



# **Policy Review Committee**

**Annual Report  
2018-19**

## **Introduction by Councillor James Deans - Chair of the Policy Review Committee**



I am pleased to present the Policy Review Committee with the Annual Report for 2018-19.

The Policy Review Committee met 5 times in 2018-19 and considered a range of different issues, including (amongst others) Universal Credit, Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Council's Budget for 2019/20, Taxi Licensing, Gambling Policy, Digital Strategy and the Planning Enforcement Management Plan.

I would like to thank all Councillors 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.

I look forward to the continuing progress of Policy Review in 2019-20.

Cllr J Deans

## Policy Review Committee Annual Report 2018-19

### The Policy Review Committee

The Policy Review Committee membership comprised the following Members during the 2018-19 municipal year:

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Independent</b>
J Deans (Chair)	J Shaw-Wright	Mary McCartney
M Hobson (Vice Chair)		
K Arthur		
J Cattanach		
D Hutchinson		
<b>Substitutes</b>	<b>Substitutes</b>	
E Casling	J Thurlow	
C Pearson	P Welch	
I Reynolds		

The Committee met 5 times during the year (July 2018, September 2018, December 2018, January 2019 and March 2019).

### 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.

### 2018-19 Work Programme

During 2018-19 the Policy Review Committee reviewed and commented upon a number of topics, including:

- Planning Enforcement Management Plan
- Gambling Policy Refresh
- Universal Credit
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Taxi Licensing
- The Budget 2019-20
- Digital Strategy and Transformation Plan
- Annual Report of the Committee 2018-19
- Work Programme of the Committee

Date of Meeting	Topic	Discussion/Resolution
24 July 2018	<p><b>Planning Enforcement Management Plan</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Planning Development Officer and was asked to agree the use of a specific Planning Enforcement Management Plan (PEMP) to improve the performance of planning enforcement, and note that a specific PEMP would enable the embedding of policy and practice, which would improve responses and output, whilst at the same time setting clear standards for delivery. The Committee's views were being sought on the principle of moving towards a specific PEMP in order to facilitate service improvement.</p> <p>Members expressed concern that prioritisation of enforcement matters was not working, and that better information about enforcement procedures and processes would be useful to both the public and Members. Reporting and monitoring of enforcement was also a key element of the service which Members felt required improvement; Officers confirmed that work would be undertaken on these aspects as part of the development of the PEMP.</p> <p><b>The Committee strongly supported the development and implementation of a Specific Planning Enforcement Management Plan to improve the performance of planning enforcement, recommended that a specific Planning Enforcement Management Plan would enable the embedding of policy and practice, which would improve responses and output, whilst at the same time setting clear standards for delivery.</b></p> <p><b>The Committee also recommended that the existing case load be reviewed, and that all non-planning matters, historic or otherwise, should be removed from the case load and re-directed to the appropriate service,</b></p>

