

POLICY COMMITTEE

15 January 2019

Present – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Barrett Brockbank, Dawson, Heseltine, Ireton, Jaquin, Lis, Morrell, Mulligan, Myers, Place and Rose.

Also in attendance – Councillor Hull

Officers – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer), Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Madeley.

Start: 6.43pm

Finish: 7:53pm

The minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 28th November 2018 and 4th December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

POL.968

UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted an updated policy to deal with problems created by complainants who demonstrated unreasonable behaviour in their pursuit of complaints against the Council.

Members noted that the Council received a very small number of complaints which were considered unreasonable and this updated policy did not stop complainants from presenting additional relevant information or submitting a new complaint.

The updated policy drew heavily from the Ombudsman's guidance to local authorities and also from the Ombudsman's own policy used by his office.

Resolved – (1) That, the draft policy, as now submitted, is approved.

(2) That, the guidance from the Ombudsman on developing an appropriate policy as now submitted is noted.

(3) That, delegated authority is given to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the policy as now submitted.

POL.969

JOINT VENTURE COMPANY

The Director of Services submitted a report providing Members with a progress updated on the Council's joint venture partnership with Barnfield Investment Properties Limited.

Members had already approved the Craven Barnfield Regeneration Plan (CBRP) 2017-2020 which set out the partnership would deliver the Council's aspirations to generate economic growth and local regeneration by making the best use of the Council's land and property assets.

A list of potential projects had been identified and evaluated with six being selected to form a phase one delivery programme to ensure a balance of employment and housing opportunities, including much needed affordable housing.

The indicative timescales shown below were for business cases to be presented to Policy Committee, planning decisions, construction:

Schemes	Design / Development Appraisal	Council Decision to develop	Planning Decision	Construction Start	Completion
Airedale Ave	Mar 2019	Mar 2019	Jul 2019	Oct 2019	Jan 2021
Back Gate / Low Demesne	Apr 2019	Apr 2019	Aug 2019	Nov 2019	May 2021
Engine Shed Lane	Apr 2019	Apr 2019	Oct 2019	Apr 2020	May 2021
Horse Close	Apr 2019	Apr 2019	Aug 2019	Feb 2020	Dec 2020 (Infrastructure)
Langcliffe	Sep 2019	Sep 2019	Jan 2020	Apr 2020	Apr 2021
Whitefriars	Jun 2019	Jun 2019	tbc	tbc	tbc

Resolved – That the progress made and the indicative timetable for when the business cases for the individual developments will be presented to Policy Committee for approval is noted.

Minutes for Decision

POL.970 **LONGER TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (LTFS) 2019/20 TO 2025/26**

The Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) submitted a report which presented the Council’s Longer Term Financial Strategy and provided Members with an update on the forecast financial position for the 7 year period to 2025/26. The purpose of the strategy was to provide a framework for the Council to assess its financial stability over a ten year period but because of the continuing volatility and uncertainty around future Government funding the strategy covered a seven year period to 2025/26.

Continuing public sector pressures, the impact of the Council Tax Support Scheme, changes to specific grants, confirmation of the business rates retention scheme and announcements from central Government meant that continuing cuts to local government were inevitable. 2019/20 was the final year in the four year settlement offer which had been accepted in 2016/17. Whilst acceptance of the offer provided some certainty it did not offer complete protection from further adjustments to grants such as the New Homes Bonus.

The Longer Term Financial Strategy indications were that whilst the Council had an approved balanced revenue budget for 2018/19 the challenges for 2019/20 and beyond were significant. Revenue Support Grant reduced to nil by April 2019 and the Council had to find additional income streams or savings to bridge the gap if services were to continue at current levels.

The Council would need to continue with its savings plan and achieve savings of up to £1.255m by 2025/26 and possibly more, particularly as a District Council delivering unprotected services it was expected that the cuts would carry on.

RECOMMENDED – That, the long term financial strategy 2019/20 to 2025/26 as set out in the report now submitted, is approved.

POL.971 **COLLECTION FUND COUNCIL TAX SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)**
2018/19

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report declaring an estimated surplus of £750,000 on the Council's collection fund in respect of council tax for the financial year 2018/19.

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	£526,598
• Police and Crime Commissioner North Yorkshire	£98,173
• North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	£29,180
• Craven District Council	£96,049

Craven District Council was required to take the £96,049 into account when setting its element of the council tax for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, an estimated surplus of £750,000 on the Council's collection fund at 31st March 2019 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 2019/20.

POL.972 **COLLECTION FUND NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES**
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) 2018/19

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report declaring an estimated deficit of £257,136k on the Council's collection fund at 31st March 2019 relating to national non domestic rates (NNDR) transactions.

Under the rates retention scheme, local authorities were allowed to keep a proportion of the business rates collected, giving authorities a direct financial interest and therefore an incentive to work with businesses to grow local economies.

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

• North Yorkshire County Council	£23,143
• Central Government	£128,566
• North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	£2,572
• Craven District Council	£102,855

Members were advised that Craven District Council had to take the £102,855 into account when it set its element of the council tax for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, an estimated deficit of £257,136k on the Council's collection fund at 31st March 2019 relating to NNDR transactions is declared.

BOUNDARY SIGNS

The Director of Services submitted a report asking Members to consider the introduction of boundary signs on entrance road into the Craven District. It was a common approach for local authorities to promote their districts by having boundary signs announcing the arrival into the district.

With a forthcoming Road World Championship coming through Craven in September 2019, there was an opportunity to promote Craven by installing boundary signs on the 20 main approach roads into Craven.

The estimated costs of between £500 and £1,000 per sign were dependent on the style of sign, design and number of locations. Sponsorship was currently being discussed with Great Places and community partners including whether there was scope to carry out a design competition. North Yorkshire County Council was in agreement for the erection of boundary signs subject to them meeting their Passive Safety Protocol and their signage criteria.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, a sum of up to £18,000 funded from NHB Infrastructure Reserve to enable the delivery, implementation and future maintenance of the boundary signs covering primary routes into Craven (A and B routes including tourist routes and canal towpaths) is approved.

(2) That, subject to approval of (1) above, the boundary signs will be placed on the Council's assets register and insurance policy.

Chairman