



Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue: Committee Room

Date: Tuesday 12 April 2016

Time: 5.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors J Deans (Chair), K Arthur, D Hutchinson, R Packham, and Mrs J Shaw-Wright.

Apology for Absence: Councillors J Cattanach and M Hobson.

Officers Present: Karen Iveson – Chief Finance Officer, Rachel Crossley – Graduate Policy Officer, Michelle Dinsdale – Policy Officer, June Rothwell – Head of Operational Services, and Janine Jenkinson - Democratic Services Officer.

29. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2016.

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 19 January 2016 for signature by the Chair.

31. CHAIR'S ADDRESS

The Chair thanked all members of the Policy Review Committee for their contributions and commitment during the past year. Furthermore, the Chair thanked officers who had attended the Committee to present reports and

policies. The Chair extended his personal thanks to the Deputy Chief Executive, the Solicitor to the Council and Democratic Services Officer.

Note – Councillor R Packham entered the Committee Room at this point in the meeting.

The Chair advised the Committee that due to an on-going review of the Overview and Scrutiny functions, consideration of the Policy Review Committee Work Programme had been deferred to the meeting in June 2016.

32. REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY

The Graduate Policy Officer presented a report that outlined the review of the current Corporate Charging Policy that was being undertaken. The aim of the review was to bring the Policy up to date with legislation, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Corporate Plan 2015-2020 objective to 'deliver great value and increase income'.

The Committee was informed that the draft Policy had been designed to support the Council's vision of being customer focused, business like, and to develop business resilience in the face of significant reductions in grants from central Government.

In response to a query regarding leisure centre charges, the Chief Finance Officer explained that the contract for Selby Leisure Centre was managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and they were responsible for setting the charges for the leisure service and retained the income generated. Due to this, it was explained that leisure centre charges were excluded from the Corporate Charging Policy.

In reply to questions regarding the revenue generated by the household repairs and the maintenance service and the number of employees, the Head of Operational Services reported that the service employed 30 people in total, with the majority of staff being trades people. With regard to the revenue generated, the Committee was informed that the service had been established mid-year and had undertaken approximately 100 additional jobs. In the forthcoming financial year the service would be marketed and would aim to increase revenue.

Some Councillors were keen to expand marketing and the scope of the Policy in order to exploit the opportunities available in the wider market.

Some Councillors raised concerns regarding the commercialisation of Council services and the absence of reference in the report to providing services for the benefit of residents of the District.

The Head of Operations explained that the Council was able to enter into agreements with other local authorities and public bodies for the supply of goods and services, however for the purposes of charging, this could not

exceed the cost of the provision of the service. In order to operate on a commercial basis, to generate a profit, the Council would be required to establish a trading company.

Councillors were informed that the proposed Corporate Charging Policy would allow flexibility and support the commercialisation of services to ensure the Council operated in a business-like manner.

The Committee noted that on page 19 of the report car parking in Tadcaster and Sherburn were listed as free services. The Policy Officer explained that a review of car parking charges throughout the District was currently being undertaken and a report would be considered by the Executive in June 2016.

There was some discussion regarding the decision making process with reference to those subsidised services listed within the Policy. The Chief Finance Officer explained that all decisions in relation to corporate charging would be made in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedure Rules) and would have to demonstrate consistency with the Council's strategic priorities, policies and statutory obligations.

The Committee thanked Officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

I. To support the Policy, its aims and objectives and to note that the definitions of the framework for charging were clear and simple to understand.

II. The Committee acknowledge that the initial approach of the Policy was to target other local authorities and public bodies; however, the Committee recommended that the scope of the Policy should be extended in order to exploit the opportunities available in the wider market, as soon as circumstances became appropriate.

33. POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair introduced the report and informed Councillors that over the past 12 months the Committee had met on five occasions and had considered a wide range of issues and topics in-line with the Council's priorities.

RESOLVED:

I. To endorse the Policy Review Committee Annual Report.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Policy Review Committee
12 April 2016