



# **Policy Review Committee**

**Annual Report  
2021-22**

## **Introduction by Councillor Chris Pearson - Chair of the Policy Review Committee**



I am pleased to present the Policy Review Committee with the Annual Report for 2021-22.

The Policy Review Committee met 4 times in 2021-22 but considered a range of different issues, including (amongst others) the

The Low Carbon Working Group, set up to closely examine the low carbon agenda of the Council, met on numerous occasions and produced a Low Carbon Strategy which was presented to and agreed by full Council in February 2022. The Working Group held a workshop in December 2021, which helped in the development of the strategy and identified priorities for Officers to take forwards, including tree planting, social housing retrofitting, the Council's renewable energy tariff, rewilding (increasing biodiversity and hedgerows), energy efficiency retrofitting of buildings and climate change impact assessments, sustainable travel and travel plans.

I would like to thank all members of the Policy Review Committee for their support and continued hard work. Many people have contributed to the success of Policy Review, including officers, external partner organisations and my thanks goes out to all of them.

Looking forward, the 2022-23 year will be an unusual one for both the Committee and the Council, as local government reorganisation and the formation of a single unitary North Yorkshire Council from 1 April 2023 will see the end of Selby District Council as we know it. However, the Policy Review Committee are determined to carry on undertaking their important work throughout 2022-23.

I look forward to the continuing progress of Policy Review in 2022-23.

Councillor Chris Pearson

**Chair of the Policy Review Committee 2021-22 and 2022-23**

## Policy Review Committee Annual Report 2021-22

The Policy Review Committee membership comprised the following Members during the 2021-22 municipal year:

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Cllr Chris Pearson (Chair)	Cllr Robert Packham	Cllr Mary McCartney
Cllr Mark Topping (Vice Chair)	Cllr Jennifer Shaw-Wright	
Cllr Mike Jordan		
Cllr Karl Arthur		
Cllr J Chilvers (until 24 February 2022)		
Cllr Georgina Ashton (from 24 February 2022)		
<b>Reserves</b>		
Cllr Neil Reader	Cllr Steph Duckett	Cllr John McCartney
Cllr Ian Chilvers	Cllr Keith Franks	
Cllr Keith Ellis		
Cllr Charles Richardson		

The Committee met 4 times during the 2021-22 year.

### **The Role of the Policy Review Committee**

The Policy Review Committee is one of the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny committees.

It is responsible for contributing to the development of Council policy, reviewing and making recommendations regarding existing Council policy and considering and commenting upon the implications on Selby District of the policies of partner organisations and other agencies delivering public services in the District.

### **2021-22 Work Programme**

During 2021-22 the Policy Review Committee reviewed and commented upon several topics, including:

Standing Update from Low Carbon Working Group (every meeting)	Flytipping and Littering
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Payment of Covid-19 Business Grants
Proposed Taxi Licensing Consultation on Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards	Bulky Waste Collection Service

Feedback on the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation	Car Parking Update
Universal Credit Update	Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan
Homelessness (inc. Homelessness Strategy)	Street Cleansing in Selby District
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Adaptations Policy 2021	Work Programme 2021-22 and Draft for 2022-23
Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021-23	Gambling Policy
Taxi Licensing Policy	

For further detail on each item, the full minutes of each meeting are available on the Council's website.

Date of Meeting	Topic	Discussion and Decision
20 July 2021	Update from the Low Carbon Working Group (Standing Item)	<p>An update was provided on scope 3 emissions, tree planting and the draft Low Carbon Action Plan.</p> <p>Members asked several queries about the realistic aims of the Working Group, how targets could be achieved, the size and length of time for the projects proposed over the next two years and the relationship of the projects to the imminent decision on local government reorganisation (LGR) in North Yorkshire.</p> <p>Members were pleased that an overall baseline was being identified and emphasised the need to front-load some of the actions, particularly short-term ones. The Council should attempt to achieve as much as possible over the next few years to leave a strong legacy after LGR.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update and emphasised the importance of both long- and short-term low carbon projects being taken forward promptly.</b></p>
	Medium Term Financial Strategy	<p>The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which asked Members to provide comments on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. In attendance at the meeting was the Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources.</p> <p>Members asked numerous questions of Officers and the Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources was in attendance. The queries covered a few matters within the MTFs, including the Selby Station Gateway Project, the</p>

