

# West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>														
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, 15th January, 2019</b>														
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00 pm</b>														
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Chamber - Kilworthy Park</b>														
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Cllr Yelland <b>Vice Chairman</b> Cllr Cheadle</p> <p><i>Members:</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Cllr Baldwin</td> <td>Cllr Musgrave</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Cloke</td> <td>Cllr Parker</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Evans</td> <td>Cllr Pearce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Kimber</td> <td>Cllr Ridgers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr McInnes</td> <td>Cllr Sellis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Moody</td> <td>Cllr Sheldon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Moyse</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Musgrave	Cllr Cloke	Cllr Parker	Cllr Evans	Cllr Pearce	Cllr Kimber	Cllr Ridgers	Cllr McInnes	Cllr Sellis	Cllr Moody	Cllr Sheldon	Cllr Moyse	
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Cllr Moyse															
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.														
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	Member.Services@swdevon.gov.uk														

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Confirmation of Minutes** **1 - 12**  
Committee Meeting held on 6 November 2018
- 3. Declarations of Interest**  
Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.  
  
If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.
- 4. Items Requiring Urgent Attention**  
To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the Meeting as matters of urgency
- 5. Public Forum** **13 - 14**  
A period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public.
- 6. Hub Committee Forward Plan** **15 - 20**  
  
If any Member seeks further clarity, or wishes to raise issues regarding any future Hub Committee agenda item, please contact Member Services before **12 noon on Friday, 11 January 2019** to ensure that the lead officer(s) are aware of this request in advance of the meeting.
- 7. Devon Building Control Partnership Update** **21 - 34**
- 8. Budget Proposals 2019-20 Onwards Update** **35 - 60**
- 9. Corporate Strategy Key Performance Indicators** **61 - 68**
- 10. Customer Satisfaction Progress Update: Standing Agenda Item**

- 11. Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item**
- 12. Task and Finish Group Updates: 69 - 80**
- (a) Northern Link Area Outreach Services
- 13. Annual Work Programme 2018/19 81 - 82**
- 14. Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this Meeting**

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, tape format, other languages or alternative format upon request. Please contact the Committee section on 01822 813662 or email [darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk)

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# Agenda Item 2

At a Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **6<sup>th</sup>** day of **NOVEMBER 2018** at **2.00 pm**.

**Present:** Cllr J Yelland – Chairman  
Cllr R Cheadle – Vice-Chairman

Cllr R E Baldwin	Cllr D W Cloke
Cllr J Evans	Cllr P Kimber
Cllr J B Moody	Cllr D E Moyse
Cllr C R Musgrave	Cllr G Parker
Cllr T G Pearce	Cllr P J Ridgers
Cllr D K A Sellis	Cllr J Sheldon

Group Manager – Customer First and Support Services  
Group Manager – Business Development  
Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Section 151 Officer  
Commissioning Manager  
COP Lead – Environment Services  
Case Management Manager  
Localities Team Leader  
Senior Specialist – Democratic Services

**Also in Attendance:** Cllrs W G Cann OBE, M Davies, C Edmonds, B Lamb, A F Leech, C Mott, A Roberts, R F D Sampson and P R Sanders

- \* **O&S 58**     **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
An apology for absence for this meeting was received from Cllr J R McInnes.
- \* **O&S 59**     **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**  
The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 October 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.
- \* **O&S 60**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting. These were recorded as follows:  
  
Cllr T G Pearce declared a personal interest in agenda item 6: 'Scrutiny Call-in: Minute HC 39 – Public Conveniences: Clarification for Parishes' (Minute \* O&S 62 below refers) by virtue of being the Acting Chairman of

Brentor Parish Council and remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote thereon.

**\* O&S 61 PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session.

**\* O&S 62 SCRUTINY CALL-IN: MINUTE 'HC 39 – PUBLIC CONVENIENCES: CLARIFICATION FOR PARISHES'**

The Chairman introduced this agenda item and highlighted that, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, three Members of the Committee had invoked a Call-in on Hub Committee Minute HC 39 'Public Conveniences: Clarification for Parishes'.

Upon the conclusion of the debate on the Call-in, the Chairman advised that there would be three options available to the Committee. These were:

1. that the Committee was content with the original Hub Committee resolution and the decision would therefore take immediate effect;
2. that the Committee refer the decision back to the next Hub Committee meeting (on 20 November 2018) for further consideration; and
3. that the Committee opt to refer the decision to the next full Council meeting (on 4 December 2018).

At this point, the Chairman invited the three signatories of the Call-in to explain their reasoning behind this decision. In so doing, the key focus of their concerns related to the belief that the process that had been undertaken to reach this Hub Committee decision had been deeply flawed and had been handled really poorly. In expanding upon their process related concerns, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) non-Hub Committee Members having effectively been bypassed throughout the decision-making process. For such a key issue, the Members felt that this decision should have been referenced up to the full Council for an ultimate decision;
- (b) the justification for the speed of the decision being to enable town and parish councils to set their annual precepts accordingly being a weak argument. Furthermore, this speed had been to the detriment of an open and transparent decision-making process;
- (c) clarification being sought over exactly when the decision was taken to bring the report forward from the Hub Committee meeting on 20 November 2018 to the meeting on 16 October 2018;
- (d) recommendation 2 (i.e. that the 75% contribution from town and parish councils be increased over three years to the point where full costs were covered by them). In citing Brentor Parish Council as an example, the

local Ward Member highlighted that consultation meetings had been carried out prior to the Hub Committee meeting. However, neither he nor the local Parish Council had been made aware of this proposal during these meetings or before the report had been published with the Hub Committee meeting agenda. The Member advised that this had created a great deal of ill-feeling and resentment amongst the Parish Council;

- (e) the lack of reference in the Hub Committee agenda report to the impact of Discretionary Business Rate Relief; and
- (f) the lack of any mention of these proposals at the all Member Budget Workshop that had been held on 8 October 2018.

