

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

- Venue: Committee Room
- Date: Tuesday 14 June 2016
- Time: 5.00 pm
- Present: Councillors J Deans (Chair), M Hobson (Vice Chair), K Arthur, J Cattnach, P Welch (Substitute for Councillor R Packham), and Mrs J Shaw-Wright.
- Apology for Absence: Councillor D Hutchinson and R Packham.
- Officers Present: Karen Iveson – Chief Finance Officer, Ralph Gill – Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation), Michelle Dinsdale – Policy Officer, Chris Watson – Assistant Policy Officer and Janine Jenkinson - Democratic Services Officer.

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 April 2016.

RESOLVED:

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

3. CHAIR'S ADDRESS

There was no address from the Chair.

4. TIMING OF MEETINGS 2016/17

The Committee considered the start time for meetings for the forthcoming municipal year.

RESOLVED:

To agree 5 pm as the start time for Policy Review Committee meetings in 2016/17.

5. WELFARE REFORM – SIX MONTH UPDATE

The Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) introduced the report and explained that the report detailed the Welfare Reform changes in Selby District and highlighted future developments.

In relation to Housing Benefit, councillors were informed that no tenants had been evicted solely as a result of the spare room deduction. The Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) explained that the tenants that had been evicted were those that already had significant arrears before the deduction had been introduced.

The Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) explained that Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) were available to people who found themselves in financial hardship due to the Welfare Reform changes. The Committee was advised that the DHP funding was available in 2016/17 and the Council would use the funding to provide additional support for residents, where appropriate. In 2016/17 the Council had a total DHP budget of £94,564; an increase of £9,000 over last year.

With regard to the 'Benefit Cap', Councillors were informed that the benefit cap thresholds were being lowered, however the exact date had not yet been announced. The Committee was informed that the Department for Work and Pensions had written to households affected by the changes.

The Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) explained that the Council had discretion in relation to the DHP; however certain minimum criteria were applied and officers the circumstances of each case into consideration.

In relation to Council Tax support, the Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) reported that it would be proposed to the Executive that the Council changed the Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2017 to mirror the changes made to Housing Benefit by the DWP and Pensioner Council Tax Support by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Chair thanked the Lead Officer (Benefits and Taxation) for a comprehensive report.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Committee considered the items for inclusion on the Committee Work Programme 2016/17.

Councillors requested an update in relation to PLAN Selby and suggested that the Policy Review Committee include this item in the Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

- I. To agree to include the proposed items, as detailed in Appendix A, attached to the report.**
- II. To ask the Interim Planning Policy Manager to provide a report, outlining the work programme and key issues in relation to PLAN Selby, for consideration at the Policy Review Committee meeting schedule on 13 September 2016.**

The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.