

# Minutes

## Policy Review Committee

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Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Tuesday, 11 September 2018
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillors J Deans (Chair), M Hobson (Vice-Chair), J Cattnach, K Arthur, J Shaw-Wright and C Lunn
Officers present:	Gillian Marshall, Solicitor to the Council, Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer, Drew Fussey, Customer, Business and Revenues Service Manager, Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Officer
Others present:	Councillor C Lunn, Executive Lead Member for Finance and Resources
Public:	0
Press:	0

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### **7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Liz Casling and Mary McCartney.

### **8 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **9 MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2018.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**To approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 24 July 2018 for signing by the Chair.**

## **10 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Chair reported that the Chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees (Overview and Scrutiny, Policy Review and Audit and Governance) had met with the Executive in late July to discuss the work programmes of the committees and the Executive. As a result a number of items had been added to the Policy Review Committee work programme, as attached at item 8 of the agenda.

## **11 GAMBLING POLICY REFRESH**

The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager and was asked to note the draft Gambling Policy, consider the consultation responses received and provide any comments or recommendations. The Solicitor to the Council was in attendance at the meeting to introduce the report, and explained that following consideration by the Licensing and Policy Review Committees, the Gambling Policy would be taken to Council for approval in December 2018.

The Solicitor to the Council explained that the Gambling Policy (Statement of Principles) had to be reviewed at least every three years, and the current policy required review and revision (if needed) by January 2019.

The Committee noted that the minor changes to the policy were as follows:

- An updated population figure for Selby District at page 5 of the policy;
- A footnote relating to the stakes and prizes table at Appendix D to the policy to show they may change;
- An updated postal address for HM Revenues and Customs (a Responsible Authority) listed in the appendices of the policy; and
- An observation from the Gambling Commission to suggest that within section 12 of the policy, the Council may wish to include a requirement that Local Risk Assessments were kept on licenced premises.

The Committee acknowledged that the suggestion relating to Local Risk Assessments applied to certain types of gambling premises, and that the arrangement could prove useful for Enforcement Officers conducting visits. Members were supportive of the Gambling Commission's suggestion and agreed that it should form part of Selby District Council's Gambling Policy.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the draft Gambling Policy and consultation responses received; and**
- ii. To recommend to Council that the amendments to the Gambling Policy, as set out in the report of the Licensing Manager, including the suggestion of the Gambling Commission that Local Risk Assessments be kept on licenced premises, be approved.**

**12 UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE (PR/18/3)**

The Committee received a report from the Customer, Business and Revenue Manager and was asked to consider the content of the report and make any comments on Universal Credit.

The Customer, Business and Revenue Manager explained that the report before Members provided an update on the impact of Universal Credit (UC) on Council services, partners and the community and voluntary sectors.

The Committee noted that the Universal Credit Full Service had gone live at Selby Job Centre (which covered the majority of postcodes in the district) on 30 May 2018. To date, due to it being new working age people that were required to claim Universal Credit, the volume of claimants was very low (336). As a result the impact on Council services, partners and the community and voluntary sectors was negligible.

The Committee were pleased to note that the Department for Work and Pensions had reported on Selby District Council's transition to Universal Credit, and had stated that the Council's approach had ensured a smooth and supportive path for new Universal Credit claimants.

Members agreed that the next update on the impact of Universal Credit should be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the updates on Universal Credit as set out in the report; and**
- ii. To ask officers to bring a progress report back to the Policy Review Committee in 12 months' time.**

**13 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (PR/18/4)**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Finance Officer and was asked to consider the content of the report and make any comments on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the report before them

presented an update to the MTFS, covering both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) prior to consideration by Council on 18 September 2018. The report had been considered by the Executive on 6 September 2018.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Cliff Lunn, was in attendance at the meeting.

The Committee noted that the key assumptions that underpinned the strategy had been updated. The MTFS highlighted the potential for the New Homes Bonus to be withdrawn after 2019-20, as well as the additional renewable energy business rates receipts expected in the final year before the system was reset.

Members were informed that the MTFS also identified risk and uncertainty around business rates retention, ongoing reductions to government funding for the General Fund and HRA rents as the key issues for the Council to consider. The MTFS also confirmed the Council's strategic approach to reducing its base revenue budget and investing 'one off' or finite resources to stimulate economic growth, and achieve sustainable income through Council Tax and Business Rates growth.

The Committee also noted the Council's reserves strategy which sought to set aside sums to cover known commitments and cover financial risk, as well as earmarking resources to support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Officers explained that taking in to account prudent forecasts in Business Rates income, alongside the Council's ongoing savings plans, a target net General Fund revenue budget of £17.8m and £11.6 for the HRA were proposed for the 2018-19 budget, which included a savings target of £1.5m, for the General Fund.

Committee Members acknowledged that based on the assumptions within the next MTFS, the savings requirement was estimated to rise to £2.9m over the next 3 years.

The Committee debated the report further and asked a number of questions of officers on a number of issues, including the impact of Brexit on the Council's finances, council tax levels and the level of financial uncertainty facing the Council in the coming years.

Some Members expressed concern around spending on projects such as the Tour de Yorkshire and if there were measurable benefits from hosting such events.

The Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that the benefits of events like the Tour de Yorkshire were hard to quantify, but they did have an overarching positive effect on the local and regional economies.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the content of the report; and**
- ii. To recommend to Council that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.**

**14 WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19**

The Committee considered the work programme and were asked to consider items for inclusion in the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Chair took the Committee through the current work programme and explained that a number of items had been added on as a result of the meeting between the scrutiny Chairs and the Executive, held in July 2018.

The Committee noted that PLAN Selby had been removed from the work programme as a revised timetable for consideration was being worked on; it would be added back on to the work programme when this new timetable had been established by officers. As a result, the October meeting of the committee currently only had one item on it (the work programme). However, the provisional date in November was busier and would be going ahead.

With reference to the 'potential items' section of the work programme, Members acknowledged that the GDPR impacts report and the Counter Fraud Strategy, Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy and Prosecution Policy were matters to be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, and as such, should be removed from the Policy Review work programme.

Lastly, the Chair explained that the monitoring of planning enforcement performance would be more appropriate as a matter for the Scrutiny Committee, and as a result he had asked the Democratic Services Officer to discuss this with the Chair of Scrutiny, with a view to including it in the Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the work programme for 2018/19.**
- ii. To ask the Democratic Services Officer to remove the GDPR impacts report and the Counter Fraud Strategy, Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy and Prosecution Policy from the work programme, as these would be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee.**
- iii. To ask the Democratic Services Officer to discuss the monitoring of planning enforcement performance with the Chair of Scrutiny Committee,**

**with a view to including the matter on the Scrutiny Committee's work programme.**

The meeting closed at 5.47 pm.