		<p>and that all out of time duplicate cases and non-planning matters should be culled from the list of outstanding cases. Lastly, Members recommended that on completion of the draft Planning Enforcement Management Plan it should be presented again to the Policy Review Committee for review and comment.</p>
	<p><b>Policy Review Work Programme 2018-19</b></p>	<p>The Committee considered the work programme and were asked to consider items for inclusion in the 2018/19 municipal year. The Chair emphasised the importance of Officers preparing and submitting reports to the Committee at the meetings for which their items were scheduled on the work programme. The Committee agreed that their work programme required further development</p> <p>The Committee asked the Democratic Services Officer to contact Officers who had items under the 'potential items for 2018/19' section at the end of the work programme, in order to ascertain which committee meetings these would be presented at.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2018/19 and asked the Democratic Services Officer to contact Officers with items listed under the 'potential items for 2018/19' section at the end of the plan in order to ascertain which committee meetings these would be presented at.</b></p>
<p><b>11 September 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Gambling Policy Refresh</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager and was asked to note the draft Gambling Policy, consider the consultation responses received and provide any comments or recommendations. The Committee acknowledged that the Gambling Policy (Statement of Principles) had to be reviewed at least every three years, and the current policy required review and revision (if needed) by January 2019.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the minor changes to the policy were as follows:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. An updated population figure for Selby District at page 5 of the policy;</li> <li>ii. A footnote relating to the stakes and prizes table at Appendix D to the policy to show they may change;</li> <li>iii. An updated postal address for HM Revenues and Customs (a Responsible Authority) listed in the appendices of the policy; and</li> <li>iv. An observation from the Gambling Commission to suggest that within section 12 of the policy, the Council may wish to include a requirement that Local Risk Assessments were kept on licenced premises.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee acknowledged that the suggestion relating to Local Risk Assessments applied to certain types of gambling premises, and that the arrangement could prove useful for Enforcement Officers conducting visits. Members were supportive of the Gambling Commission’s suggestion and agreed that it should form part of Selby District Council’s Gambling Policy.</p> <p><b>Members noted the draft Gambling Policy and consultation responses received and recommended to Council that the amendments to the Gambling Policy, as set out in the report of the Licensing Manager, including the suggestion of the Gambling Commission that Local Risk Assessments be kept on licenced premises, be approved.</b></p>
	<p><b>Universal Credit Update</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Customer, Business and Revenue Manager and was asked to consider the content of the report and make any comments on Universal Credit. The report provided an update on the impact of Universal Credit (UC) on Council services, partners and the community and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Universal Credit Full Service had gone live at</p>

		<p>Selby Job Centre (which covered the majority of postcodes in the district) on 30 May 2018. To date the volume of claimants had been very low (336). As a result the impact on Council services, partners and the community and voluntary sectors was negligible.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to note that the Department for Work and Pensions had reported on Selby District Council's transition to Universal Credit, and had stated that the Council's approach had ensured a smooth and supportive path for new Universal Credit claimants. Members agreed that the next update on the impact of Universal Credit should be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.</p> <p><b>Members noted the updates on Universal Credit as set out in the report and asked Officers to bring a progress report back to the Policy Review Committee in 12 months' time.</b></p>
	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Chief Finance Officer and was asked to consider the content of the report and make any comments on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p> <p>The report before Members presented an update to the MTFS, covering both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) prior to consideration by Council on 18 September 2018.</p> <p>The Committee debated the matter and asked a number of questions of officers on a number of issues, including the impact of Brexit on the Council's finances, council tax levels and the level of financial uncertainty facing the Council in the coming years. Some Members expressed concern around spending on projects such as the Tour de Yorkshire and if there were measurable benefits from hosting such events.</p>

		<p><b>The Committee noted the content of the report and recommend to Council that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.</b></p>
	<p><b>Work Programme 2018-19</b></p>	<p>The Committee considered the work programme and were asked to consider items for inclusion in the 2018/19 municipal year. The Chair took the Committee through the current work programme and explained that a number of items had been added on as a result of the meeting between the scrutiny Chairs and the Executive, held in July 2018.</p> <p>The Committee noted that PLAN Selby had been removed from the work programme as a revised timetable for consideration was being worked on; it would be added back on to the work programme when this new timetable had been established by officers.</p> <p>With reference to the 'potential items' section of the work programme, Members acknowledged that the GDPR impacts report and the Counter Fraud Strategy, Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy and Prosecution Policy were matters to be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, and as such, should be removed from the Policy Review work programme.</p> <p>Lastly, the Chair explained that the monitoring of planning enforcement performance would be more appropriate as a matter for the Scrutiny Committee, and as a result he had asked the Democratic Services Officer to discuss this with the Chair of Scrutiny, with a view to including it in the Scrutiny Committee's work programme.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the work programme for 2018/19, asked the Democratic Services Officer to remove the GDPR impacts report and the Counter Fraud Strategy, Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy and Prosecution Policy from the work programme, as these would be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, and to discuss the</b></p>



