



## **Policy Review Committee Report to Council – 17 December 2019**

The Policy Review Committee has met once since the previous update given to Council in December 2019.

### **14 January 2020**

The main item of business for consideration by Members at the meeting was the Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Committee asked a number of questions around savings targets, the support grant, changes to the Council recycling service, rent increases, the Programme for Growth, long term investment of funds in the District, CIL and S106 funds and repairs to play areas. Members requested that a copy of the list of play areas covered by the capital programme bid, which was circulated after the meeting.

Members also discussed the impact of low carbon initiatives in the future, such as the feasibility of investment in green energy; it was noted that this sort of investment would depend on business cases put forward. Members asked about potential future investment in a solar farm, and which departments in the Council would be involved; Officers explained there would be involvement from across the Council. A detailed and comprehensive business case would need to be brought forward before any investment was considered.

Concerns were expressed by some Members regarding the proposed rise in Council Tax. Officers advised the protection of guaranteed income streams such as Council Tax as the financial assistance from central government going forward was uncertain. Officers confirmed that the financial cost of not increasing Council Tax by the proposed 5% would be in the region of £160k.

Some Members, including the Chair, felt strongly that instead of raising Council Tax, more comprehensive work should be undertaken to ensure that savings targets were met and delivered.

The Labour Group and Yorkshire Party representatives on the Committee asked that it be made clear that they supported the proposed increase in Council Tax.

The Committee queried the extensions to existing posts in the Programme for Growth (P4G), and Officers explained that the Economic Development Team were developing the projects for P4G as well as being funded through it.

Officers explained that it was important to invest in the P4G work as it focused on growing the local economy, improving sustainability and investment, and encouraging the growth of the Council.

It was proposed, seconded and carried that the Committee agreed with the 2020-21 draft budget proposals from the Executive, including the £5.00 increase in Council Tax for Band D property. A vote was taken with four in favour, 2 abstentions and 1 against.

**Future Meetings:** The next meeting of the Policy Review Committee will be on 10 March 2020.

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