

Minutes

Scrutiny Committee

Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Wednesday, 27 June 2018
Time:	5.00 pm
Present:	Councillors S Duckett (Chair), I Chilvers, J Chilvers and D Mackay
Officers present:	Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer, Michelle Dinsdale, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, Sarah Thompson, Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager, Iain Brown, Economy and Infrastructure Manager and Victoria Foreman, Democratic Services Officer
Others present:	Councillor C Lunn, Executive Lead Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor C Pearson, Executive Lead Member for Housing, Health and Culture
Public:	0
Press:	0

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Buckle. Councillor Judith Chilvers was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Buckle.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 22 March 2018.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 March 2018 for signing by the Chair.

4 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There was no Chair's address to the Committee.

5 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18 - S/18/1

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to approve the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017-18 and make any comments or suggestions as to how the format of the Committee's Annual Report could be improved for future years.

Members noted that the Scrutiny Committee was required, under Article 6 of the Constitution, to prepare an annual report reviewing its work during the previous municipal year.

The Committee were happy with the format of the report, but expressed concern that recommendations made by the Committee were often not implemented.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017-18.

6 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19 - S/18/2

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to agree items for inclusion on the Work Programme 2018-19, note the meeting dates for the Executive in 2018-19 and agree Scrutiny Committee Member attendance at these meetings.

Members noted that the Committee's work programme should effectively scrutinise and contribute to supporting service improvement and delivery against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, and progress the relationship between the Scrutiny Committee and the Executive to facilitate the development of scrutiny at Selby.

The Committee were pleased to note the number of attendees from various organisations that had been confirmed as attending the special transport themed meeting in October. Officers asked the Committee to begin thinking about strategic and regional issues they would like to raise at the meeting.

Members queried the progress of the project for Police co-location and Selby District Council's offices. The Chief Finance Officer informed the Committee that she would find out the status of the project and update Members accordingly after the meeting. Members also asked the Chief Finance Officer to enquire after the sale of Newby Wiske Hall, the former

Police Headquarters in Northallerton.

The Democratic Services Officer asked Members to begin considering how they wished to undertake the 'deep dives' or 'scrutiny in a day' topics that were listed at the end of the work plan (housing, Safer Selby Hub/anti-social behaviour and planning enforcement).

Members acknowledged the attendance of the Chair of the North Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel at the committee's November meeting, and asked the Democratic Services Officer to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, Julia Mulligan, and a senior Police Officer to the same meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i. To agree the Work Programme for 2018-19.**
- ii. To note the Executive meeting dates in 2018-19 and agree Scrutiny Committee attendance at the meetings.**
- iii. To ask the Chief Finance Officer to update Members on the Police co-location and the sale of Newby Wiske Hall.**
- iv. To ask the Democratic Services Officer to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner and a senior Police Officer to the meeting of the committee in November.**
- v. To ask Members to consider how they wished to undertake the 'deep dives' or 'scrutiny in a day' topics that were listed at the end of the work plan (housing, Safer Selby Hub/anti-social behaviour and planning enforcement).**

7 SCRUTINY REVIEW 2018 - S/18/3

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider and make any comments or suggestions on the Scrutiny Review 2018.

Members noted that the work on improving and strengthening scrutiny, as recommended by the Peer Challenge Team and set out in the Council's Peer Challenge Improvement Plan, required the input and involvement of the Scrutiny Committee in order to be successful.

The Committee felt that the report was comprehensive and the recommendations sensible. The Committee emphasised the importance of the promotion of the work of scrutiny, including encouraging the Committee to get out into the community more as part of their work.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the contents of the report.**
- ii. To emphasise the importance of the promotion of the work of scrutiny, including encouraging the Committee to get out into the community as part of their work.**

8 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND BUDGET EXCEPTIONS REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2018 - S/18/4

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider and make any comments on the Council's financial results and budget exceptions.

Members noted that the Council's year-end results for 2017-18 gave a surplus of £414k on the General Fund against budget. There were a number of variances (positive and negative) which had made up the surplus including increased planning fees, staffing savings, higher interest returns, higher waste and recycling income and unspent contingency.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had generated a net surplus of £1,919k after carry forward requests, against a budgeted surplus of £1,185k a variance of £734k. The main drivers of the variance were savings on external interest payments arising from lower borrowing requirements, reduced revenue funding required on the capital programme, lower pension deficit repayments and unspent contingency.

The Committee noted that savings exceeded target in the HRA due to higher than expected savings from the pension deficit reduction. Savings on the General Fund fell short against target, primarily due to the delay in the Contact Centre office move and interest returns on loans to the Housing Trust commencing later in the year than anticipated.

It was confirmed that the General Fund Capital Programme had reported an underspend of 3521k after carry forwards. A number of ICT projects had been rolled into the Channel Shift digital strategy and would now deliver in 2018/19. In addition, the budget for Disabled Facilities Grants was underspent in the year. The amendments to the Private Sector Assistance Policy and a more proactive marketing of the grants should help the spend increase in 2018-19.

Members acknowledged that the HRA capital programme had a surplus after carry forwards of £525k; key reasons for this were a lower level of boiler and central heating replacements than expected, an under-utilised estate enhancements budget and lower demand for damp works.

The Committee noted that the latest Programme for Growth update had been considered by the Executive in April 2018; the programme was underspent by £1.7m in the year. The new approved programme was

now underway with increased spend expected in 2018-19 as projects continued to progress.

