

POLICY COMMITTEE

3 March 2020

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brockbank, Heseltine, Madeley and Mulligan.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 8.18pm

Councillor Myers arrived at 6.33pm.

The minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 4th February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

POL.1053 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 3**
2019/2020

The Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) submitted a report advising Members of the revenue budget position of the Council, based on the quarter three review of income and expenditure to the end of December 2019.

The Council had a revised net revenue budget of £6,788,786 and based on the December budget monitoring exercise was a forecasted underspend of £116k for the financial year. However, the volatility of the Council's income streams could reduce the surplus to a deficit. The Chief Finance Officer's report highlighted the various departmental over/underspends against budget.

The Council had a general fund unallocated balance of £995k at 1 April 2019 and it was expected to remain at that figure during 2019/20. It was the Council's policy to maintain a prudent level to mitigate against the risk of unplanned movements from budgeted net expenditure levels and to cover for day to day cash flow variances.

Resolved – (1) That, the revenue budget position as at 31st December 2019 is noted.

(2) That, the latest position of the savings achieved this quarter and identified as green in Appendix B to the report now submitted, is noted and that these savings are transferred to an earmarked reserve for support to the 2020/21 budget and beyond.

(3) That, the draw on the planning reserve of £75,000 to contribute to the spend on agency staff within the service is noted.

(4) That, a sum of £10k will set aside from the in-year budget contingency to fund projects in support of the devolution agenda is noted. Further reports to Policy Committee are to be made as the agenda develops.

POL.1054 **QUARTER THREE CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**
REPORT – 2019/2020

The Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) submitted a report informing members of the Council's capital programme position, based on the quarter three review of income and expenditure to the end of December 2019.

Since the 2019/20 capital programme was agreed, supplementary estimates had been approved totalling £143k including £189k for the boundary signs project, and £125k awarded to the DNAire project, although £75k of that amount would be utilised in the 20/21 programme. In addition, a supplementary estimate of £2,920k had been requested for joint venture development projects.

The Chief Finance Officer's report emphasised the capital resources that were available for each project and reflected future receipts and programme costs.

Resolved – (1) That, the capital budget position of the 2019/20 capital programme as at the 31st December 2019 is noted.

(2) That, the 2019/20 capital programme and the proposed funding is noted.

POL.1055 **PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 3 –
2019/20**

The Chief Finance Officer (S151 officer) submitted a report presenting the Council's performance monitoring for quarter three 2019/20 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 the implementation of Council Plan actions. Twelve had been assessed as on target by those completing the updates. In relation to the eleven, Council Plan indicators, seven had targets and, of those three were failing to achieve their target and these related to the delivery of affordable homes, the number of businesses assisted to improve their performance and the Council's income and savings plan.

Resolved – That, the progress and outcomes achieved, are noted.

POL.1056 **LEEDS CREDIT UNION PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT –
PROJECT UPDATE**

The Director of Services submitted a report updating members on the progress of the Craven District Council and Leeds Credit Union partnership arrangement.

In October 2019, Policy Committee requested an update report in twelve months' time, particularly highlighting the number of accounts and loans opened/closed. The position in year five of the project at January 2020 (2019/20) was that there had been an 80% reduction in the average number of new members when compared with the period 2015/2018 and an 86% reduction in the average number of loans over the same period. For the first three years of the project a part-time development worker had been in post and the report indicated that not having a dedicated worker or resources during 2018/19 to date, the take up of new members/ accounts had been affected.

Whilst there had been a reduction in the numbers joining the credit union, it remained as a valuable resource for Craven residents who were not able to access high street banking facilities.

Resolved – That, the report is noted.

POL.1057 **DEVOLUTION**

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Members on recent development with regard to devolution. The single offer currently on the table from Government is a devolution deal based on the geography of North Yorkshire and York. This would result in the formation of a Mayoral Combined Authority. Government had made it clear that this would be the only deal to be offered and if councils

did not wish to pursue this then North Yorkshire, York and the Districts would go to the back of the queue and be told the type of deal they would receive when the devolution White Paper was brought into legislation. This was unlikely to be before 2023/24.

