

**POLICY COMMITTEE**

18<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Present** – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Barrett, Handley (substitute for Brockbank), Heseltine, Ireton, Lis, Morrell, Mulligan, Myers, Noland, Place, Rose, Solloway (substitute for Wheeler) and Welch.

**Officers** – Chief Executive, Director of Services, Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer), Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Environmental Services and Housing Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brockbank and Wheeler.

**Start:** 6.30pm

**Finish:** 7:48pm

Councillor Heseltine left the meeting at 6.52pm

The minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**Nicola Chick** – At the end of the meeting the Lead Member for Financial Resilience Councillor Mulligan paid tribute to Nicola Chick, the Council's Chief Finance Officer and S.151 office who was retiring from the Council. He thanked her for her dedication and her contribution had been invaluable. The Chairman and Members of the Committee endorsed Councillor Mulligan's comments and they wished Nicola well in her retirement.

**Minutes for Report**

POL.992

**PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 4  
2018/19**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report presenting the Council's performance monitoring report for quarter four 2018/19 in accordance with arrangements set out in the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Monitoring against the Council Plan showed that good progress had been made in implementing Council Plan actions with nine having been assessed as on target by those completing updates, some elements of five projects were behind schedule and one project was behind schedule.

**Resolved** – That, the progress and outcomes achieves are noted.

POL.993

**BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF :  
MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report updating Members on a proposal endorsed by Local Government North Yorkshire and York for a County wide scheme to offer discretionary rate relief for new mobile phone infrastructure in the District. Members were asked to decide whether the scheme should be included within Craven's Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy.

The District suffered from disparities in coverage due in part to the the topography and geography, a lack of suitable infrastructure for enabling connectivity and a dispersed rural population. These issues contributed to reducing the commercial viability of mobile network operators making additional investment in the District.

The purpose of the scheme was to address the issue of commercial viability of new mobile infrastructure in rural areas such as Craven where large areas, predominantly to the north of the

District along its border with Richmondshire lacked any 4G coverage whereas the A65 corridor and the area surrounding Skipton benefitted from two or more operators.

Mandatory relief was already in existence for eligible 5G and fibre optic infrastructure and so this relief should encourage greater coverage of a 4G infrastructure to ensure the gap between rural and urban mobile coverage did not widen.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the in principle approval by Local Government North Yorkshire and York for a county wide discretionary rate relief policy for new mobile infrastructures is noted.

(2) That, the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme for Mobile Infrastructure as presented in Appendix B to the report now submitted is approved and that the scheme is incorporated into the Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy to fund a maximum of three eligible applications for rate relief.

(3) That, the creation of a Mobile Infrastructure Discretionary Rate Relief Reserve to a maximum value of £126,000, funded from the Rates Equalisation Fund Reserve is approved.

POL.994

### **APPOINTMENT TO SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

The Democratic Services Manager submitted a report asking Members to consider the appointment of Members to the Craven Spatial Planning Sub-Committee and the Craven Employees' Consultative Group.

**Resolved** – (1) That the Craven Spatial Planning Sub-Committee is re-appointed for 2019/20, with a membership of seven and three named substitutes, comprising the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Myers, Councillors Barrett, Brockbank, Rose, Shuttleworth, Staveley and Sutcliffe. Substitutes: Councillors Madeley, Mulligan, Solloway.

(2) That the Craven Employees' Consultative Group is re-appointed for 2019/20, with a membership of five, comprising the Leader of the Council, Councillors, Brown, Madeley, Myers and Solloway.

### **Minutes for Decision**

POL.995

### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2018/19**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report informing Members of the outturn position of the Council's capital programme for 2018/19 and the sources of financing.

Members had been updated with quarterly monitoring reports throughout the year, the last of which showed the quarter three position at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 when total expenditure was forecast to be £2,084k. The final outturn was £3610k.

As part of the year end process, £3,863k had been identified for slippage into the 2019/20 programme. The majority of this slippage was in relation to the redevelopment of Skipton Town Hall and Museum. Other slipped projects included Skipton Canal Waterfront scheme, Ings Beck and Gallow Syke water management scheme and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal – improving connectivity in the Southern Dales.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the outturn position of the 2018/19 capital programme is noted.

(2) That, the financing of the 2018/19 capital programme is noted.

(3) That, £3,864,142 is carried forward for the continuation of 2018/19 projects in 2019/20.

POL.996      **BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF – UPDATE  
TO POLICY**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report introducing a refreshed and simplified Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy which was last updated in 2007. Since then the Government had introduced many initiatives to help businesses and in order to reflect these, an updated over-arching policy had been produced. The policy clarified the powers available and who was responsible for implementing the new reliefs.

**RECOMMENDED** – That, the Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy is adopted.

POL.997      **EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2019 - 2024**

The Director of Services submitted a report presenting a draft Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024. The strategy set out the Council's aims and objectives in addressing and reducing the number of empty homes in the District. The strategy was supported by a revised procedure document that established a consistent and transparent approach to the application of powers of enforcement in respect of empty homes.