		<p>Council's low carbon goals, including the potential projects and the need for a steer from the Executive on these, the use of savings and reserves, risks such as the possible loss of funds from Drax Power due to LGR, the future of the Summit Sports Centre and economic assumptions regarding interest rates and inflation.</p> <p><b>Overall, the Committee were content to recommend the MTFS to the Council for approval.</b></p>
	<p>Proposed Taxi Licensing Consultation on Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Licensing Manager which asked Members to provide comments on the Proposed Taxi Licensing Consultation on Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, in order to ensure that the views of the Policy Review Committee were considered as part of the eight-week consultation taking place between 12 July 2021 and 6 September 2021.</p> <p>Some Members wondered if the change to six-month DBS checks were appropriate. The Committee felt it would be more appropriate for Members to individually respond to the consultation, and as such, that the consultation before them should go forward as it stood.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the proposed taxi licensing consultation on statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards and agreed that Members should respond to the consultation on an individual basis.</b></p>
	<p>Car Parking Update</p>	<p>The Committee received a verbal update on car parking and were pleased to note that new tariff schemes, signage and machines had been implemented, and the work on large EV charging units had been completed.</p> <p>Officers would supply information to Members at a later date as to the number of people using the £1 tariff. There had been a drop in car park revenue due to the</p>

		<p>pandemic, which it was hoped would recover following the lifting of restrictions on 19 July 2021.</p> <p>Officers would shortly be looking at the provision of a new long stay car park in Selby, and the refurbishment of the car park at Back Micklegate.</p> <p><b>Members noted the update.</b></p>
	<p>Flytipping and Littering</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Head of Operational Services and Head of Commissioning, Contracts and Procurement, which asked the Committee to note the content of the report.</p> <p>Members expressed their frustration at how the problem of flytipping did not seem to be abating. Fixed penalty notices (FPNs) had been issued, which had generated £11k in fines; the Committee noted that local authorities often preferred FPNs due to the way in which the courts generally dealt with flytipping, as well as some offences being difficult to prosecute due to lack of evidence</p> <p>In relation to littering, Members acknowledged that the evidence suggested that Selby's standards were relatively high, which could be why when there was litter, it was more noticeable and reported by the public. A campaign against littering on high-speed roads was being planned by asking people to report the registrations of cars who littered, so that FPNs could be issued.</p> <p>Members went on to ask Officers several questions relating to mechanical versus hand litter picking, identification of areas that needed more focus and inspections and how quickly reported mess was cleared up.</p> <p>.</p> <p><b>Members noted the update and requested an information report on the frequency, methods and locations of litter picking in the district.</b></p>

	<p>Feedback on the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Planning Policy Manager which provided Members with an update on the responses to the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation.</p> <p>Members had very few comments and thanked Officers for the tremendous work they had done on the Local Plan and noted the summary of responses as set out in the report.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update on the responses to the Preferred Options consultation.</b></p>
	<p>Universal Credit Update</p>	<p>The Committee received the short update on Universal Credit in Selby District.</p> <p>The Committee expressed their concerns as to the rise in the number of people claiming Universal Credit, as well as the government's additional payment for Universal Credit claimants coming to an end. Ring-fenced grants for homelessness were received from the government, but rent debt had also been accruing which, with the courts reopening, could lead to some evictions.</p> <p>Members asked that the issue of homelessness was brought to a future meeting of the Committee, as well as the criteria for the use of any money left from the government's grant; Officers explained that just before the pandemic the Council's new Homelessness Strategy had been agreed, and as a result this could also be explored.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update, agreed that a report on homelessness should be added to the Committee's work programme for the September 2021 meeting, and that an explanatory report on the criteria for and the proposed uses of the remainder of the government's Covid-19 grant be presented to them in the next few months.</b></p>



