

POLICY COMMITTEE

18th July 2017

Present – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Barrett, Brockbank, Dawson, Hull, Ireton, Jaquin, Madeley, Mercer (substitute for Rose), Morrell, Mulligan, Myers, Solloway (substitute for Heseltine), Thompson (substitute for Lis) and Welch

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heseltine, Lis and Rose

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 8.19pm

Councillor Barrett left the meeting at 7.37pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 6th June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved – (1) That, in accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public is excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute POL.845 below on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the Category 1 (relates to an individual) exempt information therein.

(2) That, in accordance with the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public is excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minutes POL.850 and POL.851 below on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the Category 3 (financial or business affairs of any particular Person (including the Council)) exempt information therein.

Minutes for Report

POL.838 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2016/17

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services submitted a report informing Members of the treasury activity undertaken during 2016/17 in the context of current and forecast economic climates.

The Council's investments had been managed in accordance with the Council's Investment Policy, and as at 31st March 2017 the Council had a total debt of £5,988,000, with investments of £14,020,000. During 2016-17 gross borrowing had remained within the Council's authorised limit and the Strategic Manager pointed out that at the current time early repayment of loans would not be a viable proposition.

The Council's investments had also been boosted by a discount of £14,730 on the annual pension fund contribution as a result of making payments in advance. The total investment income received from all sources was £127,496.

Resolved – (1) That, the actual treasury management indicators for 2016/17 are noted.

(2) That, the treasury management annual report for 2016/17 is noted.

POL.839

BAD DEBT WRITE OFFS

The Strategic Manager for Financial Services submitted a report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, presenting details of total bad debts written off during the 2016-17 financial year under delegated powers.

The total write offs in the year to 31 March 2017 amounted to £249,719 across the following debt types:

Sundry Debtors: £12,282 (as compared to £5,041 in 2015-16);
NNDR Debtors: £122,927 (£140,864);
Council Tax Debtors: £86,969 (£87,822); and
Overpaid Housing Benefits: £27,541 (£47,463).

In 2016-17 the Council's collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and been 98.57% and 98.77% respectively (98.8% and 99% in 2015-16).

Resolved – That the bad debts written off during the 2016-17 financial year are noted.

POL.840

**WINTER MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL OWNED CAR PARKS AND
ENGINE SHED LANE**

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval to the introduction of a winter maintenance policy and operational procedure for the treatment of Council owned car parks and Engine Shed Lane, Skipton. Estimated costs in the sum of £9,000 per annum would be absorbed within existing annual maintenance budgets.

Resolved – That the proposed policy and operational procedure for the winter maintenance treatment of Council owned car parks and Engine Shed Lane, Skipton is approved.

POL.841

**YORK AND NORTH YORKSHIRE ESIF PROGRAMME – GREEN
AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN SKIPTON**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report seeking approval to submit a detailed application in response to a call from the York and North Yorkshire European Structure and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme for proposals relating to the creation of water and green habitats linked to employment sites.

In summary, the proposed project, entitled "South Skipton Employment Zone – Green and Blue Infrastructure" involved delivery of green and blue infrastructure linked to the development of Wyvern Park and the Engine Shed Lane/ Ings Lane employment area (referred to as the South Skipton Employment Zone). Whilst the project and the development of the employment zone were exclusive of each other, the two were mutually beneficial with the focus predominantly within the catchment area of Ings Beck and Gallow Syke, from their source to the north of Aireville Park to their confluence with the River Aire.

If successful the application would provide / result in

- Woodland planting in the riparian buffer and catchment areas to slow run-off, improve water quality and enable the creation of new habitats;
- Creation of sustainable drainage measures, including holding ponds which will create new wetland habitats and improve water management;

- Creation of native wildflower margins and grassland strips alongside woodland to enhance biodiversity;
- Creation of cycling and walking routes to link the employment zone with Aireville Park and adjoining areas including the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.
- Natural processes to slow the passage of water and reduce the risk of flooding from Ings Beck; create a network of natural habitats and improve the provision of green infrastructure.

The project represented an opportunity for the Council to use the development of the employment zone to deliver a range of environmental and quality of life benefits which added to the natural capital of Skipton. A plan showing the project area had been circulated with the Strategic Manager's report.

