



Meeting: **POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**
Date: **TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2019**
Time: **5.00 PM**
Venue: **COMMITTEE ROOM - CIVIC CENTRE, DONCASTER ROAD,
SELBY, YO8 9FT**
To: **Councillors A Lee (Chair), K Arthur (Vice-Chair),
J Cattanach, M McCartney, J Shaw-Wright, T Grogan,
M Jordan and R Packham**

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Disclosures of Interest

A copy of the Register of Interest for each Selby District Councillor is available for inspection at www.selby.gov.uk.

Councillors should declare to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest in any item of business on this agenda which is not already entered in their Register of Interests.

Councillors should leave the meeting and take no part in the consideration, discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Councillors should also declare any other interests. Having made the declaration, provided the other interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest, the Councillor may stay in the meeting, speak and vote on that item of business.

If in doubt, Councillors are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Review Committee held on 11 June 2019.

4. Chair's Address to the Policy Review Committee

5. Empty Homes Strategy (PR/19/3) (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider the report of the Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager.

6. Work Programme - Policy Review Committee 2019-20 (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the Committee's work programme for 2019-20.

Janet Waggott

Janet Waggott, Chief Executive

<p>Dates of next meetings (5.00pm) Tuesday, 10 September 2019</p>
--

Enquiries relating to this agenda, please contact Victoria Foreman on 01757 292046 vforeman@selby.gov.uk.

Recording at Council Meetings

Recording is allowed at Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings which are open to the public, subject to:- (i) the recording being conducted with the full knowledge of the Chairman of the meeting; and (ii) compliance with the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at meetings, a copy of which is available on request. Anyone wishing to record must contact the Democratic Services Officer on the above details prior to the start of the meeting. Any recording must be conducted openly and not in secret.

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Tuesday, 11 June 2019
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillors A Lee (Chair), K Arthur (Vice-Chair), M McCartney, J Shaw-Wright, T Grogan, M Jordan and R Packham
Officers present:	Sharon Cousins, Licensing Manager, Sarah Thompson, Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager, Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Manager
Public:	1
Press:	0

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019.

Councillors queried why the street cleansing and recycling item suggested under minute number 34 had not appeared on this meeting's agenda. The Democratic Services Officer explained that the item could be better suited to consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee were advised that a Task and Finish Group had been established to consider the future of the Council's recycling service, and

as such it was suggested that the matter be returned to at a later date once the group had met and made recommendations.

In terms of street cleansing, Members agreed that this could be considered separately from the recycling element.

RESOLVED:

- i. **To approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee meeting held on 15 January 2019 for signing by the Chair.**
- ii. **To amend the Committee's work programme to reflect the Committee's suggestions regarding future work in relation to the Council's recycling service and street cleansing.**

4 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Policy Review Committee for the 2019-20 municipal year.

5 SELBY DISTRICT COUNCIL TAXI LICENSING POLICY 2019 - PR/19/1

The Committee received the report of the Council's Licensing Manager, which asked Members to consider and comment on the proposed Taxi Licensing Policy set out at Appendix A of the agenda, which incorporated required changes following the reviewing of the consultation responses.

The Committee noted that a consultation had been held between 1 December 2018 and 4 February 2019 with proposals to Selby's Taxi Licensing Policy 2019. Officers had reviewed the consultation responses received and had updated the proposed policy; updates were shown by way of tracked changes. On 8 April 2019 the Licensing Committee resolved to adopt the recommendations and endorsed the proposed policy. The policy would then be considered by the Executive for agreement and adoption.

Members acknowledged the detailed work had gone into the production of the new policy, but expressed concerns around the proposal that all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to the fleet must be wheelchair accessible. The Committee felt that more evidence was required to support the proposal, and that a 70/30 or 50/50 mixed fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles would be more acceptable. Members also agreed that further work around how a mixed fleet would be monitored and implemented should be undertaken.

Officers explained that the current policy stated that all new vehicles had to be wheelchair accessible, and that it was the local authority's duty to ensure that all taxis were safe and secure. Increasing the number of vehicles deemed as wheelchair accessible was an important part of ensuring that the fleet of vehicles licenced in Selby District were fit for

purpose. Members noted that if vehicles were wheelchair accessible, this could be of benefit to drivers as they would be able to access contracts for organisations such as North Yorkshire County Council and the NHS, who required accessible vehicles for a number of reasons.

The Committee felt that more work was required with regards to a fully accessible fleet, including figures relating to the current number of accessible vehicles, what arrangements at other local authorities were and how numbers of accessible vehicles could be monitored.