The Chairman then proceeded to invite the lead Hub Committee Member for Commercial Services to respond to the concerns raised. During which, the lead Member informed that:-

- the speed of the decision had been largely determined by the town and parish councils themselves seeking clarification at the earliest opportunity;
- there was absolutely no intention to bypass the wider membership;
- there had been a number of Member meetings during which the principle of this matter had been discussed, including an opportunity at the full Council meeting on 25 September 2018 during consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Minute CM 33 refers);
- the feedback from the town and parish councils had been generally understanding. In reply to a question, the lead Member did inform that, since the Hub Committee had taken its decision, one parish council had formally declined the offer;
- the proposals had been generated as a means to achieve the necessary £50,000 savings that had been approved by the Council at its Budget meeting on 20 February 2018 (Minute CM 57 refers).

The Section 151 Officer was also invited to respond and confirmed that Public Conveniences had been part of the documentation for the Budget Workshop that had been sent to all Members.

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

- (a) For clarity, the Committee noted that these proposals only related to rural parishes;
- (b) In agreement with the experiences of Brentor Parish Council, another Member highlighted the consultation meetings held with representatives of Buckland Monachorum Parish Council. The Member stated that it was his understanding that further dialogue would take place between the two councils before any decision was taken. However, no further

dialogue had been undertaken prior to the Hub Committee making its decision;

- (c) Notwithstanding the decision of the Council to obtain £50,000 of savings, a Member retained the view that any public conveniences closures would be to the detriment of the local economy and the tourism industry;
- (d) A Member expressed the view that there were instances of locally managed public conveniences that were run both effectively and efficiently;
- (e) To improve communication links between the Hub Committee and the wider membership, a Member again made the request for lead Members to provide (and circulate) regular brief written update reports from their portfolio areas to all Members;
- (f) A number of Members expressed sympathy with the process concerns that had been highlighted. That being said, these Members also stressed the extent of the ongoing budgetary pressures being faced by the Council and, whilst the Council had already set a target of £50,000 savings to be made in the service, unfortunately, there had been no alternative suggestions made to deliver these savings. As a consequence, these Members each expressed their support for the original Hub Committee decision and the following motion was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**:-

*‘That the Committee expresses its concern and dissatisfaction over the process adhered to yet does endorse the decision arising from Hub Committee Minute HC 39: ‘Public Conveniences: Clarification for Parishes’.*

Such were the extent of his governance concerns, that a Member **PROPOSED** an alternative recommendation as follows:-

*‘That the 75% contribution be increased annually in line with inflation.’*

However, this alternative recommendation was not seconded.

Prior to the vote on the motion, some Members requested that a recorded vote be undertaken in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19. However, when expressions of interest were sought, there was an insufficient number of Members who supported a recorded vote.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee expresses its concern and dissatisfaction over the process adhered to yet does endorse the decision arising from Hub Committee Minute HC 39: 'Public Conveniences: Clarification for Parishes'.

**\* O&S 63 HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

Members considered the latest version of the Hub Committee Forward Plan. In so doing, the following points were made:-

- (a) Officers advised that two additional items had been added to the Plan for consideration at the next Hub Committee meeting on 20 November 2018. These items were: 'Heart of the South West Joint Committee Update' and 'Supporting the Formation of South West Mutual' and it was confirmed that both would also be presented as standalone agenda items to the Council meeting on 4 December 2018;
- (b) The Panel noted that the agenda item titled: 'Council Tax Reduction New Scheme' had been deferred to the Hub Committee meeting on 4 December 2018;
- (c) To avoid any future confusion, a Member asked that the column titled 'Service' be re-named 'Portfolio Area' on the published Plan.

**O&S 64 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

The Committee considered a report that presented the outcome of the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey that had been undertaken by the Council and recommended next steps to improve the Council's performance.

In her introduction, the lead Hub Committee Member advised that, once approved, it was her hope that the Customer Satisfaction Action Plan would become a standing agenda item at future meetings of the Hub Committee. In addition, the lead Member also informed that the ambition would be to over achieve on the proposed targets and she highlighted the opportunity for the Committee to undertake detailed reviews into individual and collective elements of the Action Plan.

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

- (a) the cost of the recent staff away days that focused on Customer Satisfaction. Having been informed that the recent all staff away days had cost a combined £7,500 for both councils, some Members felt that, given the current financial pressures being faced by the Council, this was excessive. However, other Members were of the view that the spend was justifiable if it resulted in improvements in the Council's Customer Service performance. A Member did question the need to facilitate a staff training event off-site and requested that, in the future, consideration be given to using Kilworthy Park for such sessions;

- (b) the draft Customer Service Standards. To ensure that these Standards were reflected in the Council's Performance Indicators, it was agreed that this would be discussed at the meeting of the Task and Finish Group that was to be held on 7 November 2018;
- (c) reviewing the Standards. In light of some concerns over the proposed Standards, the Committee recognised that they would evolve and be subject to regular review;
- (d) the impressions of Members. Based upon their current caseload, it was the impression of some Members that the Survey was accurate and the Council had significant strides to make in terms of its Customer Satisfaction levels. As a consequence, these Members were of the view that this impression was not sufficiently borne out in the published agenda report. In response to a specific question, officers gave a categorical assurance that the results of the survey were consistent across both the Council and South Hams District Council;

In conclusion, the majority of Members welcomed the direction of travel outlined in the presented agenda report and recognised the corporate commitment and emphasis that was being given to improving Customer Satisfaction.

It was then:

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Hub Committee be **RECOMMENDED** that:-

1. the results from the Council's recent Customer Satisfaction Survey be noted and the proposed actions (as detailed in Section 5 of the presented agenda report) be endorsed;
2. the proposed Customer Service Standards (as detailed in Appendix D of the presented agenda report) be supported; and
3. the Forward Plan be amended to include 'Progress Against the Customer Service Action Plan' as a standing agenda item for consideration at every meeting of the Hub Committee.

\* O&S 65

### **LOCALITIES TEAM UPDATE**

The Committee considered a progress report that outlined how the Localities Service had been operating in the previous twelve months. The report also set out how the Service had evolved from its initial inception in 2015.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) By way of an update, officers confirmed that the new mobile technology had been successfully trialled and, whilst there still remained a few black spots in the Borough, overall coverage was much improved;
- (b) A number of Members expressed their support for the Service and some questioned whether it was adequately resourced to be able to meet increased demands. In reply, the Localities Team Leader reported that the Service had dealt with 400% more issues in comparison to the previous year and, whilst the Team was very busy, he was confident that the Service was appropriately resourced. Despite these reassurances, some Members still wished to express their concerns over the work demands on the Team;
- (c) With regard to the support provided by the Development Management service, it was confirmed that the Service had affixed 1,550 planning notices and continued to take on-site photographs;
- (d) The Committee was informed that, as a reactive service, the Team was always open to Member suggestions over its work priorities. In response to this point, some Members were of the view that there was a need for consideration to be given to an increased visibility and presence in those areas that were seeing repeated instances of dog fouling.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That, pending ongoing monitoring, the progress of the Locality Team be noted, with a further update report being presented to the Committee in twelve months.

