

Selby District Council



Agenda

Meeting: **Executive**
Date: **Thursday, 12 April 2018**
Time: **4.00 pm**
Venue: **Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT**
To: **Councillor M Crane (Chair), Councillor J Mackman (Vice-Chair), Councillor C Lunn, Councillor C Metcalfe and Councillor C Pearson**

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 10)**

The Executive is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2018.

3. **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.

4. Corporate Plan 2015-2020: 2018 Update (Pages 11 - 30)

Report E/17/455 presents an update to the Corporate Plan that sets out the key priorities for the next two years – and beyond.

5. The Council's Approach to Support Residents and Tenants to Claim and Manage Their Universal Credit (UC) Entitlement (Pages 31 - 42)

Report E/17/56 outlines the Council's approach to support residents and tenants to claim and manage their Universal Credit (UC) entitlement.

6. Private Housing Assistance Policy (Pages 43 - 62)

Report E/17/57 seeks approval for the new Private Housing Assistance Policy following consultation.

Janet Waggott

Janet Waggott
Chief Executive

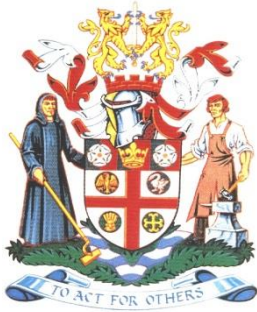
Date of next meeting
Thursday, 24 May 2018 at 4.00 pm

For enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Palbinder Mann, on 01757 292207 or pmann@selby.gov.uk

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Selby District Council



Minutes

Executive

Venue:	Committee Room, Civic Centre, Selby
Date:	Thursday 1 March 2018
Time:	4pm
Present:	Councillors Crane (Chair), Lunn and Mackman
Also Present:	Councillors Buckle and Hobson.
Officers present:	Janet Waggott, Chief Executive, Dave Caulfield, Director of Economic Regeneration and Place, Gillian Marshall, Solicitor to the Council, June Rothwell, Head of Operational Services, Martin Grainger, Head of Planning, Mike James, Communications and Marketing Manager, Chris Watson, Policy and Performance Officer (for minute item 81), Angela Crossland, Head of Communities, Partnerships and Customers (for minute item 83), Phil Hiscott, Property Management Team Leader (for minute item 88) and Palbinder Mann, Democratic Services Manager.
Public:	0
Press:	1

NOTE: Only minute numbers 81 to 85 and 87 to 88 are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is 5pm on Wednesday 14 March 2018. Decisions not called in may be implemented from Thursday 15 March 2018.

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Metcalfe. The Leader of the Council informed the Executive that Councillor Musgrave had stepped down from the Executive and thanked him for all of his work. The Leader of the Council explained that the Executive would continue to have four members in the interim and that he would be picking up Councillor Musgrave's portfolio.

79. MINUTES

The Executive considered the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2018.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2018 for signing by the Chair.

80. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

81. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 3 – 2017/18 (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER)

Councillor Crane, Leader of the Council presented the report that 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 key performance indicators (KPIs).

The Leader of the Council stated that very positive feedback had been received from a number of residents regarding staff undertaking waste collections in the recent difficult weather conditions. He also expressed his thanks for the work undertaken.

Concern was raised at the figures relating to the number of visits to Selby Leisure Centre and it was stated that work needed to be done with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to increase the figure. It was felt work needed to be done on the marketing and promoting both the Leisure Centre and Summit.

With regard to the staff survey, the Executive requested feedback on the responses provided by staff.

A query was raised on the average time to re let vacant properties. The Head of Operational Services explained that additional funding had been approved in the recent budget for extra resource in this area. It was also noted that when properties were made

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vacant, they tended to be in a poor condition and required work before they were made in a condition to be let.

RESOLVED:

To note and approve the reports

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To enable the Council to demonstrate progress on delivering the Corporate Plan Priorities to make Selby District a great place.

82. DRAX REPOWER PROJECT – NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Councillor Mackman, Lead Executive Member for Place Shaping presented the report which set out the proposal and the legislative background to the anticipated Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) proposal for Drax Power Station and how such projects were dealt with.

The Lead Executive Member for Place Shaping explained that Drax would be making an application to the Planning Inspectorate however the final decision would be made by the Secretary of State. It was noted that a decision on the proposal must be made within 12 months of it being validated.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report and to agree to support this Drax Repower NSIP application in principle, subject to agreement in relation to specific and localised matters of detail.**
- ii) To authorise the Director of Economic Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Place Shaping to agree the Local Impact Report, Statement(s) of Common Ground, the content of the Draft DCO and all further necessary representations by the District Council, together with post decision monitoring of planning conditions and enforcement of the Development Consent Order.**

REASON FOR THE DECISION

Timescales for commenting on the DCO Application once it is submitted are embedded in statute and it is important that appropriate delegation arrangements are in place so that the Council is able to meet the deadlines which are set by the Inspectorate.

83. VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Councillor Crane, Leader of the Council presented the report which outlined the Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan.

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 and secure investment.

The Executive were supportive of the strategy and action plan however stated that actions needed to be prioritised to ensure they were sustainable and that there was capacity to deliver. It was requested that an update report be brought back before the Executive each year to monitor progress.

RESOLVED:

To approve the strategy and action plan including an initial outline budget for delivery.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To agree the recommendation as a key element in delivering Strategic Priority 2 of the Economic Development Framework: 'Making Selby District a great place to live and work'.

84. BETTER TOGETHER LEGAL

Councillor Crane, Leader of the Council presented the report which set out the results of the review of the current trial to integrate legal services as part of the 'Better Together' collaboration with North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).

The Leader of the Council explained that the trial had been a success however improvement was needed in some areas. It was clarified that the Solicitor to the Council would continue to be employed directly by Selby District Council.

The Executive requested that a presence of staff should be maintained at Selby, there should be direct access services to

Legal Services at NYCC and that it was important that Selby priorities were given due care and attention.

The Solicitor to the Council explained that a presence would be maintained at Selby and access to legal services at NYCC would be agreed in the Service Level Agreement. It was also explained that there was regular dialogue with NYCC where the priorities of Selby could be discussed.

It was requested that there should be update report brought back to the Executive in 12 months to provide an update on progress. It was agreed to add this to the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- i) To approve that with effect from 1 April 2018, there be a formal integration of SDC's legal service with NYCC's legal service;**
- ii) To provide delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of Council to finalise the terms of the agreement with NYCC;**
- iii) To authorise the Chief Executive to transfer the affected employees to North Yorkshire County Council under the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) provisions.**
- iv) To provide an update report to the Executive in 12 months.**

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To deliver service resilience and improvement, and operational efficiencies.

85. FAIR FUNDING CONSULTATION

Councillor Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which provided information on the Fair Funding Review consultation by the Government.

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that the Council would request that Internal Drainage Boards should raise a separate precept similar to that raised by the Fire

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and Police services rather than being funded directly from the local authority.

Concern was raised that the funding received per head was lower than that provided to areas in London and it was requested that there should be a fairer distribution of funding.

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources and the Leader of the Council to submit a response on behalf of the Council which takes into account the comments made by the Executive.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To ensure a response to the consultation is submitted by the due date and allow the views of the Executive to be included in the consultation response.

86. PRIVATE SESSION

The Executive moved into private session to discuss the next two items.

RESOLVED:

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, the meeting be not open to the Press and public during discussion of the following item as there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act as described in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To ensure the Executive compiles with the correct legislation when discussion private and confidential items.

87. LEASE OF LAND AT BURN AIRFIELD

Councillor Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which outlined the current position regarding the site at Burn Airfield, Selby, currently occupied for agricultural use and the proposal to manage this going forward in line with the Council's proposals for this site.

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that the former leaseholder had passed away and subsequently the lease had not been renewed. It was proposed to enter into a tenancy with the son of the previous tenant.

It was noted that this item had been deferred from a previous meeting to allow further discussions to take place regarding the insertion of break clause for the Council. The Head of Operational Services explained that further discussions had taken place with the agents acting on behalf of the Council however it had been advised that it would not be possible for the Council to insert a break clause as requested. The Executive were informed that the Council was able to give 12 months' notice to the tenant at any time however costs would be associated with this.

The Executive also requested details of the other tenancies associated with the Burn airfield site.

RESOLVED:

To approve the terms of the proposed lease for the 47.25 acres of agricultural land in respect of which a new lease is required.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

- *To ensure an income stream is retained by the Council for the 47.25 acres of agricultural land.*
- *To provide certainty that any lease agreed will ensure the Council is able to take back possession at a time approximately co-terminus with the Gliding Club of Burn Airfield to allow development of the Burn Airfield to progress.*

88. COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL UNIT RENTAL POLICY

Councillor Lunn, Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which outlined the current position in respect of the four commercial property sites currently owned by the Council, outlined options for rent increases and proposals for the future management of the units.

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that the Council should have carried out a rent review every three years however this had not been consistently undertaken and implemented for the industrial units. It was explained that a recent review had been undertaken and that following calculations, rent increases were being proposed which had met with objections from the tenants. It was noted that four options for consideration had been outlined in the report.

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The Leader of the Council informed the Executive that he had agreed to let Councillor Buckle, Ward Councillor for Sherburn in Elmet to speak on this item. The following discussion took place:

- The tenants for the industrial units at Swordfish Way had raised concern at the large rent increases proposed and felt this was unfair.
- Concern had been raised by the tenants at Swordfish Way regarding the lack of maintenance undertaken by the Council on the sites and the lack of response to communication on this in the past. It was explained that the Council had met all of its legal requirements with regard to maintenance of the units and had undertaken a condition survey of the units identifying future maintenance requirements. It was also noted that additional funding had been agreed in the Council's budget to undertake further maintenance work to improve the general condition of the units,
- A staggered rent rise should be implemented to demonstrate support for local businesses.