Resolved – (1) That the scope of the South Skipton Employment Zone – Green and Blue Infrastructure Project, and the activities to be undertaken as part of the project are approved.

(2) That submission of a full application for grant funding of £620,000 from the York and North Yorkshire European Structural and Investment Funds programme to deliver the Project is approved

(3) That, subject to a successful award of funding, the Director of Services is granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Strategic Director for Financial Services, to agree terms and enter into an agreement with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and any other appropriate organisations for the delivery of the project.

POL.842

GROWTH DEAL 4 – PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Strategic Manager, Planning and Regeneration submitted a report in respect of a call for a “Growth Deal 4” round from the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership. Members were reminded that Growth Deal was the process by which the Government agreed a package of projects, funding and powers with a Local Enterprise Partnership.

In June 2017 the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had announced a call for bids for a Growth Deal 4 round as a contingency in light of an identified potential budget underspend in 2018/19. It was currently unclear how much funding would be reallocated but it could be as high as £20 million. Discussions with the LEP had highlighted four potential projects it would welcome being further developed for the proposed fourth round, namely

- Accelerating Housing and Employment Land Delivery,
- Redevelopment of Engine Shed Lane Depot,
- Redevelopment of Skipton Town Hall, and
- Improvement to the A59 from the A65 roundabout to the A56 roundabout.

Although the exact terms of any proposal or offer from the LEP were unclear at this stage, it was anticipated that the four potential projects would be able to achieve significant spend in 2018/19, be delivered by March 2021 and meet the aims of the LEP.

Resolved – (1) That the four projects as identified above and detailed in Section 4 of the report are approved for submission to the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership Local Growth Deal 4 Fund.

(2) The Director of Services is granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Member for Enterprising Craven, to agree the final project submissions for the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal 4.

(3) That the Leader of the Council writes to North Yorkshire County Council seeking its agreement to become the project lead for improvements to the A59.

POL.843

**IMPLEMENTING ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION FLEXIBLE
ELIGIBILITY**

The Director of Services submitted a report presenting details of a Government initiative which gave local authorities the ability to set local criteria to attract Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding. By adopting and making known its criteria through publication of a statement of intent, the Council would be in a position to attract funding to help fuel poor residents in the District.

The Director's report explained that the Energy Company Obligation was a Government energy efficiency scheme funded by the six main energy companies to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty, and that under associated regulations local authorities could set their own criteria for eligibility for funding for domestic energy efficiency measures in order to address local needs and priorities. A flexible criteria for Craven had therefore been worked up in conjunction with Leeds City Region partners to develop a consistent protocol which would meet both varying local needs and provide a mechanism which facilitated inter-authority programmes of work in partnership with Better Homes Yorkshire.

Copies of a draft statement of intent had been circulated with the Director's report.

Resolved – (1) That it is noted that the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) transition period allows local authorities to set criteria for fuel poor households, and households which are vulnerable to cold, to qualify for ECO funding from the "Big 7" energy suppliers towards the cost of certain energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

(2) That publication of the Statement of Intent, as presented at the Appendix to the report now submitted, setting out the criteria for Craven District Council is approved.

(3) That the Director of Services is granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Member, to make minor amendments and/or adjustments to the Statement of Intent to meet current or future requirements, and in order to facilitate responses to revised priorities and/or funding opportunities.

(4) That a report is submitted to this Committee in July 2018 presenting details of where the Energy Company Obligation monies have been spent and whether the aims behind this initiative are being achieved

POL.844

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – PARISH COUNCILS

The Member Services Manager submitted a report asking the Committee to consider carrying out a community governance review of electoral arrangements in smaller parish councils.

Thornton-in-Craven Parish Council had requested that a community governance review be undertaken to consider increasing the number of councillors on the Parish Council from the current figure of five, in order that it might more effectively carry out its business. The Local Government Act 1972, as amended, specified that each parish council must have at least five councillors and the National Association of Local Councils' view was that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven. In light of Thornton-in-Craven's request it was suggested that it would

be opportune to review the arrangements in the 12 other parish councils which also had fewer than seven members.

