**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Meeting: Wednesday 6th September, 2017

at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Pidduck (Chairman), Sweeney (Vice-Chairman), Biggins, Brook, Hamilton, McEwan, McLeavy, Maddox, Pemberton and D. Roberts.

Also Present:- Phil Huck (Executive Director), Sue Roberts (Director of Resources), Jon Huck (Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer) and Sandra Kemsley (Democratic Services Officer).

**44 – Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Hamilton and McEwan declared an Other Registrable Interest in Agenda Item 11 – Appointment to Barrow Highways Advisory Committee. They were Members of Cumbria County Council.

**45 – Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July, 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

**46 – Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barlow, Cassells, R. McClure and Williams.

Councillors McEwan and McLeavy substituted for Councillors Barlow and R. McClure respectively.

**47 – 2018-2019 Holiday Dates**

The Director of Resources’ report set out the bank holidays and additional days when the Council would be closed and what staff would be required to take either a holiday (annual leave) or flexi-day over the Christmas and New Year period.

**Easter 2018**

Monday 2nd April, 2018, Easter Monday

**Other Bank Holidays**

Monday 7th May, 2018, Early May Bank Holiday

Monday 28th May, 2018, Spring Bank Holiday

Monday 27th August, 2018, Summer Bank Holiday

**Christmas and New Year**

Tuesday 25th December, 2018, Christmas Day

Wednesday 26th December, 2018, Boxing Day

Thursday 27th December, 2018, Council Day

Friday 28th December, 2018, Council Day

Monday 31st December, 2018, annual leave or flexi-day to be taken

Tuesday 1st January, 2019, New Year’s Day

RESOLVED:- To note and agree the 2018-2019 holiday dates as reported.

**48 – Procurement of Services**

The Committee were informed that the Council’s out of hour’s calls for emergency homelessness, housing repairs and other services, had been handled externally since 2004.

The current operator was The Riverside Group Limited (Riverside) and officers had been satisfied that the service meets the Council’s requirements and delivered an effective service for residents.

The contractual arrangements had now been formed into Service Level Agreements (SLA) for each of the services used and it was proposed that these were signed off by the Assistant Director - Housing; which was within his existing delegation.

When drawing up the SLA the pricing structure had been reviewed and had been incorporated. The value of the complete service was £6.4k per annum, plus RPI in subsequent years; there was also the provision for additional services and the pricing list had identified those should they ever be required.

The purpose of the report was to request approval not to obtain alternative prices for the service. Officers accepted that it was not a unique service and that there would be other providers, but given the effective service that was currently operated and the key role it played in service delivery, it was recommended that the contract continued with Riverside. Officers would continue to monitor the use of and effectiveness of the service that the Council received and would re-procure the service in the normal way should the need arise.

The Council’s Purchase Procedure provided for:

“The use of specialist suppliers may not require the quotations as set out where there is uniqueness to the provision. Specialist supplies/suppliers are not expected to be a regular occurrence. Where a specialism is identified, justification must be agreed and documented by a member of Management Board prior to ordering.”

Management Board had supported the use of Riverside and had referred the matter to the Committee as it was not unique and it was an ongoing service, therefore outside the scope of the current provision and delegation.

RESOLVED:- To agree that the Council’s out-of-hours emergency calls continued to be contracted to The Riverside Group Ltd, with no further quotations being sought.

**49 – Member Representation on FCC Partnership Board**

The Committee were informed that part of the contract with FCC Environment who delivered the Council’s waste, recycling and street sweeping services, was the formation of a Partnership Board. The objectives of the Board were to keep each other informed of all developments, both good and bad at all times and make efficiency savings year on year.

The contract expanded on these by committing to share information openly; jointly solve problems; continuously improve services; reduce the cost of services through efficiencies and innovate and implement changes.

FCC had nominated four representatives to the Board comprising their Contract Manager, Area Manager, Regional Development Manager and their General Manager for Cumbria. In line with similar Partnership Board arrangements on other contracts, to nominate four members to the FCC Partnership Board, plus the Executive Director and Assistant Director of Community Services.

RESOLVED:-

1. To nominate Councillors Hamilton, McLeavy, Pidduck and M. A. Thomson to the FCC Partnership Board; and

2. To agree that the FCC Partnership Board becomes an outside body to which the Council nominates Members at Annual Council.

**50 – Appointment to Barrow Highways Advisory Group**

The Executive Director informed the Committee that an email had been received from Cumbria County Council advising that the Barrow Highways Advisory Group would now only include one Member from the Council instead of three Members.

RESOLVED:- To nominate Councillor Brook to the Barrow Highways Advisory Group and Councillor D. Roberts as substitute.

**51 – Closure of Playgrounds**

The Committee were reminded that as part of the Budget Strategy 2016-2020 Council had agreed a new policy on provision of playgrounds which ensured the current distribution of playgrounds by settlement, protected the largest and well used facilities and identified the least used and valuable from a play perspective.

