

Selby District Council



Minutes

Executive

Venue:	Committee Room - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT
Date:	Wednesday, 5 February 2020
Time:	4.00 pm
Present:	Councillors M Crane (Chair), R Musgrave (Vice-Chair), C Lunn, C Pearson and D Buckle
Also Present:	Councillors S Shaw-Wright and M Jordan
Officers Present:	Janet Waggott (Chief Executive), Dave Caulfield (Director of Economic Regeneration and Place), Karen Iveson (Chief Finance Officer (s151)), Alison Hartley (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer), Sarah Thompson (Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager) (for minute item 86), Hannah McCoubrey (Housing Strategy Officer) (for minute item 86), Tammy Fox (Taxation, Benefits and Debt Team Leader) (for minute item 85), Joel Sanders (Better Together Programme Manager, NYCC) (for minute items 87 and 88), Gary Fielding (Director of Finance, NYCC) (for minute items 87 and 88), Leanne Cahill (Communications & Marketing Officer) and Victoria Foreman (Democratic Services Officer)
Public:	0
Press:	0

NOTE: Only minute numbers 85 to 92 are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is 5pm on Wednesday 19 February 2020. Decisions not called in may be implemented from Thursday 20 February 2020.

82 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

83 MINUTES

The Executive considered the minutes of the meeting held 10 January 2020.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2020 for signing by the Chair.

84 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Dispensations had been granted by the Council's Monitoring Officer for Councillors C Lunn, R Musgrave and C Pearson for any decisions relating to the Better Together collaboration with North Yorkshire County Council, until the end of the current Council term. The items in question on the agenda were item 6 – 'Better Together Collaboration Agreement Renewal' and item 7 – 'Better Together Finance Review'.

The dispensations had been granted because the aforementioned Members were also North Yorkshire County Councillors, and therefore hold disclosable pecuniary interests.

Decisions relating to the Better Together Collaboration Agreement were required to be taken by the Executive; as the Executive consisted of five Members, of which three were North Yorkshire County Councillors. Unless a dispensation was granted, the business of renewing the Collaboration Agreement would be impeded as the Executive would be inquorate.

85 COUNCIL TAX PENALTIES POLICY (FAILURE TO NOTIFY OR SUPPLY INFORMATION)

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which proposed to apply financial penalties to Council Tax bills for people who fail to notify changes, or fail to supply information that has been requested by the Council in order to determine the amount of discount or exemption they may be entitled to.

Members were pleased to note that the application of the penalty would be on a case by case basis and at an Officer's discretion, as some changes in circumstances for residents could have occurred as the result of a sensitive situation, such as bereavement.

Officers explained that it was hoped that the penalties would act as more of a deterrent. Data matching exercises that had been undertaken by the Council had revealed around 450 Council Tax accounts where single person discount was being claimed, but there was evidence that these people were not living alone.

The Executive also noted that the penalty amount of £70 was the maximum level that could be set, as per in government legislation.

RESOLVED:

To approve the imposition of a Council Tax Penalty Policy from 1 April 2020.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To encourage all tax payers to report to report changes and act as a deterrent of those who continue not to do so. The regular reporting of these changes will enable the authority to set a more accurate Council Tax Base, resulting in fairer Council Tax bills for all residents. The existence of a policy will also reinforce the message that the authority will take positive action against the abuse of these public schemes.

86 DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2025

The Lead Executive Member for Housing, Health and Culture presented the report which recommended the approval of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 in order to progress with stakeholder consultations, and to note that the outcome of the consultation would inform and shape the final strategy and its future priorities, before final approval was sought from the Executive.

Members discussed the differences between homelessness and rough sleeping, as well as hidden homelessness, all of which the Council's Housing Options Team worked hard to prevent.

The Executive commended the work of the Housing Options Team in this area.

RESOLVED:

- i. To approve the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 in order to progress with stakeholder consultations.**
- ii. To note that the outcome of the consultation would inform and shape the final strategy and its future priorities, before final approval was**

sought.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that the Council was working to the direction of Central Government and refreshing the Homelessness Strategy to include rough sleeping; it also provided scope to refresh the Council's strategy in light of the current housing market and socio-economic climate.

87 BETTER TOGETHER COLLABORATION AGREEMENT RENEWAL

The Leader of the Council presented the report which set out the overall terms of the Better Together Collaboration Agreement, reported progress and benefits already achieved, and recommended that the Agreement be renewed until 30 June 2023.

In attendance at the meeting for this item were Joel Sanders, Better Together Programme Manager and Gary Fielding, NYCC Director of Finance.

Members agreed that the Better Together arrangements had been successful, and were confident that extending the arrangement for another three years would enable both authorities to continue to build on what had already been achieved. It was suggested that future renewals of the arrangements (if proposed) be more strategic in nature, and include closer working on issues such as planning policy and climate change.

In response to a query from Members it was confirmed by Officers that the North Yorkshire registration service at Selby District Council's offices would continue to be based there.

RESOLVED:

To renew the formal Better Together Collaboration Agreement with North Yorkshire County Council for a further 3 years until 30 June 2023.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure the successful model of joint working continues; that the benefits and new opportunities identified by the Better Together Programme can be delivered, and to provide a legal framework to govern service specific agreements for any particular shared services.