Any recommended changes arising from community governance reviews required the approval of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Resolved – (1) That a community governance review is carried out of electoral arrangements in those parish councils with fewer than seven councillors to examine whether the number of councillors should be increased to the National Association of Local Councils recommended minimum of seven councillors.

(2) That the views of larger parishes is also sought on the adequacy of their current electoral arrangements.

(3) That a report on the outcome of the consultation is submitted to Policy Committee for the approval of any recommendations to be made to the Local Government Boundary Committee for England.

\$POL.845

STAFFING MATTER

The Chief Executive submitted a report on actions taken in settling a staffing matter.

Resolved – That the action taken by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Strategic Manager for Financial Services, is noted.

Minutes for Decision

POL.846

WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY - ONE PUBLIC ESTATE AND ASSETS DELIVERY PLAN

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the Council to join the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Partnership's One Public Estate Programme (OPE); a pioneering initiative funded by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit, and delivered on its behalf by the Local Government Association, which was designed to facilitate and enable local authorities to work successfully with central government and local agencies on public property and land issues through sharing and collaboration.

The Government expected all Councils to be part of an OPE scheme.

RECOMMENDED – That the Council joins the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Partnership's One Public Estate Programme.

POL.847

LEEDS LIVERPOOL CANAL – IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN DALES

Further to Minute POL.685/15-16, the Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report informing the Committee of an application to the Rural Development Programme for England, led by the Canal and River Trust, to improve infrastructure along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Members were reminded that at Minute POL.685/15-16, a sum of up to £300,000 had been allocated from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support future funding applications submitted by the Council and partner organisations to improve pedestrian and cycle

connectivity along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal towpath corridor between Gargrave and the Aire Valley. The current application would build on the improvement to the towpath between Bradley and Skipton completed in 2016, and deliver:

- Upgrading of up to 13.5km (8 miles) of towpath between Skipton and Gargrave;
- Improved signage and way marking for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Improved facilities for narrow boaters;
- New infrastructure to support use of the Desmond Canoe Trail;
- Business support activity to benefit 40 businesses;
- Five marketing initiatives.

Although predominantly focused on improvements to accessibility along the Canal towpath, the project included a proposal to integrate a programme of business and marketing support to encourage visitors to the area; including those less visited areas of the District. The project would also ensure local businesses had the skills and knowledge to maximise the benefit from narrow boaters, cyclists and walkers visiting the area.

It was understood that the Government's Rural Payments Agency had endorsed the project pending receipt of a full application, agreement was therefore now sought to part of the monies previously allocated by the Council at Minute POL.685 being used as match funding to support the project.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That submission of the funding bid by the Canal and River Trust to the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme to deliver the Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales project is approved.

(2) That, subject to a successful award of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme, a contribution of up to £200,000 from the monies previously allocated by the Council at Minute POL.685/15-16 as matched funding to the project is confirmed.

(3) That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Services, in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council and the Strategic Manager for Financial Services, to agree terms and enter into a written agreement with the Canal and River Trust.

(4) That, subject to the successful award of funding from the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme, £25,000 of the monies previously allocated by the Council at POL.685/15-16 are used to deliver business and marketing support for the Leeds Liverpool Canal: Improving Connectivity in the Southern Dales project.

(5) That, subject to adoption of Recommendations (1) to (4) above, contributions to the project funded from the New Homes Bonus Reserve, are included in the Council's 2018/19 budget.

POL.848

NON STATUTORY FOOD HYGIENE RATING RE-SCORE VISITS

The Director of Services submitted a report proposing the introduction of a fee to recover the costs associated with undertaking non-statutory food hygiene rating re-score visits to food businesses.

Members were reminded that the Food Standards Agency's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) had been in place in Craven since 2012 and that currently all visits made to premises were conducted at no cost to the business, including second visits requested by a business for the sole purpose of assessing its rating. However, following an announcement in March 2017, the Food

Standards Agency had now confirmed a change in policy which allowed the use of powers within the Localism Act 2011 to introduce full cost recovery for requested re-inspections.

Any business assigned a rating of less than five could request a follow up re-rating inspection once it had made any improvements brought to their attention following the first inspection. In the last financial year 20 applications for a re-score visit had been received, should a charge be introduced it was estimated that the number requesting a re-visit would fall to approximately ten. A charge of £175 plus VAT would be necessary to achieve full cost recovery for a re-visit.