		<p><b>monitoring of planning enforcement performance with the Chair of Scrutiny Committee, with a view to including the matter on the Scrutiny Committee's work programme.</b></p>
<p><b>17 December 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Enforcement Management Plan</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Head of Planning and was asked to note the progress and provide comments on the draft Enforcement Management Plan. The report gave Policy Review Committee an up to date position on Planning Enforcement performance and provided an opportunity to comment on the draft Enforcement Management Plan (EMP).</p> <p>Members noted the changes and improvements that had been made to the service since they had last considered the PEMP in July 2018. The overall caseload had been reduced by around 25% despite the generation of new cases on a weekly basis; response times and customer service was improving. The agreement of a detailed Enforcement Management Plan (EMP) was a key step in optimising the Planning Enforcement service.</p> <p>Members discussed the draft EMP in detail and made a number of comments and suggestions. The Committee felt it should be made clearer that whilst there was still a backlog of historic cases, these were continuing to be worked through whilst the future of the service and improvements to it were developed at the same time.</p> <p>In relation to the timescales for dealing with cases, Members felt it should be clarified that the timescales listed in the EMP were the very maximum or 'worst case scenario', and it was likely that most cases would be responded to in a timelier manner. Members understood that some cases could take longer to resolve than others due to sensitive negotiations, and that flexibility was essential.</p> <p>The listing of untidy land as a lower priority matter caused concern for some</p>

Members, as this was a topic that the public contacted their local Councillors about regularly. Officers explained that it was important to set realistic expectations for the public and Members, and that whilst every case would be taken on its own merit, there needed to be a framework to work within.

Unauthorised advertisements were also raised as an area of concern by the Committee, as they had a detrimental effect on the local area; Officers were asked to consider whether some forms of unauthorised advertising, i.e. in conservation areas, could be prioritised. However, Members did acknowledge that the prioritisation of some enforcement matters above others was difficult and there wasn't a 'one size fits all' that could be implemented across the whole District or within the EMP.

The Committee queried the resource available in the Planning Enforcement Team and asked Officers to confirm if they felt they had sufficient resource to tackle the existing backlog of cases, as well as dealing efficiently with new ones. Officers confirmed that they felt the service was now working efficiently, but that the matter should be monitored and looked at again around six to twelve months after implementation, to ensure that improvements within the service, as a result of the EMP, were continuing to be seen.

Members also indicated that some of the details and wording in the draft EMP could be streamlined and strengthened; the inclusion of elements replicating parts of the NPPF could offer opportunities to appellants where there was perceived to be a difference in the form of words on matters concerning responses to the processes for dealing with action. In order to keep the information in the EMP simple, further explanatory notes could be provided to accompany it when published online.

Proactive monitoring of the performance of the EMP and the Planning Enforcement Team was suggested as an essential component to the

		<p>implementation and success of the plan. The Committee suggested that a Planning Sub-Committee be established to meet and monitor the progress of the enforcement caseload on a quarterly basis. The Committee also requested that an all-Member briefing to formally launch the document take place following agreement of the EMP by the Executive.</p> <p><b>The Committee welcomed the production of a Planning Enforcement Management Plan, and offered the following comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. that the time lines for action appeared to be too long, it needed to be emphasised that these were maximum response times; and</b></li> <li><b>ii. that the Plan was regarded as not being strong enough and was weakened by too many qualifications relating to available resources;</b></li> <li><b>iii. that the inclusion of elements replicating parts of the NPPF could offer opportunities to appellants where there was perceived to be a difference in the form of words on matters concerning responses to the processes for dealing with action.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee also recommended that a Planning Enforcement Sub-Committee be established to meet and monitor the progress of the enforcement case load on a quarterly basis, and that following approval by the Executive, an all-Member briefing session be arranged, at which the Planning Enforcement Management Plan would be launched.</b></p>
	<p><b>Work Programme 2019-20</b></p>	<p>The Committee considered the work programme and were asked to consider items for inclusion in the 2018-19 municipal year. The Chair took the Committee through the current work programme and noted the upcoming items for the January and April 2019 meetings.</p> <p>The Committee asked that following the next Universal Credit update in</p>

