

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 31st July, 2018 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Yelland
Vice Chairman Cllr Cheadle

Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Kimber
Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Sheldon

Cllr Evans
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Parker
Cllr Sellis

In attendance:
Councillors:

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Leech
Cllr Oxborough

Cllr Lamb
Cllr Mott
Cllr Sampson

Officers:
Head of Paid Service
Senior Specialist – Commercial Services
Specialist – Performance & Intelligence

16. **Apologies for Absence**

***O&S 16**

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs D W Cloke, J R McInnes, J B Moody and P J Ridgers.

17. **Confirmation of Minutes**

***O&S 17**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 June 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

18. **Declarations of Interest**
***O&S 18**
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there were none made.
19. **Public Forum**
***O&S 19**
There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session at this meeting.
20. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**
***O&S 20**
During consideration of the most recently published Hub Committee Forward Plan, the Committee made reference to:-
- (a) the intention for an additional agenda item entitled: 'Commercial Property Acquisition Strategy Update' to be added to the Forward Plan for consideration at the Hub Committee meeting on 11 September 2018;
 - (b) the number of particularly significant agenda items that were scheduled for consideration at the Hub Committee meeting on 11 September 2018. In noting the contents of the Plan, Members expressed their concerns over the likely size of the next Hub Committee meeting agenda. As a consequence, the Committee requested that the Chairman contact the Leader of the Council to relay these concerns;
 - (c) the Tamar Valley AONB Management Plan Review 2019-24. With regard to the proposal for this Review to be presented to the Hub Committee meeting on 11 September 2018, a Member advised that she had already received a copy of the draft version of the Plan. In commending its content, the Member was of the view that the wider membership should also be in receipt of a copy before its presentation to the Hub Committee. Such was its linkages to the Joint Local Plan (JLP) that a Member also felt that the JLP Joint Steering Group should be given the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan prior to its adoption.
21. **Update Report on Garden Waste Service**
***O&S 21**
Members considered a report that provided an update on the garden waste service that had now been in operation for a twelve month period.
- In presenting the report, the lead Hub Committee Member advised that the Waste Working Group was actively looking at methods of promoting the service to increase resident uptake.
- During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In response to a question, it was confirmed that trend analysis did not indicate any significant increases in cases of fly tipping in the Borough since the charging scheme had been in place;
- (b) Following the most recent waste analysis exercise, officers advised that there was no significant evidence of green waste being placed with residual waste. However, the Committee was advised that there was a number of instances of food waste being placed with residual waste and Members acknowledged the need for this to be addressed;
- (c) Due to the particularly dry and warm weather this year, Members noted that it was difficult to obtain an accurate assessment of how successful the first year of this scheme had been;
- (d) Some Members expressed their regret that the wider membership had delayed the initial decision to implement this scheme. As a consequence, this delay had resulted in a negative financial impact that the Council could ill afford at this time;
- (e) With regard to the £40 annual subscription charge, the Committee was informed that this was broadly consistent with the fees applied by other local authorities who provided a similar service. Members proceeded to confirm their belief that a £40 annual charge remained appropriate for the service;
- (f) Whilst accepting that there would be some complexities, some Members were of the view that uptake in the service would be increased if residents could sign up to the scheme anytime throughout the year. In reply, it was agreed that the Waste Working Group would look into this matter in more detail at a future meeting.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the contents of the update report and the views of the Committee (as outlined in the minutes above) be noted.

22. **Exclusion of Public and Press**
***O&S 22**

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

23. **Financial Stability Working Group: Progress Update**

***O&S 23**

The Committee considered an exempt Briefing Note that had also been presented to the Hub Committee meeting on 17 July 2018 for consideration (Minute *HC 15 refers).

In discussion, the Committee welcomed the update and wished to put on record its thanks to the lead officers and Members of the Review Group for the progress that was being made.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the contents of the Briefing Paper be received and noted.

24. **Re-admittance of Public and Press**

***O&S 24**

RESOLVED

That the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting.

25. **Economy Working Group - Verbal Update**

***O&S 25**

In his introduction, the lead Hub Committee Member for Economy highlighted some of the challenges that were preventing the Working Group from making real progress. To overcome these challenges, the lead Member was strongly of the view that there was a need for some form of officer resource to be available in order to support the economic development agenda.