**\* O&S 66 OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2018**

The Committee was presented with a report that sought to review the Annual Letter 2018 from the Ombudsman. In addition, the report asked for consideration to be given to any corporate lessons that have been learnt (or could be learnt) from the outcome of the complaints and whether further service improvements could be made.

In discussion, a number of Members welcomed the performance improvements in complaint handling that were felt to reflect the increased corporate emphasis that had been given to complaint management. In addition, Members were also assured that the Council was reviewing (and taking learning points) from each complaint received.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Ombudsman Annual Review Letter for 2018, as presented at Appendix A, be reviewed, corporate lessons learnt and whether service improvements are required had been considered.

**O&S 67      GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY UPDATE**

Members considered a report that sought to approve an amended Data Protection Policy.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Committee acknowledged the excellent work that was being undertaken by the Council's Information Governance Group;
- (b) In respect of occasions when forwarding emails that had been received from a resident, officers advised that it would be good practice for Members to obtain consent from their constituents before they share their details with Council officers and that Members should not share information about constituents (including their personal details) with fellow Members without obtaining consent;
- (c) A Member expressed his concern that the Committee should not be tasked with reviewing Policy and that this had been reflected in the most recently adopted revisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference. In response, this point was acknowledged, but it was also confirmed that this agenda item had been scheduled for consideration (and was ultimately approved) by the Committee when it had adopted its most recent Work Programme.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

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

1. approve the amended Data Protection Policy (as detailed in Appendix A of the presented agenda report);
2. delegate approval of the related Codes of Practice and Protocol documents (as summarised in Section 3 of the presented agenda report) to the Council's Data Protection Officer; and
3. note and support the approach and progress made towards GDPR readiness by the Information Governance Group.

**O&S 68      REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) 2000 POLICY AND UPDATE**

A report was considered that sought to:

- review and approve the Council's RIPA Policy;
- provided an update on the use of RIPA; and
- report on training for Officers.

In discussion, the previously raised points relating to the appropriateness of this Policy report being presented to the Committee for consideration were noted. In taking this view a step further, a Member asked that, for next year, this matter be presented to the Hub Committee for its consideration as opposed to this Committee.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

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

1. the IPCO (Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office) report and recommendations (as attached at Appendix A) be noted;
2. the updated policy (as attached at Appendix B) be approved;
3. it be noted that there have been no RIPA Authorisations since the annual update to the Committee in September 2017; and
4. the amendments to the RIPA Act 2000 (effective from 1 November 2018) be noted.

## **O&S 69**

### **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The Lead Member for Support Services presented a report that set out the performance levels against target as communicated in the Balanced Scorecard and the performance figures supplied in the presented background and the exception report.

In conjunction with the presented agenda report, the Specialist – Performance and Intelligence conducted a presentation that outlined to the Committee the proposed revisions to the performance dashboards. In so doing, the officer asked that, in the event of any Members experiencing access difficulties, he be made aware of these problems outside of this meeting.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the general positivity of the measures. Members highlighted the customer satisfaction survey results (which had been considered earlier in this meeting) and felt that these suggested a disconnect between the perception of customers and the performance information being

reported. In accepting the point, it was noted that this would be a key consideration for the Corporate Strategy Performance Measures Task and Finish Group review that was about to commence;

- (b) access to performance information. Some Members stated that, in comparison to when they were first elected in May 2015, it was now much easier for Members to obtain and access performance information. As a result, these Members wished to put on record their thanks to the lead officer and lead Hub Committee Member for their work to reach this point.

## **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.

## **O&S 70 FINANCIAL STABILITY WORKING GROUP UPDATE: STANDING AGENDA ITEM**

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Section 151 Officer provided the following statement on behalf of the Chairman of the Working Group:

*‘Two very informative and useful budget workshops have been organised recently. These have been both well received and productive.*

*The Group met on 16 October 2018 to discuss the implications and to pull together projections and forecasts following those meetings.*

*The current assumption of the Working Group is that, assuming:*

- 1. All of the potential income and savings identified to date and, added to during the workshop, can be delivered; and*
- 2. No major unforeseen cost pressures develop.*

*The Council should be in a position to contribute to Reserves (£50,000) in the current financial year and should be able to produce at least a balanced Budget in 2019/20.*

*The position following that is less clear, but is manageable with good financial control and continued emphasis on adopting a commercial approach and generating income.*

*One key aspect of the future position is the Government’s view about the negative Revenue Support Grant. This element constitutes a major cost to the Council in the period from 2020 onwards and its removal would go a long way towards balancing the books in 2020/21. The Council, and all*

*Members, should maintain pressure on the Government and our MPs in this respect.*

*The next piece of the jigsaw that we await is the settlement figures due in December 2018 and the position will become much clearer once they are known. In the meantime, the FSG will concentrate on ensuring that savings and income identified to date are monitored and secured.'*

**\* O&S 71      JOINT LOCAL PLAN: STANDING AGENDA ITEM**

By way of an update, the lead Hub Committee Member advised that:

- the Council was in the midst of the consultation exercise on the modifications to the Joint Local Plan (JLP);
- 16 Members had attended the recent Workshop held on 31 October 2018. In addition, the Committee was reminded that a further JLP Workshop had been scheduled to take place on 13 November 2018 and all Members were encouraged to attend this session;
- the drafting of a Development Planning Document on Settlement Boundaries was making good progress and Members were asked to keep a close watching brief over how this evolved.

**\* O&S 72      TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES**

**(a) Northern Link Area Outreach Services**

By way of an update, it was noted that the first Group meeting would be taking place on the rising of this Committee meeting.

**(b) Corporate Strategy Performance Measures**

It was noted that the Group would be holding its inaugural meeting on 7 November 2018.

**\* O&S 73      ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

The Chairman introduced the latest version of the Work Programme for the next 12 months and noted its content without any further debate.

