

POLICY COMMITTEE

16th September 2014

Present – The Chairman (Councillor Knowles-Fitton) and Councillors Barrington (substitute for Barrett), Beck, Foster, Harbron, Heseltine, Kerwin-Davey, Lis, Moorby, Mulligan, Myers, Sutcliffe and Turner.

Officers – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Corporate Head of Business Support, Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer, Finance Manager, Environmental Protection Officer and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrett and Place.

Start: 6:30pm

Finish: 9pm

Councillor Myers arrived at 7:05pm

Councillor Lis left the meeting at 8.55pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 19th August 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

POL.617

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 1 **2014/15**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report advising Members of the revenue budget position based on the quarter 1 review of income and expenditure to the end of June 2014.

The Council had a general fund unallocated balance of £1,030k as at 1st April 2014 and this was expected to remain during 2014/15 in order to mitigate against the risk of unplanned movements from budgeted net expenditure levels and variances. Risks included a potential liability of £960k from 2013/14 NNDR appeals.

The monitoring exercise had shown a projected underspend of £180k for the full financial year which included £81.5k from the Council's Income and Savings Plan.

The Council had £3,908k in earmarked reserves at 1st April 2014 and it was estimated that contributions of £1,277k (including the underspend from the savings plan) would be made to specific reserves during the year and £1,429k would be utilised in 2014/15.

Resolved – (1) That, the revenue budget monitoring position as at 30th June 2014 is noted.

(2) That, £81.5k of the savings expected to be achieved this year as identified in Appendix B to the report now submitted are noted and that these savings are to be carried forward for support to the 2015/16 budget and beyond.

(3) That, the Council's Long Term Financial Plan is amended to take account of the savings at (2) above in 2015/16 and beyond where these are not currently allowed for in the budget.

POL.618 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 1
2014/15**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report advising Members of the Council's capital programme position based on a review of the first quarter's income and expenditure to the end of June 2014.

The Council approved the 2014/15 capital programme of £1,608 in February 2014. However, supplementary estimates for works at Skipton Bus Station public conveniences of £49k together with £873k of slippages from 2013/14 had given a total capital programme of £2,530k.

Subject to Council confirmation, the recent approval of phase 2 works for the Town Hall project would also be added to the capital programme.

The Council was forecasting that it would receive £650k in capital receipts during 2014/15 and, in addition, the Council had £1,767k of receipts carried forward from previous years giving a total of £2,417k. It was estimated that £998k 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 June 2014 is noted.

POL.619 **PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 1 2014/15**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report presenting an overview of the Council's performance between April and June 2014. Good progress had been made in respect of the Council Plan actions with 18 of the 25 having been assessed as on target. Four projects had not started and two actions relating to recycling and kerbside food waste collections were classed as being behind schedule.

Resolved – That, the report is noted.

POL.620 **BAD DEBT WRITE-OFFS 2013/14**

In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, the Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report informing Members of the bad debts written off during the 2013/14 financial year.

The total written off amounted to £295,532 comprising of £13,724 of sundry debts; £112,300 NNDR; £97,877 Council Tax debts; and £71,631 in overpaid housing benefits. Wherever possible, the debts were recovered and, in all cases, writing off the debts had been a last resort. Reasons for non-collection included bankruptcy, lack of funds to pay or relocation abroad.

Resolved – That, the bad debts written off during the 2013/14 financial year, as detailed in the Appendix to the report now submitted are noted.

Minutes for Decision

POL.621 **LONGER TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (LTFS) UPDATE FROM
2015/16 TO 2021/22**

The Corporate Head of Financial Management submitted a report providing Members with an update on the forecast financial position for the seven year period to 2021/22. The Council's first Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS) provided a framework to assess financial sustainability over a 10 year period but because of the continuing volatility and uncertainty around Government funding,

the current LTFS covered a 7 year period to 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covered a six year period.

In view of continuing uncertainty it was suggested that the Council moved to producing detailed budgets covering the next three financial years to be identified as the Medium Term Financial Plan and that the MTFS and LTFS were merged to become the LTFS covering a period of up to 10 years as appropriate.

The view of the Corporate Head of Financial Management was that ongoing cuts to public spending was inevitable, and that whilst the Council had approved a balanced revenue budget for 2014/15 the challenges for 2015/16 and beyond would remain and the Council would need to continue with its savings plan in order to achieve savings rising to £470k in 2018/19.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the long term financial strategy 2015/16 to 2021/22 as set out in the report now submitted is approved.

