



# **Policy Review Committee**

**Annual Report  
2022-23**

## **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 2022-23.

The Policy Review Committee met 4 times in 2022-23 and considered a range of different issues, including Council owned industrial units, the low carbon work being undertaken in the District, Universal Credit, and the Annual Reports of the Policy Review Committee for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

I would like to thank all Councillors who served on the Policy Review Committee during 2022-23, for their support and continued hard work.

Indeed, over the years of Selby District Council's existence many people have contributed to the work and success of the committee, including officers and external partners. I would like to put on record my thanks to them.

Councillor Chris Pearson  
**Chair of the Policy Review Committee 2022-23**

## Policy Review Committee Annual Report 2022-23

The Policy Review Committee membership comprised the following Members during the 2022-23 municipal year:

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Cllr Chris Pearson (Chair)	Cllr Robert Packham	Cllr Mary McCartney
Cllr Mike Jordan (Vice Chair)	Cllr Jennifer Shaw-Wright	
Cllr Charles Richardson		
Cllr Karl Arthur		
<b>Reserves</b>		
Cllr Keith Ellis	Cllr Stephanie Duckett	Cllr John McCartney
Cllr Ian Chilvers	Cllr Keith Franks	

The Committee met 4 times during the 2022-23 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.

### **2022-23 Work Programme**

During 2022-23 the Policy Review Committee reviewed and commented upon several topics to include Council owned Industrial Units, a standing update from the Low Carbon Working Group, an update on Universal Credit, and the Annual Reports of the Policy Review Committee for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

In addition, the Committee received presentations in relation to the Monk Fryston and Hillam Community Buildings Sustainability Project, Selby Sustainability Partnership and Our Zero Selby Project; and the emerging North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Climate Change Strategy.

At the final meeting of Policy Review the Committee will receive a presentation from the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on the Routemap to Carbon Negative

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

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion and Decision</b>
<b>12 July 2022</b>	Low Carbon Working Group Update (Standing Item)	<p>An update was provided on the loss of resources for the low carbon work since the last Committee meeting, tree planting and 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.</p> <p>Members stated their disappointment on the contribution made by Selby District Council in relation to low carbon and noted the update.</p>
	Industrial Units Information Report	<p>The Committee received a comprehensive update 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

		<p>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.</p> <p>Following full independent energy audits of the two sites 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.</p> <p>Members debated the report and asked the officer numerous 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.</p> <p>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; and also strongly advocated that a level "C" EPC rating was achieved by March 2023.</p>
	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 2022-23	<p>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. The Committee also felt strongly that they should continue to have sight of work at a District level such as Low Carbon and Universal Credit.</p> <p>The Committee noted the Policy Review Work Programme.</p>

<b>18 October 2022</b>	Work Programme 2022-23	Members were reminded that the next date in the Committee Calendar for Policy Review Committee was Tuesday 6 December 2022 however this was being held provisionally. The Committee agreed that they wished to confirm the 6 December 2022 date and requested that the Chief Officer of the AVS along with officers from Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council be invited to attend the meeting, to discuss the low carbon agenda within the district, and receive a presentation on the Y&NY LEP's Routemap to Carbon Negative.
	Low Carbon Working Group Update (Standing Item)	<p>The Committee had received a short update note on the work of the Low Carbon Working Group (LCWG) prior to the meeting, and had a number of queries regarding the information contained within the note in relation to the role that the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Y&amp;NYLEP) would be taking in co-ordinating on the low carbon agenda in the future, the total number of trees which had been planted in the district by Selby District Council, were solar farms included within the Climate Change Strategy; and did fuel poor homes refer to poor insulation, and if so was there a target to be met.</p> <p>The Committee had noted that NYCC had secured £2m of funding through the local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme to deliver electric vehicle charge points across deeply rural parts of the county. Members queried why the funding was being used for this purpose when local bus service routes were being discontinued. The Committee noted the update.</p>
	Universal Credit Update <b>(Standing Item - Every 6 Months)</b>	<p>The Committee heard that the number of recipients of Universal Credit within the Selby area, taken from the latest figures available from May 2022, stood at 3921 recipients. Members queried why the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) managed migration of legacy benefit recipients onto Universal Credit had stopped.</p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>

Monk Fryston and Hillam  
Community Buildings  
Sustainability Project

The Committee welcomed Mr Ray Newton from the Monk Fryston and Hillam Community Buildings Sustainability Project to the meeting who gave an overview of the project, which aimed to make five community buildings (the Community Centre, the Primary School, St Wilfred's Church and Church Hall and the Cricket Club) across the two villages of Monk Fryston and Hillam carbon neutral.

It was explained that the project had come about through a small group of people who wished to reduce the communities carbon emissions, and who joined forces with other like-minded people and organisations within the two villages to effect change.

External advice had been provided by the Chief Officer at Selby District Association of Voluntary Services (AVS), and the Yorkshire Energy Doctor, Kate Urwin, and it was commented that their contribution had been invaluable.

Members heard a timeline of events for the project which had been conceived in 2019. A Steering Group had been formed and following a community survey which established that there was strong support for the project, the group applied for a grant from the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) to undertake a feasibility study to assess if the aim of making the buildings carbon neutral was realistic; the application was successful. The feasibility study had clearly shown that given the dispersal of the buildings round the two villages that they could not benefit from a shared power or heating system, therefore each building was surveyed on its individual requirements with a customised solution developed for each one.

Members heard some of the actions which had already been implemented, and the Committee noted that they had been encouraged by the Council's Low Carbon Project Officer to share their knowledge and write a press release that would publicise what the group were achieving, this had prompted pod casts and the group being featured on a Radio York broadcast.