**\* O&S 74      MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

In discussion, the Committee requested that:

- there was a number of lessons that should be learned from the earlier Call-in (\* O&S 62 above refers);
- a Member Drop-in Session should be set up for the General Data Protection Regulations;
- as good practice, officers who were intending to undertake presentations to Member meetings should test the equipment before the meeting started.

(The meeting terminated at 4.55 pm)

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Chairman

## **PUBLIC FORUM PROCEDURES**

### **(a) General**

Members of the public may raise issues and ask questions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This session will last for up to fifteen minutes at the beginning of each meeting, with any individual speaker having a maximum of three minutes to address the Committee.

### **(b) Notice of Questions**

An issue or question may only be raised by a member of the public provided that they have given written notice (which may be by electronic mail) to Darryl White ([darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk)) by 5.00pm on the Thursday, prior to the relevant meeting.

### **(c) Scope of Questions**

An issue may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if:

- it relates to a matter within the functions of the Planning and Licensing Committee;
- it is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- it is offensive, frivolous or defamatory;
- it is substantially the same as a question which has previously been put in the past six months; or
- it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

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### WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL: HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

This is the provisional forward plan for the three months starting January 2019. It provides an indicative date for matters to be considered by the Hub Committee. Where possible, the Hub Committee will keep to the dates shown in the plan. However, it may be necessary for some items to be rescheduled and other items added.

The forward plan is published to publicise consultation dates and enable dialogue between the Hub Committee and all councillors, the public and other stakeholders. It will also assist the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the Hub Committee to account.

The Plan is published in hard copy and on the Council's website ([www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk))

**Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings of the Hub Committee, which are normally held at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, and normally start at 2.00 pm.**

**If advance notice has been given, questions can be put to the Hub Committee at the beginning of the meeting.**

The Hub Committee consists of nine Councillors. Each has responsibility for a particular area of the Council's work.

*Cllr Sanders – Leader*

*Cllr Samuel – Deputy Leader*

*Cllr Sampson – Lead Member for Commercial Services*

*Cllr Leech – Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing*

*Cllr Oxborough – Lead Member for Economy*

*Cllr Jory – Lead Member for Environment and Assets*

*Cllr Roberts – Lead Member for Customer First*

*Cllr Edmonds - Lead Member for Resources and Performance*

*Cllr Mott – Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Housing*

Further information on the workings of the Hub Committee, including latest information on agenda items, can be obtained by contacting the Member Services Section by e-mail to [member.services@westdevon.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westdevon.gov.uk)

**All items listed in this Forward Plan will be discussed in public at the relevant meeting, unless otherwise indicated**

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Officer/ Member	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Decision	Consultees and means of consultation
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Revenue Budget Monitoring for 2018/19 (9 month position) <b>Purpose of report:</b> A revenue budget monitoring report to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved revenue budget for 2018/19, and to provide a forecast of the year end position.	RH/ Cllr Edmonds	Report of Senior Finance Specialist	29 Jan 2019	
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Capital Programme Budget Monitoring for 2018/19 (9 month position) <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report advises Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme, including an assessment of their financial position.	AE /Cllr Edmonds	Report of Capital Finance Specialist	29 Jan 2019	
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Revenue Budget Proposals 2019/20 <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report sets out the recommendations for the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 (including the council tax level for 19/20)	LB/ Cllr Edmonds	Report of Section 151 Officer	29 Jan 2019	
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Capital Budget Proposals 2019/20 <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report sets out the recommendations for the Capital Programme Budget for 2019/20	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Report of Section 151 Officer	29 Jan 2019	
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Quarter 3 Write Off Report <b>Purpose of report:</b> To update on Council debts written off by the S151 Officer (in accordance with the Financial Regulations) and to seek approval to write off any debts in excess of £5,000	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Report of Section 151 Officer	29 Jan 2019	
Commercial Services	<b>Title:</b> Partnership Board Terms of Reference for waste & cleansing <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report seeks approval of Terms of Reference for the Waste and Cleansing	HD/ Cllr Sampson	Report of the Group Manager Commercial Services Draft Terms of Reference	29 Jan 2019	

	Contract Partnership Board (Consisting SHDC, WDBC and FCC Ltd)				
Health and Wellbeing	<b>Title:</b> Syrian Resettlement Scheme Update <b>Purpose of report:</b> To update Members on the latest position with progress of the Scheme	IB/Cllr Leech	Report of Head of Housing, Revenue and Benefits	29 Jan 2019	
Commercial Services	<b>Title:</b> Public toilet update <b>Purpose of report:</b> to update members on latest negotiations with Parish and Town Councils.	CA/ Cllr Sampson	Report of the Head of Environment Services Practice	29 Jan 2019	Town and Parish Councils, by email, telephone and meetings.
Leader of the Council	<b>Title:</b> Peer Challenge Recommendations <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report considers the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review team and sets out a draft action plan	SH/ Leader	Report of the Executive Director LGA Peer challenge Report	19 March 2019	
Customer First	<b>Title:</b> Coastal Concordat <b>Purpose:</b> To consider the Concordat agreed between SHDC and Marine Management Organisation in respect of planning matters below the mean low tide	TJ/Cllr Roberts	Report of the Head of Place Making Practice  Coastal Concordat	19 March 2019	
Environment & Assets	<b>Title:</b> Accommodation Strategy <b>Purpose of report:</b> To consider & agree principles for future options for WDBC accommodation.	DA/C Brook Cllr Jory	Report of Head of Assets & Group Manager Business Development	19 March 2019	Invest to Earn Member group
Leader of the Council	<b>Title:</b> Draft Corporate Strategy Delivery Plans <b>Purpose of report:</b> To consider the draft delivery plans for each of the Corporate Strategy Themes (Homes, Communities, Enterprise, Environment, Wellbeing & Council)	NT/ Leader	Report of the Commissioning Manager  Draft Corporate Strategy Delivery Plans	19 March 2019	
Resources & Performance	<b>Title:</b> Employee Terms and conditions <b>Purpose of report:</b> The report will set out options for considering Employee Terms and Conditions	NH/ Cllr Edmonds	Report of the Support Services Specialist Manager	19 March 2019	
Commercial Services	<b>Title:</b> Car Park Strategy <b>Purpose of report:</b> To review the current strategy and purpose of the group.	CA/ Cllr Sampson	Report of the Head of Environment Services Practice	TBC	Current car parking strategy group

