

POLICY COMMITTEE

19th November 2013

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

Officers – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Corporate Head of Business Support, Corporate Head of Financial Management, Strategic Manager for Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration, Principal Housing Services Manager, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Manager, Asset and Project Manager, Project Delivery Officer, Committee Officer and Committee Administrator.

Also in Attendance: Chairman of the Select Committee (Councillor John Roberts) and Councillor Eric Jaquin.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrett and Beck.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 9.55pm

Note : An eight minute comfort break was taken at 8.40pm.

Duration of Meeting: In accordance with Procedure Rule 9, it was agreed that the meeting should continue beyond three hours in duration.

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 8th October 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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 Minutes POL.558 and POL.559 below (marked\$) on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose Category 3 (financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council) and Minute POL.560 Category 1 (likely to reveal the identity of an individual) exempt information of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Minutes for Report

POL.546

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Richard Lumsden a resident of Skipton circulated a presentation to Members and expressed his view that there was an inherent error in the Council's calculation / comparison of the numbers which determined the surplus or shortfall to the National Planning Policy Framework target for housing supply in Craven.

The Chairman assured Mr Lumsden that his concerns would be examined and he would be advised of the findings and if appropriate these would be reported to Committee.

POL.547

DISCHARGING STATUTORY HOMELESS DUTIES POLICY

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report asking Members to approve the Discharging Statutory Homeless Duties Policy which had been developed in accordance with current legislation.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced significant changes to the way local authorities could choose to exercise their powers relating to applications made under parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996. These powers would potentially enable local authorities to discharge the full housing duty owed to homeless households in the private sector by way of offering an assured shorthold tenancy with a fixed term of at least 12 months.

If adopted, the Policy would enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations by making use of any available good quality private rented homes, thereby reducing pressure on social housing within the District. Potentially, this could reduce the amount of time households would have to spend in temporary accommodation.

Resolved - (1) That the power to discharge the statutory homelessness duty into the private rented sector is adopted.

(2) That the Discharging Statutory Homelessness Duty Policy as now submitted, is approved.

POL.548

**SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE PARKING OF
COACHES AND HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES IN THE DISTRICT**

The Chairman of the Select Committee, presented the findings and recommendations of the Committee's working group further to its review of coach parking in the District. HGV parking had been the subject of an earlier report.

The Committee had examined the problems with regard to coach parking and the use of Jerry Croft for vehicular access to the High Street car park in Skipton.

During the review, the Working Group spoke to various organisations and individuals and received feedback on the perceived problems associated with coach parking in the District and also comments regarding the economic benefits derived from coach visitors. Concerns expressed by a member of the public about the safety of residents and visitors associated with the pedestrian use of Jerry Croft had been raised with North Yorkshire Police and the County Highways Authority but their data showed no recorded incidents or complaints regarding the safety of pedestrians.

Having considered all the various options, the Select Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That Skipton Town Council and Skipton Business Improvement District should be approached regarding the offer made to consider making town centre ambassadors available at peak times of the day to assist with the management of coaches on the High Street car park.
2. That for the medium term, a business case should be prepared for the resourcing of up to 20 man hours per week to manage coaches on Wednesdays and Saturdays at peak times and other days such as bank holidays throughout the year when coach traffic is at its peak.
3. Policy Committee should commission a study into finding a long term strategy / solution to coach parking and management in Skipton, taking account of all possible options including:
 - The introduction of set down and pick up only arrangements within the town centre.
 - Making use of the bus station.
 - Retaining space on the High Street car park and provide additional space for coaches on other car parks within Skipton, compensating for lost parking spaces by constructing a deck on, for example, the High Street Car Park.

4. That consideration of changes to the use of Jerry Croft should be held in abeyance pending an assessment of the situation following the opening of the development to the rear of Skipton Town Hall. In the meantime, implementation of the following actions should be sought:
 - i. A speed limit of 5mph to be indicated in the carriageway, and existing markings on the carriageway along Jerry Croft should be checked to ensure they are clearly visible and renewed if considered necessary; and
 - ii. To counter drivers turning into Jerry Croft when travelling north in the High Street and ignoring the no right turn sign, consideration could be given to petitioning the County Council regarding the possibility of installing a traffic island or some other form of barrier.