	Work Programme	Members noted the work programme which would be amended to reflect the suggestions made at the meeting.
14 September 2021	Update from the Low Carbon Working Group (Standing Item)	<p>Members received an update from the meeting of the Low Carbon Working Group, which had met on 23 August 2021. The update covered carbon footprint, tree planting and the draft Low Carbon Action Plan and Low Carbon Strategy.</p> <p>Members asked Officers to check if the Council had communicated with any Parish Councils yet about land for tree planting; Officers explained that the Low Carbon Officer had circulated a survey to all parishes, but that the query around tree planting land would need to be checked and the answer supplied to Members after the meeting. Members requested that if such contact had been made, a list of those parishes that had been communicated with could be supplied to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there would be a motion presented at the next Council meeting on the Council's low carbon work and Members' concerns around the lack of progress.</p> <p>It was also emphasised that any tree planting in the current season needed to be done immediately; Officers assured Members that they were working with the WRFP to identify the best type of tree for planting this season.</p> <p>Also present at the meeting was the Lead Executive Member for Health and Culture, who, in response to a question regarding the success of previous tree planting on Hambleton Hough, explained that there was an upcoming meeting about the Hough, after which an update would be provided to Members.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update.</b></p>

	<p>Bulky Waste Collection Service</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The Committee asked why collection rates had increased despite the service being suspended for a short while due to the pandemic; Officers thought that the increase could be down 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Members noted the report.</b></p>
	<p>Homelessness (Including Homelessness Strategy)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The Committee asked a number of questions of Officers, starting with how the Council got to know about rough sleepers in the district and how many there were</p>

		<p>currently. Officers explained that various sources were used, including notification by the public and the Streetlink service. The Homelessness Team would go out to try and find the person the same day in order to offer assistance. There was one rough sleeper in the district at present that the team knew of, with the annual estimated number (calculated on a single night in November each year) being around five.</p> <p>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. 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.</p> <p>The Committee accepted that the team did struggle to assist some people, but that they were doing their best to help. The resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan was a very current issue, and Members asked if this would affect the Selby district.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Members noted the report.</b></p>
	Work Programme	Officers discussed adding fly tipping to the work programme alongside the litter picking item at the October meeting, as requested by Members earlier in the meeting, but that this would need to be discussed with the relevant team first.

		<p>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.</p> <p><b>Members noted and agreed the work programme for 2021-22.</b></p>
	Payment of Covid-19 Business Grants – Verbal Update	<p>Officers gave a verbal update on the payment of Covid-19 grants.</p> <p>Members noted that over 500 businesses had been forced to close in the November and January national lockdown and these businesses had received grant payments totalling £5.9 million; pubs also received an additional £150,232 in grants in separate schemes.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update.</b></p>
<b>11 January 2022</b>	Update from the Low Carbon Working Group (Standing Item)	<p>Members received an update on the work of the Low Carbon Working Group, including the online workshop that was held on 9 December 2021.</p> <p>Following the workshop, Members had identified the following priorities: tree planting, the retrofitting of social housing, biodiversity and greener energy tariffs.</p> <p>Officers went on to give updates on various projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The climate change training module for Members and Officers was complete and would be made available on the Council’s online training system soon.</li> <li>• The remaining data for the calculation of the Council’s 2019-20 and 2020-21 carbon footprint was being collated.</li> <li>• Officers planned to move the Council’s energy tariff over to renewables from April 2022.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urbaser had been involved in a three-month trial using hydrotreated oil with waste collection vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>Members asked if the renewable energy tariff would be tied in with the hospital and were very keen to see some action with the identified projects but acknowledged the need for the carbon footprint calculations to be completed so that an accurate comparison could be made.</p> <p>Members also asked that details and figures were provided on energy efficiency of social housing.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the update.</b></p>
	<p>Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer which had been brought before Members to provide comments on the Draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022-2023.</p> <p>Members asked several questions of Officers on the budget. Some Committee Members were pleased that a freeze on Council Tax had been proposed due to the rise in the cost of living; it was important to keep tax levels down. The number of consultation responses was queried, as was the impact of the rise in interest rates, the 2% rise in Council employee salaries and the increase in National Insurance.</p> <p>Some Members stated that whilst they could see why there were reasons to freeze Council Tax levels which were feasible at present, they may not be appropriate in the long term. Members felt that the situation with the Council's reserves was very important; a clear understanding by Members was essential.</p> <p>The Committee asked further questions on receipt of renewable energy business rates, the differences between the expected and awarded financial settlement,</p>

