

**MISSION STATEMENT**

***To Improve the Quality of Life  
For Those Who Live and Work in the District***

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7 January 2008

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to an extraordinary meeting of the Selby District Council to be held in the Civic Suite, Civic Centre, Portholme Road, Selby on **Tuesday 15 January 2008** commencing at **6.00 pm**.

Yours sincerely

M Connor  
Chief Executive

Opening Prayers will be offered.

## **AGENDA – PUBLIC SESSION**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

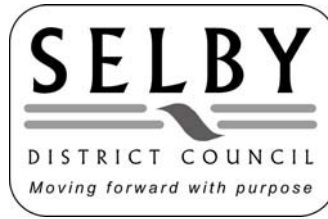
2. **Disclosure of Interest**

To receive any disclosures of interest in matters to be considered at the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, and Sections 50, 52 and 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

3. **Executive Structure**

Report of the Chief Executive (pages 3 – 8).

**COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED TO UPDATE THE REGISTER OF INTERESTS AFTER ANY CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY AFFECT CURRENT ENTRIES**



**Title:** Potential Move to an Executive Structure

**To:** Extra Ordinary Council

**Date:** 15 January 2008

**Author:** Martin Connor, Chief Executive

**Presented by:** Martin Connor, Chief Executive

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**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 For councillors to consider a potential move to an executive structure.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 **That Council determines that it is minded to move forward to an executive structure and the Chief Executive progresses the following:**

- **A review of staffing implications, including democratic service support and support for the new Overview and Scrutiny arrangements**
- **The creation of a revised constitution**
- **The advertising of the Council's intent to progress towards an executive structure with the opportunity for the community to express their own views**
- **The appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to recommend a scheme for Councillor allowances.**

**3 Executive Summary**

3.1 The Council has considered, on a number of previous occasions, the move to an executive structure. Recent legislation and government guidance renew the impetus for such a move and consequently Council is asked to consider whether it is now minded to proceed.

## **4 The Report**

4.1 The report attached has been prepared for consideration by the Council.

## **5 Financial Implications**

5.1 There will be a number of financial implications arising from:

- Staffing provision
- Community budgets
- Revised allowances

At this stage it is not possible to estimate the costs, which would be subject to detailed evaluation and further reports to Council.

## **6 Conclusions**

6.1 Council is asked to consider the report.

## **7 Link to Corporate Plan**

7.1 There is no direct link to elements of the Corporate Plan, though such a move would impact on democratic and delivery mechanisms across the range of the Council's operations.

## **8 How Does This Report Link to the Council's Priorities?**

8.1 Such a move is fundamental to the delivery of the Council's priorities.

## **9 Impact on Corporate Policies**

No direct impact.

## **10 Background Papers**

10.1 None.

# **Council report on the potential move to an executive structure - January 2008**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 It seems that we have lived with the possibility of local government reorganisation in North Yorkshire for some time now. Since 2003 one review or another has signalled the demise of Selby District Council. With the failure of the latest bid by NYCC for the formation of a single unitary authority to cover the County area the future of the District Council is assured... at least for now.
- 1.2 The failure of the unitary bid does not mean continuation of the status quo however. The White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, published in October 2006, made it quite clear that even in areas where two-tier structures continued there would be a requirement to improve working between the tiers so as to provide the same efficiency and service benefits to the community as would have been obtained if a new unitary council had been formed. The big stick here, of course, is that improvements and shared services can effectively be forced through by the grant mechanism.
- 1.3 This Council, and indeed others in North Yorkshire, needs to consider how it will respond to the White Paper requirements, many of which have been incorporated into the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

## **2 The Drivers**

- 2.1 The drivers for change are many but include the following:
  - Clearer and stronger political and community leadership
  - Improved accountability and transparency of decision-making
  - Improved community engagement and empowerment
  - Strong and effective scrutiny function
  - Enhanced two-tier working and efficiency
- 2.2 The Council should always, of course, be looking for ways to improve its services to the community and even without legislation would wish to address the issues listed above.

## **3 History**

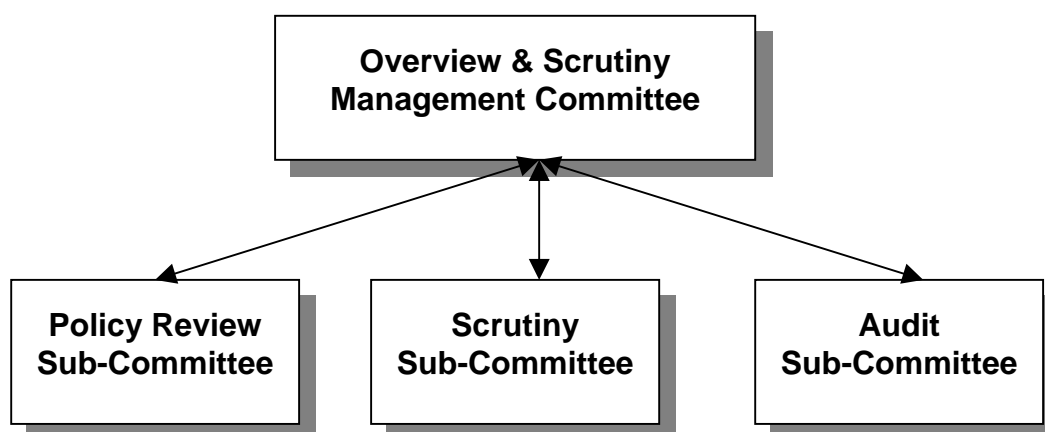
- 3.1 The Council has, on a number of occasions, considered the move to an executive structure and concluded, either internally or as a result of inconclusive public consultation, that it would retain the committee system synonymous with the fourth option structure.

