



Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue: Committee Room

Date: 15 January 2013

Present: Councillor M Jordan (Chair), Councillor K Ellis, Councillor Mrs E Metcalfe, Councillor I Nutt, Councillor R Packham, Councillor I Reynolds, and Councillor Mrs A Spetch

Apologies for Absence: Councillor R Musgrave

Also Present: Councillor M Crane

Officers Present: Martin Connor, Chief Executive; Karen Iveson, Executive Director (S151); Sarah Smith, Business Manager; Eileen Scothern, Business Manager; Keith Cadman, Lead Officer – Contracts, Jodie Taylor, Lead Officer – Finance and Richard Besley, Democratic Services

32. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Minutes

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 16 October 2012 and the special meetings held on 10 December and 18 December 2012 and they are signed by the Chair.

34. Chair's Address

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the New Year and to what was to be detailed debate with such a busy agenda.

The Chair welcomed Martin Connor, the Chief Executive, and Councillor Mark Crane, the Leader of Council who were in attendance. He also introduced, Jodie Taylor the new Lead Officer Finance who was attending for the Budget report.

35. PR/12/14 – Outcomes from Meeting 16 October 2012

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which outlined the outcomes of the reports and recommendations from the previous meeting.

The Officer referred the Committee to the report on the Countryside Management and Green Space Strategy and reported that Eileen Scothern, Business Manager would present a follow-up report to the April Committee.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

36. PR/12/15 – Chargeable Green Waste Collections

The Executive Director (S151) outlined the background of the report and the previous meetings on this issue. The Executive Director (S151) reminded the Committee that they had been requested to look at the practical issues in respect of charging for green waste collection.

The Lead Officer – Contracts outlined the decisions to date and tabled further information requested by the Committee. He confirmed that in the case of Newark & Sherwood Council which had no green waste collection, the authority had looked at introducing a chargeable service but the business case was unsuccessful. They were now looking at launching a shared charged service with Mansfield Council.

The Committee discussed its wish to enter into consultation and engagement with the public on this issue.

The Leader of Council, Councillor Mark Crane, thanked the Committee for allowing him to attend to listen to the debate and appreciated that the decision to introduce a charge would be unwelcome.

Councillor Crane stressed that an increase in Council Tax had not been agreed and that the decision would be made by full Council in February. However, since the December meeting of the Executive, the Government had made further announcements on Council Tax grants which may mean a revised Executive proposal.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Executive had looked at other options for savings, including reducing the service to an eight month collection period. These options had already been raised with the

political groups and the introduction of a charge had been the preferred route.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Committee that as the service cost was presently paid for through Council Tax it was subsidised by those households who make no use of the service, such as flats and those homes with no garden.

An introduction of a charge to those who require the service would be fairer and although the Council did not wish to place an additional cost on the public, there was a need to balance the budget. With an annual charge of £26.00, the cost per household is 50 pence a week or £1.00 per fortnightly collection which the Councillor Crane felt was not a considerable hardship.

RESOLVED:

No recommendations on the practical issues concerning the introduction of charging for green waste were approved.

37. PR/12/16 – Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Executive Director (S151) presented the report, which allowed Policy Review Committee the opportunity to comment on the Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2013/14 and the Medium term Financial Plan

The Executive Director (S151) identified the key issues for the Committee and confirmed that the Budget would go to full Council for approval on 26 February.

The Committee were concerned that the budget proposal included the saving from charging for green waste collection and wished to see full public consultation carried out before such a decision was taken. The Committee acknowledged that with the time scales involved the opportunity for public consultation before Council in February was limited. The Committee suggested the Executive consider alternative savings.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a public consultation exercise on a collection charge for green waste could still be carried out before the implementation of a charge later in the year.

The Committee reminded Officers of its discussion on Asset Management at a previous meeting and identified the possible increased income from garage rents, if any currently unused property stock could be refurbished and made available, as a source of income to offset against savings.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To request that the Executive look for other possible savings before implementing a green waste collection charge;**
- ii) **To request that the Executive undertake public consultation on the introduction of charging for green waste.**

38. PR/12/17 – Tenancy Policy

The report was presented by Business Manager, Eileen Scothern who outlined the passage of the North Yorkshire Tenancy Strategy through the Executive in April 2012, to the implementation of a steering group to create a Policy Paper that was reviewed by the Executive in December 2012. The Executive had now asked that the Committee scrutinise the Tenancy Policy before formal adoption.

The Business Manager confirmed that the Policy would be in place for “new” tenants only and any current tenants that re-locate. Existing tenants would be governed by their current tenancy contract’s terms and conditions.

The Business Manager outlined the key points in report and confirmed for the Committee that the current ongoing consultation on the Policy, included articles in Open Door and Citizen Link, a questionnaire on the website, engagement with CEF’s, Tenancy Scrutiny Panels, Selby Homeless Steering group, over 50s Forum, Disability Forum, other local agencies as well as the scrutiny of the Policy by this Committee. The Committee felt that Parish Council’s should have been allowed to comment and asked that they be consulted.

Councillor Reynolds welcomed and supported the Policy, however he felt that the term of the contract should be reduced from six years

The Business Manager outlined that, although there was no provision in the new Policy to carry forward the existing practice to offer an incentive to downsize when children leave home, it was something that could be considered. The Business Manager confirmed that when downsizing occurs, tenants are offered properties in their locality when possible.

The Committee discussed the issue of young families being placed into an area of elderly occupation. The Committee felt that this was a problem and recognised the need to look at protecting some elderly and vulnerable tenants. A reducing tenancy period may help solve some of these issues.

RESOLVED:

The report was noted and Councillors would submit comments as part of the Consultation.

39. Work Programme 2013 - 2014

The Democratic Services Officer presented an early draft of the Work Programme for 2013/14 to be adopted by the Committee at its next meeting.

The Chair asked councillors to consider items for the Policy Review Committee to introduce to the next Work Programme and asked that they bring those items to his attention.

The Chair asked that Renewable Energy Strategy be entered onto the July agenda rather than April.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

40. Work Programme 2012 - 2013

The Democratic Services Officer presented the current Work Programme and asked that Councillors note the entry in the April agenda for the report back by Officers on the Countryside Management and Green Space Strategy.

The Officer also introduced a new item for scrutiny in April, the Council's new Gambling Policy, that would be received by the Licensing Committee in February and likely to be referred to this Committee by the Executive when it was reviewed by them in March.

RESOLVED:

The Work Programme be amended accordingly

The meeting closed at 6:45pm