The formation of a Combined Authority would have to have the agreement of all the constituent councils and, if any council did not support the proposition, then the formation of the Combined Authority would, in effect be vetoed.

A briefing had been arranged for all Members at which the 'asks' that had been developed to date would be presented. The draft ambitions for York and North Yorkshire included:

- Britain's most desirable location
- England's first carbon negative region
- Space and ambition to grow
- A world leading agri-food and bio-renewable cluster
- Digitally transformed businesses.

Any decision on the 'asks' and whether Craven should or should not join the proposed Combined Authority would be taken by Full Council.

Resolved – (1) That, the report is noted.

(2) That, it is noted that a briefing session has been arranged for all Members on the 'asks' which are likely to be made of Government, on March 12th at 6.30pm in Belle Vue Square.

(3) That, the decision on the 'asks' and whether Craven should join any proposed Combined Authority, would be that of Full Council.

POL.1058

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report asking Members to appoint a second Member to represent the Council on the Strategic Partnering Board of the Joint Venture Company, Craven Barnfield Regeneration Limited.

The Council had been represented on the Board by two officers and one Member. One of the officers, the Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration had recently resigned from the Board and it was proposed that the vacancy was filled by a second suitably qualified Member.

Due to the size of the Council, it had become increasingly difficult to nominate an officer with the appropriate strategic expertise and whose role at the Council did not create an unacceptable conflict of interest. It was also considered that appointing a second Member to the Board would enhance political accountability.

Resolved – That, Councillor Staveley is appointed as a second Member to the Strategic Partnering Board of Craven Barnfield Regeneration Limited.

Minutes for Decision

POL.1059

MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY AMENDMENT 2019/20

The Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) submitted a report highlighting the outcome of a review of the current policy for minimum revenue provision (MRP) and presented a revised statement for 2019/20 for approval. Regulation required an annual charge in respect of outstanding capital debt liability, to be made. Local authorities were required to calculate a level of minimum revenue provision they considered to be prudent and a review had been undertaken by the Council's treasury

management advisers. As well as an independent assessment of the Council's capital financing requirement and MRP charged, the review suggested alternative options for the provision of MRP.

A revised MRP Policy Statement reflecting the outcome from the review was attached to the Chief Finance Officer's report and the recommended changes would support financial resilience in the medium term and in the longer term ensure that provision for debt was made in a sustainable way.

RECOMMENDED – That, the updated Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2019/20 onwards is approved.

POL.1060

CRAVEN HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2020-2023

The Director of Services submitted a report seeking approval for the Craven Housing Renewal Policy 2020-2023. The 2017/20 policy updated the range of direct financial assistance offered using the powers available within the Regulatory Reform Act in order to increase the Council's capacity to assist households through the provision of discretionary grants.

In consultation with North Yorkshire County Council, the changes were welcomed and resulted in speeding up the process and enabling wider access to financial assistance. The 2020/23 builds upon those improvements to achieve the following aims to:

- improve housing conditions across the District; and
- help people manage their own health and wellbeing and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

The above aims would be achieved by providing assistance through a combination of education and encouragement, direct and indirect financial assistance and taking enforcement action when it was appropriate to do so.

RECOMMENDED – (1) That, the Craven Housing Renewal Policy 2020-2023 is approved.

(2) That, delegated authority is given to the Director of Services, in consultation with the Lead Member, to make minor amendments and/or adjustments to the Craven Housing Renewal Policy to meet current or future requirements and in order to facilitate responses to revised priorities and/or funding opportunities.

(3) That, authority is given to place a notice in the local press stating the policy is in force in accordance with the conditions of the Regulatory Reform Order 2002.

Chairman