

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXTERNAL COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny (External) Committee** held on **Tuesday, 15th March, 2016** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman

Vice Chairman Cllr Cloke

Cllr Cheadle
Cllr Jory
Cllr Leech
Cllr Pearce

Cllr Roberts
Cllr Sheldon
Cllr Watts

In attendance:

Councillors:
Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Parker
Cllr Sampson

Cllr Samuel
Cllr Sanders
Cllr Yelland

Officers:
Head of Paid Service
Specialists Manager
CoP Lead – Environmental Health
Lead Specialist – Place & Strategy

27. **Apologies for Absence**
***O&S(E) 27**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K Ball, P J Ridgers and B Stephens
28. **Confirmation of Minutes**
***O&S(E) 28**

The minutes of the Meeting held on 17 November 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29. **Declarations of Interest**

***O&S(E) 29**

Members and officers were asked to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there were none made.

30. **Public Forum**

***O&S(E) 30**

The Chairman informed that there had been no issues raised for this meeting in accordance with the Public Forum.

31. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

***O&S(E) 31**

The most recently published Hub Committee Forward Plan was presented for consideration. In introducing the Plan, the Chairman informed those present that the 'Income Generation Opportunities / Business Development Update' report, that was to be presented to the next Hub Committee meeting on 22 March 2016, was to be published under exempt cover.

32. **Our Plan**

O&S(E) 32

The Committee was presented with a report that recommended the adoption and publication of the West Devon Our Plan for the 2016/17 Financial Year.

In introducing the item, the Leader advised that the Plan would evolve and proceeded to emphasise the importance of the following statement in the draft Plan:

'Our Plan itself will need to flex and may require subsequent review – not least as the Local Plan progresses and reaches a stage when it is adopted and establishes the plan led basis to housing and employment development.'

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the reliance on external factors which could be detrimental to the local economy. Whilst it was recognised that commercial decisions were often made that were outside the control of the local authority, there was still a general acceptance of the need for the Council to try and stimulate the local economy;
- (b) the last round of consultation responses. It was confirmed that, following the most recent consultation exercise, 164 responses had been received that had generated a total of over 1,000 separate comments. These comments were now available on the Council website and were currently being evaluated by officers. The Panel noted that it was then intended that these would be referred to in the next version of the Local Plan presented to Members;

- (c) the draft Collaboration Agreement. The Leader informed that the draft Agreement (to establish the operation of the Joint Local Plan) was currently being reviewed and it was hoped that it would be signed by all partner authorities within the next few weeks;
- (d) the importance of qualitative measures. Members recognised the importance of both qualitative and quantitative measures being included in the Action Plan;
- (e) the establishment of the proposed WD/SH Economic Development Member Working Group. If ultimately approved by Council, it was envisaged that the Group would also be best placed to agree the key measures for the Delivery Plan;
- (f) neighbourhood planning groups. Officers recognised the difficulties and pressures facing these groups, particularly until the Joint Local Plan had progressed to the next stages.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Council that:

1. the progress on the 2015/16 Our Plan: Annual Activity Programme (appendix 1 of the presented agenda report refers) be noted;
2. the West Devon Our Plan (as outlined at appendix 2 of the presented agenda report) be adopted and published for the 2016/17 Financial Year as a document that:-
 - recognises West Devon Our Plan as the single comprehensive Council Plan;
 - restates the Council's Corporate Vision and Objectives;
 - establishes the common basis for the Council's Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan, Local Plan and all other Plans and Strategies;
 - establishes priorities for delivery, including a delivery plan commencing in 2016/17 (appendix 4 of the presented agenda report refers);
 - establishes mechanisms for delivery;
 - establishes engagement, monitoring and review procedures;
 - provides context for subsequent incorporation of the Local Plan element currently subject to separate preparation.

Subject to any amendments, which are to be delegated to the Lead Specialist – Place and Strategy, in consultation with the Leader of Council and the Hub Committee Lead Member for Strategic Planning.
3. a joint WD/SH Member Working Group be established to agree the scope and details of the economic development work; and
4. further work be undertaken to identify *Key Measures* for the 8 Our Plan themes that are clear expressions of the Councils intentions and which can be measured and readily promoted. Agreement of these to be delegated to the Lead Specialist – Place and Strategy, in consultation with the Leader of Council and the Hub Committee lead Member for Strategic Planning.

