

Minutes

Policy Review Committee

Venue:	Committee Room
Date:	Tuesday 16 January 2018
Time:	5.00pm
Present:	Councillors J Deans (Chair), K Arthur, J Cattnach, D Hutchinson, Mrs M McCartney, C Pearson, Mrs J Shaw-Wright.
Officers Present:	Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer, Angela Crossland, Head of Community, Partnerships and Customers, Sarah Thompson, Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager, Simon Parkinson, Private Sector Housing Officer, Michelle Dinsdale, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, Alex Dochery, Economic Development Officer, Sharon Cousins, Licensing Manager, Rachel Crossley, Customer Business Analyst
Others Present:	Ruth Tiernan, Selby Big Local

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Hobson. Councillor C Pearson was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Hobson.

8. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Policy Review Committee held on 13 June 2017 for signing by the Chair, subject to the amendment of minute number 2. – Timing of Meetings to read:

‘To agree that the meetings of the Policy review Committee would commence at 5pm for the forthcoming Municipal Year.’

10. CHAIR’S ADDRESS

The Chair had no address for the Committee.

11. TACKLING DEPRIVATION WITHIN SELBY DISTRICT

The Committee received a presentation from Officers on the Council’s work and policies aimed at supporting residents living in areas of high deprivation, and were asked to review the effectiveness of the policies.

The Committee noted that Officers had recently looked at data and statistics concerning levels of deprivation within Selby District; it had been identified that generally the District was a prosperous area with low levels of deprivation, ranked 254 out of England’s 326 Local Authorities by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

However, Members were made aware that there were two small areas within Selby Town with comparatively high levels of deprivation. These areas were an area to the north of Selby Town centre near Charles Street and Flaxley Road, which ranked within the 10% of the most deprived areas in England, and an area near Abbots Road estate in the south of Selby Town which ranked within the 20% most deprived areas in England.

The presentation went on to provide an overview of deprivation levels in Selby District and the District’s particular strengths and challenges, before emphasising the need to take a long term, whole system approach to various challenges. It was explained to Members that it was important to take a strategic look at the issues in question and what the Council could do to achieve the most impact to improve quality of life across the District.

Members welcomed a representative from Selby Big Local to the meeting who gave an update on their work and future priorities for the high deprivation areas of Selby Town.

The Committee discussed the matter in detail and raised a number of points, as set out below.

- Members asked how areas of deprivation in other areas of the District were identified. Officers explained that understanding community resilience and engagement was key in order to identify issues and facilitate and support change.

- The Committee noted the relevant links of the work on deprivation to a recent report circulated to Members on 'Children's Lives in North Yorkshire' produced by the Children's Society, and how population density in the areas identified as deprived could affect the scale of the problem.
- Members agreed that some residents were harder to contact, and that significant effort would need to be made in order to reach these people; access or barriers to services, such as affordable housing, was a key reason for deprivation. Officers explained that being able to connect with hard to reach groups was the main reason that one of the Council's Neighbourhood Officers moved her weekly surgery to a local school, to increase visibility and accessibility for these residents.
- Concerns were raised by the Committee around the levels of housebuilding in some areas, such as Sherburn, and that such housing was not necessarily accessible by low skilled workers in the area. Transport for employment in areas such as Sherburn, in particular bus provision, was also raised as an issue by the Committee. Officers confirmed that they had been discussing the matter with local employers on the Sherburn Industrial Estate and local bus service provider Arriva and felt that some headway was being made in addressing the issue.
- Members emphasised the importance of working with local schools to raise the aspirations of children from the areas identified as deprived, in order to try and break the cycle of deprivation.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To note the content of the presentation.**
- ii) **To endorse the strategic approach to improving quality of life across the District outlined in the presentation, which focused on fostering inclusive growth to improve prospects for all of the District's residents, and supporting residents and local communities.**

12. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Committee received a report from the Council's Chief Finance Officer setting out the Executive's draft budget proposals and were asked to provide comments as part of the consultation process.

Members noted that the report presented the draft revenue budget, capital programme and outline Programme for Growth for 2018/19 to 2020/21. The 2018/19 budgets showed a forecasted deficit of £6k (before further planned savings) on the General Fund and a £885k surplus on the Housing

Revenue Account, which was required to fund the housing capital programme. Over the next 3 years a total funding shortfall of £3.7m was forecast on the General Fund. The report identified a number of mounting budget pressures and acknowledged that an increase in General Fund savings was required. £2.4m of reserves had been earmarked previously to support the revenue budget pending delivery of savings. To date £377k had been used, with a further £668k planned to be used in 2018/19, and £81k in 2019/20. The on-going use of reserves to support the revenue budget in this way was not sustainable and as part of the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, options for future savings would be sought in the context of emerging budget risks.

Members queried various aspects of the report, including funding for housing purchases, the move of the Contact Centre and its staff to the Civic Centre, council housing rents, renewable energy business rates and the Council's use of reserves.

The Committee noted that there were still significant savings to be made by the Council and that further reductions in funding by the government were likely.

In response to the Executive's request for savings ideas, the Committee felt that the Better Together Programme with North Yorkshire County Council could be developed and explored further in order to share other services and potentially save additional money. The Chief Finance Officer undertook to feed this back to the Executive.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the Draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Plan.**
- ii) To recommend that Officers explore further the future development and scope of the Better Together programme with a view to achieving future savings.**

13. EXECUTIVE HIRE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager and were asked to note and endorse a number of changes to the application process and conditions upon the grant of discreet vehicle licences, and to agree the appointment of Policy Review Committee Members to a Working Group to look at the necessary amendments to the Licensing Policy.