The year-end revenue surpluses were proposed for transfer to earmarked reserves and balances to support future spending plans.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2017/18 - S/18/5

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider and make any comments on the Council's treasury management.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the report reviewed the Council's borrowing and investment activity (treasury management) for the financial year to 31 March 2018 and presented performance against the prudential indicators.

Members noted that on average the Council's investments totalled £51.3m over the year at an average rate of 0.53% and earned interest of £271k (£209k allocated to the general fund; £62k allocated to the HRA) which was £146k above budget.

The Committee acknowledged that long-term borrowing had totalled £59.3m at 31 March 2018 (£1.6m relating to the general fund; £57.7m relating to the HRA), with an average interest rate of 4.19%. Interest payments of £2.5m were made in 2016-17 (£0.1m allocated to the general fund; £2.4 to the HRA). The Council had no short term borrowing in place as at 31 March 2018.

Members were pleased to note that the Council's affordable limits for borrowing were not breached during the period.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

10 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 - 2017/18 (JANUARY TO MARCH)/YEAR END 2017/18

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider and make any comments on the Council's performance.

The Committee noted that the quarterly corporate performance report provided a progress update on delivery against the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 as measured by a combination of progress against priority projects/high level actions, and performance against KPIs.

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer explained that the report also contained a year-end summary of progress on delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 as measured by year-end performance against KPIs in 2017-18 compared with year-end data for KPIs in 2016-17.

Members discussed the report and expressed concerns around the targets for re-letting empty properties, and levels of sickness in the authority. Officers explained that some of the void properties required more work than anticipated to ensure they were in a good condition before re-letting, and that work to reduce levels of sickness was progressing.

The Committee suggested that the delay in re-letting empty properties was an area that the Executive could consider in more detail. However, Members were pleased to note that performance in relation to urgent repairs was very good.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

11 HOUSING TENANT SERVICES UPDATE - S/18/7

The Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager introduced the report which asked the Committee to note the content and consider how the Committee might contribute to the consultation on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was being reviewed in 2018-19.

The Committee noted that the Council's Corporate Plan had four key ambitions, and the Housing service specifically supported the aims of making Selby District a great place to enjoy life and make a difference, through delivering great value.

Officers explained that the Housing Tenants Services Team was responsible for tenancy and estate management. The team worked with key partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and with the Enforcement Team to tackle tenancy breaches. The team administered all applications for housing and were responsible for council house allocations, mutual exchanges, successions and assignments, and supported tenants to sustain tenancies.

Members were informed that the Housing Options Team offered advice and guidance to anyone facing homelessness. As demand for affordable housing remained high, the team were continuing to develop links to private rented sector landlords to help widen the housing options available to customers.

The Committee asked about the involvement of social services in when awarding tenancies and how to ensure the best use was made of properties in the District. Some Members felt that local knowledge would be helpful during the housing process. Officers explained that the each

application for housing was dealt with on its own merits, but that the local knowledge of Members could be useful with regard to other matters that required attention, for example, streetlight repairs or highways issues.

It was confirmed that area 'walkabouts' were being reintroduced and that different ways to get tenants involved were being explored, for example, the current garden competition. Members noted that Housing had a budget for estate improvement and were currently looking for ideas for longer term improvements that could be made; Members were asked to submit any ideas to the department for consideration.

The Committee were supportive of the proposal to be consulted on the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the report.**
- ii. To ask Members to submit ideas for estate improvement works to the Housing Team.**
- iii. To support the involvement of Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation on the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.**

12 PROGRAMME FOR GROWTH - UPDATE ON EXISTING PROGRAMME AND PROPOSED NEW PROGRAMME - S/18/8

The Economy and Infrastructure Manager introduced the report which asked the Committee to note progress on the existing Programme for Growth (P4G), the approved new Programme for Growth projects and associated budgets, the strengthened programme management and reporting arrangements and provide guidance to Officers as to whether there were any elements of the Programme for Growth that the Committee would like to focus on as part of future updates.

The Committee noted that the P4G was first established in 2011 as a means of focussing and managing investment in the Council's key priorities. The programme was now in its third iteration (from 2017-18), and P4G3 was the critical delivery mechanism for the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 and growth focused Economic Development Framework which aimed to make Selby District 'a great place'. The Executive report before the Committee provided an update on progress and included recommendations to the Executive for a further round of P4G projects.

Members were pleased with the comprehensive report and asked a number of questions on the content. Some Members expressed concern about future involvement in the Tour de Yorkshire, as they were unsure as to the real benefits for traders in the District, and were of the opinion that infrastructure and town regeneration should be focused on.

The Committee noted that there were a number of large strategic planning applications expected in the coming months, including the rail freight interchange at Gascoigne Wood and former air base at Church Fenton. However, Officers reassured Members they were aware that the majority of businesses in the District were small and medium sized enterprises, and that the Council was keen to support them through encouraging long term investment and job creation.

Members acknowledged that long term strategic planning was essential to the economic growth of the District, and that a number of strategic sites were currently being developed the Council's Economic Development Team.

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the progress on the existing Programme for Growth.**
- ii. To note the approved new Programme for Growth projects and associated budgets.**
- iii. To note the strengthened programme management and reporting arrangements.**
- iv. To receive regular updates on the progress of the Programme for Growth via the quarterly updates to the Executive throughout the year.**

The meeting closed at 6.08 pm.