

POLICY COMMITTEE

15th December 2015

Present – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Barrett, Brockbank, Dawson, Heseltine, Hull, Ireton, Kerwin-Davey, Lis, Mulligan, Place and Sutcliffe

Officers – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Strategic Manager – Financial Services (S.151 Officer), Strategic Manager - Planning and Regeneration, Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer), Housing and Environmental Health Manager, Communications and Partnerships Manager and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors English, Myers and Quinn
Councillor Heseltine left the meeting at 7.40pm.

Start: 6:30pm

Finish: 8.35pm

The minutes of the Committee's meetings held on 3rd November 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

(Item 10 – Fees and Charges 2016/17 as shown on the agenda for this meeting was withdrawn by the Chairman as it was felt prudent to defer the decision until after the financial settlement was received from the Government.)

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That, in accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public is excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute POL.720 marked (\$) below on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the Category 3 exempt information (financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council).

Minutes for Report

POL.707

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' IT AND DATA PROTECTION

The Chairman of Select Committee presented a report on the outcome of a review on the implementation of the Data Protection and IT project for Members. Members had been provided with new IT equipment and Council email addresses in order to address data security concerns and to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

In order to inform their review and gain an understanding of Members' opinions on their experiences on using the new equipment, the working group HAD canvassed the opinion of Members.

Having taken into account the views of Members and relevant officers, the Select Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That those Members who wish to print documents via their iPad and who are unable to attend a Council office to do so, should be provided with information to allow them to install the appropriate 'App', and also enable them to purchase the relevant printer. Members to fund this expenditure from their existing allowances provided for that purpose.
2. A printed colour version of the iPad user guide should be sent to each Member, and a named officer provided for day-to-day Member queries. A series of focused training sessions for small groups of Members with similar skill levels, and a number of drop-in

sessions should be made available and publicised to Members. More advanced iPad users amongst the Council Membership should be asked if they would be prepared to voluntarily mentor other less experienced Members in their use of the iPad.

3. Whatever training is provided in the use of iPads should be made available in-house, and not contracted out.
4. Members should be provided with data protection awareness sessions and also:
 - a. Guidance in the form of a protocol covering what can/should not be sent by email outside the Council's secure network; and
 - b. Copies of the Information Commissioner's good practice note for councillors on handling personal data (at the same time as the iPad user guide referred to above).
5. That once training has been completed the default position should be that committee and other papers are supplied electronically only, unless a Member indicates otherwise (recommendation added by Select Committee).
6. That in addition to the above recommendations, the following additional points should also be taken forward:
 - a. Finance Department send claim forms to Members that they were required to print off and sign. The Council should accept electronic submission of documents from Members.
 - b. Could the support team provide support on exporting address books to the iPad.
 - c. As some Members struggle to follow large/lengthy documents in Council and committee meetings. The ICT Department to examine how documents are sent out and indexed, for example the possibility of colour coding documents in agendas.
 - d. Members should sign that they have received data protection training and be offered regular refresher training.

In receiving the report, Members thanked the Select Committee for their work on the review, and it was

Resolved – That, the recommendations are approved.

POL.708

RECOMMENDATION FOR CONFIRMATION

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report seeking confirmation of a decision of the Planning Committee at its meeting held on 24th November 2015 regarding the discharge of affordable housing conditions.

Resolved – That, the decision contained within Minute PL.779/15-16 is adopted.

POL.709

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2 2015/16

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services (S.151 Officer) submitted a report informing Members of the revenue budget position of the Council based on the second quarter review of income and expenditure to the end of September 2015.

The Council's overall performance against revenue budget was a projected underspend of £239k for the full financial year, which included £44k from the Council's Income and Savings Plan and it was proposed that £229k was transferred to earmarked reserves.

The 2015/16 approved revenue budget was £7,183k and this was subsequently increased by 2014/15 revenue budget slippage amounting to £145k, capital programme slippage and other additions amounting to £385k. In addition the Council had approved £121k of supplementary estimates to be funded from earmarked reserves giving a revised net revenue budget of £7,834k. The general fund reserve balance stood at £995k and this would assist in mitigating against the risk of unplanned movements from budgeted net expenditure levels as well as the impact of changes in local government funding.

Resolved – (1) That, the revenue budget monitoring position as at 30 September 2015 is noted.

(2) That, the transfer of £44k of savings to be achieved this year and as identified as green in Appendix B to the Future Years Budget Reserve for support to the 2016/2017 budget and beyond is approved.

(3) That, the Council's Long Term Forward Plan is amended to take account of the 'green' savings in in 2016/17 and beyond where these are not currently allowed for in the budget.

(4) That, the transfer of £229k of the forecast budget surplus to earmarked reserves as detailed in the report now submitted, is approved.

POL.710 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – QUARTER 2 2015/16

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services (S.151 Officer) submitted a report advising Members of the capital programme position of the Council based on the quarter 2 review of income and expenditure to the end of September 2015.

The 2015/16 capital programme of £3,087k included slippage of £1,315k from 2014/15 and previously approved and new projects had commenced including works to the Skate Park and Pump Track in Aireville Park, the purchase of shared ownership dwellings and the continuation of the empty homes scheme had added a further £443k to the programme.