Empty homes represented a wasted housing resource as well as posing problems for local authorities, owners, neighbours, emergency services and the environment. They were often a blemish on the area and could be subject to vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Craven had a significant need for additional market and affordable housing and excluding holiday homes, there were over 300 dwellings across the District which had been vacant for 6 months or more (80 empty for over 2 years) which could potentially be brought back into use.

The strategy focussed on internal process improvements and engaging in proactive working alongside empty home owners with a solution based approach as well as demonstrating a commitment to use enforcement powers if needed to ensure empty homes were returned to use.

Funding the scheme would be £200,000 made up of £160,000 for Compulsory Purchase, acquisition and ancillary costs related to an empty dwelling which would be recycled on the sale of that dwelling together with £40,000 to fund an Empty Homes Officer for an 18 months' pilot. Funding would be available from within the Council's Community Housing Fund allocation.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the Empty Homes Strategy 2019 – 2024 and associated documents for implementation and monitoring is approved.

(2) That, £200,000 of the Council's Community Led Housing Fund to resource option 3 as set out in paragraph 6 in the report now submitted, as the agreed option for resourcing the Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024.

(3) That a report is brought back to this Committee in 18 months' time reviewing the progress made in relation to the strategy.

POL.998      **FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL  
BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019 - 2024**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report asking Members to agree to the adoption of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan for the period 2019 – 2024. The area covers communities living within the parishes of Bentham, Clapam-cum-Newby, Austwick, Lawkland, Giggleswick, Rathmell and Wigglesworth.

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was managed by a statutory partnership of local authorities, landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, parish councils, and Government agencies who worked to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

A Joint Advisory Committee was responsible for strategic decision making and liaising with a wide range of interested organisations. Craven District Council was represented by Councillor Handley and Councillor Welch represented the County Council.

Following a period of formal consultation and taking into account the views of AONB partners and interested parties a draft Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 had been produced and Craven District Council along with other partner funding authorities and statutory agencies had been asked to give their final approval to the plan.

**RECOMMENDED** – That, the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024 is approved.

POL.999

**DEVELOPING THE NATURAL AIRE PROJECT (DNAIRE)**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report introducing the DNAire project which would improve the routes along the river Aire, improving the ecology of the area, reintroducing salmon to the river and developing new tourist assets. Members were also asked to approve funding to support the project's implementation. The return of Atlantic salmon would be enabled by building four fish passes to create a fish super highway from Leeds to Gargrave. This would open the way for salmon to migrate from the North Sea to Gargrave where they would spawn in the gravels. Ten 'Focus Points' would be created along the river connected by the Airedale Way along which people could follow the route of the migrating salmon. The Focus Points would be hubs for community engagement and the trails would boost visitor numbers into Craven bringing in income that would support the Craven hospitality and outdoor business sector.

The Council had developed an excellent relationship with the Environment Agency who had made a considerable investment in Skipton to alleviate flooding including the development of the Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme and the implementation of the Growth Deal Scheme to protect businesses on Engine Shed Lane from flooding.

The Environment Agency had asked for a contribution of £150,000 towards the project and it was proposed to utilise £125,000 from the New Homes Bonus and £25,000 from the Leeds – Liverpool Canal Public Art and Interpretation Project as a match funding contribution.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the scope of the DNAire project and related blue green infrastructure along the river Aire corridor is noted.

(2) That, £125,000 is made available from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support the Developing the Natural Aire Project (DNAire) Project.

(3) That, a supplementary estimate of £125,000 is included in the Council's capital budget for 2020/21 to be funded from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve.

(4) That, the Director of Services is given delegated authority to confirm the final agreement with the Environment Agency.

POL.1000

**LEEDS – LIVERPOOL CANAL – STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC ART AND HERITAGE INTERPRETATION**

The Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration submitted a report updating Members on the activity related to the improvement of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal corridor and presented proposals to enhance heritage and visitor interpretation along the canal.

The Council had worked jointly with the Canal and River Trust to develop and deliver improvements to accessibility along the canal towpath. Previous and planned activity was detailed in the report and Strategy attached to the report identified a planned coherent approach to delivering public art and

heritage interpretation along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal that would add value to the access improvements to land and water users in the Craven District.

As a result of the towpath improvement schemes and the Skipton Canal Waterfront project approximately £2.78m would be invested in infrastructure located to the canal in Craven by the end of 2019/20 with further investment anticipated in the missing sections such as the 3km stretch of towpath between Silsden to Kildwick. Craven District Council's investment to date was £225,000 and a further £100,000 from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve was requested to support measures designed to enhance heritage and visitor interpretation along the canal.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, progress with regard to the towpath improvement schemes in the District are noted.

(2) That, the proposal as detailed in the Strategy attached to the report now submitted, to deliver works to enhance heritage and visitor interpretation along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal in Craven is approved.

(3) That, subject to (2) above, delegated authority is given to the Director of Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Enterprising Craven to confirm delivery of the final works and agree arrangements for future ownership and maintenance.

(4) That, subject to (2) above, £100,000 is made available from the Council's new Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support measures that are designed to enhance the heritage and visitor interpretation along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal corridor.

(5) That, subject to (4) above, a supplementary estimate of £100,000 is included in the Council's capital budget for 2020/21 to be funded from the New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve.

Chairman