Commercial Services	<b>Title:</b> Procurement of Cleaning Services <b>Purpose of report:</b> To procure cleaning services through tender of a new contract	CA/Cllr Sampson	Report of the Head of Environment Services Practice	19 March 2019	
Commercial Services	<b>Title:</b> Grounds maintenance service <b>Purpose of report:</b> To consider the future provision of a grounds maintenance service, both for SHDC and as a commercial operation.	CA/ Cllr ?	Report of the Head of Environment Services Practice	TBC	
Strategic Planning and Housing	<b>Title:</b> JLP working arrangements after adoption <b>Purpose of report:</b> A report setting out the governance arrangements for the JLP following adoption	TJ/ Cllr Mott	Report of the Head of Place Making Practice	TBC – pending adoption of the JLP	



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# Agenda Item 7

Appendix A of this report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **15 January 2019**

Title: **Devon Building Control Partnership Update**

Portfolio Area: **Strategy & Commissioning**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Andrew Carpenter** Role: **Head of Partnership**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee SUPPORT and MAKE any recommendations (as appropriate) to Full Council.**

### **1. Executive Summary**

1.1 The report gives an overview of the performance of Devon Building Control Partnership.

### **2. Background**

2.1 Since 2006 building control services in West Devon have been delivered by Devon Building Control Partnership. The Partnership has been fully hosted by Teignbridge District Council since April 2017. Building Control staff who were previously employed by South Hams and West Devon councils transferred to Teignbridge Council on 1 April 2017.

2.2 Performance of the Partnership is monitored by a joint Committee made up of two elected Member representatives from each partner council.

### **3. Outcomes/Outputs**

#### **3.1 History**

3.1.1 Devon Building Control Partnership began in 2004 between West Devon and Teignbridge Councils and was joined by South Hams in 2006. The main objective being to improve efficiency from an operational perspective, together with competitiveness in an increasingly commercial area of business. These objectives were achieved but over the subsequent years financial pressures and further significant competition from the private sector caused changes that became a lot easier to achieve with the partnership in place.

3.1.2 Operational activities remain largely unchanged because building control is a regulatory service operating sections of the Building Act 1984. The Partnership arrangement has enabled these to be delivered in a much more cost effective and efficient way.

**3.2 Some of the more significant achievements include:**

- Hosting (management and some support services) by Teignbridge Council since 2011 and full hosting (all support services, finances, accommodation and employment of staff) from 2017.
- The full hosting arrangements meant that all finances were held in one place. This made them easier to manage, deal with earmarked reserves, further reduce support costs, improve ability to respond to changes and improve resilience of the service. It also enabled potential issues with an outdated staff secondment arrangement to be addressed.
- Centralised office accommodation in Newton Abbot, generating efficient working and overall reduction in accommodation.
- A single IT back office system, reducing support costs, enabling investment in remote working and management tools. Significantly reducing costly software upgrades if three separate services had remained.
- Enabling surveyors to become remote/home based which increases efficiency and customer contact time.
- Taking on three apprentices. Two have developed into fully qualified surveyors in recent years. The current Apprentice has progressed very well and is currently mid-way through his second year, following when it is intended to progress to another qualified surveyor.
- Reducing overall staff numbers from 36 to 26 (Including some part time) over a ten year period without compromising service delivery but delivering substantial savings to partner councils. This has been achieved by centralising at Newton Abbot, re-organising and introducing efficient ways of working, restructuring senior management and reducing support staff numbers as a consequence of centralising accommodation.

3.2.1 Whilst the charges for building regulation applications fully cover the costs of that part of the service, there are costs for the provision of all other statutory services for which a charge cannot be made. For WDDB this figure is currently budgeted at £57,080 for 2018/19 compared to £62,776 in 2016/17 despite rising inflation and salary costs.

3.2.2 Working efficiently has enabled the proportion relating to non-chargeable work (cost to partner councils) to be reduced.

3.2.3 To demonstrate efficiency, the ratio of income generated from charges received to the total number of FTE surveyors is measured. In 2012 this figure was £48,000. It has increased annually to £61,000 in the early part of 2018. Current income levels are higher than in previous years so this figure will increase further for the 2018/19 financial year.

3.2.4 Much more efficient and responsive coverage by surveyors over the combined geographical areas of the three partner Councils. This was achieved by pooling staff and be deploying resources to meet demand. This competes very effectively against private sector surveyors who have to cover very large areas.



3.2.5 The above applications are those received up to Mid-December 2018. They all generate income for the Partnership. Further information about volumes are shown in Exempt Appendix A.



3.2.6 The cases above relate to different types of work that is carried out by surveyors for which a charge cannot be made (non-chargeable).



3.2.7 The cases above relate to the whole partnership. Competent persons are registered to 'self-certify' their work under the building regulations so that the Local Authority is not required to inspect the work. Every time work is carried out on a property under this scheme the Local Authority is notified and required to record the information. There is no charge for this (also non-chargeable).

3.2.8 More information about the level of work completed by the partnership, its successes and challenges can be found in Exempt Appendix A.

### 3.3. Chargeable/non-chargeable work

3.3.1 Chargeable work is all work under the building regulations, such as Full Plans, Building Notices and Regularisations, for which a charge is made.

3.3.2 Non-chargeable work relates to everything else that is carried out for which a charge cannot be made. This includes the various cases in the tables above, but also numerous other services or responses, mostly statutory. These include processing Initial Notices (formal notifications from the private sector), Search enquiries, general enquiries, neighbour complaints etc.

### 3.4. Partnership agreement and monitoring

3.4.1 The Partnership operates under a formal Partnership agreement, signed by each council. It includes governance, host council responsibilities, management, staff, financial arrangements, business planning, withdrawal and termination arrangements.

3.4.2 Standing orders for the partnership enable each council to appoint two elected members to the Partnership Committee, who meet a minimum of three times per year. For the current year, Cllrs Terry Pearce and Patrick Kimber represent WDBC.

3.4.3 The building control functions of the partnership are listed in the Agreement, together with the performance information required for quarterly and annual monitoring by the Committee. Also included is a schedule of both chargeable and non-chargeable activities.