The Committee also commented on a number of other aspects to the policy; that drivers should report any health issues to the Council within three working days and clarification that any applicants convicted of a crime involving or related to, or has had any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual, whether adults or children, will never be granted a licence. In relation to comments made about the dress code for drivers, Officers explained that this was included in the code of conduct in order to encourage a professional image of drivers in the district.

The Committee agreed that the Executive should take their comments into account when considering the policy and that if additional work was required, it could be referred back to the Policy Review Committee for further comment, should they so wish.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the proposed Taxi Licensing Policy 2019.**
- ii. To ask Officers to forward to the Executive the Committee's comments on the proposed policy, including their concerns regarding the proposal that all new Hackney Carriage Vehicles should be wheelchair accessible.**

6 NORTH YORKSHIRE HOME CHOICE - CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - PR/19/2

The Committee received the report from the Housing and Environmental Health Manager which asked the Committee to consider the content and provide comments.

The Committee noted that in 2011 Selby District Council joined a shared common allocations policy with partner authorities and housing providers in the sub-region. Government policy encouraged and financially supported Local Authorities to develop a Choice Based Lettings System. The North Yorkshire Choice Based Lettings Partnership operated in Craven, Richmond, Ryedale, Hambleton, Scarborough, Selby and York and the partner organisations were the Local Authorities, Broadacres Housing Association, Yorkshire Housing and Beyond Housing. Harrogate Borough Council had never joined the partnership and operated a separate scheme.

In July 2018 City of York made the decision to leave North Yorkshire HomeChoice and adopt a City of York Allocation Policy. City of York Council made the decision to leave the North Yorkshire HomeChoice Partnership because they felt that the policy was no longer able to meet their specific local needs. At the time the decision was made City of York confirmed that they would not leave the partnership until their new Housing IT system had been procured and implemented, and this was likely to take 2 years. On 24 April, 2019, the City of York Council board member advised at a meeting of the North Yorkshire HomeChoice Board that it would be between 18-24 months before City of York left the partnership. City of York Council were required to give a formal 6 month notice period of their intention to leave the partnership.

Members asked a number of questions of the Officer, including banding of applicants, the ages of people moving between local authority areas and the effect of the scheme on Selby residents applying for housing.

It was agreed by the Committee that a broader overview report on housing at Selby District Council would be useful, covering aspects such as allocation, housing stock, housing association, processes and policies. Members explained that a number of queries they received from residents were about housing matters, and it would stand Members in good stead to receive a complete synopsis of housing and related issues in the district, and particularly in light of the fact that City of York were leaving the HomeChoice scheme.

RESOLVED:

That Officers report back to the Committee at a future meeting with an overview of housing matters in the Selby District including aspects such as housing allocations, housing stock, banding, housing associations, policies and processes.

7 WORK PROGRAMME - POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE 2019-20

The Committee considered the 2019-20 work programme as set out at pages 65 to 67 of the agenda.

Members suggested that the affordable housing and housing need item listed for October be brought forward for consideration in September 2019, in order for the information to be included in the housing overview report that had been requested by the Committee under the previous agenda item.

The Committee were reminded that they could suggest items for the work programme throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

To ask the Democratic Services Officer to amend the 2019-20 work programme to bring forward the

Policy Review Committee – Minutes

Tuesday 4 June 2019

affordable housing and housing need item to September 2019, in order for the information to be included within the housing overview report that had been requested by the Committee.

The meeting closed at 5.55 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank



Report Reference Number: PR/19/3

To: Policy Review Committee
Date: 23rd July 2019
Author: Sarah Thompson, Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager
Lead Executive Member: Cllr Chris Pearson, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Health and Culture
Lead Officer: June Rothwell, Head of Operational Services

Title: Progress with the delivery of the Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan

Summary:

The North Yorkshire Empty Property Strategy and local Selby District Action Plan was agreed and adopted in January 2018. The North Yorkshire Empty Property Strategy aims to reduce the number of long-term empty homes through a co-ordinated approach and the local Action Plan sets out how we will target empty homes across the district, and how we will encourage, support and enforce owners to bring Empty Homes back into use.

This report provides update on the progress made since the implementation of the strategy and action plan in April 2018.

Recommendations:

That the contents of the report are noted and any comments provided.

Reasons for recommendation:

To update Policy Review Committee on progress with the Empty Homes Programme and Action Plan.'

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 High levels of empty properties are recognised as having a serious impact on the viability of communities. As the numbers within an area increase so can the incidence of vandalism which acts as a further disincentive to occupation. Tackling empty homes can assist in meeting housing need; improve housing

conditions and regenerate blighted areas, thereby supporting the growth agenda.

