

# Minutes

## Scrutiny Committee

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Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Tuesday, 12 March 2019
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillors W Nichols (Chair), S Duckett (Vice-Chair), D Buckle, I Chilvers, D Mackay, D White and C Pearson
Officers present:	Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer, Julie Slatter, Director of Corporate Services and Commissioning, Dave Caulfield, Director of Economic Regeneration and Place, Stuart Robinson, Head of Business Development and Improvement, Sarah Thompson, Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager, Chris Kwasniewski, Olympia Park Project Manager and Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Officer
Others present:	Councillor C Pearson, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Health and Culture
Public:	0
Press:	0

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### **52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Casling.

### **53 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **54 MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2019.

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 January 2019 for signing by the Chair.**

**55 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There was no address from the Chair.

**56 WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19 AND 2019-20**

Members considered the work programme for 2018-19 and the draft programme for 2019-20.

Members asked that Yorkshire Water be invited to the July 2019 meeting of the Committee to talk about the management of, and any future plans for, Brayton Barff.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the work programmes for 2018-19 and 2019-20.**
- ii. To ask the Democratic Services Officer to invite Yorkshire Water to the July 2019 meeting of the Committee to talk about the management of, and any future plans for, Brayton Barff.**

**57 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 - 2018/19 (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER) - S/18/24**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Business Development and Improvement which asked the Committee to consider the contents and make any comments on the Council's performance.

The quarterly performance report provided a progress update on delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 as measured by a combination of progress against priority projects/high level actions and performance against KPIs.

The Committee noted that performance had improved or exceeded targets in relation to economic growth service delivery, housebuilding, emergency and urgent repairs to council owned properties, empty homes brought back into use, missed bins, planning application processing, processing new benefit claims, average wait times for customer phone calls and advisors and the responses to Stage 2 complaints.

However, performance in relation to the re-letting of properties, average sick days, visits to combined leisure centres and delivery of savings had not gone so well.

In relation to visits to the leisure centres, the Committee suggested that

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advertising at Sherburn train station be looked into, as the service between Sherburn and Selby was now better and more regular. Northern Rail had provided community noticeboards at Sherburn station which could be easily utilised.

Members acknowledged the ongoing issues with recruiting trades staff, which had an impact on the Council's ability to turn around vacant properties, some of which were in a poor state of repair and needed a great deal of remedial work. Members were pleased to note that some temporary staff had been recruited to the repairs team in order to improve the time taken to do repairs work. The Committee were pleased to note that the winner of Selby's Apprentice of the Year award had also been nominated for a national award.

A query was raised regarding the use of the showers at the leisure centre in Selby, including unpleasant smells that had been raised by members of the public. Officers explained that they were aware of occasional difficulties with drainage on the site which was likely to be the cause of the smell.

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the Council's performance for Quarter 3 (October to December 2018).**

**58 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND BUDGET EXCEPTIONS REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2018 (Q3) - S/18/25**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which asked the Committee to consider the contents of the report and make any comments on the Council's financial results and budget exceptions.

Members noted that at the end of quarter 3, the General Fund was indicating an outturn surplus of (£71k). There were a number of variances (positive and negative) which made up the surplus, including a shortfall on planned savings, staffing savings, changes in waste and recycling income and higher investment income. The HRA was indicating an outturn surplus of (£401k), (£348k) at Q2, which was mainly driven by lower external borrowing requirements, investment income, offset by lower rents and grants.

The Committee acknowledged that planned savings for the year had already been achieved in the HRA. However, General Fund savings were showing a forecast shortfall of £198k. The capital programme was currently forecasting an underspend of (£8,425k); (£4,817k) GF and (£3,608k) HRA. In the general fund, the majority related to loans to Selby and District Housing Trust, Disabled Facilities Grants, asset maintenance and ICT systems, some of which would be required to be carried forward to 2019/20 to meet project profiles. Similarly within the HRA slippage in the Housing Development Programme would mean that funds would need to be carried forward to complete planned work.

Officers explained that the Programme for Growth was established as part of the budget setting process; the P4G projects would be delivered over multiple years, and therefore showed a total project value rather than in-year delivery.

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the Council's financial results and budget exceptions to 31 December 2018 (Quarter 3).**

**59 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE Q3 2018/19 - S/18/26**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which asked Members to consider the contents of the report and make any comments on the Council's treasury management.

The report reviewed the Council's borrowing and investment activity (Treasury Management) for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 November 2018 (Q3) and presented performance against the Prudential Indicators.