The current forecast was for expenditure of £2,772,700 and the report summarised the programme and provided an update on the various projects. The Council was forecasting £475k in capital receipts during 2015/16 with £2,226k of receipts being carried forward from previous years. It was estimated that £1,186k would be required to support the capital programme with the balance being carried forward to support future years.

Resolved – (1) That, the capital budget monitoring position as at 30th September 2015 and the additions to the programme is noted.

(2) That, the amendments to the capital programme as mentioned in the report now submitted and the associated adjustments to the budget to give a revised capital programme of £2,772,770 are approved.

POL.711 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 2 2015/16

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services (S.151 Officer) submitted a report presenting the Council's performance monitoring report for quarter 2 of the 2015/2016 financial year in accordance with arrangements set out in the Council's performance management framework.

Monitoring against the Council Plan showed that good progress had been made on implementation of Council Plan actions. Fifteen had been assessed as on target and one had not started as it was not required. Of the quarterly indicators attached to the Council Plan, four of the seven with targets were below target.

Resolved – That, the report is noted.

POL.712

BAD DEBT WRITE OFFS 2014/2015

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services (S.151 Officer) submitted a report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, setting out details of total bad debts written off during the 2014/2015 financial year.

The total write offs in the 2014/15 financial year amounted to £245,974 split between the following debt types:

Sundry Debtors	£ 5,831
NNDR Debtors	£103,088
Council Tax Debtors	£ 94,054
Overpaid Housing Benefit	£ 43,001

Resolved – That, the bad debts written off during the 2014/15 financial year, as shown in the appendix now submitted are noted.

POL.713

LEEDS CITY REGION ESIF PROGRAMME – DIGITAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report asking Members to consider a request for a financial contribution of up to £4,000 per annum in 2016/17 to 2018/19 to support delivery of a digital enterprise business support programme led by Leeds City Council.

In March 2015 the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership launched its European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programme which set out how it proposed to use an allocation of £170 million of European Regional Development Fund monies to invest in new technology projects that would support business growth and create jobs throughout the region.

The ESIF investment programme required match funding contributions from the private sector and local authority partners and the requested contribution from this Authority was £9,250 over 3 financial years. Combined with demand stimulation and promotional activity, it was recommended that a contribution of up to £4,000 per annum was allocated to this project from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve.

Resolved – (1) That, the proposed ESIF programme by Leeds City Council to deliver a digital enterprise business support initiative across the Leeds City Region is endorsed.

(2) That, subject to approval of the full ESIF bid, the allocation of up to £4,000 per annum in 2016/17 to 2018/19 to support delivery of the digital enterprise business support programme by Leeds City Council on behalf of partners in the Leeds City Region is agreed.

(3) That, the annual contribution at (2) above, is funded from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve, is included in the Council's 2016/17 to 2018/19 revenue budgets.

Minutes for Decision

POL.714

INTRODUCING OVERNIGHT PARKING CHARGES FOR MOTORHOMES AND HGV'S EXTENDING CHARGES AT CRAVEN POOL CAR PARK IN SKIPTON

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the introduction of HGV overnight parking charges and designated parking area at the Council's pay and display car parks. Members were also asked to approve six parking spaces at the Coach Street car park and three parking

spaces at the Greenfoot car park to be designated for overnight motorhome parking with charges, whilst retaining these spaces as standard parking spaces during the day in accordance with the Parking Places Order.

In addition, approval was sought for changes to be introduced at Craven Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre car park which would help to address the current traffic management issues and unauthorised parking which had made parking difficult for genuine pool and park users. Although signage set out the charging arrangements, there was no payment machine as users were expected to make payment in the leisure centre for stays of longer than three hours. In July 2015, a survey had revealed that there was a 78% occupancy during the academic term dropping to 36% outside term time. For the period April 2015 to July 2015 only £8.00 had been paid by car park users.

Resolved – (1) That, the charges and designated area for the parking of HGV's overnight at the Council's pay and display car parks as proposed in the report now submitted are approved.

(2) That, the re-designation of six parking spaces at Coach Street Car Park and three parking spaces at Greenfoot Car Park as dual use bays, reserved for motorhome overnight stays and standard vehicle bays during the day is approved.

(3) That, the introduction of a £5.00 overnight parking tariff for the designated motorhome parking spaces at the Coach Street Car Park in Skipton and the Greenfoot Car Park in Settle.

(4) That, delegated authority is given to the Director of Services in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council to make the formal Order necessary to implement the decision including considering and deciding on duly made objections to the proposed Order.

RECOMMENDED - (5) That, the implementation of extending parking charges at the Craven Pool Car Park as now submitted are approved

POL.715

CRAVEN HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the Craven Housing Renewal Policy which had been updated to take account of legislative changes. The aim of the Policy was to improve housing conditions across the District through the use of education and encouragement and direct and indirect financial assistance and enforcement.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Craven Housing Renewal Policy is adopted.

(2) That, delegated authority is given to the Environmental Health and Housing Manager in consultation with the Lead Member for Affordable Housing to make minor changes to the Policy as and when required.