33. **Health and Wellbeing (Leisure) Procurement Update**

***O&S(E) 33**

A report was presented that provided a further update to the Committee on the Health and Wellbeing (Leisure) procurement exercise. This update was in response to a Committee request at its last meeting on 17 November 2015 (Minute *O&S(E) 23 refers).

In his introduction, the lead Hub Committee Member advised the Committee that:

- it was intended that a series of informal Member Briefings on the procurement exercise were to be arranged during late April and May 2016;
- the shortlist of bidders was to be selected at the joint SH/WD Board meeting to be held during the week commencing 21 March 2016;
- he was suggesting that it would be appropriate for a further update report to be considered at the next scheduled Committee meeting. Members confirmed their support for this proposal.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the progress of the procurement for Health and Wellbeing (Leisure) Services be noted; and
2. That a further update be presented to the first Committee meeting in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

34. **Update on Health and Wellbeing Work in 2015/16**

***O&S(E) 34**

The Committee considered a report that presented the annual update on Health and Wellbeing.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the Social Prescribing project. In providing more details, officers confirmed that it was proposed that one GP surgery in the West Devon area would be used for this project. Whilst a decision on the location of the surgery was still to be confirmed, Members hoped that the decision would be made based upon local need;
- (b) the Big Community Switch project. A Member expressed the view that the link between switching energy provider and Health and Wellbeing was rather tenuous. In reply, officers advised that the allocation had been made in line with the strict criteria imposed by Devon County Council (DCC). Some Members requested further information relating to this project and officers committed to sending this on to the Committee. As a general point, some Members emphasised the importance of encouraging residents to switch energy provider and felt that this needed to be communicated accordingly;
- (c) the impact of the loss of DCC funding. In recognising the role that this funding played in enabling these projects to be delivered, officers also

highlighted the wider work being undertaken that was aligned to the Health and Wellbeing agenda (e.g. the Leisure review). As a consequence, officers were confident that Health and Wellbeing was not necessarily solely a funding-led theme.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the update be received and it be recognised that Members have had the opportunity to comment on the work carried out by the Council and its partners in the area of Public Health and Wellbeing;
2. That the establishment of a Public Health Working Group be supported, with its remit being to identify and deliver actions under the Health and Wellbeing theme of the Our Plan Delivery Plan.

35. **Task and Finish Group Updates**
***O&S(E) 35**

(a) DCH Review Proposal

As an update, Members were advised that investigations into the merits of this proposal were still ongoing.

(b) Partnership Review

The Deputy Leader introduced this update and highlighted that:

- two joint meetings had been held to date, with a third (and hopefully final) meeting to be held on Wednesday, 16 March 2016;
- the number of Council Partnerships was extensive. In making this point, Members recognised the work being undertaken by the lead officers and therefore wished to put on record their gratitude;
- debate had taken place to define the Council's partnerships that were deemed 'significant'. The group had concluded that a significant partnership should be defined by one of the following criteria:
 - o being in receipt of a financial contribution from the Council amounting to at least £10,000 per annum; or
 - o taking up more than four days of officer time each calendar month.
- there had been a recognition of the need to reinforce the role of a Member appointed to serve on an Outside Body;
- the Group had given a clear steer of the need for the current Policy to be refreshed and the supporting guidance notes shortened;
- the importance of value for money provision had been a common thread throughout the Group's deliberations to date. In accepting this point, a non-Group Member did also wish to highlight that the reputation of the Council and community goodwill were equally important considerations; and
- it would be prudent for a letter to be sent to all partners advising them that there was potential future changes imminent to their funding arrangements.

36.

Committee Decisions Log

***O&S(E) 36**

The latest version of the Decisions Log was considered and welcomed by the Committee.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the significance of 'Our Plan'. In light of its importance, the Committee felt that 'Our Plan' should be a standing agenda item for the foreseeable future;
- (b) the lack of a response from NHS representatives. Officers assured the Committee that this matter would not be lost sight of and they would look at alternative methods of ensuring representatives were in attendance at a future Committee meeting.

Some Members proceeded to express their disappointment that the closure of the Ockment Centre, Okehampton had not been considered at a recent meeting between senior officers, the Leader and Mel Stride MP. However, it was agreed that the high level briefing notes that had been included on the agenda would be circulated with a future edition of the Members' Bulletin.

As the debate continued, the Leader felt it to be very unfortunate that a misleading article had recently appeared in the local press that had wrongly stated that a Council meeting had been held with Mr Stride. As a consequence, the Leader confirmed that he would speak to the Communications Team to look at the most appropriate means of rectifying this inaccuracy.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the published Decisions Log be noted.

The Meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
