



Councillor Chris Pearson, Chair of the Policy Review Committee
Update to Council on 27 September 2022

The Policy Review Committee has met once since the last update to Council on 19 April 2022. The meeting took place on 12 July 2022.

Policy Review Committee Meeting – 12 July 2022

Members considered the following matters:

Update on the Low Carbon Working Group (LCWG)

The Committee received an update on the low carbon work since the last Committee meeting. The Committee were advised that a number of officers who had worked with the LCWG had either resigned or moved to other authorities, and that due to the uncertainty caused by the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), a decision had been taken not to recruit officer replacements. Members were assured that officers would continue to deliver what they could of the Low Carbon Action Plan and were currently working with colleagues at North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to establish where shared agendas overlapped, and where NYCC could help to support delivery.

The Committee heard that officers had liaised with potential delivery partners to secure the planting of some trees in the autumn and continued to engage with the LGR climate change working group. It was noted that baseline emissions data had been provided to support a North Yorkshire wide baseline and this would contribute to the development of a Climate Change Strategy for the new Council.

Members stated their disappointment on the contribution made by Selby District Council in relation to low carbon, however it was highlighted that the Members who were both Selby District Council Councillors and NYCC Councillors would support any initiatives through the Local Government Review process.

Industrial Units Information Report

The Committee received a comprehensive update from the Strategic Asset Management and Property Services Manager on the current position in respect of the Council's commercial and industrial property portfolio and the suggested proposals for their improvement and future management.

The officer explained that Selby District Council (SDC) owned a 50 percent stake in 40 industrial units across four sites within the Selby District; two situated in Sherburn in Elmet and two in Selby. All the sites were subject to a 50 percent claim of beneficial interest by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), and NYCC received 50 percent of the rental earned from the sites.

The Committee were informed that one of the key things to affect the industrial units was the legislation around energy performance and the minimum energy efficiency standards. The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales)

Regulations 2015, colloquially referred to as the “MEES Regs” imposed legislative minimum energy efficiency requirements of an ‘E’ rating for all private rented sector domestic and private rented non-domestic properties.

Members heard that in March 2021, the government had launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to amend the MEES 2015 regulations to mandate even greater levels of energy efficiency in non-domestic rented property, with a proposed interim step of ‘C’ by 1 April 2027, and a minimum ‘B’ energy efficiency rating by 1 April 2030.

It was highlighted that these increases in mandated energy efficiency requirements presented significant challenges for the Council, particularly in relation to the two Selby sites at The Vivars Centre and The Prospect Centre. Following full independent energy audits of the two sites it had been confirmed that both sites could be made to achieve the minimum ‘E’ rating required under MEES 2015 but delivering a ‘C’ and subsequently a ‘B’ EPC rating may not be feasible even with substantial investment.

It was confirmed that officers were actively working on proposals to improve one of the two sites at the Prospect Centre to achieve at least MEES 2015 requirements before 31 March 2023 to ensure the Council was not required to serve notice on its current tenants. In parallel, discussions with tenants in the Vivars Centre were underway to facilitate a transfer of their businesses to the newly upgraded Prospect Centre once completed.

Members debated the report and asked the officer several questions in relation to whether NYCC would be making a contribution to the cost of the works required, alternative site options for businesses, and what improvements could be implemented at the Prospect Centre to achieve a minimum ‘C’ EPC rating.

The Committee were in agreement that this approach was correct for the future improvement and management of the industrial unit and supported the suggested Improvement Plans. Officers were requested to forward the plans and recommendations to Councillor David Buckle as Lead Member for Communities and Economic Development; and also strongly advocated that a level “C” EPC rating was achieved by March 2023.

Annual Report of the Policy Review Committee 2021-22

Members approved the Policy Review Committee Annual Report for 2021-22, the report provided an update on the topics considered and the subsequent findings of the Policy Review Committee over the last municipal year.

Work Programme

Members suggested that the Selby Local Plan be added to the work programme, to be presented at Committee once the public consultation had ended on the 7 October 2022, they also felt strongly that they should continue to have sight of work at a District level such as Low Carbon and Universal Credit. The Committee noted the Policy Review Work Programme.

The Policy Review Committee will be meeting next in October 2022.

Councillor Chris Pearson, Chair of the Policy Review Committee