Discussion took place on the options outlined in the report and clarification was sought from officers on the differences between the options outlined along with the financial and legal implications. Following the discussion and responses received, the Executive were supportive of phasing in the increase over five years with a further rent review to be carried out at three years. It was agreed to word the resolution to this effect to avoid any confusion.

RESOLVED:

To agree to a phased increase of rents over five years with a rent review to be carried out at three years.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

- *To deliver the objectives of the Asset Management Strategy.*
- *To enable implementation of outstanding rent increases to established tenants, ensuring a continued income stream for the Council.*
- *To affirm the approach to implementation of rent increases for new tenants.*
- *To standardise tenancy agreements across the industrial stock, ensuring management consistency moving forwards.*

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The meeting closed 5.27pm.

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Selby District Council

REPORT

Reference: E/17/55

Item 4 - Public



To: The Executive
Date: 12 April 2018
Status: Non Key Decision
Report Published: 4 April 2018
Author: Stuart Robinson, Head of Business Development & Improvement
Executive Member: Cllr Mark Crane, Leader of the Council
Lead Officer: Janet Waggott, Chief Executive

Title: Corporate Plan 2015-2020: 2018 Update

Summary:

Selby District Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2020 ('the Plan') was approved by Council in February 2015. It sets out the Council's vision to make Selby district a *great place: to do business; to enjoy life; to make a difference; and to deliver great value.*

Following a number of changes - including: the structure of the Council; the senior management team; the operating context; and delivery of a range of successes – it is time to take stock and set the direction for the remaining two years of the Plan.

This report presents an update to the Corporate Plan that sets out the key priorities for the next two years – and beyond.

Recommendation:

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

Reasons for recommendation

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.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 Council approved the Corporate Plan 2015-20 in February 2015. The Plan was developed on the back of a great deal of evidence gathering, engagement, research and analysis. The Plan helps us to focus our efforts on what matters most to our people and businesses to secure a sound future for Selby District.

1.2 The Plan set out the Council vision *to make Selby a great place*. This was underpinned by four broad priorities:

- *A great place...to do business;*
- *A great place...to enjoy life;*
- *A great place...to make a difference; and*
- *A Council...delivering great value*

Each priority was underpinned by a number of objectives, the achievement of which would define success around delivering the overall priority.

1.3 Subsequently, the Council has been delivering against these priorities for the last three years. Progress has been measured by a combination of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (with targets) and project delivery milestones. Monitoring has been undertaken via quarterly corporate performance reporting to the Executive (see: <http://www.selby.gov.uk/quarterly-performance-reports>). Annual Reports (<http://www.selby.gov.uk/annual-report-2016-2017>) provide a yearly summary of progress.

2. The Report

2.1 Significant changes have occurred over the past three years. Examples include:

- Changes to the Council's operating model, including an organisation-wide restructure in 2016/17;
- A new Chief Executive and senior management team, bringing in expertise and experience from across a range of backgrounds; and
- A changing operating context – both nationally, including ongoing public sector austerity, and locally, including the positive impacts of some of our successes.

As a result, it is sensible to re-appraise the priorities set out in the Plan.

- 2.2 Furthermore, it is an opportunity to refine the broad and wide ranging proposals set out in the original plan and break down 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.
- 2.3 This approach is in line with a recommendation from the LGA Peer Challenge Team following their review of the Council last November. It will also provide an opportunity to re-set the corporate language we use around our priority areas of focus and ensure the wording is reflected in other corporate documents. This will ensure there is read-through between what the vision is and what is being delivered and achieved and will support our efforts to communicate effectively with residents and other stakeholders.
- 2.4 The attached document – Corporate Plan 2015-20: 2018 Update (the 2018 Update) – is the result of:
- reviewing KPI performance and progress on delivery of plans since 2015;
 - analysis of customer feedback;
 - the outputs of other strategic planning – such as the publication of the Economic Development Framework; and
 - analysis of service priorities and plans for 2018 and beyond.
- 2.5 The 2018 Update is shorter than the original Plan and covers the following:
- introduction and purpose of the Update;
 - re-affirmation of the vision and priorities first set out in 2015;
 - a reminder of what success will look like;
 - summary of progress since 2015;
 - proposed delivery priorities for 2018-20 (and, in some cases, beyond); and
 - a financial summary.
- 2.6 A detailed, SMART delivery plan is being produced to support operational delivery. Progress on delivering this plan will be monitored via the corporate performance management arrangements and reported quarterly to Executive.
- 2.7 It is not proposed to produce hard copies of the 2018 Update; it will be published on the Council's website and shared electronically. However, it is suggested that the Update be turned into a printed leaflet, e.g. for distribution to libraries.

3. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters

Legal Issues

3.1 None

Financial Issues

3.2.1 Delivery of the actions highlighted in the 2018 Update will be done through current/planned budgets.

3.2.2 The cost of producing a printed leaflet is likely to cost less than £200.

Other Policy Matters

3.3.1 The Corporate Plan is a key part of the corporate Policy Framework – and is therefore subject to approval at full Council.

3.3.2 An Equality, Diversity and Community Impact Screening was undertaken for the original plan. This has been updated to reflect the 2018 Update.

4. Conclusion

4.1 We have reviewed the current Corporate Plan and refreshed it – the four objectives remain the same. Three years into the Plan we have made a number of significant achievements and are now clear as to what will be delivered in the remaining two years of the Plan.

5. Background Documents

None

Contact Officer:

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Corporate Plan 2015-20: 2018 Update

Making Selby District a great place...

Selby District Corporate Plan

2015-20: 2018 Update



Our Corporate Plan helps us focus our efforts on what matters most to our people and our businesses to secure a sound future for Selby District.



Introduction

It's exciting times for Selby District, at the heart of Yorkshire. We're seeing significant business investment and great quality homes, opening up new opportunities for people living and working in our area.

As a Council we've been encouraging, supporting and facilitating this growth, using our resources to help deliver on the things we know are most important to our communities.

We set out our long-term plans in 2015 to make the Selby district a great place **to do business**, a great place **to enjoy life** and a great place **to make a difference**, supported by our council **delivering great value**. In just three years we've transformed the way in which we do business to deliver on these ambitions. This type of transformational change cannot happen overnight, of course, but we believe we've made significant progress on our journey.

That's also the conclusion of a recent Local Government Association 'peer challenge', in which we invited colleagues from councils across the country to look at what we're doing and how we're doing it. Their conclusions demonstrate the great strides we've made and the positive impact this continues to have for our district.

Unlike many councils across the country, we're investing: investing in the things that will make the biggest long-term difference to our area. This means investing in how we support business growth, investing in our planning service to achieve our ambition of making it one of the best in the country, investing in building our own and Selby District Housing Trust new affordable homes as well as supporting private developments where homes are needed, investing in supporting our towns to reach their full potential.

But it's equally as important not to lose sight of the everyday support we give our communities. We're delivering core public services day in, day out to people who need them. And we've been making great strides in these services too, such as benefit claims online, new houses being built, empty homes work, our campaigns resulting in a reduction in litter, increased visits to leisure centres, street cleanliness.

This is about us delivering great value for our taxpayers each and every day. Since 2015 we've been delivering these services more effectively and efficiently. We've achieved long-term savings of £5m since 2010/11.

We cannot do this alone, however, and our approach to delivering our long-term plans is one of partnership and cooperation. Working alongside our Local Enterprise Partnerships to deliver growth, working alongside our County Council colleagues – through our Better Together partnership – to improve everyday services and deliver better value for money, working with our communities to deliver lasting change on the things that matter most.

Whilst we must be flexible in our approach, we continue to focus on the big ambitions we set out in 2015 to make our district **a great place** to be.

Leader of Selby District Council
Cllr Mark Crane



Chief Executive of Selby District Council
Janet Waggott



Why are we updating our plan for 2018-20?

Our Corporate Plan sets out our big ambitions for our district. It focuses our work on delivering the things that are important.

Throughout everything we do we refer back to these ambitions, as everything we do should support us to make Selby District a great place to do business, a great place to enjoy life and a great place to make a difference, supported by the Council delivering great value.

We need some flexibility in how we achieve this of course. The world in 2015 is very different from the world in 2018. We'll continue to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities. Having in place some solid core ambitions for our area enables us to focus on what matters and deliver our vision.

Our recent Local Government Association peer challenge recommended that we revisit our Corporate Plan each year to ensure it's still right for us. This is what we're doing with this version. The over-arching ambitions remain exactly the same: the way in which we reach these ambitions will have evolved to reflect the changing environment in which we operate.

It's also about making the most of new opportunities as they arise. For example, supporting emerging business developments and maximising the value of new funding opportunities. To do this we must be flexible and agile.

This plan takes us to 2020, at which point we will carry out a more fundamental review of our ambitions and how we – Selby District Council – can deliver these through our own work and by working with partners.



A reminder of our priorities up to 2020

We continue to work to four key ambitions for our community and for ourselves. Delivery of these ambitions will help us to achieve our vision *to make Selby District a great place*.

To make Selby District a great place to do business

- Secure new investment in the district
- Improve employment opportunities
- Work with education providers to support training and development to skill them for work
- Work with people and businesses to help our market towns reach their potential

To make Selby District a great place to enjoy life

- Improve the supply of housing
- Improve healthy life choices

To make Selby District a great place to make a difference

- Empower and involve people in decisions about their area and their service
- Enable people to get involved, volunteer and contribute to delivering services locally
- Facilitate people to use online channels to access services

Selby District Council delivering great value

- Work with others and co-develop the way in which services are delivered
- Commission those best placed to deliver services on our behalf
- Communicate well with customers to help us understand what matters, to listen and learn
- Help people to access services digitally

We've been reporting progress on all these ambitions in our annual reports and through our residents' newspaper, Citizenlink. Copies can be found on our website – selby.gov.uk



A new team

One of the big changes at Selby District Council since the original plan was agreed is the team of senior councillors and officers who are leading the delivery of our priorities.