(2) That, the Council produces a three year detailed budget to be known as the Medium Term Financial Plan which will be presented to Council in February.

(3) That, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Long Term Financial Strategy are merged to become the Long Term Financial Strategy.

POL.622

**CRAVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL – CONTAMINATED LAND
STRATEGY 2014/19**

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to approve and adopt the Craven District Council Contaminated Land Strategy 2014-2019. The new Strategy had taken into account legislative changes and DEFRA statutory guidance on contaminated land and detailed how the Authority would deal with the legacy of contaminated land. Predominantly the progress made with regard to contaminated land had been achieved through the planning process.

Craven District Council was responsible for the enforcement of contaminated land legislation in the District and aimed to protect people, property and the environments from contaminants in the ground whilst encouraging the brownfield regeneration of contaminated sites.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Craven District Council Contaminated Land Strategy as set out in the appendix to the report now submitted is approved and adopted.

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

POL.623

COLLECTION POLICY

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking Members' approval for the introduction of a collection point waste collection policy. Following a routine audit by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of the waste collection service, an Improvement Notice was issued that required the Council to carry out an assessment of its manual handling operations.

The manual handling risk assessment highlighted instances where waste operatives were retrieving a number of bins over considerable distances from where waste vehicles had difficulty accessing such as rear alleys and this continued practice over a period of time was, in the opinion of the HSE significantly increasing the risk of injury to waste collection crews. It was estimated that this practice applied to around 10% or 2,500 properties.

The HSE had suggested that, as in other local authorities, including all North Yorkshire District Councils, designated collection points could be established requiring householders to take their bins to a pre-determined area for those properties that the refuse collection vehicle could not directly access.

Members were reminded of the Council's duty to comply with Health and Safety legislation and that failure to ensure the health and safety and welfare of its employees could result in enforcement action by the HSE.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Collection Point Waste Collection Policy as set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted is approved.

(2) That, the Waste and Recycling Manager is requested to consult with each individual householder who may be affected by the introduction of the Collection Point Waste Collection Policy prior to implementing any collection points.

(3) That, a further report is submitted to the Policy Committee after the conclusion of the consultation exercise, updating Members on progress with the implementation of the Collections Policy.

POL.624

LEEDS CITY REGION GREEN DEAL AND ECO SCHEME

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to Members providing an update on the process to procure a private partner to deliver the Leeds City Region Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme and to obtain approval to 'Call-Off' from the Framework Agreement.

The new scheme following on from the successful Domestic Energy Efficiency Programme which secured a number of partners that local authorities could utilise to provide domestic energy savings schemes. This new scheme was much wider and changed the focus of measures and installations to take advantage of the new ECO scheme which commenced in 2012.

There would be a main strategic framework contract scheduled to be put in place by October 2014, along with individual district call-off contracts reflecting the detailed implementation of measures for the first three years of the scheme in each district. Each local authority would work with the successful contractor to target priority areas, such as those suffering deprivation and in greatest need of energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

In order to support the scheme, a Leeds City Region Green Deal and ECO scheme contract manager was required to manage the relationships between the Green Deal provider and the local authorities and funding in the region of £60,000 per annum was required.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, authority is delegated to the Solicitor to the Council to agree the commercial terms of the call-off contract and sign the contract.

(2) That, authority is delegated to the Environmental Health and Housing Manager to take operational decisions including the attendance of the Home Energy Project Board.

(3) That, the creation and funding of a joint project management post between like-minded partners in the Leeds City Region to manage the relationships between the Green Deal provider and the local authorities is approved.

(Councillor Lis declared an Appendix B interest in the above item as he was a Board Member of the Yorkshire Energy Partnership.)

POL.625

**APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES – LOCAL DELIVERY
TEAM (COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP)**

The Corporate Head of Business Support submitted a report asking Members to nominate a Member to represent the Council on the newly formed Community Safety Local Delivery Team for Craven following the changes to the community safety partnership structure in North Yorkshire.

RECOMMENDED – That, Councillor Roberts is appointed to represent the Council on the Community Safety Partnership Local Delivery Team for Craven, the normal term of office to be one year commencing at each Annual Meeting of the Council; the appointment to be included in the list of appointments to outside bodies which are subject to political proportionality.

Chairman