

Minutes

Scrutiny Committee

Venue:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Thursday, 28 October 2021
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillors R Sweeting, J McCartney and J Chilvers
Officers present:	Karen Iveson – Chief Finance Officer, Michelle Dinsdale – Senior Policy and Performance Officer, Julian Rudd – Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, Angela Crossland – Head of Community, Partnerships and Customers, Victoria Foreman – Democratic Services Officer
Others present:	Executive Member for Finance and Resources - Councillor C Lunn and Executive Member for Communities and Economic Development

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the election of a Chair for the meeting was required.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Councillor R Sweeting be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

Councillor R Sweeting in the Chair.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Ellis, A Lee and N Reader.

15 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

16 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 July 2021 for signing by the Chair.

17 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no Chair's address to the Committee.

18 EXECUTIVE MEMBER PORTFOLIO REVIEW - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chair welcomed the Executive Member for Communities and Economic Development, Councillor David Buckle, to the meeting.

Councillor Buckle gave an overview of ongoing work, projects and updates within his portfolio, including town regeneration projects, Sherburn legacy projects, Heritage Action Zones, the Shining Star Awards, Community Legacy Funds, Safeguarding Partnerships and the Selby Station Gateway.

The Committee asked a number of questions of the Executive Member on various subjects, such as the rollout of electric vehicle charging points. It was explained that the rollout of EV points would be in the back Micklegate, South Street and Porthole Road car parks. Members noted that a number of private companies were installing EV charging points at offices.

Members asked about the redevelopment of Kellingley Colliery and Eggborough Power Station and whether jobs at these sites would produce a suitable number of jobs in the Selby District and if the potential increase of HGVs relating to the sites had been properly considered. The Executive Member explained that all developers were aware of the import and export of labour issues and that it was vital to capture the right sort of businesses on the sites. The Coal Board Regeneration Trust had been involved with the plans for Kellingley Colliery, on which small and medium units would be provided. Members noted that all of the Council's industrial units were currently full.

The Executive Member explained to the Committee that the Gascoigne Wood developers wanted to attract a company that would use the existing rail head on the site.

Members asked about the cost of the recent Shining Star Awards, the ceremony for which was held at Selby Abbey. The Executive Member described how the Council felt it was important to recognise the achievement of people from local communities during the pandemic and floods, but that a breakdown of costs could be supplied to Members if requested. Applications for the awards had been received from across

the district.

The cost of the Places and Movement Consultation was queried by the Committee, as well as what was felt to be by the Mayor of Selby a lack of consultation with residents. The Executive Member acknowledged the cost but clarified that there was a significant amount of information required and some aspects that needed to be changed, such as the low carbon approach and the links to the Transforming Cities Fund.

The Executive Member confirmed that the Mayor of Selby had recently discussed matters with Officers, and that the first consultation could have only taken place online during the height of the pandemic, which could explain the low response and lack of awareness by residents.

Officers explained the reasons behind the Places and Movement Consultation, as well as the costs, further details such as traffic modelling, problem junctions, landscape design, the appeal of town centres and next steps. The Council was trying to improve and transform some of the district's towns and places. A great deal of the work had been funded from outside the Council by bodies such as the York Enterprise Partnership. Members felt that there needed to be better communication with residents about the work and stated that the Council's communications and social media presence needed to improve in order to engage more people.

Lastly, the Committee asked about the potential development of the land at Burn Airfield and what progress there had been with that proposal. The Executive Member and Officers explained that discussions around the airfield were being taken forward in order to understand the nature of flooding on the site, as the Planning Department would not be able to make a sound judgment without such information. In addition, a survey had been undertaken and no munitions had been found on the site.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for attending the meeting and providing the update.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the update.

Councillor D Buckle left the meeting at this point and did not return.

19 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTS Q4 2020-21 AND Q1 2021-22 (S/21/5)

The Committee received the report of the Head of Business Development and Improvement which asked Members to consider and comment on the performance information presented to them for Quarter 4 2020-21 and Quarter 1 2021-22.

Members noted that the reports provided a progress update on delivery of the Council Plan 2020-2030, as measured by a combination of: progress

against priority projects/high level actions; and performance against KPIs.