POL.716

MEMBER WARD GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted a report setting out options for delivering a community grants programme across Craven. The current revenue budget for small and medium grants for 2015/16 was £16,000 and this provided funding for a wide range of community projects including village hall refurbishments, support for older people, playgrounds, arts and heritage projects. All decisions on awarding small and medium community grants were currently made by the Community Grants Sub-Committee.

The Leader of the Council had given a commitment to introduce Ward Member budgets of £500 each, thereby allowing District Councillors to respond to local needs by recommending the

allocation of small amounts of money to support projects or activities that benefitted the communities they represented.

The Chief Executive's report proposed that small and medium community grants were combined with Ward Member grants giving an overall budget of £30,000. Half of this budget would be funded from the revenue budget with the remaining £15,000 being time limited as it was funded from the New Homes Bonus.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the establishment of Ward Member budgets of £500 per Ward Member is approved.

(2) That, a pilot scheme is undertaken, to start from the 2016/17 financial year following the Council elections in May 2016, combining the small and medium community grants with the Ward Member budget process and therefore the Ward Member budget is increased to £1,000 per Ward Member.

(Councillors Barrett, Heseltine, Lis, Ireton and Sutcliffe abstained from voting on the above item)

POL.717 **CRAVEN COMMUNITY REVISED SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Chief Executive submitted a report requesting approval for a revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and seeking formal adoption of the Safeguarding Adults West and North Yorkshire and York Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures. The revised policies, which defined the Councils' responsibilities to both children and adults at risk and how those responsibilities would be managed, reflected changes in relevant legislation and guidance, particularly the Care Act 2014.

Resolved – (1) That, the report is noted.

RECOMMENDED - (2) That, the revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedures set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted is approved.

(3) That, the Safeguarding Adults West and North Yorkshire and York Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures 2015 is formally adopted

POL.718 **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AT WHITEFRIARS CAR PARK, SETTLE**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report seeking Members' approval in advance of receiving a full action plan for sustaining the economic vitality of Settle, to allocate funding from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to fund the cost of upgrading the public conveniences at Whitefriars Car Park, Settle. As the town had been selected as one of the start and finish towns for the 2016 Tour de Yorkshire, the aim was to complete the works before the end of April.

Resolved – (1) That, an allocation of up to £15,000 from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to fund the costs of carrying out improvements to the public conveniences located on Whitefriars Car Park in Settle is approved.

(2) That, work on preparing an action plan for sustaining the economic vitality of Settle continues, in consultation with the Ward Members for Settle and Ribblesbanks, and Pen-y-Ghent.

RECOMMENDED - (3) That, a supplementary estimate of £15,000 is included in the Council's 2015/16 capital programme.

ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report informing Members on the Council's duties in relation to enforcement action, in particular under the Regulators' Code which replaced the Regulators' Compliance Code and came into statutory effect on 6th April 2014. The key aim was to protect the public, the environment, consumers and workers through fair, equitable and consistent enforcement of the law.

A wide range of enforcement action in relation to a varied number of subject matters was taken by the Council and, in certain areas the Council was also the regulator (e.g. food safety).

The report recommended a corporate approach to enforcement and the Council's enforcement policy had been revised to take account of the main six broad principles contained in Regulators' Code.

Resolved – (1) That, the Council's duties in relation to enforcement action under the Regulators' Code is noted.

RECOMMENDED - (2) That, the Corporate Enforcement Policy as now submitted, is adopted.

POL.\$720 **ACQUISITION OF ONE SHARED OWNERSHIP DWELLING AT GIGGLESWICK**

The Director of Services submitted a report updating Members on the impact of budget announcements on the ability of Registered Providers to deliver affordable homes, which would result in the loss of some on-site affordable homes. In addition, the report sought approval for the Council to acquire one shared ownership dwelling at Lords Close, Giggleswick which was a small rural site.

Changes in recent rent setting policies, the impact of welfare reform and a raft of measures to be introduced through the Housing and Planning Bill had meant that Registered Providers were currently reviewing their development programmes including their ability to buy affordable homes.

In essence, this means that although 40% of dwellings on a site may have been granted planning permission as affordable dwellings, if there were no Registered Providers willing to buy them, they would be sold at market value by the developer who would then be required to pay a commuted sum in lieu of the affordable homes. Expenditure of the commuted sum was time limited and with relatively few opportunities for housing development, affordable housing need in the same area was unlikely to be met.

By taking a commuted sum in lieu of one affordable dwelling to fund the purchase of another at the Council's approved transfer price of £1000 per square metre, the acquisition and on costs would be generated from within the site and thereafter recouped on any future sale of the property which could then be spent on affordable housing elsewhere in the District.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Council purchase one shared ownership dwelling at Lords Close, Giggleswick at the approved transfer price of £1000 per square metre (gross internal floor space), plus costs using commuted sums generated in lieu of the second affordable dwelling originally approved on-site.

(2) That, a supplementary estimate of £80,000 for the purchase of the property plus associated costs to be funded from the Section 106 receipt for the site is approved.

Chairman