The Council's **Executive** is responsible for agreeing most council policies, working within the broad policy framework set by Full Council. The Council Leader is Councillor Mark Crane. Councillor Crane leads the Executive which comprises:

Cllr Mark Crane

Leader of the Council & Executive member with responsibility for external relations and partnerships



Cllr John Mackman

Deputy Leader of the Council & Executive member with responsibility for place shaping

Cllr Cliff Lunn

Executive member with responsibility for finance, resources and Partnerships



Cllr Chris Metcalfe

Executive member with responsibility for communities and economic development

Cllr Chris Pearson

Executive member with responsibility for housing, leisure, health and culture



Council officers implement policy and are responsible for the running of day-to-day services. The biggest change has been the creation of a new Leadership Team of senior officers – including a new Chief Executive, Janet Waggott. Janet leads a team comprising:



Janet Waggott Chief Executive, Selby District Council & Assistant Chief Executive, North Yorkshire County Council

Julie Slatter Director of Corporate Services and Commissioning



Dave Caulfield Director of Economic Regeneration and place

Karen Iveson
Chief Finance Officer, Selby District Council & Assistant Director Strategic Resources, North Yorkshire County Council



Gill Marshall
Solicitor to the Council, Monitoring Officer & Deputy Returning Officer

Our plan for 2018-20: To make Selby District a great place to do business

We will achieve this by

- Increasing the levels of investment in the district
- Facilitating the creation of more and higher paid jobs
- Creating the conditions for the current and future workforce to achieve higher levels of skills and qualifications
- Making our market towns more attractive places to live, work and visit

Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015

- Substantial investment in manufacturing announced by Legal & General and Celotex for sites at Sherburn in Elmet and Eggborough, leading to at least 530 direct and indirect jobs.
- Helped to develop proposals for major new investment at the former Kellingley Colliery site, (which could bring up to 3,000 new jobs to the district).
- Negotiated a major Employer Training Agreement as part of the planning application to redevelop Kellingley Colliery, which will provide significant opportunities for local people
- Launched our Economic Development Framework at the very first Selby District Economic Growth Conference with over 120 business people from across Yorkshire attending.
- Continued to support traineeships and apprenticeships, with four graduate trainees and three apprentices since 2015 along with procurement framework contracts which will see local apprentices given the opportunity to work on new Council Housing schemes.
- Helping to develop plans to build on the Success of the Yorkshire Studios at Church Fenton (recently home to a major ITV production) to make it a hub for film-making and creative industries (Create Yorkshire) which offers the potential to deliver 2,000 jobs in a new, growing and high-value sector for Selby District.
- Supported the recovery of Tadcaster following the 2015 flood – including support to businesses, the Tour de Yorkshire start and re-opening of Tadcaster bridge.
- Set up a new partnership with Historic England to support sustainable development in our market towns, helping to protect and enhance the character of these towns.
- Introduced a new Car Park Strategy, which will see £900k spent in car park improvements across the district to support the vitality and viability of our town centres.



We will focus on the following things in the next **two years**:

- We will progress the key priorities identified in our Economic Development Framework and Action Plan to support our economic growth ambitions including:
 - Making the case for the necessary physical infrastructure, road, rail and public transport investment required to unlock economic growth
 - Attract new business investments to create employment opportunities in priority growth sectors through our Inward Investment work
 - Engage with indigenous business through our SME Advisory Service to support and resilience
 - Align housing requirements to economic ambitions to create sustainable communities
 - Increase apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities to meet current and future workforce development needs
 - Identify and seek to address existing health and transport barriers to learning and employment
- We will work proactively with key landowners and developers to unlock the significant potential of our key transformational development sites, including
 - Sherburn 2 – a significant expansion of Sherburn Enterprise Park to deliver major new employment opportunities
 - Kellingley Colliery – a major new business park with outstanding rail-connectivity
 - Olympia Park – create a major mixed use housing and employment neighbourhood for Selby
 - Gascoigne Railfreight Interchange – potential for a major new rail-based manufacturing and logistics hub of regional significance
 - Church Fenton – potential for major film production and creative industries hub for the region
- We will develop a long term programme of market town regeneration to help them reach their true potential including:
 - Public Realm improvements
 - Support for Shopfront Improvements
 - Work with Historic England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England to unlock more investment and funding in our historic centres
 - Support Selby Abbey with its Heritage Lottery Fund bid and to jointly develop a programme of celebrations marking the 950th Anniversary of the Abbey and its key role in the foundation and future of Selby Town
- We will work with our key Businesses through a proactive Key Account Management approach to support their growth ambitions and unlock barriers to growth e.g. Drax, Legal and General Homes, Sain Gobain
- We will boost visitor, leisure and night-time economy by implementing the Selby District Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan



Our plan for 2018-20: To make Selby District a great place **to enjoy life**

We will achieve this by

- Having a local plan in place which will deliver more houses in the district – including affordable homes
- Creating the conditions for our residents to be healthier – for example there will be fewer smokers, more active residents taking exercise and a reduction in the number of obese children

Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015

- Built the first new council homes in the district for 25 years at Byram followed by two further developments of Council properties at Eggborough and onsite for the family housing at Byram
- Worked with Selby & District Housing Trust to develop a site at Riccall. This follows the successful completion of award-winning homes at Tadcaster during the previous year.
- Successfully secured nearly £9 million of central government money to unlock development of Olympia Park for over 1000 homes and significant new business space
- Developed a Selby District Action Plan for the North Yorkshire Empty Homes Strategy which has already delivered 13 (as at Q3 2017-18) empty homes being re-occupied
- Opened the brand new £5.7m Summit Indoor Adventure in May 2016
- Supported a number of high profile sporting and other events in the district, including the Tour de Yorkshire, the Selby and Tadcaster sportive rides and a half marathon, Selby Arts Festival, Sherburn Food and Craft Festival and the new Selby Park Run
- Hosted the Selby Health Matters Conference held in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council Public Health colleagues attended by over 60 different partners and leading to the drafting of a new Selby District Health Action Plan.



We will focus on the following things in the next **two years**:

- We will take the new Site Allocations Local Plan through public examination to Adoption by the end of 2019.
- We will deliver the new Housing Development Programme so that, by 2020 we will have delivered over 200 new affordable homes through Council direct build and in partnership with the Selby District Housing Trust
- We will work proactively with key landlords to unlock delivery of new housing development on key sites including :
 - Olympia Park
 - The former Rigid Paper site, and key sites in the Council's ownership such as Portholme Road
- We will deliver the Empty Homes Programme so that by 2020 we aim to have brought twenty more empty homes back into use for residents to live in.



Our plan for 2018-20: To make Selby District a great place **to make a difference**

We will achieve this by

- Increasing the numbers of residents and other stakeholders that we talk to about the things we are planning to do
- Involving more local residents in the delivery of services locally
- More local residents will be able to be online and confidently access online services

Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015

- Worked with Selby College Students' Union to create a new Youth Wellbeing fund to help students dealing with financial or emotional issues.
- Worked closely with residents of Staynor Hall on the need for and design of a new community centre on the estate.
- Delivered a successful Neighbourhood Plan referendum for Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Selby - resulting in the adoption of the first Neighbourhood Plan in the district.
- Worked with the County Council and others to develop new management teams - led by members of the community – to take over and Sherburn and Tadcaster libraries.
- Developed and launched a year-long 'Don't be a Waster' project to tackle key environmental issues we know are important to our residents.
- Supported the Digital Neighbour scheme which helped to give 'hard to reach' people support and access to online services.
- Supported the introduction of Community Hubs – run by local trusts - delivering local services support at Tadcaster and Sherburn.



We will focus on the following things in the next **two years**:

- We will work with customers to get a better understanding of what our customer want and need to improve the quality of their experience and clear standards for customer service delivery.
- We will update our community engagement model – including how we work with Community Engagement Forums – and develop data analysis and engagement to improve our understanding of community aspirations and needs and helps us support communities to become more resilient and self-sufficient.



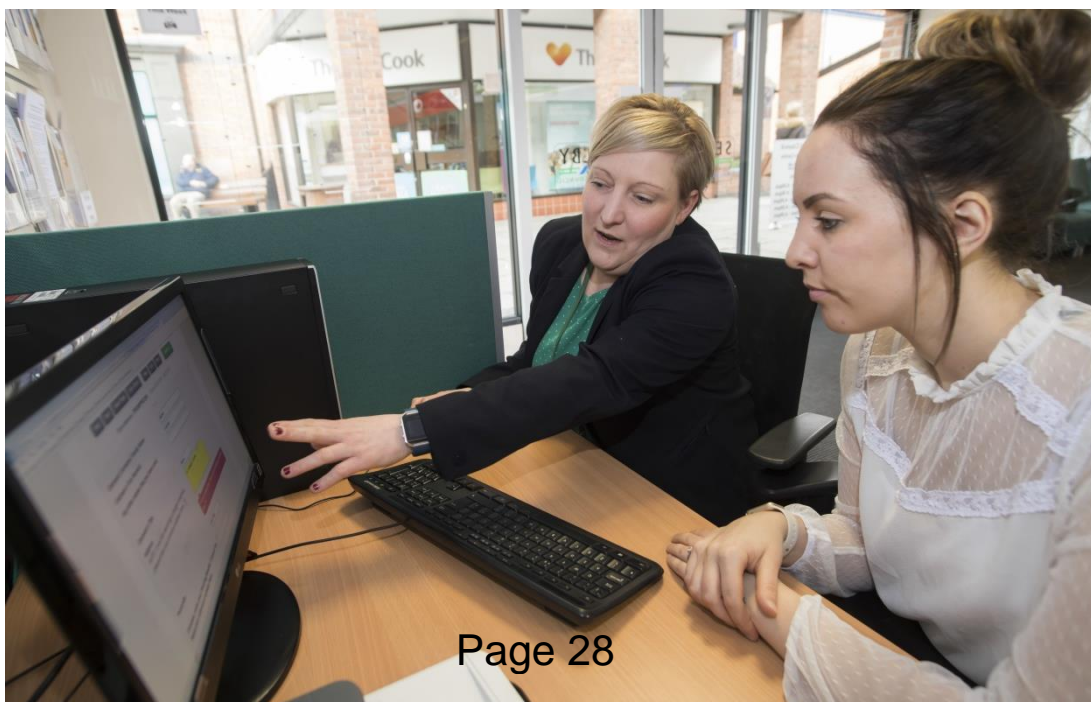
Our plan for 2018-20: To make Selby District a great place **by delivering great value**