		<p>September 2019, the matter then be considered every 6 months. Members also agreed that the Planning Enforcement Management Plan should be reconsidered by the Committee again six months after its initial implementation. With reference to the other potential items for the future, Members agreed that Housing Need was an area they would like to consider in the future.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the work programme for 2018/19, asked the Democratic Services Officer to ensure that following the next Universal Credit update in September 2019, future updates on the running of the service to the Committee be scheduled every 6 months, and to add the Planning Enforcement Management Plan to the Committee’s work plan for review six months after its implementation. Members also requested that Affordable Housing and Housing Need be added to the Committee’s work plan as a future topic for consideration.</b></p>
<p><b>15 January 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Taxi Policy Review Consultation Update</b></p>	<p>The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager which asked Members to note the contents of the report and to make any comments on the draft Taxi Licensing Policy.</p> <p>Members noted that Selby District Council’s Taxi Licensing Policy was being reviewed; a consultation on the proposed policy took place between 1 December 2018 and 12 January 2019. The Council had received 19 responses out of 192. The feedback received indicated a level of agreement with the Council’s recommendations, which had been incorporated into the proposed new Taxi Licensing Policy which went out for public consultation in December 2018.</p> <p>Members discussed the matter in details and considered a number of points, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of an age limit on existing vehicles</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the correct spelling of discrete was used in the policy.</li> <li>• Inspections for vehicles applying for discrete licences.</li> <li>• Fare levels for wheelchair accessible vehicles, and if they could charge a higher rate – Officers confirmed they could not.</li> <li>• The importance of drivers informing the Council’s Licensing Team if they developed a health condition that could affect their driving.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee noted and endorsed the proposed amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy and the recommendations by Officers.</b></p>
	<p><b>Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2019-20 and Medium Term Financial Plan</b></p>	<p>The Committee received the report of the Chief Finance Officer and were afforded the opportunity to comment on the Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2019-20 and Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer updated the Committee on the discussions that were had at Executive meeting on 10 January 2019; the draft minutes of the meeting were circulated to the Committee. The Executive had resolved to amend the proposed increase in council tax to £3 for an average band D property. The Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained the financial impact of this amendment and that there would also be an ongoing impact to the council tax income base and required savings for future years.</p> <p>Members debated the report in full and queried a number of issues, including the outcome of the government’s upcoming Fairer Funding Review, the impact of the 1% reduction in housing rents on the Housing Revenue Account, the future of renewable energy business rates from Drax Power, the option of freezing council tax for one year, investment of the Council’s reserves and returns on property funds, identification of new savings opportunities, levels of borrowing and the expected return in revenue of the Programme for Growth (P4G).</p>

		<b>The Committee noted the Draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme 2019-20 and Medium Term Financial Plan, including the amended proposed increase in council tax to £3 for an average band D property and the draft budgets, bids and savings for public consultation.</b>
	<b>Work Programme 2018-19 and Planning for 2019-20</b>	<p>The Committee considered the work programme for the rest of the 2018-19 year, and the draft work plan for 2019-20.</p> <p>Members noted the upcoming items for the next meeting of the Committee in April 2019, and were content with the draft work programme for 2019-20. It was expected that more items would be added to the 2019-20 draft work programme in the coming months.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the work programme for the remainder of the 2018-19 year and the draft work programme for 2019-20.</b></p>
<b>12 March 2019</b>	<b>Work Programme Planning for 2019-20</b>	Details of the discussion on this item will be added to the Annual Report 2018-19 after the meeting on 12 March 2019.
	<b>Digital Strategy and Transformation Plan</b>	As above.