

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held on **Tuesday, 17th July, 2018** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Sanders
Vice Chairman Cllr Samuel

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Oxborough
Cllr Leech

Cllr Jory
Cllr Sampson
Cllr Roberts

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Cann OBE
Cllr Evans
Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Yelland

Cllr Cheadle
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Pearce

Officers:

Group Manager – Customer First & Support Services
Group Manager – Commercial Services
Section 151 Officer
Commissioning Manager – Waste
CoP Lead – Housing, Revenues & Benefits
Specialist – Housing
Operational Manager Environmental Services

10. **Apologies for absence**

***HC 10**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mott.

11. **Declarations of Interest**

***HC 11**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and the following were made:

Cllr Jory abstained from the vote on Agenda Item 3: Items requiring Urgent Attention: Future Partnership Funding (Minute HC 12 below refers), as there was a reference made during the debate to Business Information Point and he had previously declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to this organisation. Whilst the recommendation did not directly relate to the funding of BIP, Cllr Jory remained in the meeting and abstained from the vote on this agenda item.

12. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**
HC 12

The Chairman advised that he had agreed for one item of urgent business to be presented, being a report on Partnership funding. The report was deemed urgent as partners had been advised that they would be made aware of their future funding following the Council meeting on 24 July 2018.

The Deputy Leader presented the report and asked that the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee also take part in the discussion on this item. A similar report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, setting out the recommendations of the Partnerships Task and Finish Group (Minute O&S 12(a) refers). However, those recommendations were not fully accepted by the Committee. The Deputy Leader expressed her views, and with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee went on to respond to questions.

During discussion, a Member proposed a revised recommendation, and this was seconded. Whilst accepting that a five year settlement would help partner organisations with financial planning, Members generally felt that it would not be appropriate for the Borough Council to be allocating funding amounts beyond 2019/20, particularly before the Medium Term Financial Strategy had been finalised. It was noted that this view had been shared by a majority of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members. Members also felt that those partnerships that had been defined during the review as either 'key' or 'statutory' should not be included, as the basis for their funding from the Borough Council was quite different to the discretionary partnerships.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that future partnership funding be set for 2019/20 only in line with the proposals outlined in the table at paragraph 3.1 below, with the exception of the four key partnerships being removed from the table as they should be considered separately to establish terms of reference, benefits arising and whether their funding should be allocated to a different funding stream (NB. These four partnerships being: Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum and World Heritage Site).

13. **Confirmation of Minutes**

***HC 13**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 24 April 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14. **Waste Procurement - verbal update - Cllr Sampson**

***HC 14**

(Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

The Lead Member for Commercial Services provided an exempt update to Members on the progress of the Waste Procurement project. A report would be presented to the full Council meeting next Tuesday, 24 July, 2018.

15. **Financial Stability Review Group - Notes - Cllr Jory**

***HC 15**

(Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

In accordance with the Council decision at its meeting on 27 March 2018 (Minute CM 73 refers) for updates to be included as a standing agenda item, the Lead Member for Assets and Environment presented Members with an exempt briefing note that updated the recent work of the Financial Stability Review Group.

16. **Medium Term Financial Position 2019/20 - Cllr Sanders**

***HC 16**

Members were presented with a report that set out the Council's Medium Term Financial Position over a rolling five year timeframe to 2023/24. This report represented a snapshot position statement, and future Member decisions on the budget strategy would inform figures within the Medium Term Financial Strategy to be presented to the Hub Committee on 11 September 2018.

The Leader presented the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Hub Committee:

1. notes the forecast budget gap for 2019/20 of £0.7 million and the position for future years;
2. notes the current options identified and timescales for closing the budget gap in 2019/20 and future years, to achieve long term financial sustainability; and
3. agrees to maintaining the current Council policy on the minimum level of unearmarked reserves being £750,000.

17. **Business Rates - Locally Administered Business Rate Relief Policy - Cllr Oxborough**
HC 17

Members were presented with a report that asked that they consider and recommend the policy to administer Year 2 of the four year funding agreement awarded by central Government, to support those who had seen an increase in their rates bill due to the 2017 revaluation exercise.

The Lead Member for Economy presented the report, and advised Members that the Council had been one of the first to publish their policy, which had successfully seen all funds distributed. Members noted their appreciation for the hard work of the officer who was responsible for the policy.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the Year 2 Locally Administered Business Rate Relief Policy.

18. **Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2018/19 - Cllr Leech**
***HC 18**

Members were presented with a report that set out a proposed Homelessness Strategy Action Plan for 2018/19, following completion of the review of the 2017/18 Action plan. Widespread consultation with partner organisations on the proposed action plan had been completed in April 2018 with 100% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed actions.

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing presented the report. Members praised the proactive nature of the Action Plan.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2018/19 be adopted with immediate effect.

19. **Public Toilet Review - Cllr Sampson**
***HC 19**

Members were presented with a report that asked Members to consider options for saving the £50,000 previously approved as part of the budget for 2019/20.

The Lead Member for Commercial Services presented the report. He confirmed that the report was not deciding on closures, but was about giving officers instruction on how to proceed. The published recommendation gave a number of options for consideration, and in introducing the report he proposed a revised recommendation that more clearly set out the purpose of the report.

During discussion, a number of Members had suggestions on ways to prevent public toilets being closed, such as sharing the responsibility with Town and Parish Councils. Members were concerned at the financial impact on Parish Councils of taking on the toilets, and the health and wellbeing implications of closing public toilets. The Lead

Member concluded the item by thanking Members for their comments and stated that a range of options that were tailored to the needs of different communities was likely.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve, and deliver efficiencies of £50,000 (or more) in 2019/20 from the overall public convenience service as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy through consideration of the following:
 - the provision of pay on entry systems (where pay back can be achieved on a capital spend within a reasonable period, depending on the choice of equipment)
 - closure of toilet facilities where adequate provision may be found within reasonable proximity or where footfall is not such as to justify continued provision
 - the transfer of toilet facilities to parishes or other partners where agreement can be reached to maintain service continuity
2. It is recommended that officers proceed on the basis of consideration of a combination of all the above options in order to achieve this, subject to seeking the authority of this Council to any closure(s) to be considered.

20.

Write Off Report - Cllr Edmonds
***HC 20**

The Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced a report that informed Members of the debt written off for revenue streams within the Revenue and Benefits service. Debts up to the value of £5,000 were written off by the s151 Officer under delegated authority. Permission was sought to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. in accordance with Financial Regulations, that the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £114,989.98 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 be noted; and
2. the write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £46,248.19, as detailed in Table 3 of the presented report, be approved.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HC 12 AND HC17 WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 24 JULY 2018, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM WEDNESDAY 25 JULY 2018 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 3.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
