

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

9<sup>th</sup> July 2013

**Present** –The Chairman (Councillor Knowles-Fitton) and Councillors Barrett, Barrington, Beck, Paul English, Foster, Hart, Heseltine, Ireton, Jaquin (substitute for Wheeler), Lis, Myers, Place, Sutcliffe, Turner.

**Officers** – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Strategic Manager for Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration, Communications and Partnerships Manager, Property and Assets Manager, Principal Housing Services Manager, Finance Officer, Senior HR Officer, and Committee Administrator.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wheeler.  
Councillors Barrett and Beck left the meeting at 8.17pm.  
Councillor Heseltine left the meeting at 8.26pm.  
Councillors Hart and Place left the meeting at 8.50pm.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 9.02pm

The minutes of the Committee's meetings held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman. The minutes from the Special Policy Committees held on 30<sup>th</sup> May and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013, were deferred for confirmation at the Special Policy Committee to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013.

### **Exclusion of the Public**

In accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public is excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute POL.533 and POL.534 below (marked\$) on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the Category 3 exempt information (relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the Council) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Minutes for Report**

POL.522

### **OUTTURN REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – 2012/2013**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report advising Members of the final revenue position of the Council (subject to audit) of income and expenditure to the end of March 2013.

The Council had managed its 2012/13 budget of £6,894k and generated savings for its budget targets in 2013/14 and beyond. Based on unaudited accounts, performance against budgeted was an underspend of £216k for the financial year.

The General Fund had an unallocated balance of £1,030 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 and as this had not been utilised during 2012/13 the balance remained at that level. Whilst the 2012/13 revenue budget report highlighted the main risk areas such as sustaining income levels and the implementation of savings, planned contributions to various reserves had still been possible.

**Resolved** – (1) That the outturn revenue budget monitoring position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 is noted.

(2) That the transfers to earmarked reserves as set out in the report now submitted are noted.

POL.523

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13 – OUTTURN REPORT**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report informing Members of the outturn position of the Council's capital programme for 2012/13 and the sources of financing. The agreed capital programme of £619,250 increased to £800,450 to fund supplementary capital projects, placed emphasis on the need to financial capital expenditure from capital receipts and reserves

The final expenditure for 2012/13 was £321,862 and projects that had been committed to, but not fully defrayed was £305,970 and requests had been made for this to be carried forward to 2013/14. In addition, £1,031k had been generated giving at total of £1,699k of funding to support future years including the projects identified for carry forward to 2013/14.

- Resolved** – (1) That the outturn position of the 2012/13 capital programme is noted.
- (2) That how the 2012/13 capital programme has been financed is noted.
- (3) That the carry forward of £305,970 for completion of 2012/13 projects in 2013/14 is confirmed.

POL.524

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report informing Members of the treasury activity undertaken in 2012/13 in the context of the current and forecast economic climates. The interest payable on outstanding debt had amounted to £302,000 compared to investment income of £69,000. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, the Council had a sum of £4,443,000 under investment, and loans in the sum of £6,238,000.

- Resolved** – (1) That, the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2012/13 is noted.
- (2) That, the actual Treasury Management Indicators for 2012/13 are noted.

POL.525

**AIREVILLE PARK**

The Director of Services submitted a report informing Members about the work and objectives of the Aireville Park Group (FOAP) together with their intention to make a bid to two funding streams for park improvements.

FOAP aimed to conserve and enhance Aireville Park, provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy the benefits of the park and encourage public participation in the Council's management of the facility, including the allocation of resources.

Following consultation, a draft masterplan had been produced which showed priority areas of work to improve the park, including:

- Revamped children's play area
- New skatepark
- New bike pump track
- Improvements to paths
- Install climbing boulders

- Resolved** (1) That, the work of the Friends of Aireville Park Group is noted.
- (2) That, it is noted that a draft provisional masterplan is currently being developed and will be presented to Policy Committee in September 2013 for Members' approval.

(3) That, the Director of Services is given delegated authority to enter into a Deed of Dedication for areas of the park, as required by the funding body on terms to be agreed, if the funding bid is successful and it accords with the masterplan

POL.526

**SICKNESS ABSENCE – 2012/13**

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report outlining Craven District Council's sickness absence statistics for the 2012/13 financial year.

Against the Best Value Performance Indicator, the target for sickness absence was 9 days per FTE and the actual number of days lost was 7.14 which represented 21% less than the target and 26% lower than last year. A total of 1431.9 days had been lost due to sickness which equated to 3.1% of the total working days.

**Resolved** – That, the sickness absence statistics for 2012/13 and the initiatives in place to work towards reducing levels of sickness absence within the Council are noted.

POL.527

**BAD DEBT WRITE OFFS**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, informing Members of the bad debts written off during the 2012/13 financial year.

The Corporate Head for Financial Management submitted a report in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules informing Members that the total write-offs in the year to March 2013 amounted to £262,394 split as follows:

- Sundry Debtors - £ 16, 833
- NNDR Debtors - £126,137
- Council Tax Debtors - £ 80,539
- Overpaid Housing Benefits - £ 38,885

Members noted that Council had a successful collection record for Council Tax and NNDR, which in 2012/13 had been 97.5% and 96.9% respectively. The option to write off debts was a last resort, after all collection methods had been exhausted.

**Resolved** – That, the bad debts written off during the 2012/13 financial year, as shown in the Appendices to the report now submitted, are noted.

POL.528

**REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

The Procurement, Payments and Risk Manager submitted a report seeking Members' approval for a revised and updated Procurement Strategy. The original Procurement Strategy had been produced in 2009 and as effective procurement was essential for achieving the Council's objectives in securing best value services, it had been necessary to update the document to incorporate current procurement practices and legislative changes.