The Council was statutorily obliged to visit premises to assess food safety on the basis of risk, and the frequency of those statutory visits was determined by the risks posed by the nature of the food business.

It was recommended and, after a discussion

RECOMMENDED – (1) That a flat rate charge of £180 for re-score inspection requests received from food businesses is approved with immediate effect and reviewed in line with the fees and charges policy annually thereafter.

(2) That a supplementary income estimate of £1,800 as a result of introducing the above charge is noted.

(3) That the annual review of the non-statutory food hygiene rating re-score visit fee is delegated to the Environmental Services and Housing Manager in consultation with the Lead Member.

POL.849

NON STATUTORY ADVISORY FOOD SAFETY VISITS

The Director of Services submitted a report proposing the introduction of a fee to recover costs associated with undertaking non-statutory advisory pre-inspection advice visits to food businesses.

In reviewing how they could provide an improved advisory service for local food businesses, officers within the Environmental Health Department had proposed the introduction of a scheme aimed at both new and existing businesses. The scheme would give new businesses a head start towards compliance and would also assist businesses scoring poorly in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to improve compliance. As a non-statutory service a charge could be applied and it was recommended that a charge of £60/hour plus VAT would be appropriate. Free information would continue to be available via the Council's website and associated links.

It was pointed out that the same officer would not conduct both an advisory visit and the unannounced formal statutory food safety inspection to a premise.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That the introduction of a charge based on an hourly rate of £60 plus VAT for advisory food safety visits based upon full cost recovery is approved with immediate effect and be reviewed in line with the fees and charges policy annually thereafter.

(2) That a supplementary income estimate of £1,800 as a result of introducing the above charge is noted.

(3) That the annual review of the non-statutory advisory food safety visits fee is delegated to the Environmental Services and Housing Manager in consultation with the Lead Member.

\$POL.850

SHARED OWNERSHIP HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Further to Minute \$POL.832/17-18, the Director of Services submitted an updated report informing the Committee of progress regarding the development of the pilot shared ownership housing scheme on Council owned land at Burnroyd Avenue, Glusburn and seeking approval to provide 11 more shared ownership dwellings across three sites at Colne Road Glusburn, Harper Grove, Sutton-in-Craven and North Parade Skipton respectively.

Development of the 11 units had been the subject of a financial appraisal, a copy of which was presented within the Director's report. It was also pointed out that commencement would be subject to receipt of Homes and Communities Agency grant, once confirmed it was estimated that construction could be completed by April 2018.

RECOMMEND – (1) That the development of eleven shared ownership housing units on three Council sites at Colne Road Glusburn, Harper Grove Sutton and North Parade Skipton is approved.

(2) That a supplementary capital estimate of £1,187,470 to be funded from borrowing and grant for the construction of the eleven shared ownership housing units at Colne Road Glusburn, Harper Grove Sutton and North Parade Skipton is approved.

(3) That the Director of Services authorised to submit a grant funding application to the Homes and Communities Agency and to accept the grant if the application is successful.

\$POL.851

**JOINT VENTURE COMPANY – CONTRACT, GOVERNANCE
ARRANGEMENTS AND INCORPORATION**

Further to Minute \$POL.823/16-17, the Director of Services submitted a report presenting and seeking approval of the contract, governance arrangements and incorporation documents for the proposed joint venture company with Barnfield Investment Properties Limited.

During the course of the ensuing discussion it was confirmed that under the proposed agreement each scheme proposed by the joint venture company would be the subject of a business case and the final decision as to whether or not to proceed would rest with the Council.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That the incorporation of Craven Barnfield Regeneration Ltd as the new joint venture company between Craven District Council and Barnfield Investment Properties Limited is approved.

(2) That, subject to (3) below, the proposed Joint Venture Agreement, as set out at Appendix A to the Director of Services' report, for the Joint Venture Company with Barnfield Investment Properties Limited is approved.

(3) That the Director of Services is granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to finalise the detail of the Joint Venture Agreement and incorporation documents.

(4) That a supplementary revenue estimate of £10,000, funded from the Enabling Efficiencies Reserve, to implement all actions necessary to establish the Joint Venture Company is approved.

Chairman