

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Tuesday, 17 April 2018
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillor J Deans (Chair), Councillor M Hobson (Vice-Chair), Councillor J Cattanach, Councillor M McCartney, Councillor K Arthur, Councillor D Hutchinson and Councillor J Shaw-Wright
Officers present:	Drew Fussey, Customer, Business and Revenues Service Manager, Aimi Brookes, Contracts Team Leader and Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Officer
Others present:	Councillor C Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources and Ben Jewell, Graduate Trainee
Public:	0
Press:	0

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

25 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2018.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 13 March 2018 for signing by the Chair.

26 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Chair welcomed Councillor C Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources, to the meeting.

27 THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING RESIDENTS AND TENANTS TO CLAIM AND MANAGE THEIR UNIVERSAL CREDIT ENTITLEMENT - PR/17/9

The Committee received a report from the Customer, Business and Revenues Service Manager and were asked to note the impact Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) would have on HRA rent arrears and additional workload across the Operational Services team, and consider and comment on the proposals to reduce the risk of hardship to claimants and increasing HRA debt.

The Committee noted that Universal Credit (UC) aimed to ensure claimants were better off in work than on benefits. There had been many criticisms of UC as it had been rolled out across the United Kingdom since May 2016. The government had responded to these concerns but the key impacts of hardship for claimants and especially the impact of UC on rent arrears remained a potential concern.

To help the Council understand the likely impact on UC claimants that live in the district, Officers had gathered information from a range of sources to provide a national context alongside local impact from visiting neighbouring local authorities that are already UCFS. The work undertaken to predict the impact of UCFS had been thorough. It was clear from the research that workloads across Operational Services would increase and HRA debt was likely to rise as more people claimed UC.

Members expressed concern regarding the lack of integration between Council systems and software and that used by the DWP; therefore, the resulting manual inputting that would be required when the DWP notified the Council of changes to individuals' circumstances was unavoidable. It was noted that this was also an issue of concern across the country for all local authorities.

The Committee was pleased to note that Selby District Council had been proactive in preparing for the implementation of UC, and had planned for the support that would be required by some recipients, such as personal budgeting support. Digital support and advice would be offered to those who needed to apply for UC but weren't used to using computers, and individuals or families with complex debt issues would be referred on to the Citizens Advice Bureau and other organisations that would be best placed to assist them.

Some Members felt that information on UC should be available in hard copy form, perhaps as a leaflet, that could be delivered or given out by the Council staff, such as Neighbourhood Officers. Officers confirmed that

they would raise the matter with the DWP at an upcoming meeting, and that if such leaflets were available, they would endeavour to make these available to residents.

Members were pleased with the level of preparation undertaken by the authority and complimented Officers on the work they had done so far.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the impact Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) would have on HRA rent arrears and additional workload across the Operational Services Team.**
- ii) To note and endorse the proposals to reduce the risk of hardship to claimants and increasing HRA debt.**
- iii) To note with concern the lack of software integration between the DWP and Council systems, and ask that Officers make representations to the Government on the matter.**
- iv) To compliment Officers on the level of preparation undertaken in the last few months to support residents and tenants to claim and manage their UC entitlement.**

28 REVIEW OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES BYELAWS - PR/17/10

The Committee received a report from the Contracts Team Leader which asked it to endorse the revised park byelaws for referral to full Council for formal adoption.

The Committee noted that the Regulation of Pleasure Ground byelaws were adopted for Selby Park in 1899 and amended in 1925 to include four other sites (Selby Recreation Ground, Leeds Road Recreation Ground, East Common Recreation Ground and Scott Road Recreation Ground). The byelaws were outdated and the Council had been through a prescriptive legal process to update them to ensure they reflect how the authority currently used its open spaces.

Following a previously unsuccessful application for approval to the Secretary of State (SoS) to amend the byelaws in 2016, a second application was submitted in November 2017. This application removed the amendments to the model byelaws that had been proposed in the first application. The model byelaws had been developed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). On 9 February 2018 the Council received formal notification from the SoS that the second application had been approved; the Council gave notice of its intention to adopt new byelaws on 22 February 2018. The proposed byelaws would go before Full Council for adoption on 15 May 2018.

Officers confirmed that the byelaws only applied to the five named parks owned and managed by Selby District Council, but that should Parish Councils wish to adopt byelaws for their own parks and open spaces, they could follow the same process.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Council would be publicising the change to the byelaws in a number of ways, such as newspaper adverts, social media, press releases and signage. Copies of the new byelaws would be deposited at the Council Offices, Contact Centre and North Yorkshire County Council.

Members also noted that the signage in Selby Park would be replaced as part of the wider investment and improvement work.

RESOLVED:

To endorse the revised park byelaws and refer to full Council for adoption.

29 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE - PR/17/11

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Officer which asked them to agree the annual report for 2017/18, and to authorise the Chair to agree the final version of the Annual Report 2017/18 following the inclusion of details from the current meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) To agree the Annual Report of the Policy Review Committee 2017/18, submitted by the Chair of the Committee.**
- ii) To authorise the Chair of the Committee to agree the final version of the Annual Report 2017/18 following inclusion of details from the meeting on 17 April 2018.**

30 POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 - PR/17/12

The Committee considered the draft Work Programme and were asked to agree items for inclusion in the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Chair emphasised the importance of Members suggesting items for inclusion on the Work Programme, and asked that suggestions be sent to both himself and the Democratic Services Officer.

Members identified a review of the Council's Enforcement Policy as a piece of work that they would be interested in undertaking.

RESOLVED:

- i) To agree the draft Work Programme for 2018/19.**
- ii) To include on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19 a review of the Council's Enforcement Policy.**

The meeting closed at 5.55 pm.