88 BETTER TOGETHER FINANCE - REVIEW

The Leader of the Council presented the report which reviewed the

finance collaboration agreement currently in place, 12 months in advance of the contract end date on 31 March 2021. The report recommended renewing the arrangements for a further five years in order to provide a reasonable time frame for forward resource planning; a number of improvements had been identified through the review and recommendations were included in the report for consideration.

In attendance at the meeting for this item were Joel Sanders, Better Together Programme Manager and Gary Fielding, NYCC Director of Finance.

Members commended the mutually beneficial arrangements for the delivery of financial services at Selby, and acknowledged the resilience and access to specialist knowledge that the arrangement provided.

It was agreed that the Council's Finance Team had developed a great deal since the arrangement had started, and was expected to continue to do so.

RESOLVED:

- i. To renew the agreement for five years with effect from 1 April 2021 (specific terms to be subsequently agreed).**
- ii. To widen the links between the s151 Officer and the wider finance functions.**
- iii. To reconfirm the Council's commitment to budget manager ownership and the previously agreed operating model.**
- iv. That a further two days a week of a Senior Accounting Technician be added to the SLA with effect from 1 April 2020.**

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that the Council had in place the financial management arrangements it needs to fulfil its statutory duties and support sound decision making.

89 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which set out the Executive's proposed revenue budget, capital programmes and proposals for the Programme for Growth for 2020/21 to 2022/23. The 2020/21 budgets showed a forecasted

balanced budget after taking into account planned savings and reserve transfers.

Whilst Members acknowledged that savings were becoming harder to identify and deliver, there were some concerns expressed regarding missed savings targets, as detailed in the report.

In response to a query regarding the annual increase of the housing base in the District, Officers explained that costs were rising faster than the Council's funding streams and as such, there was a widening gap between the cost of services and the level of funds available to deliver them.

Members noted that it was difficult to estimate the precise cost to the Council of servicing a property, as a number of factors would affect such a figure, such as the cost of street scene services and waste disposal.

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources explained that central government would shortly be reviewing and therefore potentially changing business rates arrangements in local government.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to consideration of the budget consultation responses, the proposed budgets, bids, savings and Council Tax increase for 2020/21 be submitted to full Council for consideration and approval.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To enable the Council to set its budget and Council Tax for the coming financial year.

90 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND BUDGET EXCEPTIONS REPORT TO 30TH DECEMBER 2019

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report and associated appendices which set out the financial performance of the Council as at 31 December 2019 against the budget.

The Chief Executive reported an overspend of £75k, relating to the roll-out of the Council's new wheeled bins. The Executive were assured that the cost could be covered as a capital item.

It was explained that the discrepancy had arisen as a result of the quotation for the delivery of the new bins having been based on the number of households in the properties, when it should have been

based on cost per bin.

The Executive agreed that this discrepancy would need to be discussed separately and could not be agreed as part of the recommendations of the report before them at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i. To endorse the actions of Officers and note the contents of the report.**
- ii. To approve the virement of £122k to subcontractors on the HRA from the underspend on premises budgets, as at paragraph 2.2.1 of the report.**
- iii. To approve re-profiled capital programmes and Programme for Growth as set out at Appendices C and D to the report.**

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that budget exceptions were brought to the attention of the Executive in order to approve remedial action where necessary.

91 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY UPDATE Q3 2019/20

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report which reviewed the Council's borrowing and investment activity (Treasury Management) for the period 1 April to 31 December 2019 (Quarter 3) and presented performance against the Prudential Indicators.

Members noted that whilst funds invested in longer-term property bonds had not given the best return, these investments were performing better than others given the current socio-economic climate.

RESOLVED:

- To endorse the actions of Officers on the Council's treasury activities for Quarter 3 2019/20 and approve the report.**

REASON FOR DECISION:

To comply with the Treasury Management Code of Practice, the Executive is required to receive and review regular treasury management monitoring reports.

92 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Lead Executive Member for Finance and Resources presented the report which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy together with the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21, Capital Strategy 2020/21 and Prudential Indicators 2020/21 as required by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and CIPFA (as updated 2017). A review of CIPFA's Commercial Property Investment Guidance, issued in autumn 2019, had also been undertaken.

In response to a query relating to the repayment of a historic loan that had an 8.79% fixed interest rate, Officers explained that various options for paying off the remainder of the loan in full had been explored, but that the penalties for doing so outweighed any advantages.

RESOLVED:

To recommend to Council that:

- i. the Operational Borrowing Limit for 2020/21 be set at £85m;**
- ii. the Authorised Borrowing Limit for 2020/21 be set at £90m;**
- iii. Councillors delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to effect movement within the agreed authorised boundary limits for long-term borrowing for 2020/21 onwards;**
- iv. Councillors delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to effect movement within the agreed operational boundary limits for long-term borrowing for 2020/21 onwards;**
- v. the treasury management strategy statement 2020/21 be approved;**
- vi. the minimum revenue provision policy statement for 2020/21 be approved;**
- vii. the treasury management investment strategy for 2020/21 be approved;**
- viii. the prudential indicators for 2020/21 which reflect the capital expenditure plans which are affordable, prudent and sustainable be approved; and**

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ix. the Capital Strategy for 2020/21 be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and associated policies were prudent and affordable.

The meeting closed at 5.05 pm.