The revised Strategy contained an updated action plan and a forward plan, to be updated annually, of projects which were anticipated during the next 12 months.

**Resolved** – That the revised and updated Procurement Strategy is approved.

POL.529

**SKIPTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – RENEWAL**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report asking Members' to consider proposals for the renewal of the Skipton Business Improvement District for the five year period from April 2014 to March 2019.

A Business Improvement District (BID) was a partnership between a local authority and local businesses with the intention of providing improvements or additional services with a specified area. All non-domestic ratepayers in the BID district are required to vote on proposals describing the additional services and if successful a mandatory levy is imposed on all defined

The proposal document and business plan, attached to the report now submitted, set out the background to Skipton Bid, what had been achieved in the first five years and the plans and objectives for the next five year term which included ensuring that Skipton was:

- Attractive, clean and green
- Safe and secure
- Promoted as a quality visitor destination
- An environment where businesses can prosper
- A place where cultural and festival activities add to the overall experience of visitors and residents.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the proposal to seek the renewal of the Skipton Business Improvement District is supported.

(2) That, the development of a proposal document and business plan is supported.

(Councillors Jaquin English and Heseltine declared an Appendix B interest as they are Members of Skipton Town Council. The BID will have a dedicated manager funded jointly by the Town Council and the BID.)

POL.530

**NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY –  
APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY (NON-VOTING) MEMBER**

The Strategic Manager for Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report asking Members to agree the nomination of a Member to be appointed to serve as the Council's advisory (non-voting) representative on the North Yorkshire Local Transport Body.

Following the devolution of funding for major transport schemes to Local Transport Bodies, North Yorkshire County Council had proposed to Government that a North Yorkshire Local Transport Body (LTB) be established.

Two representatives from the seven North Yorkshire Councils would become voting Members and in addition, each local authority could appoint one of their own Members to sit on the LTB in an advisory capacity only.

**Resolved** – That, Councillor Jaquin, is appointed as the Council's representative on the North Yorkshire Local Transport Body for 2013/14.

(Councillor Jaquin, declared an Appendix B Interest as he was named in the report.)

**MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

The Chairman presented the minutes of meetings of the following sub-committees held on the dates indicated and re-produced as Appendix A to these minutes.

Community Grants Sub-Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
Craven Employees' Consultative Group – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
Craven Spatial Planning Sub-Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013

**Resolved** – That the minutes are received.

**9 HIGH STREET DEVELOPMENT – AGREEMENT CHANGE REQUEST**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to consider two potential amendments to the 9 High Street Development Agreement.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the proposal by Maple Grove to remove the buy-back clause included in the development Agreement is not approved.

(2) That, the swap of a parcel of land in the ownership of Maple Grove with another small parcel of land owned by the Council as identified on the plan now submitted is not approved.

(Councillor Jaquin declared that he had a dispensation to speak on matters relating to Skipton Town Hall

**DISPOSAL OF A GARAGE SITE, SKIPTON**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to enter into a collaboration agreement for the disposal of a garage site together with adjoining land which was not owned by the Council. In addition an agreement for the disposal of the garage site would be required.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, is authorised to complete negotiations on the detail of the collaboration agreement with the owner of land adjoining the garage site and the agreement with the development company. Subject to legal advice, such negotiations to include overage provisions in favour of the Council.

(2) That, subject to (1) above, approval is given for the Council to enter into a collaboration agreement with the owner of land adjoining the garage site together with an agreement with the development company and the owner of the land for the development company to buy the combined site, subject to the development company securing planning permission.

**Minutes for Decision**

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Further to Minute POL.494/12/13, the Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting the capital programme for 2013/14 and further clarity on its funding sources, the individual projects and their prioritisation.

Two projects and their funding had already been approved, namely the rationalisation of Waltonwrays crematorium buildings and the installation of photovoltaic cells at Craven Pool and Airedale Business Park.

The projects defrayed from 2012/13 had been combined with the 2013/14 projects to give an overall capital programme of £1.842k and a description of each project had been appended to the report now submitted. In addition, a further capital project in respect of capital works to Skipton Town Hall/Museum, as part of the overall Town Hall/Museum project had also been included in the 2013/14 programme at an estimated cost of £70k.

**RECOMMENDED** – That the 2013/14 capital programme and its funding is approved.

POL.535

**COMMON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY FOR THE NORTH**  
**YORKSHIRE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report seeking Members' approval for the use in Craven of a revised North Yorkshire Common Housing Allocations Policy, for the delivery of Choice Based Lettings to the participating Councils in York and North Yorkshire.

A full review of the Policy by partner authorities had taken into account legislative changes and an impact assessment, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and undertaken by the University of Birmingham. In addition, a countywide consultation exercise had been completed with various stakeholders.

After a lengthy discussion, in which Members expressed their concerns including the lack of social housing in Craven to meet demand and the restriction on eligibility to join the register if householders had a joint income or assets in excess of £60,000, it was

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That the revised North Yorkshire Common Housing Allocations Policy for use as the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme for the delivery of Choice Based Lettings within the Craven District, as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted, is approved.

(2) That, the Policy is adopted at a time when all IT system infrastructure changes and re-registration have been completed within the partnership area.

(3) That, the Principal Housing Services Manager is given delegated authority to make any minor amendments to the Policy that arise from the development work of the partnership on the Policy.

(Councillors Jaquin and Lis declared an Appendix B interest as they had been appointed by Craven District Council to sit on the Craven Operational Committee of Yorkshire Housing.

Chairman