- 3.2 With the greater emphasis placed on strong, clear and accountable leadership in the White Paper, I cannot avoid revisiting the matter in this report.
- 3.3 Two recurring themes in Government guidance, however, are the need for community leadership and engagement and the heightened role for scrutiny and whether or not the Council moves to an executive structure these issues will have to be adequately addressed.

#### **4 Suggested Route**

- 4.1 As a catalyst for change, I would recommend that the Council reconsiders a potential move to an executive structure. This is the most obvious way to demonstrate clarity of leadership and decision-making. It may also speed up the decision-making process depending on the level of delegation which accompanies this shift but accountability and strong leadership are the two factors which will most evidently result.
- 4.2 Previous discussions around an executive structure have faltered to some extent on the marginalisation of the non-executive members of the Council. If half a dozen or so people are making the decisions then what is the role of the remaining members of Council? Here, I think, is the opportunity to give effect to the White Paper requirements and create a real and involving role for the non-executive councillor.
- 4.3 I am suggesting the creation of six Community Management Boards (CMBs) with the following make-up:
- Ward councillors for the area
  - County councillors for the area
  - 3 reps from parish councils in the area
  - Up to 3 co-opted members of the community
- 4.4 The meetings for each CMB (of which, I would suggest, there will be six each year) would be divided into two parts, the community part and the business part. The first part will be open to all but the second part, though held in public, would be the part where only elected representatives of the community would have a vote.
- 4.5 The meetings would be chaired by a Selby District councillor and the skills of the chair would be paramount in ensuring an inclusive but businesslike process.
- 4.6 The CMBs would replace CIPs and JAGs and be responsible for the development of a Community Management Plan and the administration of a devolved budget or Community Fund. This body would be the prime point of community engagement and would cover all aspects of the public sector service provision for the area, thus obviating the need for separate bodies such as the County Area Committee.

- 4.7 I suggest that the CMB would be the first point of consideration for any community calls for action (mentioned in the White Paper) and that they would present a real opportunity for true community leadership at a local level. Though demanding, the CMB process would offer a meaningful role for those councillors not on the executive.
- 4.8 The inclusion of NYCC and parish council representatives would also present more than a token move towards better cross-tier working.
- 4.9 For Overview and Scrutiny I am suggesting the following:



- 4.10 The Management Committee and its Sub-Committees would each consist of six non-executive councillors and the Sub-Committees would be chaired by a member of the Management Committee in order to provide a level of consistency, continuity and co-ordination.
- 4.11 The Management Committee would have the power of call-in and be responsible for agreeing its own and its Sub-Committees' work programmes for approval by Council.
- 4.12 The Management Committee would receive community calls for action and have responsibility for scrutiny of CMBs and the use of any devolved budgets or Community Funds. The Management Committee would allocate work to its Sub-Committees as it saw fit but would maintain a division so as to ensure that the same members did not scrutinise a decision on which the Policy Review Sub-Committee had had an input.
- 4.13 The Executive would meet on a monthly basis in public with private meetings on alternate fortnights. Decisions would be recorded in minutes and all decisions would be collective with no powers delegated

to individual members of the Executive. Individual members of the Executive would take lead responsibility for services allocated by the Leader.

- 4.14 The Leader would be appointed by the Council for a four-year term and it would be the Leader's responsibility to select the Executive for Council approval.
- 4.15 The Executive would work to a four-month rolling forward plan where all key decisions would be included, thus ensuring that all councillors and other interested parties would have prior warning of intended decision-making and secure an input if required.
- 4.16 Regulatory Committees, dealing with Planning, Licensing and Standards would continue, as before, to deal with these important non-executive functions.

## **5 Consequential Issues**

- 5.1 If the Council is minded to move forward with these proposals, I would need approval to progress with a number of consequential issues including the following:
  - A review of staffing implications, including democratic service support and support for the new Overview and Scrutiny arrangements
  - The creation of a revised constitution
  - The advertising of the Council's intent to progress towards an executive structure with the opportunity for the community to express their own views
  - The appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to recommend a scheme for Councillor Allowances
- 5.2 I would also suggest that an implementation date of 21 May 2008 would be the earliest realistic opportunity.