



## **Policy Review Committee Report to Council**

The Policy Review Committee has met once since the previous update given to Council in July, on 14 September 2021. A summary of the items is set out below:

### **Update on the Low Carbon Working Group**

Officers presented an update on the previous meeting held on 23 August 2021, which covered work on the Council's carbon footprint with APSE, tree planting and development of the draft Low Carbon Action Plan and Low Carbon Strategy, which were currently in development; the strategy would be considered by the Executive at its October meeting. The next meeting of the Low Carbon Working Group was on 20 September 2021.

Members asked Officers to check if the Council had communicated with any Parish Councils yet about land for tree planting; the Low Carbon Officer had circulated a survey to all parishes, but the query around tree planting land would need to be checked and the answer supplied to Members after the meeting. Members requested a list of those parishes that had been communicated.

It was emphasised that any tree planting in the current season needed to be done as soon as possible; Officers assured Members that they were working with the WRFPP to identify the best type of tree for planting this season.

Also present at the meeting was the Lead Executive Member for Health and Culture, who, in response to a question regarding tree planting on Hambleton Hough, explained that there was an upcoming meeting on the matter, after which an update would be provided to Members.

### **Bulky Waste Collection Service**

The Committee received the report of the Contracts Team Leader which had been brought to committee to allow Members to review the current bulky waste collection service; the report set out the details of the existing service along with benchmarking information from neighbouring authorities.

The Committee asked why collection rates had increased despite the service being suspended for a short while due to the pandemic; it was thought that the increase may be due to residents doing more DIY at home and taking the pandemic as an opportunity to clear out their homes, therefore producing more material and items that needed disposal.

Members were complimentary about the service and felt that it was delivered consistently and well with reasonable pricing compared to the rest of the county.

Officers were asked if there had been an increase in fly tipping over the past two years and explained that for specific figures, they would need to supply these to the

Committee after the meeting. Members noted that when the pricing structure for bulky waste collection had been changed previously there had been no increase in the level of fly tipping.

The Committee asked Officers to bring back a further report on fly tipping to them as it was a matter that required relatively frequent consideration.

### Homelessness

The Committee were asked to consider and comment on a report about homelessness in the district, presented by the Private Sector Housing Officer and Housing Options Supervisor.

Members praised the Homelessness Action Plan and asked how those people at risk of homelessness became aware of the services they could access to help them. Officers explained that to ensure the information was out there the team did a great deal of partnership working, produced leaflets for inclusion in foodbank parcels, worked with the Citizens Advice Bureau and other voluntary agencies and lastly through direct customer contact.

The Committee were very impressed with the work of the team and how committed they were to what they did. Members expressed concern that in the next few months there would be a very difficult crisis period when support offered during the pandemic over the past year would cease; Officers were asked if there was a way through the potential upcoming problems which were a national issue. Officers responded by assuring Members that whilst it may be difficult, there were a number of systems in place to help families and individuals who may be at risk of homelessness, and that it was acknowledged that families were often more vulnerable. However, whilst the support structure was there, the need for committed funding was key; some government initiatives were capital initiatives without a return. It was essential for the service not to be diluted and for the focus on the work of the team to be maintained, alongside strong adult, social care and mental health teams.

Officers confirmed that two Afghan families were being housed in the district at present, and the Council had committed to take a number of Afghans as it did with Syrian refugees a few years ago. All local authorities had been asked to take more if they could, and Selby would be taking in three more families in September/October.

Members thanked Officers for their report and their attendance at the meeting and praised them for the good work they were doing for vulnerable people in the district.

### Payment of Covid-19 Business Grants

Officers gave a verbal update on the payment of Covid-19 grants. The amount left in the fund was £170,803. A total of £3,119,579.00 had been paid out, and any unallocated spend after 31 March 2022 would need to be returned. Demand for the third phase was low so it was not envisaged that any further grants could be paid. Following a question from Members, Officers were able to confirm that there weren't many fraudulent applications and that the Council's checking service was very robust.

## Work Programme 2021-22

The Committee considered the work programme for 2021-22.

Officers discussed adding fly tipping to the work programme alongside the litter picking item at the October meeting, but that this would need to be considered with the relevant team first.

The draft Corporate Policy Framework was taking longer than expected to develop as it was complex and wide ranging; as such, it was unclear as to which meeting this could be presented at. Members would be kept informed.

Members agreed the work programme as presented.

The Policy Review Committee will be meeting next on 19 October 2021.

**Councillor Chris Pearson**  
**Chair, Policy Review Committee**