The non-chargeable activities being those services carried out for/on behalf of each council for which a fee cannot be charged. These services are funded by each council.

3.4.4 Under the Partnership agreement the responsibilities of the Partnership Committee are:

- To agree the appointment of the Head of Partnership
- To agree budgets, monitor performance, approve the statement of accounts and agree any distribution of surpluses/deficits.
- To approve and monitor the development of a 3 year business plan for the Partnership.
- To monitor the Partnership's (Action) Improvement Plan.
- To monitor service delivery, value for money and performance of the Partnership.
- To monitor the service delivery and cost effectiveness of the Host Council.

3.4.5 Officers representing the partners are currently Phil Shears, Managing Director, Teignbridge District Council and Darren Arulvasagam, Business Development Group Manager, Strategy & Commissioning, South Hams and West Devon Councils.

### **3.5. Staff and work allocation**

3.5.1 There are currently 18 surveyors, including Head of Partnership, Operations manager and Group leaders. Six surveyors work part-time or reduced hours with a total FTE equivalent of 16, including an Apprentice Surveyor. There are 8 Technical support staff with the equivalent of 5.7 FTE, made up of 4.2 FTE permanent staff plus an apprentice and temp.

3.5.2 All the work received by the partnership is allocated according to demand. No council boundaries exist and all parishes are included, effectively being treated as if one large council. The Technical Support team are all based in the office at Newton Abbot and deal with all work relating to the Partnership.

There are two teams of surveyors, each with a Group Leader. The teams are based on whether they usually work from the Newton Abbot office, or direct from home. Most of West Devon, the Northern part of Teignbridge and about two thirds of South Hams are covered by home-based surveyors, who generally live relatively close to their areas with efficiency and savings gained through shorter travelling distances. This arrangement has saved significant accommodation related costs compared to when the Partnership originally formed. The present Group Leader for the home-based surveyors is Dave Bealing.

### **3.6. Challenges**

- 3.6.1 The chargeable work provided by building control is legally required to be self-funding over a three year period. At the same time the service is open to competition from the private sector on a job-by-job basis. The Partnership therefore operates under a zero based budget, where surpluses are held for reinvestment or to counter any losses. Shortfalls cannot be cross-subsidised.
- 3.6.2 Approximately 25% of the total budget is for non-chargeable services. These are statutory services such as dangerous structures and maintaining registers of notifications, or inevitable demands such as complaints about neighbours and general enquiries.
- 3.6.3 Setting budgets must take account of trends, financial climate and market share. Charges must be set realistically as they cannot make profits, but additionally they need to remain competitive to win business without engaging in a price-war with competitors, with inevitable consequences of reduced service levels.
- 3.6.4 Reducing the amount of non-chargeable contributions by partner councils is an understandable pressure. This is especially difficult because the partnership cannot afford to reduce service standards in its competitive chargeable work.
- 3.6.5 There are a number of challenges related to building control and Development management. Often the public do not understand the difference between the two services. Unfortunate consequences of long planning processes and decisions that are no fault of the council often cause people to choose the private sector when it comes to building control. With greater remote working and less presence in offices it is harder to maintain regular communication with planning teams, even in Teignbridge where many staff are in the same building.
- 3.6.6 Access to planning information has previously helped with marketing the building control service but the recently introduced General Data Protection Regulations makes this much harder.
- 3.6.7 Specific to the Partnership's geographical area there are many locations with poor mobile phone signals, travelling through lanes and at holiday times making journeys time consuming and costly, finding car parking spaces in places such as Okehampton and Tavistock. Travelling times in some rural locations where jobs are often remote from each other, as well as from surveyors' homes/work locations, can be significant greater.
- 3.6.8 Communication with staff at SH/WD isn't always easy now that building control don't have a presence in those offices. It isn't easy maintaining awareness of the Partnership without a visible presence in offices. Taking part in Developer Forums, such as the one held recently in Ivybridge, has been recognised as a positive way in which value can be added to discussions with developers and enhancing visibility in each council.

- 3.6.9 Reducing demands on the service in relation to non-chargeable works is targeted.  
Encouraging customers to 'self-help' through the website and automated systems go some way to achieve this, but in many cases customers still want to talk to people. Incoming telephone calls received by the Technical Support team and by surveyors remain at high levels.
- 3.6.10 Mobile telephone signals across all 3 areas are unreliable. Communication is therefore difficult at times.
- 3.6.11 Access to office systems can be difficult when working in remote locations on specific sites. An upgrade to software has recently been installed which enables offline working but with automatic updating as soon as access to the internet is received, either through 4G or wireless network. iPads have recently been purchased from Partnership reserves enabling efficient access to and use of the software which is proving to be very successful.
- 3.7. Funding**
- 3.7.1 The building regulations require charges to be set to fully recover the costs of providing the service. Following the CIPFA guide to building control accounting the Partnership operates a zero based budget to balance over a three year period. Surpluses are kept in an earmarked reserve belonging to the Partnership, used to reinvest or to balance deficits if they occur.
- 3.7.2 Charges are calculated using an hourly rate that accounts for all associated costs. Because all chargeable work is competitive many projects result in negotiated bespoke charges.
- 3.7.3 The volume of workload falling into the non-chargeable category tends to fluctuate in line with chargeable work and is currently close to 25% of the total budget. The amounts each partner contributes varies in line with the percentage of workload in each area. Whilst there is the objective to reduce non-chargeable contributions it remains inevitable that much of it will remain because the work is either statutory, e.g. dangerous structures, or provided to meet customer demands such as general enquiries. Maintaining market share of chargeable work is not only vital to ongoing service provision but to avoid increasing non-chargeable work that would result.
- 3.7.4 The Partnership account for 2017/18 is shown below. Recharges relate to the total cost to the partner councils for non-chargeable work. The Partnership maintains a positive balance in the reserve, some of which is used to reinvest in the service with the remainder as a contingency.

