

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

6<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**Present** – The Chairman (Foster) and Councillors Brockbank, Dawson, Ireton, Jaquin, Lis, Madeley, Morrell, Mulligan, Rose, Solloway (substitute for Heseltine), Shuttleworth (substitute for Barrett) and Welch.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrett, Heseltine, Hull and Myers.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 7.25pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **Minutes for Report**

POL.906

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Graham Standring from the North Yorkshire Wildlife Trust explained that they were enthusiastic about leasing Mealbank Quarry, Ingleton from the Council. The Trust hoped that their expertise gained in managing other sites would help the project be a success and be of benefit to local residents and contribute to tourism in the area. The Trust was keen to involve local people in the project including the Scouts. Plans included repairing dry stone walling, erecting safety fencing, producing an events programme which would include guided walks. He informed Members that the site had within it a Hoffman Kiln of significant interest and was also very important for a particular species of butterfly.

Members asked questions of Mr Standring, following which, the Chairman thanked him for his presentation and wished the project every success.

POL.907

#### **TRANSFER OF LAND AT MEALBANK QUARRY, INGLETON**

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the transfer of land at Mealbank Quarry, Ingleton, to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust as a wildlife area under a long lease.

The Council's Asset Management Plan stated that the Council would continuously review its property portfolio and make disposals where liabilities or under-performing assets existed. In addition the Council would work with the community to transfer responsibility of assets to be managed locally where appropriate.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) had shown an interest in taking the bulk of the site that included the Hoffman Kiln and several other features. Most of the area was under an agricultural tenancy and the YWT confirmed that they were prepared to sustain this arrangement and would be held responsible for doing so.

The YWT wished to create a wildlife area for plants, birds and insects and retaining part of the area for agricultural grazing did not impinge upon their intention.

The existing site and buildings were potentially a significant maintenance liability and all future costs would be transferred solely to the YWT.

**Resolved** – (1) That, the lease of land at Mealbank Quarry, outlined red in Appendix A to the report now submitted, under a 50 year lease for the sum of £1.00 per annum is approved.

(2) That, the Director of Services is authorised to complete the transfer of land at Mealbank Quarry, Ingleton, land outlined red in Appendix A to the report now submitted, under a 50 year lease to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

### **Minutes for Decision**

POL.908

#### **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018-2019**

The HR Manager submitted a report seeking approval to implement a 2018/19 Pay Policy Statement in accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The statement articulated the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and the lowest paid employees. The relevant provisions in the Act ensured increased accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of pay and the statement would be published on the Council's website and considered annually by full Council.

**RECOMMENDED** – That, approval is given to implement the 2018/19 Pay Policy Statement as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted.

POL.909

#### **COUNCIL PLAN 2018-2021**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report presenting the Council Plan 2018/2021 for approval. The Plan set out the Council's agenda for improving service delivery to Craven's communities and organisational change. The Plan focussed on the Council's top priorities for improvement and set out the Council's vision for the next three years. It also detailed the actions and projects to be provided by the Council against the priorities in improving service delivery.

**RECOMMENDED** – Approve the Council Plan 2018/2021 and give delegated authority to the Chief Executive to:

- a) revise delivery mechanisms and amend timescales for delivery as necessary;
- b) agree performance indicators and associated targets that will be used to measure progress against the achievement of the priorities and objectives set out in the Plan.

POL.910

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

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report seeking approval for the 2018/19 capital programme, subject to there being sufficient capital resources.

Following a bidding process, the total capital expenditure of £3,163,840m proposed for 2018/19 included plant and equipment replacement programme, disabled facilities grant, Skipton Town Hall works, improving the connectivity of the Leeds-Liverpool canal and a replacement cremator. The programme included slippage from 2017/18 projects of £2,036m.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, £2,036,290 of continuing projects from the 2017/18 – 2020/21 programme is noted and no slippage is confirmed at this stage.

(2) That, new capital programme projects of £1,127,550 are approved.

(3) That, a total capital programme for 2018/19 of £3,163,840 is approved.

(4) That, the final allocation of funding for the 2018/19 capital programme is confirmed once the outturn position of the 2017/18 revenue budget is finalised.