Members had reviewed current playground provision, comprising 33 playgrounds against that policy and had identified five playgrounds for closure, with two subject to discussions about future management.

The playgrounds identified for closure were:-

1. Dowie Close – an isolated playground which projected into an open field with limited use by the wider community.
2. Storey Square – set within a larger enclosed area of grassed open space, play equipment was limited and in poor condition, would be grassed and retained as public open space.
3. Rusland Avenue – very small (150m²) with limited play equipment, very limited access and use by the wider community. The land was not owned by the Council.
4. Lakeland Avenue – very limited informal surveillance from adjacent properties – persistent vandalism and anti-social behaviour problems retain as informal open space.
5. Sandy Gap – very limited play equipment, in poor condition, retain as informal open space.

The Council welcomed proposals for management of playgrounds 1, 2 and 3 above from local groups.

Discussions would be held on future management of Biggar Village and Talisman Close.

Estimated savings included in the Budget Strategy from these closures would be £13,247.

RESOLVED:- To agree the playgrounds identified for closure and alternative management arrangements as reported.

Immediately after the vote was taken Councillor Pemberton requested that it be recorded in the Minutes that he voted against the motion.

**52 – Housing Service: Continuation of Support for Housing Maintenance Team**

The Committee was informed that on 29th June, 2016 this Committee had agreed to the appointment of an independent building surveyor in the Housing Maintenance Team for a period of up to 12 months and to agree the classification of the appointment as an ‘exception’ under Item 16 of the Council’s Standing Orders.

It had been envisaged that the appointment would be short term but the on-going implementation of the new Housing Management Software Systems and the unexpected need to change appointed contractors had led to a number of delays in the delivery of the 2017/18 Planned Investment Programme. The change of contractor for major void works was expected to compound the problem further in the short-term as new working practices would need to be developed and implemented.

The roll out of CX repairs and Keystone Asset Management software between October and December 2017 would undoubtedly place additional pressures on the Maintenance Team and as such there existed a need for the temporary surveyor to be retained for the remainder of the financial year.

The surveyor concerned had knowledge and familiarity with the Procure Plus e-procurement systems and had been engaged on a competitive hourly rate. It was proposed to retain the surveyor on a week-by-week basis until 31st March 2018. The maximum number of hours employed were not expected to exceed 21 hours in any one week.

RESOLVED:- To agree the continued retention of an existing Building Surveyor in the Housing Maintenance Team on a week-by-week basis until 31st March, 2018.

**REFERRED ITEMS**

**THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION**

**53 – 2018-2019 Council Tax Support**

The Director of Resources reminded the Committee that since 1st April, 2013, the Council had operated a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Council Tax Support) that mirrored the Council Tax Benefit regime as it was, including subsequent updates to Housing Benefit that would have applied to Council Tax Benefit pre 1st April 2013; those receiving Council Tax Support would have received the same under Council Tax Benefit.

The funding for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme came mainly through the financial settlement; that was 90% of the Scheme cost in the first year of the Scheme. The amount was no longer itemised in the settlement, so the Revenue Spending Power reductions had been used as a proxy to determine the funding.

The 2017-2018 Council Tax Support had been awarded as at 30th June 2017 was £5.7m. The Council’s share of the cost was based on the precepts for the year and was £748k; for 2018-2019 that was estimated to increase to £764k with funding of £614k. The net cost of £150k had been reduced by £75k estimated to be generated from existing Council Tax reforms (implemented from 1st April, 2013), leaving £75k to come from Council resources. That shortfall had been included in the Council’s current Medium Term Financial Plan.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council to agree the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018-2019.

**54 – Car Parking Review**

The Committee considered a detailed report regarding a recent review of off-street car parking usage and income.

The Committee was informed that the Council had over 1,200 parking spaces across 19 car parks, 10 of which were not available for pay and display purposes and were for contract holders with some also having disabled parking spaces.

Of the remaining nine car parks only Market Street had contract spaces allocated, the others were all pay and display parking with some also having disabled parking spaces.

There were 276 contract parking spaces across 10 car parks and 222 of the spaces had been taken, with 54 spaces available across five car parks.

The Council also offered season tickets, 251 currently sold across three car parks; these allowed the holder to park in available pay and display spaces. The current income from pre-paid parking was £134k per annum, pay and display parking £600k per annum and £35k from the Ringo mobile phone payment service.

The review resulted in a number of recommendations which, taken together, aimed to balance the type, location and number of spaces available, against the income generated.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council:-

1. To agree not to increase the number of contract parking spaces on current pay and display car parks;

2. To agree that additional contract or season tickets be made available for low demand car parks only;

3. To agree that the discount scheme for bulk space purchases applied only where a single customer was paying upfront at the start of the year and the discount levels were:

i. 10% discount for 10-19 spaces;

ii. 20% discount for 20-29 spaces;

iii. 30% discount for more than 30 spaces;

4. To agree that the Admin and Parking Services Manager be delegated to apply the discount scheme; and

5. To agree to continue to monitor the viability of low demand car parks.

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.