Members noted that on average the Council's investments totalled £64.3m over the first three quarters at an average rate of 0.77% and earned interest of £331k (£231k allocated to the General Fund; £100k allocated to the HRA) which was £171k above the year to date budget. Whilst cash balances were expected to reduce over the year, and Brexit was creating uncertainty in the markets, returns were forecasted in the region of £491k (£343k GF, £148k HRA), a budget surplus of £251k. It was proposed that any amount allocated to the General Fund above £300k was transferred to the contingency reserve, in line with the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Officers explained that long-term borrowing had totalled £59.3m at 30 November 2018, (£1.6m relating to the General Fund; £57.7m relating to the HRA), interest payments of £2.5m were forecast for 2018/19, a saving of £0.3m against budget, which was due to deferral of borrowing assumed for the Housing Development Programme. The Council had no short term borrowing in place as at 31 March 2018, and had not undertaken any during 2018-19. The Council's affordable limits for borrowing were not breached during this period.

The Committee acknowledged that at the end of October, £5m was invested in Property Funds, split equally between Blackrock and Threadneedle. Returns achieved against Property Fund investments would be allocated against the GF savings target. Entry fees would be treated as revenue expenses and offset against returns in year one.

Members queried the recent acquisitions by the Council of the two former Natwest banks in Selby and Tadcaster. Officers explained that the development of future plans for both of the premises had been slower than anticipated, but that a project group was looking at potential uses for both sites, and Members would be kept informed as to any developments.

The Committee were keen for the buildings to be brought back into use as soon as possible, and supported the idea of a mix of residential and commercial spaces at both the Selby and Tadcaster sites.

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the Council's treasury management update for Quarter 3.**

**60 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CENTRES - S/18/27**

The Committee received the report of the Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager and Housing Strategy Officer, which asked them to agree the scope and methodology to review and establish a Task and Finish Group, in partnership with the Council's Tenant Scrutiny Panel, to help facilitate a review of Community Centres, which would include a district-wide consultation.

Councillor C Pearson, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Health and Culture was in attendance at the meeting, and introduced the item.

The Committee noted that previous reviews have taken place in regards to Community Centres. Most notably in 2010, following a report to the Social Board, the decision was made to sell the poorly used centre at Womersley and convert the centre at Kellington into a residential unit. This left the Council with the 10 centres it had today:

- Anne Sharpe Centre, St Edwards Close, Byram
- Westfield Court Centre, Westfield Court, Eggborough
- Coultish Centre, Charles Street, Selby
- Cunliffe Centre, Petre Avenue, Selby
- Harold Mills House, North Crescent, Sherburn-in-Elmet
- Lady Popplewell Centre, Beechwood Close, Sherburn-in-Elmet
- Grove House, Grove Crescent, South Milford
- Calcaria House, Windmill Rise, Tadcaster
- Kelcbar, Kelcbar Close, Tadcaster
- Rosemary House, Rosemary Court

Reviewing the Community Centres had been suggested as a piece of work in June 2015, following a proposal from Councillor Buckle. Primary concerns were raised around the poor use of the centres, running costs and lack of community engagement. Considerable discussions took place between the Committee and Lead Officer for Community Support, but it was not felt a Task and Finish Group was required at that stage. It was however agreed that work would be undertaken to try and address the issues raised by Committee as to the use of the centres.

Members acknowledged that since 2015, public WiFi has been installed into almost every centre, and a new booking system created and managed by the Customer Contact Centre, in the hopes of encouraging

new community and private sector interest in the centres. An investment of £78,000 over two years had also been agreed in 2017 to facilitate security and access improvements. However, the same concerns regarding community usage and value for money remained, and it was therefore important that this work was revisited and progressed, and that a review was undertaken to inform a way forward.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed it would be better to pick members for the Task and Finish Group after the May 2019 local elections. However, it was suggested that Scrutiny Committee members could assist Officers with the scoping of the work in the few weeks prior to the elections; the Chair asked for volunteers to do so. Councillors Buckle, Duckett and the Chair herself volunteered to meet Officers and undertake this work in the next few weeks.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **To defer the establishing of a Task and Finish Group until after the May 2019 elections.**
- ii. **That Councillors Buckle, Duckett and Nichols meet with Officers to offer guidance and ideas for the scoping of the review into Community Centres, before the May 2019 elections.**

**61 OLYMPIA PARK - UPDATE ON PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS - S/18/28**

The Committee considered the report of the Olympia Park Project Manager which asked Members to note the work carried out to date, and the proposed next steps, to enable the delivery of Olympia Park.

