

## POLICY COMMITTEE

26<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Present** – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Barrett, Dawson, Heseltine, Hull, Ireton, Jaquin (substitute for English), Kerwin-Davey, Lis, Mulligan, Place, Quinn and Sutcliffe

**Officers** – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Strategic Manager – Financial Services (S.151 Officer), Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer), Housing and Environmental Health Manager, ICT and Transformation Manager, VFM and Improvement Manager and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Brockbank, English and Myers.

Start: 6:30pm

Finish: 7.36pm

The minutes of the Committee's meetings held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### Minutes for Report

POL.721

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Judy Rogers a resident of Clapham addressed the Committee regarding all the work Craven's voluntary sector was undertaking in relation to the Syrian refugees who would be resettled in Craven.

POL.722

#### FEES AND CHARGES 2016-2017

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services submitted a report presenting for approval the Council's fees and charges for the 2016/17 financial year in line with the revised fees and charges policy which was approved by Policy Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The policy provided that discretionary fees and charges for a number of core areas would need Policy Committee approval, with the remainder being approved under delegated authority by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team in consultation with the relevant Lead Member. The Licensing Committee continued to be responsible for approving fees and charges in relation to the Council's licensing obligations which included hackney carriages. Certain fees had to be set in accordance with statute, whilst other services such as car parking and leisure facilities were at the discretion of the Council.

**Resolved** – That, with the exception of fees and charges in respect of parking at Craven Pool / Aireville Park which had been agreed at Minute POL.714, the discretionary fees and charges for the 2016/17 financial year as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted are approved.

POL.723

#### MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Community Grants Sub-Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and re-produced as Appendix A to these minutes.

**Resolved** – That, the minutes are approved.

### Minutes for Decision

POL.724

#### SYRIAN REFUGEES' RESETTLEMENT

The Director of Services submitted a report updating Members regarding the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme and the National Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme. Members were asked for approval for Craven District Council to take part in the resettlement scheme working in partnership with other North Yorkshire local authorities and key agencies.

In September 2015, the Government committed to accepting up to 20,000 Syrian refugees into the United Kingdom from camps in countries neighbouring Syria and local authorities had been asked to participate in the resettlement scheme. Originally, the North Yorkshire approach was to agree on a number of refugees for based on the percentage of population size with Craven's share estimated at a maximum of 25 individuals (based in family groups) over the next five years. However, experience from other authorities had shown that the support needed by refugees was extensive requiring a rapid range of services.

The proposal was, therefore, to have a pilot scheme in North Yorkshire which would resettle a small number of families in a combined block of 2/3 districts. This would make it easier to manage the process and build up expertise, before resettling refugees in other parts of the County.

The Home Office would provide grant assistance to cover all the costs incurred in setting up and operating the scheme for the first twelve months and support would also be provided to local authorities at a regional level by the Government funded Migration Yorkshire.

Skipton and South Craven had been identified as preferred locations for resettlement as this was where the largest housing stock and school places were available together with easy access to Bradford's existing Syrian refugee community and specialist services.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the North Yorkshire wide Syrian Refugee settlement scheme is supported.

(2) That, Craven District Council's commitment to the scheme shall be no more than 25 Syrian refugees.

(3) That, delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with North Yorkshire County Council and other North Yorkshire district councils concerning the scheme.

(4) That, delegated authority is given to the Director of Services to:

- i. enter into an agreement with Migration Yorkshire to enable overall regional co-ordination and support; and
- ii. vary existing nomination agreements with registered providers to enable the allocation of social housing to the Syrian refugees.

(5) That, the Council becomes a pilot authority for the North Yorkshire Resettlement Scheme.

(6) That, the Chief Executive is asked to carry out a detailed assessment of the capacity of Craven to respond greater than the Council has been asked to on compassionate grounds and report back to Policy Committee.

POL.725

### **ICT STRATEGY**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to adopt an ICT Strategy for Craven which had been prepared to support the Council Plan and the Council's Long Term Financial Strategy. The ICT Strategy contained broad objectives enabling an agile approach to service delivery, taking advantage of new proven developments and partnership opportunities.

**RECOMMENDED** – That, the ICT Strategy along with the approach and standards defined therein as set out in the appendix to the report now submitted.

POL.726 **ACQUISITION REGENERATION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking members to approve an Acquisition Regeneration and Investment Strategy in order to enable the Council to secure an income stream which would, over time, increase financial resilience instead of being reliant on Government funding.

Due to the increasing pressure on the public sector to strategically and commercially manage and operate property assets, many councils were acting to strengthen their funding base by building asset portfolios to provide a commercial return. Depending on the value of the acquisition there it could be necessary to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board and the capital programme would be amended in order to establish an acquisition fund of up to £3m financed from borrowing. In addition, £10,000 from the New Homes Bonus to meet one-off costs such as expert investment advice and legal costs was required.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the Acquisition Regeneration and Investment Strategy as set out in the Appendix now submitted, is approved.

(2) That, the Council's Capital Programme is amended to include the acquisition of assets.

(3) That, up to £3m financed from borrowing is made available to fund acquisitions and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and the Council's authorised and operational borrowing limits are increased by £3m respectively to allow for this borrowing.

(4) That, a supplementary revenue estimate of £10,000 funded from the New Homes Bonus reserve to meet one-off costs such as legal and valuation costs is approved.

(5) That, all decisions to acquire assets be brought to a meeting of the Council's Policy Committee.

(6) That, a further report be submitted to a future Policy Committee setting out proposals on the financial and legal implications / arrangements associated with the delivery model, namely a third party company for the acquisition of assets for commercial purposes, together with the resourcing and governance arrangements.

(Councillors Heseltine and Kerwin-Davey voted against the above recommendation and asked that this be recorded.)

POL.727 **COLLECTION FUND COUNCIL TAX SURPLUS/DEFICIT 2015/16**

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services submitted a report declaring an estimated surplus of £550,000 on the Council's collection fund in respect of council tax for the financial year 2015/16.

There was a statutory requirement to declare an estimate of the surplus or deficit likely to occur. The calculated surplus would be shared between the precepting authorities as follows:

North Yorkshire County Council	£381,717
Police & Crime Commissioner North Yorkshire	£ 73,836
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority	£ 22,414
Craven District Council	£ 72,034

Craven District Council was required to take the £72,034 into account when setting its element of the council tax for 2016/17.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, an estimated surplus of £550,000 on the Council's collection fund at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 relating to council tax collections is declared.

(2) That, as part of the budget strategy, the Council's element of the estimated surplus is used in calculating the level of council tax for 2016/17.

POL.728

**COLLECTION FUND NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES**  
**SURPLUS DEFICIT 2015/16**

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services submitted a report declaring an estimated deficit of £910,000 on the Council's collection fund at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 relating to national non domestic rates (NNDR) transactions.

Under the rates retention scheme which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, local authorities were able to keep a proportion of the business rates collected, giving authorities a direct financial interest and therefore an incentive to work with business communities to grow local economies.

Any surpluses or deficits had to be shared in prescribed proportions and based on the estimated deficit, the amount that had to be distributed between the precepting authorities was as follows:

North Yorkshire County Council	£ 81,900
Central Government	£ 455,000
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority	£ 9,100
Craven District Council	£ 364,000

Members were advised that Craven District Council had to take the £364,000 into account when it set its element of the Council Tax for 2016/17.

**RECOMMENDED** – That, an estimated deficit of £910,000 on the Council's collection fund at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 relating to NNDR transactions is declared.

Chairman