

Selby District Council



Minutes

Executive

Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Thursday, 12 April 2018
Time:	4.00 pm
Present:	Councillors M Crane (Chair), J Mackman (Vice-Chair), C Lunn, C Metcalfe and C Pearson
Also Present:	Councillors Arthur and Jordan (from minute 94 onwards)
Officers Present:	Janet Waggott (Chief Executive), Gillian Marshall (Solicitor to the Council), Mike James (Media and Communications Manager), Michelle Dinsdale (Senior Policy and Performance Officer) (for minute item 93), Drew Fussey (Customer, Business and Revenues Service Manager), Sarah Thompson (Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager) and Palbinder Mann (Democratic Services Manager)
Public:	0
Press:	1

NOTE: Only minute numbers 94 to 95 are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is 5pm on Thursday 26 April 2018. Decisions not called in may be implemented from Friday 27 April 2018.

90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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There were no apologies for absence.

91 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Executive considered the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2018. The following amendments were suggested:

- To amend the second paragraph under minute item 83 to read as follows *“The Head of Communities, Partnerships and Customers explained that the strategy was a key element of the Economic Development Framework and would be used to invest, strengthen and promote assets of the district along with securing investment.”*
- To amend the third paragraph under minute item 84 to read as follows *“The Executive requested access to staff should be maintained at Selby and that there should be direct access to Legal Services at NYCC. It was also requested that Selby priorities should be given due care and attention.”*
- To amend the last sentence of the fourth paragraph under minute item 84 to read as follows *“It was also explained that there was regular dialogue with NYCC where the priorities of Selby would be discussed.”*

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2018 with the above amendments for signing by the Chair.

92 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

93 CORPORATE PLAN 2015-2020: 2018 UPDATE

Councillor Crane, Leader of the Council presented the report which presented an update to the Council’s Corporate Plan that set out the key priorities for the next two years and beyond.

The Executive were supportive of the documents however suggested the following amendments/comments:

- On page 17 of the agenda, within the sixth paragraph in the introduction the phrase ‘empty homes work’ should be amended to ‘empty homes programme’,
- On page 17 of the agenda, within the same paragraph, clarity was sought on the wording relating to the increased

visits to leisure centres as recent performance reports to the Executive may have included different information.

- On page 19, the third bullet point under the priority heading 'To make Selby District a great place to do business' should be amended to read as *"Work with education providers to support training and to provide appropriate skills for work"*.
- On page 23, the third bullet point under the priorities for the Economic Development Framework and Action Plan should be amended to read as *"Engage with indigenous business through our SME Advisory Service to support and provide resilience"*.
- On page 24, within the first bullet point under the heading 'Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015', the wording *"and onsite for the family housing at Byram"* should be removed as there was already a reference to Byram in the same paragraph.
- On page 27, the first bullet point under the heading 'We will focus on the following things in the next two years' should be amended to read as *"We will work with customers to get a better understanding of what our customers want and need to improve the quality of the customer experience and standards for customer service delivery"*.
- On page 28, within the fifth bullet point under the heading 'Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015', the wording "wider range on" should be amended to read *"wider range of"*.
- On page 29, within the fifth bullet point the wording 'ensuring the chosen option continue to deliver' should be amended to read as *"ensuring the chosen option continues to deliver"*. It was also felt this paragraph should refer to the customers and residents and not just be about the authority.
- On page 30, in reference to the paragraph on business rates, it was felt that greater clarity was needed to inform residents that the Council was not just increasing business rates to invest in the Programme for Growth but rather using one off payments received.
- The Executive felt that the document should be circulated more widely and felt that one option would be to produce a special edition of Citizenlink based on the document. It was acknowledged however that further consideration needed to be given to the costs for this option.

RESOLVED:

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To note and endorse the updated Corporate Plan, prior to seeking approval at Council on 24 April 2018.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Corporate Plan 2015-20 sets clear long term ambitions for the Selby district underpinned by a set of clearly articulated priorities. However, those priorities were born of circumstances that prevailed over three years ago. The time is now right to re-appraise those priorities in light of the circumstances that face the district in 2018.

Furthermore, it is a chance to refine the broad proposals set out in the original plan and set the programme of activities for the next two years - providing a clear picture of the expected outcomes, particularly as they relate to the quality of people's lives. This enables the Council to better sequence activities, performance manage them and deploy capacity more effectively by tackling the things that are most important.

94 THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS AND TENANTS TO CLAIM AND MANAGE THEIR UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC) ENTITLEMENT

Councillor Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which outlined the Council's approach to support residents and tenants to claim and manage their Universal Credit (UC) entitlement.

It was explained that UC replaced six existing benefits and combined them into one payment that would be paid monthly in arrears. The Executive were informed that as a result of the implementation of UC, and based upon the experience of authorities who had already implemented the UC system, it was expected that there would be a rise in Housing Revenue Account (HRA) arrears and a rise in council tax support claims.

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that each transaction had to be manually inputted as there was no integration between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the leading revenue and benefits systems. It was noted that this would result in a significant increase in council tax work albeit that each change was minor.

The Customer, Business & Revenues Service Manager further explained that the transition to UC would be incremental over the next 12 to 18 months however the Council had been proactive in their approach to minimise hardship on those claiming UC and minimise any HRA rent arrears.

In response to a query concerning the impact of the Autumn

Statement on homelessness and emergency accommodation, the Customer, Business & Revenues Service Manager explained that the Statement had outlined that housing benefit could still be paid to those in emergency accommodation and that the Council would be able to act on behalf of someone who was going to be made homeless.

The Executive agreed to amend the wording of the second recommendation to replace the 'will' with the word 'may' as from the research conducted with other authorities it was not clear what the impact may be.

RESOLVED:

- i) To support the proposals to reduce the risk of hardship to claimants and increasing HRA debt.**
- ii) To note the impact Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) may have on HRA rent arrears and additional workload across the Operational Services team.**

REASON FOR DECISION

To enable Operational Services to adopt and embed the proposals explained in this report to establish a "Make Every Contact Count" principle in relation to UC, reducing any risk of hardship for those needing to claim UC, and mitigating the possible rise in HRA arrears.

95 PRIVATE HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

Councillor Pearson, Lead Executive Member for Housing, Leisure, Health and Culture presented the report that sought approval for the new Private Housing Assistance Policy following consultation. It was explained that the new policy introduced some new discretionary grants and loans as well as changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant.

The Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager explained that the policy would allow the use of discretionary powers to offer a disabled facilities grant without a means test for up to £5,000. It was noted however that an assessment of the disabled person's needs would still need to be carried out by an Occupational Therapist.

In response to a query concerning how much of the grant allocated by the government had been used, the Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager explained that although not all of the grant had been used, the spend would increase next year as there would be increased promotion of the service

The Executive were supportive of the policy

RESOLVED:

To approve the Private Housing Assistance Policy for adoption.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To allow the Council to provide discretionary private sector assistance. Amendments introduced through the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 allow housing authorities the flexibility to provide discretionary assistance but they must publish a policy and exercise their power in accordance with their policy.

The meeting closed at 4.55 pm.