- 1.2 Some empty properties will be on the market for sale or to rent and will soon be occupied again and therefore our focus is on long-term empty homes, empty homes that have not become re-occupied within six months. At this stage by working to understand what is happening with the property and what the prospects of re-occupation are, a view can be taken as whether we need to intervene and if so, how best to use our resources and powers to ensure that it does not remain empty.
- 1.3 The North Yorkshire Empty Property Strategy 2017-2021 and action plan has been developed to provide an overarching vision for the area and aims to reduce the number of long-term empty homes through a co-ordinated approach. The strategy highlights the importance of bringing empty properties back into use to meet housing need; to take advantage of any financial rewards such as the new homes bonus and to prevent anti-social behaviour and the blight empty homes can have on a neighbourhood.
- 1.4 The local Empty Homes Action Plan for Selby sets out how Empty Homes are targeted in the district, how owners are encouraged and supported to bring empty homes back into use and when enforcement action should be considered. The actions available to bring empty properties back in to use include:
 - Contact, encouragement and advice – this includes proactively working with landlords to help them resolve any issues that are preventing an empty property from being return to the market either for sale or for rent
 - Grants and Loans – we will support landlords or home owners to access funding or grants for improvement work where this will enable the property to be brought back into use
 - Direct Purchase (Voluntary) – a mutually agreed purchase of an empty property to enable the council to bring the property back into use
 - Enforcement (including Compulsory Purchase) – we will take enforcement action against landlords and property owners who neglect properties where this has a detrimental impact on the local area.

2. Implementation of the Empty Property Strategy and local action plan

- 2.1 The introduction of the Empty Homes Officer post in 2017/18 provided dedicated and intensive resource for empty homes management. It has enabled the Council to gain a greater understanding of why properties become empty, what incentivises owners to bring them back into use and what enforcement options bring results.

2.1.1 Performance in 2018/19

In 2018/19 24 long-term empty properties were brought back into use through the direct work of the empty homes officer of these 9 had been empty for 2 years or longer.

The Empty Homes Officer was absent during Qtr. 4 and this resulted in very little proactive work taking place on empty homes and this shows in the results.

Overall the project has progressed well and there were some good early results. The Empty Homes Officer was able to help bring a number of empty homes back into use through negotiation and by offering advice and support and now we are focusing on the more challenging cases.

2018/19	Total number of empty homes brought into use	Number of empty homes brought into use that were empty for over 2 years
Qtr. 1	6	3
Qtr. 2	11	6
Qtr. 3	7	0
Qtr. 4	0	0
Total	24	9

2.1.2 Advice and assistance

Advice given by the Empty Homes Officer is in relation to renting and selling and the financial assistance available. Our Housing Options Team offers a Tenant Find service - the Tenant Find Scheme helps a landlord find a suitable tenant and allows them to keep up to date with the requirements of them as a landlord in terms of property condition and management. We encourage owners to use this service and the use of the service is a condition of the Empty Homes Grant.

Properties that have been empty for over 2 years pay a premium council tax rate (this increased from 150% to 200% in April 2019) and the Empty Homes Officer works closely with the Taxation and Benefits team to raise awareness of the premium and of the empty homes support available.

2.1.3 Financial assistance

Our Private Housing Assistance Policy was updated in 2018 to include Empty Homes Grants and Loans. The Empty Homes Loan is available to help homeowners bring their long-term empty properties back by providing access to

funding to do essential repairs and maintenance works on their homes to bring them up to a saleable or lettable standard. Owners can borrow up to £15,000 per property interest free, with no repayments during the loan period, no interest charges and no charges for early repayment. An Empty Homes Grant is available to owners who agree to let the property throughout a five year period at an affordable rent to tenants with a local connection on a minimum twelve month fixed-term, assured shorthold tenancy.

In 2018/19 we approved and completed one Empty Homes Grant and one Empty Homes Loan and both properties were brought back into use, one as an affordable rented property available let through the Housing Options Service.

2.1.4 Voluntary Purchase

On 13th January 2019 the Executive approved a revision to our Affordable Housing Programme which enables the Council to Buy Back Ex Council houses, as part of the Council's Housing Development Strategy for increasing its supply of affordable housing stock and Empty Homes programme. The Council can now purchase empty properties and former Right to Buy Council properties where the Council has first refusal. Subject to favourable business cases, these purchases when completed will be returned to the HRA stock and will contribute to the Council's one for one replacement target for Right to Buy properties.

Following the approval officers are actively working on the purchase of the first Buy Back property in Selby and will also be seeking grant to support the purchase from Homes England.

2.1.5 Enforcement

Through offering advice and assistance to empty property owners we have increased their awareness of enforcement options. We have used some 'quick win' enforcement tools to improve the appearance and safety of empty homes to reinforce the message that we are serious about tackling empty homes.