We will achieve this by

- More services developed and delivered in partnership with others
- Services commissioned from others where it offers better value for money
- More effective communication with customers that help us understand what matters and to listen and learn
- Increased income generated and a greater proportion of debt owed to us collected
- Delivering more services online

Just some of the things we have achieved since 2015 include:

- Developed a 'Better Together' partnership with North Yorkshire County Council to integrate some of our work to deliver savings and a better customer experience. To date, North Yorkshire County Council delivers a range of services on our behalf including: Finance, Legal, ICT and Emergency Planning – supporting savings and creating greater service resilience.
- Developed proposals to share our civic centre office with North Yorkshire Police in a move that will make best use of a public sector asset – work continues to make this possible.
- Launched a Selby Repairs and Maintenance Group – empowering tenants to help shape the Property Services team and how we deliver services by integrating them into the decision making process.
- Extended our environmental services contract with Amey Plc for a further seven years from 1 April 2017, helping us to deliver high quality services at value for money.
- Launched a new website – resulting in a 30% increase in website traffic and supporting a wider range on online activity such as the ability to pay for services online.
- Developed online forms for a range of Benefits & Taxation transactions along with a self-service benefits calculation tool.
- Launched our community messaging service and increased social media engagement levels increase by one third – on the back of award winning communications campaigns.
- Provided tablets and other touchscreen computers available for public use – for example in Community Hubs and the Contact Centre – along with other facilities such as self-scanning.



We will focus on the following things in the next **two years**:

- We will develop and implement a strategic approach to assets to ensure they enable our transformation goals and support the delivery of Council priorities. This will provide a framework to ensure our property assets are used for at least one of the following: support operational/service needs; act as an investment for financial return; enable regeneration/development; and/or as a community good (i.e. heritage assets).
- We will implement the delivery plan for our Digital Strategy 2020 – resulting in more robust ICT; more services delivered online; and a more flexible, technology enabled workforce.
- We will develop and implement the Council’s Organisational Development Strategy – including improvements to learning and development, strengthening internal communications and further improving performance management.
- We will deliver our commissioning framework and sourcing strategy, ensuring our commissioning priorities are aligned to delivering the Corporate Plan and options for service delivery, such as those around waste collection, deliver the best value for Selby residents.
- We will review our ‘Better Together’ collaborations with North Yorkshire County Council and consider options for future joint working – ensuring the chosen option continue to deliver benefits for both partners.
- We will deliver the savings plan as set out in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy



Resourcing our plan

We are a financially healthy council and have made good progress in addressing the financial challenges from public sector austerity. Since 2010 we have delivered over £5m savings and estimate that we will need to save a further £1.5m by 2020. Plans are in place or are developing to achieve these savings and reserves are available to mitigate the assessed risk within these plans.

For 2018/19, our **net revenue budget** after contributions to/from reserves is **£18.4m**

We have earmarked over **£10m** resources from business rates to support the priorities in the Corporate Plan, through our '**Programme for Growth**'.

In addition, estimated **capital expenditure** for 2018/19 is **£10.3m** which will cover a range of investments in our assets such as council owned homes and car parks.

More information on our financial plans is available at: <http://www.selby.gov.uk/council-22-february-2018>



Selby District Council

REPORT

Reference: E/17/56

Item 5 - Public



To: The Executive
Date: 12 April 2018
Status: Non Key Decision
Report Published: 4 April 2018
Author: Drew Fussey; Customer, Business and Revenue Service Manager
Executive Member: Clifford Lunn; Lead Councillor for Finance and Resources
Lead Officer: Julie Slatter; Director of Corporate Services & Commissioning

Title: The Council's approach to support residents and tenants to claim and manage their Universal Credit (UC) entitlement.

Summary:

The Council's priorities to 'make a difference' and 'enjoy life' combined with the Council's values to be customer focused, forward thinking and work as one team have influenced and informed the Council's approach to preparing to support residents and tenants to claim and manage their Universal Credit (UC) entitlement.

Selby Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS), for new claimants only, will start in May 2018. The impact in the district will build incrementally to around 900-1200 claiming UC over the first year. Based on information gathered from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other local authorities that are already UCFS, it is estimated that between 260 and 390 will be SDC tenants with the likely result that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) rent arrears will raise incrementally as more tenants claim UC.

The proposals in this report are proactive. The Council's aim is to adopt the "Make Every Contact Count" principle in relation to UC. A working group has been established to ensure Council services, in conjunction with relevant partners, are coordinated to reduce the well documented risks that have been identified as UC has been rolled out nationally. This will ensure that the Council is helping to reduce

hardship, sustain tenancies and safeguard its reputation helping make Selby district a great place to live.

Recommendations:

- 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) will have on HRA rent arrears and additional workload across the Operational Services team.**

Reasons for recommendation

The Executive is asked to support recommendation I. and note recommendation II. 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 the risk of hardship for those needing to claim UC, and mitigating the likely rise in HRA arrears.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Universal Credit (UC) aims to ensure claimants are better off in work than on benefits. There have been many criticisms of UC as it has rolled out across the United Kingdom since May 2016. The government has responded to these concerns but the key impacts of hardship for claimants and especially the impact of UC on rent arrears remain a potential concern.
- 1.2 To help the Council understand the likely impact on UC claimants that live in the district, officers have 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 has been thorough. It is clear from the research that workloads across Operational Services will increase and HRA debt is likely to rise as more people claim UC.

2. The Report

2.1 *What is Universal Credit?*

- 2.2 UC aims to ensure claimants are better off in work than on benefits. UC has been rolled out across United Kingdom local authorities since May 2016. It replaces six existing benefits and merges them into one payment that will be paid monthly in arrears:
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Housing Benefit
 - Job Seekers Allowance
 - Employment and Support Allowance

- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit

2.3 UC is for working-age people only and must be claimed online. Claims can be taken from anyone of working age; this includes families with no more than two children, people with health conditions and those who are in work.

3. How is Universal Credit Full Service being rolled out?

3.1 UCFS rollout is Jobcentre-based. To date the district has approximately 2,860 households that now need to claim UC rather than the 'legacy benefits' (the term used for the individual benefits named above). Selby Jobcentre is currently scheduled to go live in May 2018, impacting on the majority of households in the district should they make a new claim for benefit. The table below provides the detail on the UC rollout for the district:

Rollout date	Job Centre	Post Codes	Localities	Estimated Properties affected
13/09/17	York	LS24 0 YO19 6, YO23 2, YO23 3, YO23 7	Acaster Selby, Appleton Roebuck, Bilbrough, Bolton Percy, Escrick, Kelfield, Riccall, Stillingfleet, Thorganby.	2,600
11/10/17	Doncaster	DN6 9	Womersley area	260
30/05/18	Selby	District wide	Includes Selby, Sherburn, Tadcaster. <i>Everywhere but post codes below</i>	22,891
01/07/18	Goole	DN14 0, DN14 9 YO8 6	East Riding of Yorkshire	4,934
01/11/18	Wakefield	WF11 9	Brotherton area	1,459

3.2 Due to the low volumes currently claiming UC the impact to date on Council services and the levels of housing debt is negligible.

4.0 Government changes announced in the Autumn Statement 2017

4.1 Due to the Autumn Statement announcement, rollout of UCFS for the district has been rescheduled to May 2018.

4.2 A number of changes have been proposed to the way the UC will work and these should have a positive impact. However, it is too early to assess the likely impact the changes, which are listed below will have for claimants at this point as they are not all implanted as yet. The research that has been undertaken to inform this report predates these changes which will be implemented between December 2017 and April 2018:

- **1 week wait removed** - 7 waiting days at start of claims will be abolished as of February 2018. Instead of 6 weeks, claimants can now expect a 5-week wait (4 weeks to process, 1 week to reach bank account).
- **Increasing UC advances** - Advance available to claimants increased to 100% of estimated entitlement (previously 50%) and this can be repaid across 12 months (previously 6 months). This was implemented in December 2017.
- **Support with transition from Housing Benefit (HB)** - From April 2018, claimants previously in receipt of HB will receive an additional 2 weeks support as a transitional payment. This change is expected to go live in April 2018. DWP have not announced the detail at this time.
- **Free helplines** - The premium call helplines are now free (from December 2017), people were paying up to 55p per minute.
- **Temporary Accommodation (TA) housing support** - From April 2018 any new UC claimants in TA will have housing costs met through HB.
- **Alternative payment arrangements for landlords** - Ensure that claimants are offered option of managed payments under UC where they previously received this from legacy HB available now.
- **Universal Credit live service closed to new claims from 31 December 2017** - The closure of the live UC gateway affects single claimants only. Single people that had been on UC in live service that need to make a new claim are reverting back to the legacy benefits. This means the HB gateway for these claimants has had to be reopened. £2,086 of new burdens funding has been provided to the Council for this change.

