

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue:	Microsoft Teams - Remote
Date:	Tuesday, 20 October 2020
Time:	5.00 pm
Members present remotely via Teams:	Councillors A Lee (Chair), T Grogan (Vice-Chair), M Jordan, K Arthur, J Chilvers, R Packham, J Shaw-Wright, M McCartney and R Musgrave
Officers present remotely via Teams:	Dave Caulfield – Director of Economic Regeneration and Place, June Rothwell – Head of Operational Services, Sarah Thompson – Housing Service Manager, Michelle Dinsdale – Senior Policy and Performance Officer and Victoria Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

9 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

10 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee meeting held on 8 September 2020 for signing by the Chair.

11 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

There was no Chair's address to the Policy Review Committee.

12 POLICY REVIEW LOW CARBON WORKING GROUP - DRAFT LOW

CARBON ACTION PLAN (PR/20/5)

The Committee received the report of the Senior Policy and Performance Officer which asked Members to endorse the Draft Low Carbon Action Plan.

Officers thanked the Committee for their work as part of the Low Carbon Working Group which had been proactive and collaborative. The group had met on five occasions (16 January 2020, 27 February 2020, 23 June 2020, 28 July 2020 and 6 October 2020), with updates from the group being a standing agenda item on Policy Review Committee meetings.

The Policy Review Low Carbon Working Group had developed a draft Action Plan which detailed actions which the Council could take in order to reduce its carbon footprint. The Action Plan focused on those actions which the Council could directly deliver, as well as those it could influence, through collaboration with others.

The Committee noted that APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) had been commissioned to undertake work on calculating the Council's carbon footprint (based on 2018-19 data) and had calculated the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions. Scope 1 (direct) emissions were from activities owned or controlled by the Council. Examples included emissions from combustion in Council owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles. Scope 2 (indirect) emissions were associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. They were a consequence of the Council's energy use but occurred at sources that the Council did not own or control. Examples included grid supplied electricity and heat provided through a heat network. The Council's annual carbon footprint was calculated at 418 tonnes. Scope 1 emissions made up 38% (160 tonnes) and scope 2 emissions 62% (257 tonnes).

Officers also informed Members that at Council on 22 September 2020 £1.2 million Programme for Growth funding over three years had been agreed for project feasibility and delivery, and £135k for a dedicated Officer resource.

Members discussed the report and agreed that the work of the group had been collaborative and cross party, and that it should continue following consideration by the Executive in December.

The Committee queried the potential for tree planting at Burn Airfield and joint working with the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) for the development of a low carbon economy.

The Deputy Leader was in attendance at the meeting and confirmed that he would speak on the matter at the Executive meeting in December. In response to a question from the Deputy Leader, Officers confirmed that the 418t carbon footprint of the Council did not include outsourced services.

The Chair of the Committee asked about the impact of these low carbon interventions, and while he supported the action plan he also accepted that the Council was dependent on outside contractors, for services such as waste and recycling, to reach the target of being carbon neutral by 2030. In addition, the Chair expressed concern that by increasing use of green technology and interventions such as solar panels and electric vehicles, the Council would be unwittingly generating carbon elsewhere, for example, in their manufacture.

Officers responded by explaining that the calculation of the Council's carbon footprint did not include emissions from manufacturing the interventions because this would fall under Scope 3, which was outside of the scope of this piece of work. APSE could be asked to look at Scope 3 emissions as a separate commission, but it was difficult to obtain the raw data for this as it was heavily reliant on third party information being submitted, i.e. by organisations delivering outsourced services and contractors, and could take some time.

The Committee noted that the approach that APSE had taken in producing the report was a standard methodology that had been used across the country in other local authority areas. Scope 3 data was problematic, mainly due to the amount of time it would take to collect. The elements included in Scopes 1 and 2 would have a positive effect. Officers went on to explain that some local authorities had tried to trace their carbon footprint for everything, but it had proved problematic in places.

The Chair asked that his concerns around gathering further data be noted and asked the Committee if they wished for this additional information to be gathered. The general consensus from the Committee was that the action plan as set out should be submitted to the Executive and the work be taken forward, without the need for the additional data.

RESOLVED:

The Policy Review Committee endorsed the Draft Low Carbon Action Plan for submission to the Executive at their meeting in December 2020.

13 THE ALLOCATION OF HOUSING - UPDATE PRESENTATION (PR/20/6)

The Committee received a presentation and report from the Housing Service Manager which updated them on the allocation of housing in the district.

Members noted that the North Yorkshire Home Choice Policy was the Council's policy used to allocate our council owned housing and linked to the wider sub-regional Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy and our own Tenancy Policy.

Officers explained that the allocations policy was delivered in partnership

with other local authorities and registered providers across North Yorkshire, and was focused on meeting housing need, making the best use of stock and supporting sustainable tenancies. Choice Based Lettings worked by the public advertisement of all available social housing vacancies, allowing applicants to select the home they were interested in through a bidding process.

The Committee noted that there was a single unified 'housing register' that covered the whole partnership area and a single policy for determining eligibility to the register and/or determining the level of priority of applicants. The prioritisation of bids for advertised properties was on the basis of priority banding, with bids for properties ranked in order of Housing Need (e.g. priority banding); local connection to the partnership area; household size and time waiting. Councils consulted with housing associations that they had nomination agreements with over new schemes or major changes in policy, and summaries of the allocation scheme had to be published.

Members acknowledged that the policy made it clear that some landlords could restrict who was eligible to bid on some properties; any such restrictions were stated in the advert. There were a number of restrictions, including specially adapted properties for those with an identified physical disability or a mobility need, Section 106 (S106) properties where there was a legal agreement between Local Authorities and developers linked to planning permissions and applicants meeting specific conditions, minimum age criteria, rural area restrictions to applicants with a local connection to a parish, sensitive lets where a landlord could manage specific local housing issues and carry out additional checks on applicants, local letting initiatives that enabled landlords to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, and priority band restrictions in local authority areas of high demand.

The Committee understood that in some cases, properties could not be advertised but offered directly to an applicant; any such direct offers were approved by a senior manager and were monitored by the North Yorkshire Home Choice Partnership Board on a quarterly basis.

Members had previously expressed concerns around inward migration; as such, Officers acknowledged the importance of the needs of Selby district residents being met and provided feedback on the use of the rural area restrictions.

Officers gave a presentation which explained further the demand for affordable housing and homelessness across Selby district, affordable housing delivery, the acquisition of empty homes and Right to buy and buy backs, the allocation of affordable housing through North Yorkshire Home Choice, local lettings and the rural area restrictions and the new Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy timeline.

Members were pleased to note that a new Affordable Housing Development Strategy was currently being developed and would be

brought to Policy Review Committee for consultation in due course.

The Committee asked a number of questions regarding housing around variations to S106 Agreements and comments on planning applications from the Housing Team, the advertising of rural area restrictions, the future of the Home Choice scheme once York City Council had left and the acquisition of empty homes. Officers confirmed that seven empty homes had been acquired by the Council so far, and that there was a list of around 20 to 30 properties that were long term empty which the Council had identified.

The Committee asked that an update report on empty homes be brought back to them at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and presentation of the Housing Service Manager and asked that an update report on empty homes in the district be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Policy Review work programme for 2020-21 and asked that the following items be added to it:

- The consultation report for the preferred options from the Local Plan Programme Board; and
- The draft Affordable Housing Strategy.

RESOLVED:

To amend the work programme for 2020-21 as above.

The meeting closed at 5.58 pm.