The Policy Committee thanked the Members of the Select Committee together with officers, for all their efforts and, it was

Resolved – That the report and recommendations therein of the Select Committee are accepted.

POL.549 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2 2013/2014**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management 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 2013.

The Council's overall performance against revenue budget was a projected underspend of £257k for the full financial year.

The 2013/14 budget included a compensatory grant of £34k, contributions to the Enabling Efficiencies Fund (£30K) and the New Homes Bonus Reserve (£553k). There was also a corporate contingency of £67k which had been adjusted to £100k by utilising surpluses generated in 2012/13. Growth pressures of £228k were included in the 2013/14 budget of which £100k was ongoing impacting on the base budget in future years.

The general fund reserve balance stood at £1,030k and this would assist in mitigating against the risk of unplanned movements from unplanned movements from net expenditure levels as well as the impact of changes to local government funding.

Resolved – (1) That the revenue budget monitoring position as at 30th September 2013 is noted.

(2) That the £127k of the savings expected to be achieved this year as identified in Appendix B now submitted and that these savings will be carried forward to support the 2014/15 budget and beyond is noted.

(3) That the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is amended to take account of the savings identified in (2) above where these are not currently allowed for in the budget.

POL.550 **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2 2013/2014**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report informing Members of the capital programme position of the Council based on the second quarter review of income and expenditure to the end of September 2013.

The capital programme for 2013/14 of £1.842m including £306k of slippage from 2012/13 was approved by this Committee in July 2013. The current forecast was for expenditure of £1.486m

and the report summarised the programme and provided an update on the various projects. The Council was forecasting £1,357k in capital receipts during 2013/14 of which £927k would be required to support the capital programme with the balance being carried forward to support future years.

Resolved – That the capital budget monitoring position as at 30th September 2013 is noted.

POL.551

PERFORMANCE MONITORING – QUARTER 2 2013/2014

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting the Council's second quarter performance monitoring report for the 2013/14 financial year as determined by arrangements set out in the Council's Performance Management Framework. Members were informed of progress and details of current performance against the Council Plan and Priority Indicators.

Monitoring against the Council Plan showed that good progress had been made on implementing the Council Plan actions. Seventeen of the twenty seven had been assessed as on target by those completing the updates. One action was due to start and nine had been classified as amber i.e. some elements of the project were behind schedule. Eight of nine Council Plan indicators were collated at the half year point; two were on target, two were below target and data was not available for two others. The remaining two which related to unemployment rates and new business formations were viewed as context information.

Resolved – That the progress and outcomes achieved are noted.

POL.552

FEES AND CHARGES

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting the Council's fees and charges for the 2014/15 financial year for approval.

The Council generated approximately £4.5m in income from levying fees and charges for the provision of certain services and it was the Council's policy to ensure that any surplus income was used to support the Council's general fund reserve account and the medium term financial strategy. Certain fees had to be set in accordance with statute whilst other services such as car parking were at the discretion of the Council.

The Council's Value for Money Group was continuing to explore new opportunities for income generation and the following additional new charges were proposed for 2014/15:

Asset Management	administration charge to Parishes for street lighting - £50
Electoral Services	certificates of residence - £15 certification of entry on the electoral register - £15
Environmental Health	Scrap metal site licence (3 years) - £300 scrap metal collectors licence (3 year) £120
Planning and Development Control	Pre-applicant meeting with tree officer - £50 permitted development enquiries - £25

Resolved – (1) That the Council's current policy in relation to fees and charges is further reviewed and updated, and presented for approval to a future meeting of the Policy Committee.

(2) That the discretionary fees and charges to operate from 1st April 2014 as set out in Appendices A and B to the report now submitted are approved and that the statutory charges are noted.

