

Community Services Committee

held at Ryedale House, Malton
on Thursday 23 July 2009

Present

Councillors Mrs Cowling (in the Chair) Mrs Frank, Hawkins, Hemesley, Hope, Mrs Keal, Knaggs and Woodward.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Observers: Councillors Cussons, Cottam and Raper

In Attendance

Mrs B Bennett, Mrs F Brown, J Brown, Mrs MA Jackson, R Etherington, Mrs E Hayes, J Rudd, Mrs C Slater.

Minutes

15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Arnold and Ms Warriner.

16 Minutes

The minutes of a meeting of the Community Services & Licensing Committee held on 11 June 2009 were presented.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 11 June 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Part A – Matters dealt with under delegated powers or matters determined by the Committee

17 Annual Report

Members considered a report which presented the Ryedale District Council Annual Report for 2008-09.

The Annual Report concluded the reporting in relation to the corporate Plan for 2006-09. It also presented a summary of the ambitions of the council and its clear strategic direction.

Resolved:

- (a) That the format and content of the Annual Report be agreed.

- (b) That the achievements against the priorities of the Corporate Plan for 2006-09 be noted.

Councillor Woodward asked that his vote of abstention be recorded, as the affordable housing target had not been met.

18 **Government Action to Prevent Repossessions and the Development of a Sub-Regional Action Plan**

Members considered a report which informed them of the wide range of proactive steps being taken by Government in an effort to reduce the impact of the present economic conditions and provided details of a proposed sub regional action plan to maximise the benefit of these initiatives.

The report summarised the key actions to prevent repossessions. It was noted that the mortgage rescue scheme had had a very limited impact locally, however, some of the financial criteria that had restricted eligibility had been relaxed. The Government had announced extra funding of £3.7m being paid to Local Authorities to help support the development of plans to tackle the threat of repossessions. In order to progress matters, there was general consensus amongst the County Homelessness Group that there were three key areas that needed to be addressed, namely improved communications, improved understanding and improved co-ordination. The report outlined a number of actions proposed to deliver those aims.

The recommendations to the Strategic Housing Board were outlined in the report.

Resolved:

That Members support for the Government initiatives be affirmed and that the proposals contained in the sub-regional action plan be endorsed

19 **Sub Regional Homelessness Strategy and Review of Ryedale's Action Plan 2009**

Members considered a report which updated them on progress made in the delivery of the North Yorkshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-12.

The report outlined progress made on the key objectives contained within the Sub Regional Strategy, being: Preventing Homelessness; Reducing the use of temporary accommodation and improving the standard of temporary accommodation used; tackling youth homelessness; providing housing support for homeless and vulnerable people, and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The report also outlined areas that needed to be addressed locally to meet the targets originally set in the Ryedale Action plan. Specific progress had been made in certain areas, but the report also outlined areas where progress needed

to be made.

The report concluded that the development and implementation of a Sub Regional Homelessness Strategy had been successful in promoting joint working across the County, and had contributed to the achievement of key service objectives and improvements in service delivery through the sharing of skills, expertise and knowledge. The specific areas of improvement had been identified and the Action Plan had been revised to achieve the objectives.

Resolved:

- (a) That progress made in the delivery of the strategy be noted;
- (b) That the key actions identified for 2009/10 be endorsed.

20 Housing – Performance Report

Members considered a report which informed them of the progress made against the Council's agreed Housing policies.

The report set out the strategic objectives, and progress made in individual areas.

Resolved:

That the report be endorsed.

Part B – Matters Referred to Council

21. Mortgage Rescue Scheme

Members considered a report that provided them with the main details of the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

The report outlined the background to the Scheme and developments that had taken place since the scheme went live in January 2009. It went on to explain the main objectives of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, the eligibility criteria and the application process.

The report outlined the role of Yorkshire Housing, the Zone Agents, which was to confirm the property valuation and agree the terms of the rescue.

One of the main obstacles for progressing the scheme was the level of debt secured against second or third charges, and whether lenders were willing to reduce or waive the charges. Another obstacle was the cap on property values of £140000, as although this had increased, it was still problematic in Ryedale. Funding from the HCA was only available to cover 55% of the property price with the balance coming from the zone agent.

A funding allocation of £200,000 had been made in the Capital Programme for this year. Due to the general ongoing effect of the economic downturn it was

only now that the demand for such assistance was starting to be felt. It was clear this was going to continue beyond the end of the current year, and if the Council's efforts to assist households were to have a meaningful impact it would be necessary to continue the scheme beyond the current financial year. It was proposed that the in year allocation of £200,000 be spread over two years, ie 09/10 and 2010/11. The report also outlined the need for a funding allocation of £10,000 per annum to ensure the necessary staff resource to deal with applications for assistance. In addition, access to specialist money advice had previously been provided through the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The CAB were unable to continue to provide this service due to a lack of funding, and the report recommended that £12,000 per annum be allocated from within the overall allocation of £200,000 to enable this service to continue.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:-

- (a) the principles of a local Mortgage Rescue Scheme designed to provide further support to the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- (b) That the overall funding allocation of £200,000 in the capital programme for 2009/10 be amended to cover the period 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- (c) A funding allocation of £12,000 per year be made to secure the services of a specialist Money Advice Worker and
- (d) A funding allocation of £10,000 per year be made to ensure that there were the necessary staff resources available in order to deal with applications for assistance through the scheme.

22 CO2 Performance and Targets

Members considered a report, which informed them of the performance to date on National Indicator 185, the percentage carbon dioxide reduction from local authority operations.

The Government had asked Local authorities to set a target for reducing CO2 emissions, and stated that authorities should be looking to reduce emissions by a 2% minimum per year. A joint reduction target for the North Yorkshire area was required to include NYCC, District Councils and National parks. Some authorities had stated they expected to exceed the 2% minimum but others had indicated they may struggle to meet it. The national parks were able to offer the largest percentage reductions whilst NYCC were offering the minimum.

So far as Ryedale District Council were concerned, it was estimated that a 5% reduction target could be possible over a 2 year period, realised by the replacement boiler programme for Pickering and Derwent Pools and Ryedale House. The report outlined the improvements that the Council had made to its buildings over the years, and warned that it would be increasingly difficult to realise further efficiencies without major refurbishment and investment. Officers

intended to carry out further work targeted at greening the vehicle fleet and aiming to reduce fleet mileage. Results for NI 194 would be automatically computed from data entered into the same spreadsheet used for calculating NI 185, utilising an incorporated add-on module.

Councillor Woodward proposed, and Councillor Mrs Cowling seconded an amendment, which added the words “a minimum of” before 2% and 3%. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve the target for reductions in Carbon Dioxide emissions for Ryedale District Council be a minimum of 2% in 2009/10 and a minimum of 3% in 2010/2011