		<p>public sector pay restraint, if IT projects and the replacement of systems were truly necessary ahead of LGR, the spending of funds within the Programme for Growth, the increase in housing rents by 4% and levels of business rate relief.</p> <p>Some Members felt strongly that housing rent decisions should not be taken by the Executive but by full Council; the 4% rise was unfair and unreasonable and would be detrimental to tenants.</p> <p>The Committee recognised that the recurring deficit was unlikely to recover and as such, it was likely that the new authority would have to tackle the matter early on. There would be challenges ahead and savings would need to be identified at some point in the future.</p> <p><b>The Committee endorsed the Executive’s draft budget proposals for 2022-23, including the proposed freeze in Council Tax.</b></p>
	<p>Street Cleansing in Selby District</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Contracts Team Leader, which had been brought to Members to allow them to review the street cleansing service. The report set out the details of the existing service along with an independent review of standards by Keep Britain Tidy that was carried out in 2019.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased with the litter posters that had been produced and requested more copies for other areas, such as Gowthorpe in Selby, which was particularly bad near the school. Officers were aware of such areas but were pleased to report that the extended operative hours would mean more street cleansing in both Selby and Tadcaster. Further work with the schools was encouraged. Brayton was also identified as a problematic area for litter.</p> <p>Members asked about the hotspots for the clearance of leaves on the highway. Officers explained that heavily wooded and treelined areas were addressed by a</p>

		<p>rolling programme of work, with sweepers working on roughly a three-weekly cycle.</p> <p>The Committee were aware of some members of the public who cleared litter themselves, sometimes on busy roads. Officers explained that people could borrow the Council's litter picking equipment, but that a risk assessment was required and as such, a busy road would not be an appropriate place, as they would not be covered by the authority's public liability insurance.</p> <p>Lastly, it was noted by Members that an assessment by the Keep Britain Tidy campaign had said that Selby district was a good and clear area for litter and fly tipping.</p> <p><b>The Committee considered and noted the report.</b></p>
	<p>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Adaptations Policy 2021</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Operational Service Manager and Housing Strategy Officer, which had come to Committee to allow Members to review the draft Adaptations (DFG) Policy 2021 and provide feedback as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>Members asked if any consultation work had been undertaken with local disability groups; Officers explained that a few people that they had spoken to included local disability forums.</p> <p>There was general concern from Members as to the time it took to make adaptations to properties in order for people to stay in their homes, and how the Covid-19 pandemic could have made it worse. Officers described how referrals from North Yorkshire County Council had doubled in the last 12 months, and that it was taking an average of 80 days to do the work, which was above the national average.</p>

		<p><b>The Committee noted the draft policy and provided feedback as part of the consultation process, before the draft was returned to the Executive, expected in March 2022.</b></p>
	<p>Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021-23</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Operational Service Manager and Housing Strategy Officer which had come to Committee to allow Members to review the draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2021-23 and provide feedback as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>Members asked how private homeowners would be aware of the assistance offered; Officers explained that it could be through North Yorkshire County Council, Selby District Council's website or social services.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the draft policy and provided feedback as part of the consultation process, before the draft was returned to the Executive, expected in March 2022.</b></p>
	<p>Covid-19 Government Grant</p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Revenues and Benefits Manager Housing Service Manager which had been requested by Members and set out business grants in September 2021 in order to give further detail about the use of the remainder of the government's Covid-19 grant to the Council, and details of security, fraud, and data protection for previous payments of the grants.</p> <p>The Chair asked what could stop a small business from applying for a grant; Officers explained that discretionary grants asked for evidence that losses did happen for a business, which could put some business owners off. The amount of the grant was set by central government.</p>



