

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

- Venue: Committee Room
- Date: 15 July 2014
- Present: Councillors M Jordan (Chair), Mrs K McSherry (Vice Chair), I Chilvers (substitute for Mrs A Spetch) Mrs M Davis, K Ellis, Mrs E Metcalfe, I Nutt and R Packham .
- Apologies for Absence: Councillors R Musgrave and Mrs A Spetch (substitute I Chilvers)
- Also Present: Councillor Mark Crane, Leader of Council
- Officers Present: Karen Iveson, Executive Director (S151); Simon Parkinson, Lead Officer Community Support and Richard Besley, Democratic Services Officer

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 15 April 2014 and they are signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIR'S ADDRESS

The Chair welcomed Councillors and Officers to the first meeting of the new municipal year

4. TIMING OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to commence meetings at 5.00pm for the 2014/15 municipal year.

5. PR/14/1 – STATE OF THE AREA ADDRESS

Councillor M Crane, Leader of the Council presented the State of the Area Address.

A query was raised regarding whether the Council was removing carpets in a good condition which then meant that new families were then moving into an uncarpeted property. It was agreed that this would be looked into and a response would be circulated to the Committee via the Democratic Services Officer.

The Leader of the Council explained that there had been significant successes in 2013/14 with good work from officers and Councillors. The work to improve roundabouts on the entries to Selby was highlighted.

Queries were raised around the following areas:

- The progress of Community Engagement Forums (CEFs).
- The welfare reform changes.
- The planning process concerning impact assessments and section 106 agreements.
- The purchase of the Burn Airfield site.

With regard to CEFs, the Leader of the Council stated that they were currently under review however there were some effective CEFs and best practice could be shared via these.

With regard to Welfare Reform the Leader of the Council stated that he shared the Committee's concerns for people wishing to down size and increasing the number of affordable homes was a priority for the Council.

In response to queries raised regarding planning, the Leader of the Council stated that changes had been made to pre planning application consultation and currently the Executive were considering the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Leader of the Council explained that Selby was aiming to show that it was open for development. He also stated that it was recognised that Sherburn had contained a number of developments and it was important that those communities were rewarded with better facilities.

In response to a query regarding the purchase of the Burn Airfield site, the Leader of the Council explained that it was important to purchase a large piece of land as an asset for long term planning and the purchase had now also been backed by the Parish Council.

A query was raised concerning improving tourism for the area. The Leader of the Council stated that the development of the new leisure centre will assist in bringing people to the area along with Selby Abbey.

A query was raised regarding conducting a green belt review of appropriate sites. The Leader of the Council stated he would support such a review.

RESOLVED:

To note the State of Area Address.

6. PR/14/2 – WELFARE REFORM

The Lead Officer for Community Support presented the report which provided a 6 month review detailing the effect of the Welfare Reform changes in Selby district and offered feedback on the work of the Policy Review Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group.

The Committee were informed that there had been more movements on tenancies in 2013/14 than 2012/13 to downsize however there was currently a shortage of smaller properties. It was also explained that the number of people in rent arrears had reduced however the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had stated that the figures nationally had risen. The Lead Officer of Community Support stated that the fact that Selby was performing better than the national trend was due to the work of officers in helping tenants and families.

It was reported that there had been positive discussions between the Task and Finish Group and the Selby Advice network. It was stated that the Task and Finish Group were looking at supporting the Selby advice service.

The Committee were also informed that there was work on-going regarding empty homes in the private sector to open up opportunities to obtain properties for affordable rent. It was also explained that Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) applications had risen.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the updated information contained within the review element of the report (including the progress made on Task & Finish Group work)**
- (ii) To endorse the proposal that there is no requirement to amend current policies in relation to implications relating to existing tenants wishing or needing to downsize.**

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Committee's Work Programme for the 2014/15 municipal year.

It was agreed that items relating to the financial strategy and the tenants policy would be added to the work programme for the meeting in September. It was also agreed to have a further welfare reform update in January.

RESOLVED:

To note the Policy Review Committee Work Programme for 2014/15 with the above amendments.

The meeting closed at 6:23pm.