Officers explained that the Quarter 4 2020-21 report included a year-end summary of progress on delivery of the Council Plan 2020-23 as measured by year-end performance against KPIs in 2020/21, compared with year end data for KPIs in 2019/20. In Quarter 4 56% of KPIs were showing improvement over the longer term or had maintained 100% performance; 69% of KPIs were on target, and a further 31% of KPIs were within acceptable tolerances.

The Committee were informed that in Quarter 4 a number of things had gone well, including elements of the Council's response to Covid-19 such as Reopening High Streets Safely (RHHS), the performance of the Environmental Health, Enforcement and Licensing Teams, the payment of business grants and NNDR collection. Positive performance had also been seen in the accessing of benefits forms and taxation direct debit forms online, the average sick days per full time employee, council tax collection, support for SMEs, affordable homes and recycling.

However, there were elements of performance that were not as good, council house repairs, particularly those that were routine, had been suspended throughout the third national lockdown, resulting in a backlog of such works. As restrictions were gradually eased in line with the national Government roadmap, the Council was implementing measures to re-introduce delivery of non-urgent repairs going forward and identifying additional resources to address the backlog of repairs as soon as possible.

Officers then gave a summary of performance in 2020-21, acknowledging the impact of Covid-19, the average time taken to re-let void properties, planning application processing and enforcement, environmental health and enforcement including food hygiene inspections, caravan sites, inspection of industrial permitted premises and sampling of private water supplies.

The Committee were then taken through by Officers the Quarter 1 2021-22 performance report. The period had seen the successful delivery of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election, good performance by the Environmental Health, Enforcement and Licensing Teams, payment of business grants, reduced average days to re-let void properties and gradual improvement in repairs to Council owned properties. The number of average sick days per full time employee had slightly increased but was still an improvement from some previous figures. The target for empty homes brought back into use had been exceeded, all major planning applications had been dealt with within the statutory time limit and non-major ones had exceeded the 70% target by 12%. Lastly, 100% of corporate complaints had been responded to on time and exceeded the 90% target.

However, there were still some issues with performance in relation to the collection of council housing rent and arrears, planned savings and

responses to FOIs and stage 1 complaints.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and noted the content of the reports.

20 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND BUDGET EXCEPTIONS REPORT Q1 - 2021-22 (S/21/6)

The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which asked Members to consider and comment on the Council's financial and budget exceptions for Quarter 1 of the 2021-22 year.

Officers explained that whilst the majority of financial impacts of Covid-19 were in 2020/21, it continued to have an impact on the 2021-22 financial year. The Council continued to report monthly to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government the estimated impacts of this on income streams and cost base, affecting both the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Members noted that at the end of Quarter 1 the current estimated full year revenue outturn estimates indicated surpluses of (£60k) for the GF and (£155k) for the HRA. The key variances were highlighted in the report with further detail in Appendix A. Recommendations were also included in the report to approve virements for £223k from the additional resource contingency to planning, to support the team to operate at full capacity and reduce the backlog of applications. There was also £130k to help support additional resources required to address the exceptional pressure from gypsy and traveller applications and enforcement.

The Committee acknowledged that a number of savings were put back to 2024/25 as part of the recent Medium Term Financial Strategy; GF planned savings were forecast to deliver at £184k, details of which could be found in Appendix B. However, the £195k saving in the HRA for the housing system would not be achieved in 2021-22 as it was predicated on the implementation of phase 2 of the housing system, which would not happen until later in the year.

Officers described how the capital programme was currently underspent by £1,422k at the end of Quarter 1. Of that sum £363k was forecast to be underspent at the year end, which was all in the GF; the majority related to disabled facilities. Programme for Growth projects spend was £412k in Quarter 1, £239k of which was staffing costs, with the majority of the remainder on visitor economy, transforming cities fund and towns master planning.

Lastly, the MHCLG return submitted for June 2021 indicated an overall estimated gross impact on Council finances of £2,730k across both the GF and HRA when compared to pandemic budget levels.

RESOLVED:

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The Committee considered and noted the report.

**21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY UPDATE Q1 - 2021-22
(S/21/7)**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which asked Members to consider and comment on the Council's borrowing and investment activity (Treasury Management) for Quarter 1 and performance against the Prudential Indicators.

