Budget Task Group Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Task Group held on Tuesday 25 October 2011 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Members present:

Councillor Anderson
Councillor E Anderton
Councillor Balmain
Councillor Brooks (Chairman)
Councillor M Gandhi
Councillor R Gandhi
Councillor Hodgkinson
Councillor Lawrenson
Councillor McCann
Councillor MacNaughton
Councillor Martin
Councillor Perkin

Officers present:

Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources
Michael Ryan, Corporate Director of People and Places
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer

BTG. 08 Apologies

None received

BTG. 09 Declarations of interest

None

BTG. 10 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the Budget Task Group meeting held on 4 October 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

BTG. 11 Capital Growth Bids

The Chairman provided a brief verbal summary of the background to and context of Capital Growth Bids. He confirmed that the task group would consider two bids at the meeting.

(i) Public Conveniences

Philippa Davies, Corporate Director of Resources, introduced a bid that included the refurbishment of six sites, including improvements to the conveniences at Cleveleys Bus Station, which are currently closed, and a new facility at Rossall Observation Point (seven sites in total). Previously these
were free to use, but following the investment would be charged at 20p, as with the other Danfo toilets.

Ms Davies confirmed that the original contract with Danfo was for a fifteen year period and commenced in February 2007. Income from the use of the toilets was currently split 50:50 between the council and the contractor, with the contractor earmarking this money for future investment. There had been a number of positive outcomes from the contract so far, which would be enhanced by extending the contract. Key priorities including cleaning up the streets, reducing crime, meeting customer need and further enhancing the council’s reputation would be delivered as a result of this capital investment. It would also ensure that all the council’s toilets were of a similar standard.

Several different options had been put forward by Danfo, and were considered by the task group, but included either a five year extension to the current contract or a ten year extension.

Ms Davies highlighted the fact that any extension to the contract needed to meet with the procurement guidelines included in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The key question was whether or not an extension to a current contract was acceptable within OJEU regulations, or whether a new tendering process was required. Legal advice was being sought on this matter and members agreed that the task group could not come to a conclusion without that additional information being available. The Chairman took the view that independent legal advice should be taken on this matter as Members were keen to see the improved facilities.

Ms Davies suggested that it might be possible for the council to put forward another option to be considered by Danfo, avoiding the need for any contract extension, and this possibility would be explored before a firm decision was taken.

(ii) Link Road through Hardhorn Car Park

This proposal was at an early stage of discussion, and was likely to involve contributions being made by the council, Lancashire County Council and the developer(s). The cost was likely to be just over £1m, but the project had not yet been fully costed.

Problems with air quality had already been identified in Poulton town centre. This has to be addressed by the council and would be greatly assisted by the delivery of the proposed link road.

Michael Ryan, Corporate Director of People and Places, confirmed that extensive traffic surveys had taken place over the past two years, and these confirmed that 40% of traffic would be removed from the Chapel Street/Ball Street junction by having the proposed link road. Further discussions would be required with the bus operators.

Cllr Martin asked whether the proposal was likely to improve road safety figures, and Mr Ryan confirmed that that was something that would also be taken into account.
Mr Ryan’s report to the task group was noted.

**BTG. Next Steps**

The next meeting would begin to consider the proposals for fees and charges for 2012/13. Ms Davies referred members to the relevant Cabinet report prepared for the Cabinet meeting held on 3 March 2011.

**BTG. Date and time of next meetings**

Tuesday 1 November at 6pm – Fees and Charges
Tuesday 15 November at 6pm – Fees and Charges