<b>Devon Building Control Partnership</b>	<b>2016-17 Actual</b>	<b>2017-18 Actual</b>
<b><i>EXPENDITURE</i></b>	<b>1,290,673</b>	<b>1,219,188</b>
Employees incl costs	917,952	946,730
Supplies and services	104,149	134,812
Support Services	97,014	74,250
Central costs	43,520	48,065
Contribution to reserve	128,038	15,332
<b><i>INCOME</i></b>	<b>(1,290,673)</b>	<b>(1,219,188)</b>
Fees & Charges	(943,897)	(914,512)
Recharges	(346,776)	(254,282)
Other income		(2,364)
Funding from reserve		(48,030)

### **3.8. Partnership Reserves**

3.8.1 It is a requirement that local authority building control fully recovers the cost of providing its chargeable service. It is also not allowed to make a profit. The Partnership therefore operates a ring fenced account in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. In order to achieve this the annual budget is zero-based.

3.8.2 Surpluses are placed in a reserve account which is used for reinvestment in the service, currently including purchasing of IT equipment, software upgrades, training, temporary staff and an apprentice surveyor. It is available should a shortfall of income occur in a particular year without being a budget pressure to the partner councils.

3.8.3 The Partnership retains a minimum of £100,000 in the reserve. This is to be used as a redundancy indemnity, under the Partnership Agreement.

3.8.4 Reserves that are unspent over a three year period can be used to reduce recharges (costs to partner councils) in subsequent years.

3.8.5 The current position is shown below:

<b>DBCP RESERVE</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19 Est</b>
<i>Reserve opening balance</i>	<i>302,639</i>	<i>212,996</i>
<i>Reserve closing balance</i>	<i>212,996</i>	<i>170,589</i>
<i>min £100,000</i>	<i>(100,000)</i>	<i>(100,000)</i>
<i>Estimated 18/19 expenditure</i>	<i>(16,751)</i>	<i>(12,391)</i>
<i>Apprentice post to Sept '19</i>	<i>(32,135)</i>	<i>(11,328)</i>
<i>Temp p/t admin post to July '18</i>	<i>(4,849)</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Available balance</i>	<b><i>59,261</i></b>	<b><i>46,870</i></b>

3.8.6 The opening balance for the current financial year is £212,996. There is anticipated expenditure to cover Apprentice and temporary Admin support as well as investment in iPads. After retaining a minimum balance of £100,000 there is £46,870 remaining.

3.8.7 Income levels are currently higher than budgeted so unless there is a significant downturn the reserve is expected to increase at the end of 2018/19.

### 3.9. Customer satisfaction

3.9.1 Every completion certificate issued by the Partnership is accompanied by a customer survey. The return rate is very high for a survey, usually well above 60%. Below is the response received during 2017/18 together with a selection of customer comments received.

- Thanks for all your help and advice
- I could not fault the help, advice and speed with how this has been dealt with – thank you
- DBC were helpful throughout the project, giving good advice on insulation products
- Both Surveyors were very helpful and approachable. Despite My build being fairly small, they took time to check and even suggest ideas – excellent, thanks
- I am very happy and would like to add that the surveyor was excellent and extremely helpful.
- The surveyor made us feel very comfortable with the service and offered great, sound advice that helped with our build. An unbiased view was very helpful.
- I have been very satisfied with the help and guidance given to me. Also how helpful and polite the staff were. Also a mention – the Operation Manager's advice was invaluable.



#### 4. External competition threats and Market share

- 4.1 Competition with the private sector has a long history in building control. It started with new housing and NHBC becoming the only competitor, in 1985. Other competitors were introduced in the 1990s and the scope widened to all types of building work, the commercial market became available and a number of new competitors set up. National contracts were agreed with national chains, shops and businesses such as Tesco and various banks. There are now many Approved Inspectors Nationwide covering all types of building work and the domestic market is now a very competitive sector in this area.
- 4.2. The general public are often unaware that there is a choice of using either the local authority or a private supplier (Approved Inspector) for their building control service, or that the level of service can vary significantly, not just the cost. The service has become highly customer focused and protecting its market share is therefore essential to the ongoing financial performance and survival.
- 4.3. A lot of work is done to make potential customers aware of the services provided. This includes providing pre-application advice at the planning stage on many projects. Reputation and customer satisfaction is probably the most important factor so that regular customers, including many local builders and architects, continue to use the Local Authority based service. Experiences with other council services can influence a customers' choice of building control provider.
- 4.4. One of the issues the Partnership has to face is where some competitors try to win work by undercutting on price and reportedly, not providing the service as a result, relying on photographs sent in to them. Some customers often don't

realise this and are only interested in paying the lowest price. Another issue, which has been ongoing but highlighted recently following the Grenfell Tower fire, is where some competitors will interpret regulations in favour of reducing building costs for the client with the consequence of lowering standards.

## 5. Implications

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Relevant to proposals Y/N</b>	<b>Details and proposed measures to address</b>
<b>Legal/ Governance</b>	N	Governance is through the Partnership Agreement between South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon councils dated April 2017.  The appendix to this report is exempt from publication because it contains information about the Council's financial and proposed commercial affairs as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.  The public interest test has been applied and it is considered that the public interest lies in not disclosing this report at this time because it contains financial and commercially sensitive information which could prejudice the Council if such information was disclosed at this time.
<b>Financial</b>	N	The cost to the council of the building control service is controlled through the Partnership Agreement
<b>Risk</b>	N	Risks associated with the building control service are controlled through the Partnership Agreement
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	N	
<b>Safeguarding</b>	N	
<b>Community Safety, Crime and Disorder</b>	N	
<b>Health Safety and Wellbeing</b>	N	
<b>Other Implications</b>	N	

### Supporting Information

#### Appendices

Exempt Appendix A: Additional Information about Devon Building Control

#### Background Papers

Minute Ref HC 32 - Devon Building Control Partnership (DBCP) Hosting Arrangements, presented to Hub Committee, 1 November 2016:

<http://mg.swdevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=221&MId=298&Ver=4>

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Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **15 January 2019**

Title: **Budget Proposals 2019-20 onwards update report**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr P R Sanders - Budget Setting Process**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Lisa Buckle** Role: **Group Manager for Strategic Finance (S151 Officer)**

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**Recommendations:**

The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on the content of the Budget Proposals report for 2019/20.