During the ensuing debate, the following points were made:-

(a) A number of Committee Members supported the views of the lead Member and recognised that Enterprise and '*creating places for enterprise to thrive and businesses to grow*' was a recently adopted Corporate Strategy Theme by the Council. Having been informed that any additional resource was likely to be a further budget pressure for the Council, it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that:

1. The Economy Working Group be asked to produce a paper for consideration at a future Hub Committee meeting that indicates the requirements for a dedicated officer resource; and
2. With this information and, in preparation of the draft 2019/20 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, consideration be given to providing sufficient officer resource to support the local economy and the Corporate Strategy Theme relating to Enterprise.

When put to the vote, this proposal was declared **CARRIED**.

- (b) The Committee noted that one of the areas of focus for the Peer Review Team that was visiting the Council to undertake a review in September 2018 was to be on economic regeneration;
- (c) Some Members regretted the fact that Business Rates did not link in any shape or form to the actual performance of a business and felt that this was a shortcoming that needed to be addressed by Central Government. As a way forward, it was suggested that a Member may wish to submit a motion to this effect for consideration at a future Council meeting.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the Economy Working Group be asked to produce a paper for consideration at a future Hub Committee meeting that indicates the requirements for a dedicated officer resource; and
2. With this information and, in preparation of the draft 2019/20 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, consideration be given to providing sufficient officer resource to support the local economy and the Corporate Strategy Theme relating to Enterprise.

26. **Quarter 1 Performance Measures**

***O&S 26**

The Committee considered a paper that presented the performance measures for Quarter 1.

By way of an introduction, the lead Hub Committee Member made reference to his review into both the performance measures reported and the appropriateness of the targets that were aligned to these measures. In so doing, the Member advised that it was his intention for the findings of this review to be presented to a meeting of the Committee in the autumn. For clarity, the lead Member confirmed that this review would include the design, format and layout of the measures and Members were encouraged to share their views with the lead Member before the findings were presented.

In the ensuing debate, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) planning enforcement cases. The Committee welcomed the performance trend whereby the number of cases closed during June 2018 had exceeded the number of new cases received. Some Members highlighted the effectiveness of the recent sessions with local ward Members during which it had been agreed that a number of historical cases should no longer be pursued. It was felt that such ongoing dialogue between officers and local Members was critical to ensure that this positive trend continued;

- (b) accessing the latest information on the performance dashboards. Some concerns were raised that officers were not regularly updating the dashboard information and it was therefore requested that officers follow up on this point outside of this Committee meeting.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the performance levels against target communicated in the Balanced Scorecard and the performance figures supplied in the background and the exception report be noted.

27. Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item

***O&S 27**

By way of an update, one of the Joint Steering Group (JSG) Members advised the Committee that:-

- Due to illness and unavailability, it was noted that there had been a further delay in the receipt of the interim findings from the Examination in Public. It was now hoped that the report would be received during mid-August; and
- In respect of a meeting that was taking place at this current time in Plymouth that related to a potential Marine Park, it was hoped that those officers and Members who were in attendance would provide feedback to the wider membership.

28. Task and Finish Group Updates (If any)

***O&S 28**

(a) Partnership Funding Review

Since a decision had now been made by the Council at its meeting on 26 July 2018 (Minute CM 24 cii refers), the Committee agreed that the Partnership Funding Review Task and Finish Group should now be formally disbanded.

29. Rural Broadband Working Group Update (if any)

***O&S 29**

During the update, reference was made to:-

- (a) the invite having been extended to the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme Manager to attend a future Committee meeting. The Committee was of the view that, in the event of its future meeting dates not being convenient for the Programme Manager to attend, then an alternative date should be sought with this matter being considered at an all Member Briefing instead;
- (b) a useful report that had been produced that illustrated the linkages between the positive impact on the Cornish Economy and the increased Superfast Broadband provision in the county. It was agreed that the Vice-Chairman would share the contents of this

report with the Council's representative on the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme Board.

30. **Annual Work Programme 2017/18**

***O&S 30**

The Chairman introduced the latest version of the Work Programme for the next 12 months.

In discussion, it was agreed that:

- (a) the Work Programme would in the future include the relevant lead Hub Committee Member alongside each item; and
- (b) the Vice-Chairman would prepare a Scrutiny Proposal Form for further consideration on a particular issue that would seek to ensure that the Council had obtained value for money from a recent Consultants' report.

31. **Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this Meeting**

***O&S 31**

In discussion, the Committee was reminded of the contacts details for the recently appointed Member IT Support Officer and Members were urged to utilise his expertise.

In addition, Members were encouraged to discuss their thoughts on the Performance Measures review with the lead Hub Committee Member before the findings of this exercise were presented to the Committee in the autumn.

The Meeting concluded at 3.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