Officers explained that the report reviewed the Council's borrowing and investment activity (Treasury Management) for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021 (Quarter 1) and presented performance against the Prudential Indicators, which had been updated following approval of a revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programmes.

Members noted that on average the Council's investments held in the NYCC Investment pool totalled £74.7m over the quarter, at an average rate of 0.18% and earned interest of £34.0k, of which £24.5k was allocated to the General Fund (GF) and £9.5k allocated to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This was £5k above the year-to-date budget. Interest rates remained at unprecedentedly low levels, and as older investments with higher rates were maturing, they were being replaced by new investments at the currently depressed rates. In this regard, forecast returns could be in the region of £116k, a budget deficit of £2k.

Officers confirmed that a prudent forecast had been made in this respect, assuming decreasing invested cash balances as funds were utilised for the annual capital programme. The interest forecast would be kept under review as the year progressed. The bank rate of 0.10% was expected to remain in place for at least the next two years until September 2023. In addition to investments held in the pool, the Council had £4.77m invested in property funds at 30 June 2021; the funds achieved 3.81% revenue return and 2.50% capital gain. This resulted in revenue income of £44.7k to the end of Quarter 1 and an 'unrealised' capital gain of £116.3k. These funds were long term investments and changes in capital values were realised when the units in the funds were sold.

In relation to borrowing, the Committee noted that long-term borrowing had totalled £52.833m at 30 June 2021, with £1.6m relating to the GF and £51.233m to the HRA. Interest payments of £1.912m were forecast for 2021/22, a saving of £0.015m against budget; the Council had no short-term borrowing in place as at 31 July 2021.

Lastly, Officers gave details of prudential indicators and the revised capital programme (as per the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy) had been incorporated into forecasts for expenditure and financing. The Council's affordable limits for borrowing were not breached during this period.

Officers explained that the details of the government's spending review

were being assessed and would be fed into the production of the Council's 2021-22 budget.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and noted the content of the report.

22 NORTH YORKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS 2019/2020 AND NORTH YORKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER'S ANNUAL REPORTS 2019/2020(S/21/8)

The Committee were presented with a report that accompanied the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2019-20 and the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships Independent Scrutineers Annual Reports 2019-20. The documents would give Members an insight into Selby District Council's current position in relation to ensuring effective safeguarding practices.

Officers explained that the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board had a statutory duty to publish annual reports, accounting for the activities of the Board for the previous year. This report covered 2019/20 activity and provided evidence of the key areas of focus for the current year.

It was important to note the changes in working arrangements for children's safeguarding following the reform in the 2017 Children and Social Work Act and to statutory Working Together guidance in 2018. These changes had led to the removal of the statutory requirement for North Yorkshire to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board; the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) undertook the work formerly delivered by the North Yorkshire Children's Trust and North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. The annual report provided a review and update of the delivery of the Young and Yorkshire Strategy, which aimed to improve the lives of children, young people and their families across North Yorkshire. The strategy included:

- The vision and approach to working for children and young people;
- the key considerations that will be used to check that a difference in truly being made;
- the desired outcomes for all children and young people; and
- priorities and actions.

Local Safeguarding Partnerships were launched in September 2019, encompassing adult safeguarding, community safety and children/young people's safeguarding; there was a Selby locality group with meetings taking place on a quarterly basis.

Members thanked Officers for the time and effort that had been put into

producing the report.

RESOLVED:

The Committee note the content of the attached annual reports for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult's Board.

23 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the 2021-22 work programme. Officers explained that due to the recently announced North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) by-election, due to be held on 25 November 2021, the next meeting of the committee would have to be cancelled and the business scheduled for consideration moved to another date.

It was suggested by the Committee that the attendance of the newly elected PFCC be put back to the meeting in February 2022.

Members were pleased to note that the Director of Public Health would be attending the Committee's December 2021 meeting.

Lastly, it was proposed by Members that the attendance of the Selby and Ainsty MP, Nigel Adams, be combined with a meeting of North Yorkshire County Council's Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the work programme 2021-22 and agreed that:

- **the attendance of the newly elected PFCC be put back to the meeting in February 2022; and**
- **the attendance of the Selby and Ainsty MP, Nigel Adams, be combined with a meeting of North Yorkshire County Council's Selby and Ainsty Area Constituency Committee.**

The meeting closed at 6.01 pm.