5.0 Impact on Council services: what the research says

5.1 The research to inform this report was carried out late in 2017. It involved visiting and reviewing information obtained from Ryedale, Richmondshire, Harrogate and York Councils, combined with national reports from a number of respected sources. All evidence suggests that work for local authorities will increase as will rent arrears. The three key areas of concern are:

- **A significant increase in Council Tax work**- every transaction has to be manually input as there is no IT integration between DWP and the leading Revenue and Benefit systems, nor has there been any development at this stage. There is also a significant increase in new Council Tax Support (CTS) claims with only a small reduction in Housing Benefit claims in the first year. The Autumn Statement did not tackle these issues.
- **Increasing Housing Revenue Account rent arrears**- those authorities with housing stock have seen increasing levels of arrears as a direct result of UC claimants in debt. The revised payment arrangements for landlords should have a positive impact.
- **More people at risk of homelessness**- those renting in the private sector struggling with UC-created arrears, and those in social housing already in arrears then switching to UC, are not coping with self-budgeting. As a result Housing Option teams in the authorities visited have reported increases in requests for support/emergency accommodation. We anticipate that the Autumn Statement will have a

positive impact here as will the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

6.0 Impact on Operational Services

6.1 When Selby Jobcentre goes UCFS the impact will be slow to start, growing incrementally throughout the year. Once UCFS is operating anyone who meets the criteria AND who would have claimed Housing Benefit will apply for UC instead. The impact of UC on Operational Services is outlined below:

Benefits and Taxation Service.

6.2 The Council will still be responsible for assessing claims for:

- All Pension age claims for HB, Supported and Exempt Accommodation
- All Council Tax Support; and
- Determining applications for Discretionary Housing Payments for those in receipt of UC or HB.

6.3 Information provided by neighbouring authorities (Richmond, Ryedale and York) show a reduction in assessments for HB, however it is the more complex cases, such as three children or more that will remain on the legacy benefit; direct CTS claims remain static. The increased UC service centre notifications will cause a significant increase in workload. This is explained below.

6.4 The Council will receive a daily download from DWP Universal Credit Service Centre about UC claimants who live in the district. This will be used to end Housing Benefit for UC claimants and amend their award of CTS where appropriate. The DWP UC system is not available to integrate with any Council's benefit and revenue systems; as a result all these changes must be looked at manually. As full service rolls out the number of these notifications will increase dramatically. The result will be an increased workload for the Benefits Teams. Although these are simple transactions they are high in volume.

6.5 UC is reviewed every month with the previous month's income determining the next award of UC. This means that any changes in earnings result in changes to UC amounts, including housing costs. This will produce a new award notification which will come through from the DWP UC Service Centre. Each change in award amount will mean the CTS has to be recalculated; this could result in up to 12 revisions of the CTS each year for every UC claimant, each revision triggering a new Council Tax bill to be issued.

6.6 The City of York Council intends to review their CTS scheme to re-issue bills quarterly. York believes this should ensure UC claimants continue to make regular payments and reduce stationary costs whilst also providing consistency and clarity for customers. Once the district is UCFS the impact on billing will be monitored closely. As the evidence of the impact emerges it will be important to consider whether we also need to make changes to the Council's CTS scheme to maximise effectiveness for the Council and CTS claimants.

- 6.7 Another factor is over recent years DWP have been reducing the payments made to local authorities to administer Housing Benefit. In 2017/18 the Council received £187,485 a reduction of 8.5% on the previous year; for 2018/19 DWP have provided a provisional amount of £169,817 a further 9.5% reduction.
- 6.8 The impact of UCFS on the Benefits and Taxation team will be monitored and once the impact of UC on the team is better understood, (after the first 6 – 12 months of going live), a review will be undertaken to ensure the Council continues to achieve best value.
- 7. Impact on the Housing Support Team (HST) and HRA debt.**
- 7.1 Selby anticipates that, as has been the experience elsewhere, there will be increased levels of Council rent arrears to deal with and manage as a direct result of UC. With the removal of the first seven waiting days, payment should be expected within 5 to 7 weeks (made monthly in arrears). Although quicker than has been the case, it will still result in claimants being in rent arrears immediately. The HST at Selby are excellent at engaging with tenants (as evidenced by the collection rate of 98.1%). However, based on the evidence from Richmondshire, York and Harrogate it will be important to increase the support to tenants on UC to make early arrangements for payment and get updates on the progress of their UC applications.
- 7.2 There are numerous studies that have been carried out to evidence the impact of rent arrears. All of these project increases in arrears, some more significant than others. This report uses Survey data from National Federation of Almos (NFoA) as it evidenced the largest percentage migration to UC in the first year of full service of 22%, 'the worst case scenario'.
- 7.3 In December 2017 the Council had 3,006 tenants with 1,711 (56.9%) claiming benefit. Based on NFoA data it is expected 376 (22%) of the Council's tenants receiving housing benefit could migrate to UC in the first year.
- 7.4 Currently in Selby 19% (580) of tenants are in arrears owing an average of £330. The Council's total arrears as of December 2017 were £176,252, and the collection rate was 98.1%.
- 7.5 UC will not be paid to a tenant for at least 6 weeks (unless the claimant takes an advance payment). Therefore, based on the worst-case scenario, after the first year of UCFS, HRA arrears may increase to £251,470, a rise of £75,217. Also, due to the 5 to 6 week lag in claimants receiving payments it will reduce the Council's collection rate. Actions proposed to minimise HRA arrears are set out in section 10 below.
- 7.6 As more people/claimants migrate onto UC, debt levels will continue to rise and the collection rate will reduce but studies indicate that this should stabilise after 18 to 24 months. It is not possible to predict the final impact at this time and, with continued pressure on the government to review UC, more changes to rollout and delivery are expected.

- 7.7 Currently HB for Council tenants is paid direct onto tenants' rent accounts. Under UC claimants will be responsible for paying their own rent.
- 7.8 Evidence indicates that managed payments via UC take time and may increase arrears by a further month. A claimant can request a managed payment but it is voluntary unless they go into more than 8 weeks arrears. At that point the HST can and will ask for the payment to come directly to the Council without the UC claimant's consent. Neighbourhood Officers will encourage new claimants to request a managed payment. This is important as although the Autumn Statement supports more managed payments, the research carried out evidenced 4 to 8 week delays in getting arrangements in place.

8.0 Impact on the Neighbourhood Officer Team.

- 8.1 The team will need to provide early assistance, signposting tenants to access digital and budget management support, to ensure they apply for UC as quickly as possible. Where possible, Officers will also encourage new claimants to get their advance payment to reduce hardship and to set up voluntary managed payments to reduce rent arrears. The process for signing up new tenants will also be reviewed to ensure they are offered the right advice and support to avoid hardship and rent arrears.

9. Impact on the Housing Options Team (HOT).

- 9.1 This team will also see an impact: in a report published by the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) in December 2017 evictions due to rent arrears in UC cases increased from 18% to 27%.
- 9.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act that comes into force on 1st April 2018 places a new duty on the Council to help prevent homelessness for all families and single people, regardless of priority need. Based on the research in preparing this report and the introduction of the Act, a significant concern for the HOT is that those facing homelessness are often already in crisis and struggling to manage debt. It is therefore much more difficult for them to adjust to receiving monthly payments and managing a monthly budget including paying their housing costs. The impact of UC is likely to be an increase in repeat homeless presentations as individuals and families fail to pay their rent.
- 9.3 The anticipated impact on the Council will be:
- An increased workload for the R&B, HST and HOT teams
 - An increased need for supporting/signposting vulnerable UC claimants for Neighbourhood Officers and Customer Contact Centre Staff
 - A greater demand for temporary accommodation
 - An increased need to provide digital and personal budgeting support

10.0 How SDC propose to support the rollout of UCFS minimising the risks of hardship for claimants

- 10.1 The proposals below explain how the Council intends to adopt the principle of “Making Every Contact Count” in relation to UC. Whichever member of customer-facing staff a customer/tenant contacts at the Council, they will be able to provide basic guidance and signposting.
- 10.2 **Supported online access** - It is proposed that the Council provide assistance to people to claim UC online and manage their online accounts. The DWP will provide some funding to the Council to enable the Council to provide this service. To deliver the service SDC will need to provide secure access to public access computers, which has now been achieved. The DWP funding will also enable the Council to train staff to provide digital support and manage their accounts. Claimants will be able to access their UC accounts and get some generic IT support in the Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn libraries/ Hubs and in Selby Jobcentre. Claimants will also be able to access their online UC account via their home computer and/or mobile devices.
- 10.3 **Personal Budgeting Support (PBS)** – It is proposed that the Council also sign up with the DWP to provide PBS to assist claimants with monthly budgeting to help them understand their responsibility to pay their bills, including rent and Council Tax. The Council currently commissions the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide PBS on a case-by-case basis. This arrangement is separate to the grant funding provided by the Council due to the specific and limited funding awarded by DWP to provide PBS. The volumes are currently low but will increase as more people claim UCFS. The Council proposes to work with CAB to develop a mixed economy of support. Using the DWP funding available, appropriate Council staff will also be trained to provide PBS to ensure claimants can access such a vital service at the point of need in a timely manner, with CAB available to support more challenging/complex cases.
- 10.4 **Mitigate the pending increase in HRA debt** - Learning from the authorities that have been visited, Housing Support and the Benefits and Taxation teams are working with the Policy Team to review the Council’s Debt Management Policy. New procedures will also be put in place to reduce the potential stress and hardship of those needing to claim UC, that go into rent arrears whilst waiting for their claim to be determined and payment made. The experience of the Housing Support team is that once the payments are set up both for arrears and rent, they are received regularly and arrears do come down.
- 10.5 **Improved system integration:** The Council is also exploring opportunities to improve integration between online forms and the back office systems that will help streamline processes and help us deliver on our aspirations for digital service delivery. This will help build capacity and release resource within Operational Services to cope with the additional workload.