(3) That the statutory planning charges as set out in Appendix C to the report now submitted are noted.

(4) That, with the exception of fees and charges in relation to licensing, delegated authority is given to the Corporate Heads, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy Committee to approve prior/in year changes to service charges where circumstances arise resulting in a required change to the level of fee/charge currently proposed to be applied from 1st April 2014 and that such changes are reported for information to the next scheduled meeting of this Committee.

(Councillor Place left the meeting whilst the above item was discussed as he had declared a disclosable pecuniary interest under Appendix A of the Code of Conduct as he was licenced to sell alcohol and had a trade waste agreement with the Council.)

POL.553

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT – APRIL –
SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report informing Members of the treasury activity undertaken in the first half of 2013/14. Given the continuing pressures hindering economic recovery in the UK and abroad and in order to protect the Council from risk associated with financial investment, it was proposed that no change was made to the investment strategy for the remainder of 2013/14.

The report stated that no additional borrowing was undertaken in the first half-year and debt remained at £6.238m. Although £1.25m of debt was repaid in October, this would be replaced by new loans totalling £1m. The net investment of £3.132m held at 30th September 2013 was likely to become a net debt of £2.138k by the end of the financial year as cash outflows in February and March would not be matched by cash inflows.

Resolved – (1) That the treasury management mid-year report for 2013/14 is noted.

(2) That the latest treasury management indicators are noted.

POL.554

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FROM APRIL 2014

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report asking Members to agree Craven's Council Tax Support Scheme. Each local authority was required to make a localised scheme by 31st January 2014 setting out the classes of persons entitled to a reduction.

When the 2013/14 scheme was agreed caseloads were relatively high at around 3550 claimants. Current figures indicate a caseload decline of 5% and awards of support amounting to £2.87m. In addition, the collection rate at the end of the second quarter was very slightly up on the same period last year, so fears of non-collection appeared to be unfounded.

It was expected that Government funding would reduce further by about 10%. Evidence suggested that increasing the council tax liability beyond a certain level would result in collection difficulties with the resultant pressures on the Collection Fund.

It was recommended that two adjustments were made to the scheme to keep in line with housing benefit and universal credit legislation. In addition, the impact of reducing the maximum council tax support by 1% would, on a Band B property, increase claimants council tax liability by approximately £1 per month.

Resolved – (1) That the administrative changes as detailed in the report now submitted are approved.

(2) That the maximum eligibility level is reduced from 91.5% to 90%

POL.555

CONFIRMATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE – 2014/15

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report seeking approval of the Council Tax Base for the 2014/15 financial year. The Committee was advised that the formula used to calculate the base had been changed due to recent legislation to take account of both the technical changes to council tax discounts and exemptions and the change from council tax benefit to a localised council tax reduction scheme. The recommended tax base reflected the decision made at Council on 11th December 2012 to abolish the second home discount and to amend the exempt classes A and C.

For every £1 of Council Tax levied, the tax base would enable the Authority to meet £21,179.96 of expenditure in 2014/15 compared with £20,767.79 in current financial year.

Resolved – (1) That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), the amount calculated by Craven District Council as its tax base for the whole of the area for 2014/15 financial year is set at 21,179.96

(2) That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by Craven District Council as the tax base for each of its parishes for the 2014/15 financial year is as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted and appended to these minutes.

POL.556

SKIPTON TOWN HALL BUSINESS PLAN AND GOVERNANCE

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the Business Plan in respect of the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Town Hall, Skipton and to seek approval for capital funding for delivery of Phase 1 together with future governance arrangements.

Further to the decision to retain management of the Town Hall, at Members' request, a business plan had been produced. This included a brief historical evolution of the building, consultation responses for future uses and the identification of key principles to be adopted during the redevelopment and refurbishment of the building.

