposed changes.

The Deputy Borough Treasurer made an undertaking to provide additional information in relation to the analysis of the New Homes Bonus, referred to in the report, to the Member who had raised it.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

45. MEDIUM TERM GRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer which set out details on the GRA medium term capital programme position for the next 3 years

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

46. HOUSING ACCOUNT - REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration and Borough Treasurer which provided a summary of the budget position for the Housing Account for the next financial year.

In discussion questions were raised in respect of:

- Longer term projections – overstated figure (30 year HRA business plan period); impact on HRA of welfare reform proposals / capital programme decisions.
- Government proposals – sale of “high value” properties.

The Deputy Borough Treasurer attended the meeting and provided clarification on the issues raised. He also provided additional information in relation to accountancy practices and the rigorous audit process.

RESOLVED: As a consequence of the discussion on this item the agreed comments to be submitted to the Housing Portfolio Holder in advance of the Council meeting to be held on 24 February 2016 be:

1. In relation to the cumulative impact of the overstated figure over the 30 year HRA business plan period:
“how has this arisen and that it is ensured that this does not happen again.”
2. In relation to the “proposals that Government will introduce measures that require the Council to sell off “high value” properties when they become vacant, that it be noted that it has not been possible to assess the impact of this issue at this time due to a lack of detail on how this will be implemented.”
3. That “when further information as regards the levy on “high value” housing and “pay-to-stay” is available that this comes forward for consideration.”

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Chairman