Some enforcement tools take much longer and in December 2018 a report was presented to the Executive seeking approval to progress towards the acquisition of an empty property through the use of compulsory purchase powers. This was approved and since then we have made a formal offer to purchase the property. This was not accepted by the owner and we are progressing with the compulsory acquisition. Once we have purchased the property it will be added to the housing stock under the Housing Revenue Account.

3. Next steps

We have started the year positively and in the first quarter of 19/20 have brought 14 properties back into use. We are focused on maximising the use of

the Homes England Affordable Housing Grant and we have committed to purchasing 6 properties in 19/20.

We are working to identify properties that would be suitable for acquisition and would help meet housing need across the district. We are currently exploring a number of options, including properties that have been sold under the Right to buy and any purchase would require the approval of an individual business case demonstrating financial viability.

4. Implications

4.1 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

4.2 Financial Implications

In 2018 the Council applied for and received approval from Homes England for grant to bring 10 Empty Homes back into use. The grant allows the Council to use up to £39,000 per property on acquisition and repairs to the housing in order to make a property habitable. A further £30,000 per property is available from Section 106 monies (per decision made by the Executive on 5 November 2015) to support the purchase and repairs to empty homes and the remaining financial support is available from the Housing Revenue capital receipts. Any property purchase is subject a financial viability assessment and the necessary approvals.

5. Conclusion

The Empty Homes programme has had a successful start and there is an opportunity to build on the foundations built in 18/19. We will aim to increase the overall supply of housing and reduce the negative impact that neglected empty homes can have on communities. We will target our financial resources where the demand for housing is at its highest and maximise the use of the affordable housing grant available.

6. Background Documents

- I. York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Empty Homes Strategy
- II. Selby Empty Homes Action Plan

Contact Officer:

Sarah Thompson
Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager
sthompson@selby.gov.uk
Ext: 42245

This page is intentionally left blank

Draft Policy Review Committee Work Programme 2019-20

Date of Meeting	Topic	Action Required
11 June 2019	Work Programme 2019-20	To review and amend the committee's work programme for 2019-20 as required.
	North Yorkshire Home Choice – Choice Based Lettings	To receive information regarding the impact of changes to the North Yorkshire Home Choice, i.e. withdrawal of City of York Council from the scheme, and the effect this will have on Selby District.
	Taxi Licensing Policy	To receive an update on the refresh of the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy.
23 July 2019	Work Programme 2019-20	To review and amend the committee's work programme for 2019-20 as required.
	Empty Homes Strategy	To examine the Council's Empty Homes Strategy.
10 September 2019	Air Quality Action Plan	To examine the Air Quality Action Plan and any progress made against it a year on from its adoption in September 2018.
	Housing at SDC – An Overview	To receive a report giving an overview of the housing service at Selby District Council.
	Affordable Housing and Housing	To receive a report on Affordable Housing and Housing Need in the

	Need	Selby District.
	Universal Credit Update	To receive an update on the implementation and running of Universal Credit.
	Medium Term Financial Strategy	To comment on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
15 October 2019	Work Programme 2019-20	To review and amend the committee's work programme for 2019-20 as required.
	Planning Enforcement Management Plan	To review and comment on the implementation of the Planning Enforcement Management Plan following 6 months of operation.
	Alcohol Licensing Policy Review	To comment on the review of the Council's Alcohol Licensing Policy.
14 January 2020	Work Programme 2019/20 and Work Programme Planning for 2020/21	To review and amend the committee's work programme for the rest of the 2019-20 year as required, and begin to plan the Committee's Work Programme for the 2020-21 year.
	Financial Budget 2020-21	To review and comment on the Council's proposed 2020-21 Financial Budget.
7 April 2020	Work Programme Planning for 2020-21	To review and finalise the Committee's Work Programme for the 2020-20 year.
	Annual Report of the Policy Review Committee 2019-20	To review and approve the Annual Report 2019-20 of the Policy Review Committee.
	Universal Credit Update	To receive an update on the implementation and running of Universal Credit.

The following **provisional** dates are also in the Democratic Services calendar for provisional meetings if required: **10 December 2019 and 10 March 2020.**

Other potential items for 2019-20:

- PLAN Selby – will be re-added to work plan when new timetable for consideration known
- Licensing Policy – add back on to the work programme if referred back to the Committee by the Executive after consideration in July 2019
- Recycling – may be better for Scrutiny Committee to look at this? Elements could be considered by PR Committee but it would need to be at the right point. A Task and Finish Group had been established to consider the matter. Consider again when the T&F group have finished their work.
- Street Cleansing – This could be considered separately from the recycling service element.

Deep Dives/Working Groups – potential items

This page is intentionally left blank