- 10.6 By changing the services we offer as described above, integrating the work of the Housing Support, Benefit and Revenue and Customer Contact Centre teams the Council will ensure it has the capacity and skills to support those claiming UC, helping minimise hardship and rent arrears.
- 10.7 The Council has also established an internal working group that will include external partners when necessary. This follows best practice from other authorities that have set up teams to deal with the impact of UC as it is rolled out. The working group led by Operational Services includes members from each relevant Council department including Customer and Communities, Economic Development, Finance, and Marketing and Communications. The aim of the group is to ensure the Council has a coordinated transition to UCFS that supports claimants and business to minimise hardship and the impact of increase HRA debt.

11. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters

11.1 Legal Issues

- 11.1.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced UC which is being implemented pursuant to further legislative provisions. Impact Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments on the Act have been carried out by the DWP (see below).

11.2.0 Financial Issues / Risks

- 11.2.1 *Increased HRA arrears:* The most significant financial impact is likely to be an increase in rent arrears. The Council HRA arrears could increase by £75,217 to £251,470. The steps described above explain the Council's proposals for mitigating the UC financial risk to the Council.
- 11.2.2 *Further reductions in local authority payments to run Housing Benefit:* Over recent years DWP have been reducing payments. In 2017/18 the Council received £187,485 a reduction of 8.5% on the previous year; for 2018/19 DWP have provided a provisional amount of £169,817 a further 9.5% reduction. The work of the Benefits and Taxation team will be monitored and reviewed following the first 6 - 12 months of UCFS roll-out to ensure best value is achieved from the available budget.
- 11.2.3 *Not achieving the anticipated savings from service transformation:* Service resources will have to adapt to manage increased homelessness and levels of debt alongside the changing nature and scale of workload of the benefit assessors and customer contact team.
- 11.2.4 This will be mitigated by effective planning of resource shift. As the number of claimants will be low rising throughout the year the impact will be assessed to ensure we have the right skills in the right place at the right time. The aim is to review and integrate teams more to reduce duplication and hand offs between

the Customer Contact Centre, the Benefits and Taxation team and services. Also, the Council intends to review the procedures and processes of Housing Support and Neighbourhood Officer teams. This will maximise the existing resources capacity to support tenants claiming UC helping to minimise the risk of general hardship and rent arrears.

11.3.0 Reputational Risk

11.3.1 Although UC is a DWP responsibility, the Council's response to supporting residents needs to be communicated to ensure that the measures that the Council has put in place with its partners to minimise hardship are clear and well understood. The Council's UCFS working group includes a member from Marketing and Communications team. This will ensure a robust communications plan is in place to manage reputational risk for the Council.

11.3.2 The aim of the UCFS working group is to ensure the Council has a coordinated transition to UCFS that supports claimants and business to minimise hardship and the impact of increase HRA debt. Joint events have also been set up with DWP to ensure external partners and stakeholders are aware and involved in ensuring UCFS is a smooth process, mitigating the risk to claimants where possible.

12.0 Impact Assessment

12.1 The Impact assessment about Universal Credit introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012 was published in December 2012. It is available on the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-impact-assessment>

13.0 Conclusion

13.1 The real impact of UCFS on the District is difficult to predict, especially in light of the Autumn Statement changes. However, this report has used the latest information available taken from a number of sources to try to provide some clarity as to how the Council can work differently across service areas to support residents. The established UCFS working group will ensure service areas are working closer than ever to reduce the likelihood of hardship for those needing to claim UC whilst managing the inevitable rise in HRA rent arrears, against a backdrop of reducing DWP funding. The transition will be slow, incrementally building over the next 18 to 24 months.

13.2 The Council has taken the advantage of learning from others that have already gone UCFS. This has led to the creation of the UC working group and informed the proposals in this report. If the Executive are in support of the proposals in this report the UC working group will develop an implementation

plan to ensure that the Council will have the right level of resource with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

14. Background Documents

A background paper on the research officers carried out to inform this report is available on request from the report author.

Contact Officer:

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Appendices:

None

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Selby District Council

REPORT

Reference: E/17/57

Item 6 - Public



To: Executive
Date: 12 April 2018
Status: Non Key Decision
Report Published: 4 April 2018
Author: Sarah Thompson
(Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager)
Executive Member: Cllr Mark Crane, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Housing, Leisure, Health and Culture
Lead Officer: Julie Slatter, Director of Corporate Services and Commissioning

Title: Private Housing Assistance Policy

Summary:

This report seeks approval for the new Private Housing Assistance Policy following consultation. The new policy introduces some new discretionary grants and loans as well as changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant.

Recommendations:

- I. Approve the Private Housing Assistance Policy for adoption.

Reasons for recommendation

It is recommended that the Private Housing Assistance Policy (appendix 1) is approved 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.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Private Housing Assistance Policy sets out how we will deal with housing in the private sector, specifically the provision of housing assistance.

- 1.2 The Disabled Facilities Grant is a 'means-tested' financial grant that helps meet the cost of adapting a private property where a disabled person lives. Common adaptations include the installation of showers, stair lifts and ramps. Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants is a mandatory service and the delivery of the grant is a requirement of each individual housing authority. Details of the provision are included in the policy.
- 1.3 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 ("the 2002 Order") gives a power to local authorities for the purpose of improving living conditions in their area by enabling a local housing authority to provide, directly or indirectly, assistance to any person for the purpose of enabling them to acquire accommodation, adapt or improve accommodation or to repair or demolish and rebuild accommodation. In using the powers under the 2002 Order the Council has discretion to provide assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions in the Selby District and to support our current corporate priorities. To meet the requirements of the 2002 Order the Council must adopt a policy that sets out under what circumstances the Council may provide assistance. Details of the discretionary proposals are set out in the Policy.
- 1.4 The technical element of the private sector grant delivery was previously included within a wider NYCC Supporting People (SP) Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Contract to which all the North Yorkshire districts signed up. The original contract ran from 1st April 2014 and ended on 31st March 2017 and on completion NYCC advised that the SP contract would not be re-tendered and would therefore end. It was, however, extended for a further year to allow the housing authorities to make alternative arrangements for the delivery of the statutory DFG element of the contract. From April 2018, the duties previously undertaken by the HIA will transfer to the Private Housing Team of Selby District Council.

2. The Report

2.1 Current Position

The current Private Housing Assistance Policy was adopted in 2013. Since then the funding available for Disabled Facilities Grants has increased considerably and there is an opportunity to use the funding more flexibly. In order to do this a new private housing policy is required. The Private Sector Housing Officer is responsible for approving any grants or loans and the budget is held by Selby District Council. The NYCC Occupational Therapist team supports the DFG process. Other discretionary loans are offered with support from Better Homes Yorkshire and the Yorkshire and Humber Home Loans Service.

2.2 The Private Housing Assistance Policy

The Private Housing Assistance Policy (appendix 1) aims to improve housing conditions across the district and to help people manage their own health and

wellbeing and live independently in their communities for as long as possible. Delivery will be through a mix of advice and financial assistance which is targeted at assisting those in most need.

The Government believes that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property. Whilst many homeowners do have the necessary funds to carry out repairs and improvements there remain a number of homeowners, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, who may not have access to the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair.

This policy seeks to support these households by offering various methods of advice and financial assistance.

2.2.1 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

The Disabled Facilities Grant remains the only mandatory grant available. Grants of up to £30,000 are available based on a referral from Occupational Therapists and a government prescribed financial assessment. Better Care funding is provided to pay for this grant. In 2014 DFG funding became part of the Better Care Fund, a pooled health and social care budget. The aim of the fund is to provide more joined-up and customer focussed services to reduce hospital and care admissions. Recognising the need for adaptations central government funding for the mandatory DFG (MDFG) has been increased considerably and in 17/18 the allocation for Selby District increased to £379,026. All grant approvals are undertaken by Selby District Council.

2.2.2 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants

The additional funding has allowed the Council to consider the introduction of discretionary DFG's (DDFG). Whilst the mandatory DFG is subject to a test of financial resources the new Private Housing Assistance Policy will use the discretionary powers to offer a DFG, without a means test, for works up to £5,000. Eligibility for the grant is still based on an assessment of the disabled person's needs carried out by the Occupational Therapist. In addition where work costs exceed the mandatory maximum the Council may offer an interest free loan of up to £10,000 to top up the grant. This will allow the Council to speed up the process, deliver a faster and more effective service and thereby meet the aims of the Better Care Fund and provide better outcomes for local residents in need of adaptations to live independently in their own homes. All DDFG's would be approved by Selby District Council, subject to available funding.

2.2.3 Repair Assistance Loans

Discretionary repair assistance loans are available for vulnerable owner occupiers or private tenants with repairing obligations. The Repair Assistance Scheme offers urgent/emergency repairs up to a maximum of £6,000. All repair assistance loans are approved by Selby District Council and registered as a local land charge thereby repayable at the point of sale. This loan is

funded through the Council's capital programme and through recycled loans and available subject to sufficient available funding.

2.2.4 Empty Property Loans and Grants

An Empty Property Loan is available for owners of long term empty properties. It offers an interest free loan of up to £15,000 to make properties suitable for re-occupation.

An Empty Property Grant is available for owners of long term empty properties who:

- agree to let their property for a five year period;
- at an affordable rent;
- to tenants with a local connection
- for a minimum of a 12 month fixed term;

Funding has been allocated from P4G and from S106 receipts.

All empty property loans and grants would be approved by Selby District Council and subject to sufficient available funding. When introducing the loan a repayment procedure will be agreed and, to ensure repayment, a local land charge registered.

2.3 Consultation

The draft policy has undergone a 6 week consultation period during which time it has been;

- available on the SDC website – no comments received;
- sent to the NYCC Occupational Therapist team – general support was expressed from the Occupational Therapy team for the new flexibility built into the DFG process;
- discussed with other North Yorkshire district/borough councils – positive support has been received. Many of the DFG proposals are also being adopted by other NY authorities;
- reported to SDC Policy Review Committee on 16th January 2018 - The Committee asked Officers about the policy, specifically about the expected budget for discretionary disabled facilities grants and emergency repairs. They were generally supportive of the assistance proposals within the policy.

3. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters

Legal Issues

- 3.1 The Council has a mandatory duty to deliver adaptations through the Disabled Facility Grant scheme and the legislative provisions governing disabled facilities grants (DFGs) are contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended) (HGCRA 1996).

Article 3 of The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 enables local housing authorities to provide discretionary assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions. Assistance may be in any form and may include grants. Such assistance may **not** be given unless the local housing authority has adopted a policy for the provision of such assistance and they have given the public notice of such adoption.

Financial Issues

- 3.2 The Better Care Fund will be used to provide mandatory and discretionary DFG's and will fund the cost of delivering that service. Although adaptations can be jointly procured for Council Housing and Private Housing, any Council adaptations will be funded through the HRA capital programme and not through the Better Care Funding.

Funding for any discretionary loans is identified in the Council's capital programme and any discretionary grant or loan is subject to the availability of funding and as such will cease once available funds are exhausted.

Local Land charges are registered for any discretionary grant or loan reducing the financial risk of non-payment.

Impact Assessment

- 3.3 The Private Housing Assistance Policy aims to provide a framework for supporting vulnerable households with necessary property improvements and repairs.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the Policy is inclusive of the relevant protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. It is designed to have a positive impact on vulnerable households which will include people with disabilities.

The support offered by the policy will specifically benefit the following;

- Independence;
- Accessible housing for all;
- Improved health, safety and well-being;
- Early discharge from hospital;
- Prevent homelessness;
- Allow people to stay in their own homes;
- Allow disabled parents to care for their children;
- Allow disabled children to have more choice;
- To prevent social exclusion;
- To keep families together and to provide help for carers.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Private Housing Assistance Policy will support the continued delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. It will also allow the Council to provide

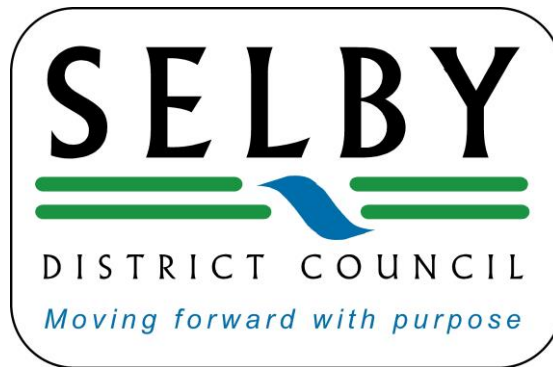
discretionary assistance to residents in private sector housing in the form of grants and loans that will improve housing conditions across the district and will help people manage their own health and wellbeing and remain independent in their own home for as long as possible. The empty homes loans will help bring much needed accommodation back into use.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – The Private Housing Assistance Policy



PRIVATE HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

2018-2023

FORWARD

The Selby District Council Private Housing Assistance Policy 2018-2023 (the Policy) is made under Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 Statutory Instrument No.1860 (the RRO).

The RRO radically changed the way in which government sought to encourage private home improvement in England and Wales. The RRO swept away much of the prescriptive nature of previous legislation (The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) and replaced it with a general power allowing local authorities to provide “assistance” “in any form” “to any person”, to improve, repair, adapt or rebuild residential premises.

The RRO reflects the view that it is primarily the responsibility of private owners to maintain their own property but it recognises that some owners, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, do not have the necessary resources to repair or improve their homes. Local authorities therefore have an important role to play in providing assistance in these cases.

The policy works within the current legislative and financial framework to contribute to providing a decent home for all current and future residents of Selby District through various advice, support and assistance mechanisms whilst aiming to give priority to those most vulnerable households.

The policy will continue to evolve as existing commitments are fulfilled and local, regional and national research and policy developments take place and will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Aims

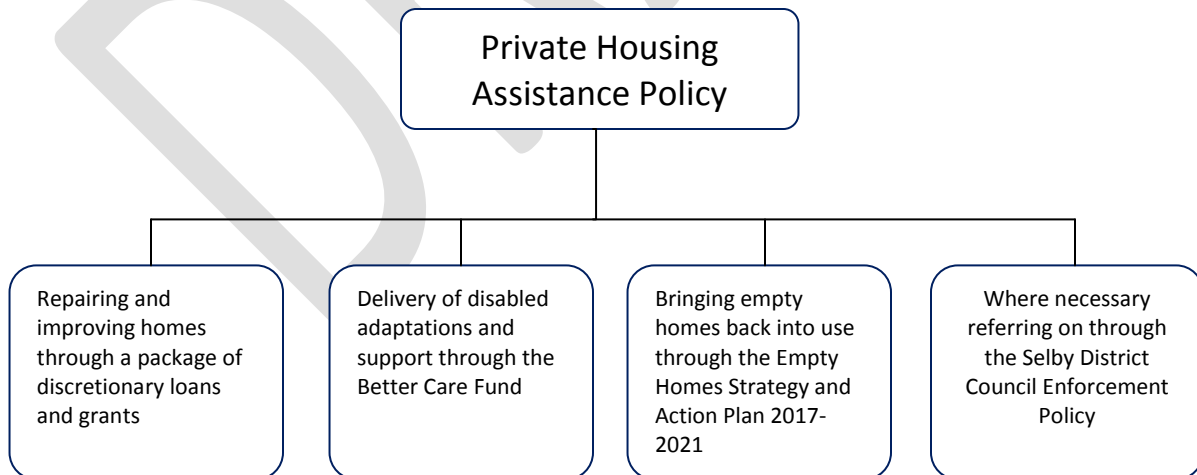
1. To improve housing conditions across the District;
2. To help people manage their own health & wellbeing and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

Prosperous and sustainable communities need good quality homes that are decent and safe and that meet the needs of the people who live in them. The location, type and quality of the homes people occupy can have a significant impact on all aspects of their lives.

The aim of this policy is encourage the improvement in private housing choice and quality across the district through the use of support and assistance mechanisms, whilst ensuring that where appropriate and necessary enforcement action is taken in line with the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy.

1.2 Policy context

This Policy provides the overarching focus for the Council's private housing assistance service and sits at the forefront of much that we want to achieve;



It also links to the following specific policies at a National, Sub-regional and a local level.

National

Integration and Better Care Fund Policy Framework 2017 to 2019

This document sets out the policy framework for implementation of the statutory Better Care Fund in 2017 to 2019 and seeks to outline how best to deliver the Better Care Fund at a local level and in partnership with others.

Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a Fuel Poverty Strategy for England (2015)

A strategy that sets out how the government will deliver their fuel poverty target to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030.

Sub-regional

York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Housing Strategy 2015-2021 - This strategy sets out the nine sub-regional priorities for housing growth and delivery. Selby District Council is committed to jointly delivering on the following priorities within the theme “Understanding and Improving the Quality of our Housing Stock”.

Priority 5: Continue to make best use of existing stock and ensure it is of a decent quality to meet the needs of our communities.

Priority 6: Ensure all homes have a positive impact on health and well-being and are affordable to run.

North Yorkshire Empty Property Strategy & action plan – This strategy aims to reduce the number of long-term empty homes across the sub-region through a co-ordinated approach and has for key objectives:

- Developing new, and strengthening existing partnerships
- Improve the quality and consistency of empty property management
- Improve the range of assistance available to owners
- Improve the quality of advice and information available to owners

North Yorkshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020 - The vision of this strategy is that “people in all communities in North Yorkshire have equal opportunities to live long healthy lives. It gives direction and sets out priorities for Board partners organisations to include in their own strategies and plans.

Local

Locally, the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy links to the **Selby District Council Corporate Plan 2015-2020** through Priority 2 -To enjoy life, by ensuring

more housing needs are met; empty homes are brought back into use; and more affordable properties are developed.

Selby District Council Housing Strategy Action Plan - Our local housing delivery plan includes the following relevant key priority areas:

Priority 2 – Ensure that our housing stock reflects the needs of communities across all areas of Selby district

Priority 3 – Ensure that our housing stock meets the diverse needs of our communities at all stages of their lives

Priority 5 - Continue to make best use of existing stock and ensure it is of a decent quality to meet the needs of our communities

Priority 6 – Ensure all homes have a positive impact on health and well-being and are affordable to run

Priority 7 - Continue to reduce Homelessness

Priority 9 – Provide appropriate Housing and Support for those with Specific Needs

Selby District Council Empty Homes Action Plan – Our local action plan sets out our approach to bringing empty homes back into use and includes the following relevant areas:

- Proactively working with landlords to help them resolve any issues that are preventing an empty property from being returned to the market for sale or rent
- Supporting landlords or home owners to access funding or grants for improvement work, where this will enable the property to be brought back into use
- Mutually-agreed purchase of a property to enable the Council or another housing provider to bring the property back into use

1.3 Legal Context

Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO)

The RRO radically changed the way in which government sought to encourage private sector home improvement in England and Wales. The RRO swept away much of the prescriptive nature of previous legislation (See below), instituting a general power allowing local authorities to provide “assistance” “in any form” “to any person”, to improve, repair, adapt or rebuild residential premises.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 - Much of this Act has been repealed by the RRO in order to remove the “burdens upon local authorities in the exercise of their functions in relation to the provision of financial and other assistance for, or in connection with, the improvement, repair and renovation of housing.”

The remaining legislative framework contained within this Act provides the basis for the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants and loans.

The Housing Act 2004 - The Housing Act covers the national minimum standard for housing standards (currently the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) and also covers the mandatory and discretionary licensing for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

2.0 THE POLICY

2.1 This policy outlines how Selby District Council, through a mix of support, financial assistance (and enforcement*), will seek to;

- Help owner-occupiers to maintain and repair their homes;
- Assist people whose independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their homes;
- Boost domestic energy efficiency and reduce the number of households in fuel poverty;
- Encourage private landlords to provide good quality and well managed properties for their tenants;
- Maximise the use of the existing housing stock to increase housing choice across the district.

