



## **Councillor Andrew Lee – Chair of Policy Review Committee**

### **Report to Council - 16 July 2019**

The Policy Review Committee has met once, on 11 June 2019, since the previous update given to Council in March 2019.

#### **11 June 2019**

The main items of business on the agenda for this meeting were the Taxi Licensing Policy, a report on Choice Based Lettings and North Yorkshire Home Choice and the Committee's Work Programme.

#### **Taxi Licensing Policy**

The Committee received the report of the Council's Licensing Manager, which asked Members to consider and comment on the proposed Taxi Licensing Policy, which incorporated required changes following the reviewing of the consultation responses.

Members acknowledged the detailed work had gone into the production of the new policy, but expressed concerns around the proposal that all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to the fleet must be wheelchair accessible. The Committee felt that more evidence was required to support the proposal, and that a 70/30 or 50/50 mixed fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles would be more acceptable. Members also agreed that further work around how a mixed fleet would be monitored and implemented should be undertaken.

It was noted that the current policy stated that all new vehicles had to be wheelchair accessible, and that it was the local authority's duty to ensure that all taxis were safe and secure; increasing the number of vehicles deemed as wheelchair accessible was an important part of ensuring that the fleet of vehicles licenced in Selby District were fit for purpose. Members also noted that if vehicles were wheelchair accessible, this could be of benefit to drivers as they would be able to access contracts for organisations such as North Yorkshire County Council and the NHS, who required accessible vehicles for a number of reasons.

The Committee felt that more work was required with regards to a fully accessible fleet, including figures relating to the current number of accessible vehicles, what arrangements at other local authorities were and how numbers of accessible vehicles could be monitored.

The Committee also commented on a number of other aspects to the policy; that drivers should report any health issues to the Council within three working days and clarification that any applicants convicted of a crime involving or related to, or has had any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual, whether adults or children, will never be granted a licence. In relation to comments made about the dress code for drivers, Officers explained that this was included in the code of conduct in order to encourage a professional image of drivers in the district.

The Committee agreed that the Executive should take their comments into account when considering the policy and that if additional work was required, it could be referred back to the Policy Review Committee for further comment, should they so wish.

## North Yorkshire Home Choice – Choice Based Lettings

The Committee noted that in 2011 Selby District Council joined a shared common allocations policy with partner authorities and housing providers in the sub-region. Government policy encouraged and financially supported Local Authorities to develop a Choice Based Lettings System. The North Yorkshire Choice Based Lettings Partnership operated in Craven, Richmond, Ryedale, Hambleton, Scarborough, Selby and York and the partner organisations were the Local Authorities, Broadacres Housing Association, Yorkshire Housing and Beyond Housing. Harrogate Borough Council had never joined the partnership and operated a separate scheme.

In July 2018 City of York made the decision to leave North Yorkshire HomeChoice and adopt a City of York Allocation Policy. City of York Council made the decision to leave the North Yorkshire HomeChoice Partnership because they felt that the policy was no longer able to meet their specific local needs. At the time the decision was made City of York confirmed that they would not leave the partnership until their new Housing IT system had been procured and implemented, and this was likely to take 2 years. On 24 April, 2019, the City of York Council board member advised at a meeting of the North Yorkshire HomeChoice Board that it would be between 18-24 months before City of York left the partnership. City of York Council were required to give a formal 6 month notice period of their intention to leave the partnership.

Members asked about the banding of applicants, the ages of people moving between local authority areas and the effect of the scheme on Selby residents applying for housing.

It was agreed that a broader overview report on housing at Selby District Council would be useful, covering aspects such as allocation, housing stock, housing association, processes and policies. Members explained that a number of queries they received from residents were about housing matters, and it would stand Members in good stead to receive a complete synopsis of housing and related issues in the district, and particularly in light of the fact that City of York were leaving the HomeChoice scheme.

## Work Programme 2019-20

Members suggested that the affordable housing and housing need item listed for October be brought forward for consideration in September 2019, in order for the information to be included in the housing overview report that had been requested by the Committee under the previous agenda item.

**Future Meetings:** The next meeting of the Policy Review Committee will be on 23 July 2019.

**Councillor Andrew Lee**  
**Chair, Policy Review Committee**