The restoration of the Town Hall would be implemented through two phases. Phase 1 delivered much needed improvements including a lift to the upper floors and the restoration of the Town Hall steps. Phase 2 offered a wide range of options to capitalise on the Town Hall's community, heritage and commercial opportunities and would include an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The report recommended that a budget of £220,000 funded from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve was allocated in the Council's capital budget for the implementation of the Phase 1 project which would enable a transformational refurbishment of the original Town Hall whilst making the building fit for purpose through much needed access improvements and alterations. In addition, a £20,000 contribution would be made from the Enabling Efficiencies Reserve to enable planning work for an aspirational Phase 2 project leading to a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding.

During the ensuing debate, Members remarked that, as the Tour de France was coming to Skipton at the beginning of July 2014, it would be beneficial if the Phase 1 timescales could be reduced

accordingly. Members also requested that they were given the opportunity to have an input into the Heritage Lottery Funding Bid.

Resolved – (1) That the Business Plan as attached at the Annexe detailing a phased approach for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Town Hall, Skipton and associated buildings is approved.

(2) That a contribution of £220,000 to be funded from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve is allocated in the Council's capital budget for the delivery of a Phase 1 refurbishment project as detailed in the Business Plan.

(3) That delegated authority is given to the Director of Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Enterprising Craven, to submit a stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of a Skipton Town Hall Hub as detailed in the Annexe.

(4) That the preferred option of the Council, at this time is to retain ownership and management of the buildings known as 17 and 19 High Street and the Town Hall, Skipton and the services operated by the Council occupying the building and that at this time the Council does not continue to investigate alternative governance structures.

POL.557

PARKING STRATEGY – BLUE BADGE PARKING CHARGES

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking Members' approval to remove the current free parking concession to blue badge holders parking in designated blue badge parking spaces.

The blue badge scheme operating throughout the UK provided a range of on-street parking concessions for those people with limited mobility. However, Craven like many local authorities, had, in addition, provided free parking on its off-street car parks. Since April 2012, blue badge holders had been permitted to park for a maximum of 3 hours' as long as they parked in a designated bay. If they chose to park in spaces outside designated bays the normal car park tariff became applicable.

The Select Committee had previously reviewed car parking in the District and had concluded that charging all blue badge holders irrespective of whether they were parked within a blue badge bay would provide clarity and avoid confusion as to whether or not charges applied.

Whilst Members expressed some concern about the potential knock on effect of blue badge holders parking on yellow lines to avoid car parking charges, it was

Resolved – (1) That the removal of the free three hour parking concession to blue badge holders parking in designated blue badge parking spaces is approved.

(2) That officers are authorised to take the necessary action to implement the decision at (1) above and delegated authority is given to the Director of Services in consultation with Legal Services to make any necessary formal Order(s) including considering and deciding on duly made objections to the proposed Order(s).

\$POL.558

DISPOSAL OF LANGCLIFFE QUARRY

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking Members' approval for the disposal of Langcliffe Quarry. The site which was listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, having an historically important Hoffman Lime Kiln, had a number of issues. These posed a significant potential liability for the Council and previous proposals supported by Yorkshire Forward to create an educational centre and workshop/office space on the site had not come to fruition.

The District Valuer had recommended that the site, excluding the grazing land, be auctioned as a whole. The Yorkshire Dales National Park was, by way of a lease expiring in 2025, responsible for the kiln and quarry face and this lease would be protected with the new owner of the site becoming their landlord. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority had, through their Planning Policy, identified the quarry as a future employment site and not for residential development. However, it was considered prudent to include a claw back provision in any contract of sale so the Council could claim a percentage of any uplift in value should residential consent be obtained.

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council's auction arrangements, the disposal of the site as a whole (excluding the grazing land) is approved subject to confirmation from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority that they will not consider any residential development for the site.

(Councillors Heseltine and Lis declared Appendix B interests in the above item as they were both Members of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.)

\$POL.559

INFRASTRUCTURE RESERVE: SUPERFAST NORTH YORKSHIRE BROADBAND

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report updating Members on the superfast North Yorkshire broadband project and requested a contribution from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support delivery of the project in Skipton and West Craven.

Access to an acceptable broadband connection was now considered to be a part of everyday life as well as helping to maintain sustainable communities. The Government had established a target of 95% for UK premises to have access to superfast broadband by 2017.