Members noted that the Executive Hire Group had met on 12 December 2017 for the second time to consider conditions to be placed on discreet vehicle licences and amendments to the application process.

The Committee discussed the membership of the Working Group and nominated the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillor Mrs J Shaw-Wright. The nominations were subsequently agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note and endorse the following changes to the Application Process:**
 - (a). That a formal application form be used for applications for a discreet vehicle licence, which should be accompanied by 3 references from potential customers who would use the executive service (Appendix 1).**
 - (b). That the Licensing Committee should consider executive hire vehicle suitability on a case by case basis, aided by the submission of photographs of the vehicle with the application for a discreet licence.**
 - (c). That the applications for discreet licenses continue to be considered by the Licensing Committee until such time as Members are satisfied that consideration can be delegated to officers.**
- ii) To note and endorse the following Conditions upon the Grant of Discreet Vehicle Licences:**

That it be made a condition upon the grant of a discreet vehicle licence that:

- (c). The vehicle must only be used for executive hire – this included no school contracts, or other contracts that involved the transport of children, young people, or vulnerable adults.**
- (d). The private hire licence plate must be carried in the vehicle at all times, although they need not be visible to the passenger.**
- (e). The driver of the vehicle must wear visible photo identification at all times.**
- (f). The executive hire vehicle is kept to a high standard both internally and externally at all times.**
- (g). The exemption certificate (granting the discreet vehicle licence) is displayed on the left of the dashboard/ bottom left of the windscreen.**

- (h). **A record is kept of all executive hire contracts undertaken by the vehicle and is to be made available for inspection by the Council's Licensing and Enforcement officers upon request.**
- (i). **A dress code is adhered to by drivers, to include a collar and tie.**
- (j). **The Discreet plate is renewed annually.**
- iii) **That a working group made up of members from both the Policy Review Committee, namely the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and Councillor Mrs J Shaw-Wright, and the Licensing Committee meet in the coming weeks to work with officers to propose the necessary amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy for Executive approval.**

14. WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received a report from the Licensing Manager and were asked to nominate members to serve on a Working Group to consider the review of the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles Policy.

Members noted that in March 2017 the Licensing Committee was asked to note the coming into force of provisions within the Equalities Act 2010 which made it illegal for taxi drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles to discriminate against wheelchair users, unless they were certified as exempt from the requirements to assist.

The Licensing Manager explained that the Licensing Authority needed to take steps to review the policy and procedures, and work with the trade to ensure that they were aware of their obligations.

The Committee were informed that the Licensing Team were still awaiting a confirmed date for the consultation on the Department for Transport's statutory/best practice guidance; it was recommended that the Licensing Authority proceed to review the legislation and existing guidance in line with the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy, considering the Council's approach to the new legislation.

The Committee discussed the membership of the Working Group and nominated the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillor Mrs J Shaw-Wright. The nominations were subsequently agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That a Working Group be formed made up of Members from both the Licensing Committee and Policy Review Committee, namely the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillor Mrs J Shaw-Wright, to consider the following questions:

- **What a Wheelchair accessible vehicle is;**
- **If a list should be created under Section 167 of the Equalities Act 2010, which would identify taxis or private hire vehicles which conform to such accessibility requirements as the licensing authority thinks fit; and**
- **The policy for exempting drivers on medical and/or physical grounds.**

15. PRIVATE SECTOR ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Committee received a report from the Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager, and were asked to note the contents of the report and make comments on the policy.

Members noted that the Private Sector Assistance Policy set out how the Council would deal with housing in the private sector, specifically the provision of housing assistance. The Private Sector Assistance Policy had been considered by the Executive on 4 January 2018, and introduced some new discretionary grants and loans. The policy would be consulted on and to return to the Executive in April 2018 for final approval and adoption.

The Committee asked Officers about the policy, specifically about the expected budget for discretionary disabled facilities grants and emergency repairs.

Members were pleased to note that assistance had already been offered over the Christmas period to a vulnerable resident who required emergency repairs to a household boiler. Officers identified the connection between the Private Sector Assistance Policy and efforts in tackling deprivation, which had been considered by the Committee earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

16. POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18 AND PLANNING FOR 2018/19

The Committee considered the work plan for the rest of the 2017/18 year, and the draft work plan for 2018/19.

The Chair requested that the Committee's Annual Reports for 2017/18 and 2018/19 be added to the work programme for agreement in April 2018 and April 2019 respectively.

Members were advised that consideration the Tree Management Policy could not wait until the April 2018 meeting of the Committee. As such, the

provisional meeting of the Committee on 13 March 2018 would be convened to examine the policy. Members were asked to ensure that this date was in their diaries.

Lastly, the Chair asked Members to think about topics they would like to look at in 2018/19, and send any suggestions to him and the Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED:

- i) To include the Policy Review Committee's Annual Report on both the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Work Programmes for consideration in April 2018 and April 2019 respectively.**
- ii) To consider the Tree Management Policy at the provisional meeting of the Committee on 13 March 2018.**
- iii) To note the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the 2017/18 year, and the proposed plan for the 2018/19 year.**
- iv) To ask Committee Members to suggest topics they would wish to see on the 2018/19 Work Programme, and to send these to the Chair and Democratic Services Officer.**

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.