POL.911 **REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/19 TO 2020/21**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report identifying a fully funded budget for 2018/19 together with recommending a prudent level of general fund reserve balances for the financial year. The report also outlined the medium term financial plan (MTFP) to 2020/21.

As the final settlement had not been confirmed, the 2018/19 budget was based on several budget assumptions and on the draft grant settlement announcement on 19 December 2017 which were expected to change little. As part of the announcement permission was given for Councils to increase their Council Tax by 2.99%, without triggering a referendum or £5 whichever was the greater. A £5 increase gave Craven a Council Tax of £167.21 at Band D.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that since the report had been circulated to Members, the final Government settlement had now been announced, but that the detailed information was still awaited. However, she did state that the Government were making available an additional £16m rural funding grant on top of the current £15m but how this would be distributed was not known.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer made a specific personal statement that the revenue budget as now submitted, was robust and would deliver a balanced budget in 2018/19.

During the ensuing debate, Members thanked the Chief Finance Officer and her team for all their hard work in producing a balanced budget.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the revenue budget assumptions, as detailed within the Chief Finance Officer's report are noted.

(2) That, the revenue budget for 2018/19 of £6,788,689 is approved.

(3) That, the schedule of growth bids of £128,980 as identified in Appendix C to the report now submitted are approved.

(4) That, the savings of £185,010 as identified in Appendix D to the report now submitted, are incorporated into the budget.

(5) That, a contribution from the New Homes Bonus Reserve of £100,000 is made to support the 2018/19 budget, in addition to £317,160 for approved projects, giving a total of £417,160.

(6) That, the assessment of the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves in Paragraph 10 and Appendix F of the report now submitted are approved.

(7) That, the estimated sum of £995,000 as identified as the General Fund Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 in Paragraph 10 and Appendix F of the report now submitted is approved.

(8) That, the Council Tax is increased at Band D by £5 to £167.21.

(9) That, the revenue budget incorporates the net contributions to/(from) earmarked reserves as detailed in tables 1 and 2, Paragraph 4.8, Appendix A and Appendix F (annex 1).

(10) That, should additional resources be available through the retained business rates scheme, a matching contribution to the business rates contingency reserve is made to mitigate against future uncertainties.

(11) That, the Section 25 report on the robustness of the budget contained at section 10 of the report and Appendix F is noted.

(12) That, the funding sources identified in the report and Appendix A now submitted are approved:

		£'000
a)	Revenue Support Grant	141
b)	Rural Services Grant	225
c)	Housing Grant	46
d)	New Homes Bonus	513
e)	Retained Business Rates	1,600
f)	Business Rates Collection Fund (Deficit)	(20)
g)	Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	98
h)	Council Tax	3,755
i)	Contribution from General Fund Balance	0
j)	Contributions (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	431
	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>6,789</b>

POL.912

**2018/19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY  
STATEMENT, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT  
AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report presenting for approval the proposed Treasury Management Strategy together with the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, Prudential Indicators and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19 as required by the Department of Communities and Local Government and CIPFA.

The Council was required to operate a balanced budget and part of treasury management was to ensure that cash flow was adequately planned with cash being available when needed. Surplus monies were invested in low risk counterparties with security of capital and liquidity of funds being considered before investment return. The counterparty lending limits enabled the Council to take full advantage of investment opportunities whilst maintaining a sufficient level of security of capital.

The strategy ensured that the required funding sources would be available to support the Council's capital spending plans and longer term cash flow planning was necessary to ensure capital spending obligations were met.

The strategy also determined the limits to borrowing and investments that officers would apply over the next 12 months in order to ensure the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Members were advised that changes to the CIPFA Code of Practice were currently being consulted upon and these were likely to be implemented for the 2019/20 financial year.

**RECOMMENDED** – (1) That, the operational boundary for 2018/19 is set at £10.5m.

(2) That, the authorised boundary for 2018/19 is set at £12.75m.

(3) That, delegated authority is given to the Strategic Manager – Financial Services to effect movement within the agreed authorised boundary limits for long-term borrowing for 2018/19 onwards.

(4) That, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2018/19, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Position Policy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy, is approved.

(5) That, the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19, which reflect that the capital expenditure plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, are approved.

Chairman