

SELECT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the Select Committee Annual Report for 2019-2020. We have had a successful year assisting in the review and development of policy and the scrutiny of Council decisions. I would like to thank all members and officers for their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work during the year.

Councillor David Staveley, Chairman of Select Committee

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Select Committee in 2019/20 comprised of the following Members:



David Staveley



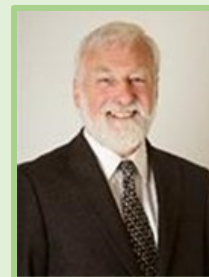
Andrew Brown



Chris Harbron



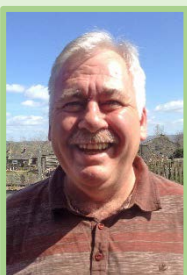
Wendy Hull



Eric Jaquin



Sue Metcalfe



Bill Mercer



Chris Moorby



David Pighills



Brian Shuttleworth



Alan Sutcliffe



Andrew Solloway

SUMMARY OF WORK AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Select Committee has continued its work in 2019-20 reviewing and developing policy in line with its work programme agreed in June 2019.

In July 2019, the Committee received an update on absence management, which included absence statistics for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Members queried the correlation between gaps in management and long term absence. The Committee agreed that a further report should be presented which included a breakdown of absence by service area and a more detailed breakdown of absence in Waste Management. It was also suggested that consideration be given to alternative solutions that may reduce long term absence. In February 2020 the half year position was presented to Members.

Members received an update in September 2019 on progress made against the recently introduced recommendation tracking template with a specific focus on Disabled Facilities Grants. Members agreed to review progress with a particular focus on the outstanding red status recommendations.

The urgency of the green theme had increased since the Council meeting in August 2019 when a Climate Emergency was unanimously declared. In response, the Committee received a report at the October meeting from the Lead Member for Greener Craven. Members noted the recent progress and supported the development of a strategic action plan. Members also highlighted the need to explore opportunities for Parish Councils to help fund tree planting, reducing the heating at the Council offices, strengthening planning requirements and increasing recycling awareness.

In November 2019, the Committee received performance updates from Bereavement Services together with an update on progress made against the business strategy.

The Committee also undertook a number of working groups sessions in 2019-20. One of the key areas of work was a review of Waste Management with a focus on lane end collections. It was recommended that Waste Management be added as formal consultee in relation to all major housing applications.

In relation to Members' IT, the Committee agreed that a more detailed report was required with a breakdown of costs. It was agreed to schedule a further working group session meeting to discuss options.

Review of Planning Enforcement and Building Control

Following public expressions of dissatisfaction with the Council's performance in relation to an increasing number of perceived breaches of planning consent conditions and cases of unauthorised development, a working group was set up with a brief to report back on the nature and extent of the identified issues and possible remedies.

A comprehensive report presented by the Planning Manager and the Planning Enforcement Officer reported the full extent of the problem, the range of ways in which the current situation had developed and the nature and effectiveness (and at times apparent ineffectiveness) of available remedies.

It was clear that planning enforcement had a high public prominence and that due to limited resources the current service was limited and re-active as opposed to an ideal pro-active nature.

Recommendations were drawn up, presented to and approved by the Committee, which concluded that the current staffing levels in planning enforcement were grossly inadequate and that, in addition to the need to appoint additional staff, an in-house training/apprenticeship function was needed to offer progressive training opportunities 'in house'. This would enable more junior staff to achieve levels of knowledge and experience to make a more positive contribution to the Council's overall planning service.

Towards the end of 2019/20, a report was submitted to Policy Committee. Implementation of the recommendations is currently delayed primarily due to the current (as this report was being penned) Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Brian Shuttleworth (Chair of Planning Enforcement and Building Control Working Group)

SELECT (CRIME AND DISORDER) COMMITTEE

In June 2019, the Committee received a presentation from Councillor Les, Chair of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel, providing an overview of the key work undertaken by the Panel. The Committee identified a number of key issues to be presented to the next Panel meeting. In particular, the Committee highlighted the need to review protocols associated with road closures on the A65 and the need for groups to work more closely together.

The Committee also received a presentation from Inspector Lorraine Crossman Smith in relation to local policing. The Committee considered the positive use of social media by local communities to share intelligence and address key issues. Members also identified a need to improve information and data presented to the Committee. A number of possible improvements were to be considered and reported back to a future Committee meeting.

The Committee also considered its response to the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Plan priorities and feedback on the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

In January 2020 the Committee received a presentation from Fiona Ancell, Road Safety Team Leader at North Yorkshire County Council. The Committee raised concerns about the Highway Authority process for reviewing planning applications and requested a further report back. It was also agreed that the issues be forwarded to the Executive Member for Transport at North Yorkshire County Council for a response.

Members were also provided with an update on a meeting organised by the local Ward Councillor in Upper Wharfedale, 'Challenges in Rural Crime'. The meeting was well attended by local residents and included representatives from the National Farmers Union (NFU) and Wharfedale Rural Watch. Also in attendance was the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Julia Mulligan, Sgt Stuart Grainger and PC Mick Carr from the Police Rural Task Force team, together with Sgt Paul Evans from North Yorkshire Police. The meeting highlighted the positive work of Wharfedale Rural Watch in local communities and discussed plans for its further development, particularly working more closely with the Police to provide intelligence to support them in successfully reducing crime in rural areas.

In addition, the Committee considered an update on local policing and a number of key matters were discussed. The Committee welcomed that a new Child Sexual Exploitation / Child Criminal Exploitation PCSO role was being trialled. The role was part of a commitment to Craven's Multi-Agency Child Exploitation group, which met monthly at North Yorkshire County Council. The Committee also supported the need for ensuring sufficient resources to make the role permanent.

MOVING FORWARD INTO 2020/21

In 2020/21 the Committee has a number of ongoing areas of work to finalise. In particular, the Committee will continue its review of Members' IT and convene working group sessions to agree a way forward.

The Committee may also need to consider the impact of Covid-19 on Council services. Recommendation tracking will also help support the Committee monitor progress against its recommendations and decide whether any further action is required.