* Enforcement protocols are covered in the Council’s Enforcement Policy.

2.2 Encouragement and Support

We will provide information and advice to assist any person to improve, repair, adapt or rebuild residential premises. In doing so, we may enter into partnership arrangements with others, including partner local authorities, health and fuel poverty related organisations and with the voluntary sector.

We recognise the importance of education and encouragement when working with private sector landlords and owners of empty properties to uphold legislative requirements and to improve standards and increase housing choice.

Where possible we seek to resolve issues between landlord and tenant in order to achieve tenancy sustainment and reduce homelessness due to the termination of tenancies.

We also seek to help owners of empty properties overcome difficulties in selling, renovating and ultimately re-occupying empty homes.

The Council will provide support in a number of ways including by:

- Ensuring the availability of information and advice on the Council's website;
- Providing advice in person;
- Engaging with groups and forums to provide advice to the community and private sector landlords;
- Working in partnership to distribute information and advice.

2.3 Financial Assistance

It is the responsibility of owners to maintain and improve their properties at their own expense. However, the Council recognises that there may be occasions when it is both necessary and appropriate to provide financial assistance to support this work. All financial assistance given is subject to funding being available and terms and conditions relevant to the type of assistance being applied for.

The Council will consider all enquiries for financial support and may choose to offer assistance through one or through a mix of the following support options.

2.3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG):

This grant is available to owner occupiers and tenants* to help adapt their home to meet the needs of a disabled occupant. Landlords may also apply for a DFG on behalf of a disabled tenant.

The aim of a DFG is to remove or help overcome any obstacles which prevent the disabled person from moving freely into and around the dwelling and enjoying the facilities and amenities in it. Typical work might include the provision of a stair-lift, the replacement of a bath with a level access shower or provision of ramps to main entrance doors.

Eligibility for grant is based on an assessment of the disabled person's need carried out by an Occupational Therapist.

DFG is a mandatory entitlement and the Council cannot refuse an application which fulfils the eligibility criteria. They are, however, subject to a legal

maximum grant limit of £30,000 and to a mandatory Test of Resources to determine the level of any financial contribution to be made by the applicant.

The DFG funding allocation from Department of Communities and Local Government is currently contained within the Better Care Fund (BCF) which is paid to upper tier local authorities. Within two tier areas the housing authority (i.e. Selby District Council) and the social care authority (North Yorkshire County Council) have established new working relationships to manage the DFG funding as the legal responsibility for provision of DFG remains with the local housing authority.

2.3.2 Discretionary Adaptations Assistance

Whilst the Mandatory DFG is subject to a test of resources, the Council will use its discretionary powers to provide a Discretionary DFG without a test of resources for all works costing under £5,000. Eligibility for the grant is still based on an assessment of the disabled person's needs carried out by the Occupational Therapist. This is expected to speed up the process for installation of the most common adaptations such as stairlifts and level access showers.

In addition, we may offer further financial assistance where the cost of eligible works exceeds the legal maximum DFG limit of £30,000. In these circumstances the applicant may be eligible for an interest free loan of up to £10,000 to top-up the DFG. Other options for additional funding (ie: charitable funding) will also be considered in such cases.

2.3.3 Repairs Assistance Scheme (RAS) Loan

The Repair Assistance Scheme is a discretionary loan available to homeowners to provide urgent/emergency repairs to alleviate imminent health and safety hazards. Loans are available up to £6,000. The loan is available to those unable to afford monthly repayments and is repayable upon sale of the property.

Loans are available if the relevant person is the freeholder of the property or is a leaseholder with at least 50 years remaining on the lease. The loan amount is subject to a Test of Resources to determine the level of any financial contribution to be made by the applicant.

2.3.4 Empty Homes Grant/Loan

The Empty Homes Loan is available to help home-owners bring their long-term empty properties back into use. The property must be in a location and be of a type/size that the Council deem to be appropriate to the housing needs of the

district. 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. Loans are available if the relevant person is the freeholder of the empty property or a leaseholder with at least 50 years remaining on the lease.

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. Freeholders of an empty property or a leaseholder with at least 50 years remaining on the lease may receive up to £15,000 per property

2.3.5 Energy Repayment Loan

The Energy Repayment Loan aims to help homeowners undertake work within their properties to address excess cold. Owner Occupiers can borrow between £500 and £3000 interest free. The loan is subject to monthly repayments. This loan is funded from recycled regional housing board funding which may be topped up by Selby District Council funding. The loan is administered by The Homes and Loans service which is operated by Sheffield City Council, on behalf of the Local Authorities across the Yorkshire and The Humber regions.

Loans are available if the relevant person is the freeholder of the property and also occupies the property at the time of application.

2.3.6 In-direct Financial Assistance

Where appropriate we may use discretionary financial powers to support partners in the delivery of regional/sub-regional shared housing objectives the Council will use these powers to:

- a) Work in partnership with the Better Homes Programme to source and bid for funding under the banner of “Better Homes Yorkshire”. All initiatives will be made available to residents through signposting to the relevant Better Homes Yorkshire delivery partner.
- b) Support the North Yorkshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy and to Support joint commissioning schemes to address housing and health impacts

3.0 RESOURCING THE POLICY

- 3.1 It is generally agreed that the primary responsibility for repairing and maintaining homes must rest with the property owner. However, the Council may use a mixture of its own capital funding, Better Care funding and appropriate third

party grant funding to provide financial support to those households or individuals who require our help and support.

3.2 Several agencies across the district will work closely together to help encourage and support this investment.

3.2.1 **Selby District Council**

- Provides general advice and information to owners, landlords and tenants regarding legal rights and responsibilities and home maintenance issues;
- Provides wider planning and neighbourhood management services to create safe and sustainable communities;
- Provides advice and help to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people to remain independent in their own homes by identifying necessary repairs, and carrying out work through the Council's grant and loan initiatives.
- Supports and promotes the work of partnership organisations to deliver housing improvements;
- Implements enforcement powers granted under the Housing Act 2004, used as a last resort, to ensure owners maintain properties to relevant standards, address anti social or nuisance behaviour and tackle long term empty properties.

3.2.2 **Yorkshire and Humber Homes and Loans Service**

- Administers the regional loan scheme on behalf of the Council.
- Uses it's expertise to develop new loan products to target regional housing priorities.

3.2.3 **Better Homes Yorkshire**

- Promotes energy efficiency and provides free, impartial, locally relevant advice on what people can do in their home to reduce energy costs and to access available energy efficiency financial support.

3.2.4 **North Yorkshire Adult and Community Services**

- Provides specialist guidance and financial top-up support through the Occupational Therapist service towards the administration of the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Provides minor disabled adaptations and equipment as necessary.
- Provides a range of Telecare services.

3.2.5 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

- Provides fire safety checks for vulnerable households.
- Assists with the inspection of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and helps deliver the North Yorkshire Fire Safety Standard.

4.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE POLICY

4.1 This Private Housing Assistance Policy has been developed to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 and Government guidance and to provide the necessary framework to deliver key housing aims of the Council. The Council will ensure that services identified within it are directly accessible through the Council and/or our partner organisations.

4.2 The following general provisions will apply throughout the policy:

- Before any financial assistance is provided, Selby District Council will set out in writing to each person the terms and conditions relating to such assistance.
- A person's ability to contribute towards or repay any assistance is taken into account.
- Clear details will be given in writing to any applicant for financial assistance of any fees and charges that will be levied prior to any works commencing.
- Risk and fraud is minimised by following Government's Housing Renewal Guidance and working closely with the North Yorkshire Audit Team.
- Financial assistance would not normally be available to improve, adapt or repair living accommodation of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) on the basis that RSLs should have robust business plans which will ensure their properties meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The only exception to this provision will be in the provision of assistance through mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Applications for Disabled Facilities Grant will be considered from RSL tenants. However in such instances Selby District Council will expect the RSL to have explored all alternative solutions prior to encouraging such an application.
- Payments of financial assistance will normally be made on full and satisfactory completion of works with the discretion to make interim

payments for actual work undertaken resting with the Authority. To safeguard against fraud, payments will normally be made direct to the contractor. However, Selby District Council reserves the right to make payment to the applicant in certain circumstances.

4.3 Complaints Procedure

- 4.3.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, administrative actions or lack of such action by Selby District Council or their member of staff affecting an individual customer or group of customers.
- 4.3.2 Any individual is entitled to exercise their right to complain regarding their dissatisfaction with the services that they have received from Selby District Council. All complaints about services will be dealt with in line with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure.

4.4 Appeals Procedure

- 4.4.1 The appeal process is available to anyone who is dissatisfied with an officer's decision made in line with the Private Housing Assistance Policy. The process will also apply in cases where Selby District Council is seeking repayment of financial assistance under conditions which were set out at the time the assistance was given, but the person from whom the repayment is being sought wishes Selby District Council to consider waiving the repayment.
- 4.4.2 Appeals on issues relating to Energy Repayment Loans should be made in writing to Selby District Council, stating the nature of and the reasons for the appeal. The appeal will then be considered by the Special Cases Panel of the Homes and Loans Service. The Regional Loans Manager will notify the appellant of the outcome of the appeal giving full reasons for the decision.
- 4.4.3 Appeals on issues relating to all other assistance schemes should be made in writing to Selby District Council, stating the nature of and the reasons for the appeal. The facts of the case will be reviewed by the relevant Head of Service and Service Manager who will notify the appellant of the outcome of the appeal giving full reasons for the decision.

4.4.4 In all cases Selby District Council may request any additional information as necessary from the appellant for a fully informed decision to be made on the matter.

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