Members were pleased to note that Homes England had now issued a formal offer letter to the Council confirming the award of the £8.878 million grant, subject to certain conditions being satisfied, mainly relating to the Council providing details about how the grant would be spent and ensuring that a comprehensive scheme was delivered for the whole site. The Council was required to complete a Grant Determination (funding) Agreement with Homes England by the 31 March 2019 to enable the funding to be drawn down.

The Committee understood that the HIF investment would have a major impact on accelerating the delivery of the site, targeting funding at the construction of the access road from the by-pass and contributing to the cost of utilities and site preparation works. The investment would act as a catalyst for future development, but a crucial role for the Council would be to guarantee that mechanisms were put into place to ensure that comprehensive proposals were developed for the site, and that landowners/developers contributed towards the provision of common infrastructure.

Officers explained that the HIF investment had to be spent by 31 March

2021. In order to achieve this critical deadline the Council would be working collaboratively with all of the landowners to prepare the necessary legal agreements for them to commit to the design and delivery of a comprehensive, integrated scheme for the whole site. Until legal agreements were signed with the respective landowners, this would remain a project risk that would need to be actively managed by the Council.

The Committee acknowledged that the HIF funding could be supplemented by additional investment from the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP. Up to £1.2 million of investment had been agreed in principle, subject to the approval of a Detailed Business Case, which was being prepared. It was anticipated that this would be considered by the LEP's Board for approval in June 2019.

Members noted that to help ensure the delivery of a comprehensive scheme, the Council was developing a planning strategy for the Olympia Park site based on the preparation of a Planning Brief and Masterplan for the area, likely to be published in consultation draft form in June 2019. The document would set out design principles and an overall vision for the site, including the indicative location of key infrastructure such the primary school, neighbourhood centre and open space and it will establish a planning framework for determining future planning applications. The document was dependent on approval by the Council's Executive, after which it would be subject to a 6 week public consultation period in June/July. Representations made at this stage would be considered prior to the document being formally approved in the autumn of 2019.

It was expected that a detailed planning application for the construction of the access road was likely to be submitted in June 2019 in order to meet the HIF investment timescales. Subsequent outline/hybrid planning applications for the development of the site for housing, employment and community uses would be submitted by the landowners and/or their development partners towards the end of 2019 once the Development Brief and Masterplan had been approved by the Council.

Members were pleased to hear that the Council had established a strong governance structure to oversee the development of the Olympia Park project that included a Board (chaired by the Director of Economic Regeneration and Place) and a Project Team that met on a monthly basis.

The Council was continuing its important enabling role, brokering meetings between the landowners who control the site and their potential development partners, to ensure that a comprehensive development strategy was agreed for the site for a scheme that had appropriate links to the town centre and neighbouring communities.

Members asked Officers to check a recently submitted planning application for two additional silos by Cemex who were present occupiers of the Olympia Park site. Officers explained to the Committee that the

impacts on future residential development of existing employment activities on the site, such as noise and smells, were being considered carefully as part of the design of the scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

**To note the work carried out to date and the proposed next steps to enable the delivery of Olympia Park.**

**62 EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE - S/18/29**

Members received the report of the Head of Operational Services which asked the Committee to note the Council's arrangements for emergency planning and the incidents for which an emergency response had been necessary during the last 12 months.

The Committee were pleased to note that during the last year there had only been one incident which had required the North Yorkshire Resilience Forum to notify NYLRF of an incident which may have a serious public or community impact in the Selby District. This related to a methane gas leak in Tadcaster, which was still a live incident.

Members were informed that a multi-agency group including Selby District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police, NY Fire Service, Northern Gas Network, Yorkshire Water, Public Health, Northern Powergrid, and the Environment Agency had responded to the incident.

The Committee noted that the incident was first reported on 23 December 2018 and was an unusual event which had focused on identifying the source of the gas and ensuring the safety of the community affected until such time as the source could be found and mitigated. In addition to the live incident, the Council was also involved in planning for the Tour de Yorkshire, the UCI and Brexit.

Members suggested that the Committee could undertake further work on flood preparedness, emergency planning and how to encourage flood wardens to volunteer. Members agreed that North Yorkshire County Council's emergency planning lead, Wendy Muldoon, be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to talk about flooding and its links to emergency planning.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the Council's arrangements for emergency planning and the incident for which an emergency response had been necessary during the last 12 months.**
- ii. To ask the Democratic Services Officer to add NYCC Emergency Planning to the Committee's work plan for 2019-20, and to invite Wendy Muldoon from NYCC to talk to Members about flood preparedness and flood warden schemes.**



The meeting closed at 5.53 pm.