		<p>Members asked questions to include, were any local businesses involved with the project, where were the simplest savings to be made, who was responsible for the governance and any grant funding monies received; and how many electricity storage batteries were in use at the Community Centre.</p> <p>It was stated that the group did not offer advice, as they were not suitably qualified to do so, however they did share their experience and learning with other village groups in the hope that they would not make the same mistakes made by the group in the early days of the project.</p> <p>Finally, in relation to what it was felt the Council could do to enable sustainability, Mr Newton listed a number of suggested initiatives to include developing an exemplar building, supporting local community groups, and signposting groups to public works loans via Parish Councils.</p>
<p><b>6 December 2022</b></p>	<p>York &amp; North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Routemap to Carbon Negative</p>	<p>Members had requested that an officer from the York &amp; North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) attend the meeting to provide a briefing on the Routemap to Carbon Negative, due to unforeseen circumstances at the last moment, the officer was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, the item was abandoned. Members requested that the officer be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee in January 2023.</p>
	<p>Selby Sustainability Partnership and Our Zero Selby Project</p>	<p>The Committee welcomed the Chief Officer of the Selby District Association of Voluntary Service (SDAVS) to the meeting who gave a short briefing on the Selby Sustainability Partnership (SSP), and Our Zero Selby project (OZS). It was explained that the SSP had been established in 2021 by the SDAVS to champion and develop a shared understanding of sustainable priorities for the district, share project updates; and foster collaboration and look for opportunities for joint delivery.</p>



The Committee heard that the SDAVS worked in partnership with a number of local groups to include amongst others, Selby District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Groundwork, Yorkshire Energy Doctor, Monk Fryston and Hillam Sustainability Project and Tadcaster and Rural C.I.C.

The SDAVS ran a number of initiatives to include the Selby Community Fridge which had been successful in reducing food waste by redistributing waste, perishable food donated by supermarkets and members of the public, to local residents who faced challenges in financial and food insecurity.

In addition, the SDAVS also provided education in the form of the Yorkshire Energy Doctor. Members were informed that 37 Energy Ambassador training courses had been delivered to over 400 advice workers, who then cascaded the information learned through the training to residents on how to reduce energy consumption and energy bills.

In response to a question from the Chairman, it was explained that Our Zero Selby (OZS) was launched in 2021 as part of a national pilot to support residents to take action on climate change and to inspire the transition to a zero-carbon economy.

In response to a query regarding the geographical area covered by the SSP, it was confirmed that historically the SDAVS was based within the Selby area, however as the new Council emerged a more flexible approach would be taken to ensure that the skills and knowledge gained by the SDAVS would be cascaded across the County, if and when needed.

Finally, the Committee heard that the SDAVS provided monthly drop in sessions where residents could talk to a number of specialist advisors to gain support and advice in a range of areas to include financial concerns, energy bills and health. It was noted that in 2021 the SDAVS had dealt with 12,000 enquiries, the figure to date for 2022 was approximately 18,000 enquiries.

Emerging North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Climate Change Strategy

Members received a detailed presentation from the Climate Change Policy Officer from North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) on the work which was being carried out in conjunction with the seven district councils and the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to develop a Climate Change Strategy for the new unitary North Yorkshire Council. The aim was that the region of York and North Yorkshire would be carbon negative by 2040 by encouraging residents, businesses, and visitors to take climate responsible actions.

The Committee heard that the LEP document, Routemap to Carbon Negative, which was the most recent and relevant document had been used as a guiding document for York and North Yorkshire, and it was hoped that the Routemap to Carbon Negative would be endorsed by the Executive Members of NYCC in January 2023, along with the draft Climate Change Strategy.

The Committee were shown data for greenhouse gas emissions for the North Yorkshire area, and it was explained that the government had recently started to include not only carbon dioxide as the key greenhouse gas but also nitrous oxide and methane, this demonstrated that agriculture was the largest emitting sector followed by transport and domestic buildings.

The Officer stated that in July 2022 NYCC had declared a climate emergency and highlighted some of the measures that had been put in place across the services provided by NYCC to reduce emissions, along with current activity taking place due to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in terms of the Climate Change Working Group and the different workstreams, with the aspiration of embedding climate change thinking into all proposals, decisions and policies.

The Committee were informed that once the draft NYC Climate Change Strategy had been endorsed by the NYCC Executive, the next step would be

		<p>for the draft to go out for public consultation, this would take place between January and March 2023.</p> <p>It was highlighted that consideration had to be given to three themes to support the region to be carbon negative, these were to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prepare for the climate changing; and support nature and the ecosystem to thrive. The Members went on to hear a number of interventions being put in place by NYCC to mitigate greenhouse gases, to adapt to the changes in the climate, and to support nature; and how these would be delivered.</p> <p>Members asked a number of questions in relation to the emissions data provided, low carbon vehicles, the connection of solar farms to the National Grid, carbon capture by trees and tree planting, and the methane produced by agriculture.</p> <p>The Committee raised concerns regarding the timescales to achieve carbon neutrality and carbon negativity and asked how confident the officers were that the targets would be reached. It was confirmed that the timescales were in the Routemap to Carbon Negative and had been part of the modelling analysis but were challenging. However, it was stated that they were targets and ambitions which NYC would strive to achieve in partnership with public, private and community sectors across York and North Yorkshire.</p>
	Work Programme 2022-23	<p>Members were reminded that the next date in the Committee Calendar for Policy Review Committee was Tuesday 10 January 2023, and there was also one further date on 14 March 2023 which was being held provisionally; it was confirmed that the Chair had agreed that the March date should be removed from the calendar as the date was so close to Vesting Day.</p>

**The following items are due to be considered at the final meeting of the Policy Review Committee:**

<b>10 January 2023</b>	York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Routemap to Carbon Negative	
	Final Annual Report of the Policy Review Committee 2022-23	