		<p>Members were pleased that constituents had reported that the Revenues and Benefits Team had been very helpful and efficient, and asked about remaining funds.</p> <p>Members were disappointed that the recipients of the grants had to pay tax on the amounts; Officers acknowledged this and emphasised that they tried to make it very clear to all recipients that the amounts would be taxed.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the content of the report.</b></p>
	<p>Universal Credit Update</p>	<p>The Committee received an update from the Revenues and Benefits Manager Housing Service Manager in relation to Universal Credit.</p> <p>Members acknowledged that UC was now a wholly DWP function, but that it would still be useful for them to be aware if numbers of claimants was rising. Officers explained that the Council didn't report back on any other legacy benefits; however, the Committee agreed that the update should be kept on the work programme going forward, but only when there was a significant change in numbers, i.e., a shift of 10% each way.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the report and agreed that the update on Universal Credit numbers should be kept on the work programme going forward, but only reported on when there was a significant change in numbers, i.e., a shift of 10% each way.</b></p>
	<p>Work Programme</p>	<p>The Committee considered the 2021-22 work programme presented by Democratic Services.</p> <p>Officers explained that with reference to the Corporate Policy Framework, the development of this had been complicated by the upcoming local government reorganisation (LGR). As Selby District Council would be ending as an authority</p>

		<p>in 2023, there was little reason to develop or refresh existing policies for a soon to be defunct organisation. The exception to this was if the policies had to be updated to remain legally compliant. As such, it was suggested that this matter be removed from the work programme.</p> <p>Members asked if a report on the Council’s industrial units could be brought to the fore, including information such as the state of the units, how many there were, where they were and how many were vacant etc. Officers advised the Committee that such an item had been suggested as a joint project between the Audit and Governance, Scrutiny and Policy Review Committees, as the matter had been raised at previous meetings of all three.</p> <p>It was agreed by Members that the best way forward with the matter would be to receive an information report on all aspects of the industrial units for consideration by the Policy Review Committee, after which the matter could be, if appropriate, brought forward as a joint piece of work between the three committees; it was acknowledged by Members that this work would be subject to the demands of LGR, specifically Officer time and availability.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted and agreed the work programme 2021-22, subject to the changes discussed at the meeting.</b></p>
<p><b>15 March 2022</b></p>	<p>Update from the Low Carbon Working Group (Standing Item)</p>	<p>The Committee received an update on low carbon work since the last Committee meeting and noted that a full update would be presented to the Low Carbon Working Group on 22 March 2022, where further discussion and feedback could be provided.</p> <p>The update contained information on the Low Carbon Strategy, the HVO fuel trial, the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Routemap to Carbon Negative, Our Zero Selby, Better Homes Yorkshire, local government reorganisation and tree planting.</p>

	Gambling Policy 2022	<p>The Committee received the report of the Licensing Manager which asked Members to consider and endorse the proposed Gambling Policy 2022.</p> <p>Selby District Council was the Licensing Authority responsible for the licensing of certain gambling premises licences and all types of gaming machine permits in Selby District. As part of this role the Council must have regard to the statutory licensing objectives and issue a Statement of Licensing Principles (“the Gambling Policy”), which must be reviewed every 3 years. The existing Gambling Policy had been reviewed and it was considered that very minor changes were required. The Council consulted on the revised Gambling Policy between 10 January 2022 to 21 February 2022.</p> <p><b>Members endorsed the proposed Gambling Policy 2022.</b></p>
	Taxi Licensing Policy 2022	<p>The Committee received the report of the Licensing Manager which presented the proposed Selby Taxi Licensing Policy 2022. A consultation was held between the 10 January and 21 February 2022 with proposals to the Selby’s Taxi Licensing Policy 2022. Officers had reviewed the consultation responses received and updated the policy.</p> <p><b>The Committee endorsed the proposed policy and recommended it to the Executive for adoption.</b></p>
	Work Programme 2021-22 and 2022-23	<p>The Committee agreed that the industrial units information report should move to the June 2022 meeting, as well as the two remaining items on the work programme for April 2022 (the update from the Low Carbon Working Group and Work Programme Planning 2022-23), and that as a result, the April 2022 meeting of the Committee be cancelled.</p>