The rollout of superfast broadband was being delivered to two thirds of UK premises based on the commercial viability of an area. However, the remaining third was declared commercially unviable without public sector investment. To deliver coverage of the final third, the Government had funded, through Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), Superfast North Yorkshire led by NYnet Ltd which was wholly owned by North Yorkshire County Council. The County Council and NYnet Ltd had asked Craven District Council for a financial contribution of £91,875 to support upgrading roadside cabinets serving the areas of Middletown, Skipton, Skipton North and Carleton-in-Craven.

It was recommended that the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve should be used to finance the request for funding as the broadband project was in line with one of the previously agreed themes for use of the reserve.

Resolved – That a maximum contribution of £91,875 from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to North Yorkshire County Council, via NYnet Ltd, to provide next generation access broadband from cabinets Skipton 4, Skipton 9 and Skipton 14 as part of the superfast North Yorkshire broadband project.

\$POL.560

STAFFING MATTER

The Strategic Manager for Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report enclosing employment advice from both the Local Government Association and Counsel about a staffing matter within the Council.

Resolved – (1) That the advice is received and no further action is taken by this Committee in connection with this matter.

(2) That all the advice received in this matter should be retained for future reference.

(3) That Monitoring Officer is asked to submit a report to Council recommending the establishment of a specific Committee to deal with staffing matters.

[Councillor Ireton requested that that his vote against the above resolution be recorded.]

Minutes for Decision

- None -

Chairman

APPENDIX

Parish Summary

Parish	14/15 Taxbase	Parish	14/15 Taxbase	Parish	14/15 Taxbase
AIRTON	94.71	EMBSAY w EASTBY	785.09	LAWKLAND	129.92
APPLETREWICK	115.26	ESHTON	43.75	LINTON	84.79
ARNCLIFFE	42.85	FARNHILL	207.05	LITTON	41.40
AUSTWICK	29.56	FLASBY w WINTERBURN	52.60	LONG PRESTON	308.35
BANK NEWTON	32.23	GARGRAVE	725.67	LOTHERSDALE	251.07
BARDEN	76.50	GIGGLESWICK	529.51	MALHAM	73.20
BEAMSLEY	43.58	GLUSBURN	1,270.95	MALHAM MOOR	20.06
BENTHAM	1184.53	GRASSINGTON	540.23	MARTONS BOTH	128.66
BOLTON ABBEY	43.58	HALTON EAST	48.15	NAPPA	4.81
BORDLEY	6.85	HALTON GILL	28.23	OTTERBURN	22.47
BRADLEY	475.05	HALTON WEST	26.60	RATHMELL	134.18
BROUGHTON	39.75	HANLITH	17.61	RYLSTONE	69.33
BUCKDEN	112.47	HARTLINGTON	36.44	SCOSTHROP	37.39
BURNSALL	62.61	HAWKSWICK	40.38	SETTLE	983.53
BURTON IN LONSDALE	261.17	HAZLEWOOD w STORITHS	38.01	SKIPTON	4559.07
CALTON	30.17	HEBDEN	120.82	STAINFORTH	106.71
CARLETON	424.62	HELLIFIELD	518.98	STIRTON w THORLBY	101.18
CLAPHAM	295.75	HETTON	75.40	SUTTON	1323.53
CONISTON COLD	92.51	HORTON IN RIBBLESDALE	201.89	SWINDEN	9.30
CONISTON w KILNSEY	61.85	INGLETON	807.62	THORNTON IN CRAVEN	203.77
CONONLEY	444.72	KETTLEWELL w STARBOTTON	215.09	THORNTON IN LONSDALE	147.16
COWLING	820.78	KILDWICK	99.00	THORPE	20.78
CRACOE	90.63	KIRKBY MALHAM	52.24	THRESHFIELD	401.64
DRAUGHTON	120.41	LANGCLIFFE	167.39	WIGGLESWORTH	138.17
ELSLACK	25.72				