Views are sought in particular on:-

- i) The proposed increase in Council Tax for 2019/20 of 2.99% (Band D of £231.63 for 2019/20 – an increase of 13 pence per week or £6.72 per year);
- ii) The proposed financial pressures shown in Appendix A of £420,000;
- iii) The proposed contributions to Earmarked Reserves of £120,000 and transferring the one-off 2019-20 budget surplus of £73,135 into the Future Financial Stability Earmarked Reserve to assist in meeting the predicted budget gap of £504,242 in 2020/21;
- iv) The proposed savings of £684,700 as shown in Appendix A;
- v) The proposed use of £375,000 of New Homes Bonus funding to fund the 2019/20 Revenue Budget as set out in 4.6 of the report;

vi) **The recommendations of the Financial Stability Review Group on Earmarked Reserves (set out in 10.2 and 10.3) and to agree for these to be recommended in the final Budget Proposals report for 2019/20 presented to Council on 12 February 2019.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council approved its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2019/20 to 2023/24 at Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (Minute CM33). This is based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2023/24. The Council, along with other local authorities, has faced unprecedented reductions in Government funding since the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. Between 2009/10 and 2019/20, the Council's Core Government funding has reduced by £3 million.
- 1.2 West Devon has continued to work in partnership with South Hams District Council which has allowed West Devon Borough Council to achieve annual savings of £2.2 million and more importantly protect all statutory front line services.
- 1.3 Between both Councils the annual shared services savings being achieved are over £6 million. However, the Councils continue to face considerable financial challenges as a result of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending.
- 1.4 ***West Devon Borough Council is currently forecasting a £504,242 budget gap by 2020/21. The report attached sets out proposals for the Council to achieve a balanced budget in 2019/20, as shown in Appendix B.***
- 1.5 The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and there has been an increase in the allocation of Rural Services Delivery Grant from £372,638 for 19/20 to £464,365 – an increase of £91,727. It is important to note that this additional funding for the provision of rural services has only been confirmed for one year (2019/20). This extra funding, alongside other changes to the budget position which was reported to the Hub Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December (set out in Section 2), has resulted in a one-off budget surplus for 2019/20 of £73,135. This is recommended to be transferred to the Future Financial Stability Earmarked Reserve to assist in meeting the predicted budget gap of £504,242 in 2020/21.
- 1.6 It is important to note that the MTFS set out the budget strategy for the Council for the next five years, with annual reviews and updates when items are further known or are announced by the Government. The MTFS approved at Council in September 2018 was the starting point for developing a meaningful five year strategy that has set out the

strategic intention for all of the different strands of funding available to the Council. The Council is now able to rely on this to inform future decisions.

- 1.7 A Cross Party Member Working Group (Financial Stability Review Group) was set up in November 2017 with defined Terms of Reference to look at the Medium Term Financial Strategy and to further look at options for securing financial stability for the longer term. The Group regularly reports to the Hub Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and has made recommendations on Reserves in 10.2 and 10.3 of this report.

## **2 CHANGES TO THE 2019/20 BUDGET REPORT SINCE THE HUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

### **Draft Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019/20**

- 2.1 On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018, the Government announced the draft Finance Settlement for 2019/20 for consultation. Appendix C sets out an analysis of the finance settlement over the four years from 2016/17. Overall over the four year funding settlement from 2016/17 to 2019/20, it can be seen that West Devon Borough Council has had a 38.2% reduction in Government funding. This compares against 38.8% for the average for Shire District Councils. The key points from the Finance Settlement are below.
- 2.2 The Council Tax Referendum limits for District Councils will remain the same (the higher of £5 or 2.99%). For Police and Crime Commissioners the potential annual increase to their council tax will be increased to £24 per annum.
- 2.3 Negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2019/20 will be eliminated by the Government. There has been no news on what will happen to negative RSG from 2020/21 onwards and therefore the modelling in this report has assumed negative RSG will remain for 2020/21 onwards in some form (e.g. as part of the business rates baseline reset). It is currently estimated to be £293,000 per annum which would be deducted off the Council's business rates funding and represents negative Government grant (it is effectively the Council's further predicted funding cuts).
- 2.4 For 2019/20 there are no changes to the New Homes Bonus baseline of 0.4% (the previous concern was that this could be increased to 0.6%). The baseline is the proportion of housing growth which is deducted as 'natural growth as such' before New Homes Bonus is paid to a Council. The Council's New Homes Bonus allocation for 2019/20 has been announced at £500,595.

- 2.5 Rural Service Delivery Grant (RSDG) in 2019/20 will increase to £81m; an increase of £16m on the previously planned £65m allocation. This has increased West Devon's allocation from £372,638 for 19/20 to £464,365 – an increase of £91,727. This additional funding has only been confirmed for 2019/20 (so only confirmed for one year). It is not known how much RSDG the Council will receive for 2020/21 onwards and the same level of £464,365 has been assumed in the modelling.
- 2.6 Proposals for new 75% Business Rates Pilots in 2019/20 have been approved for 15 areas and these are in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, North and West Yorkshire, North of the Tyne, Solent, Somerset, Staffordshire and Stoke, West Sussex and Worcestershire; Unfortunately Devon wasn't successful in being a Business Rates Pilot for 2019/20 but all the Pilots announced are new Pilot areas for 2019/20. Devon is already a Pilot for 2018/19. This will mean that West Devon Borough Council will continue to be part of a Devonwide Business Rates Pool for 2019/20.
- 2.7 In addition to the local government finance settlement, two consultation papers have been published on the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention. Officers will attend local seminars on this during January and February and circulate a consultation response to all Members and our local MPs.
- 2.8 During 2016/17 the Government offered Local Authorities the opportunity to apply for a four year agreed funding settlement, subject to the production of an efficiency plan. The Council applied and was accepted for the four year agreement. From 2018/19 onwards, the Council has received no Government funding (Revenue Support Grant, RSG) and the Council will need to be self-sufficient. Although the four year settlement offered no Revenue Support Grant, it did guarantee the Council its allocations of Rural Services Delivery Grant over the four year period. The Finance Settlement for 2019/20 only covered the last year of the four year settlement. The point is being made by the Local Government Association (LGA) that Councils need more certainty of their funding longer term post 2020.
- 2.9 There is a one-off amount of £25,000 being paid to the Council from the surplus national business rates funding held in the Government Levy Account (WDBC's share)

**Other updates to the Budget report since the Hub Committee meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

- 2.10 On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018, Council approved the recommendation of the Frontline Services Project Board to award a contract (Lot 3) for the waste collection, recycling and cleansing services (Minute CM42). This has generated a saving from a Lot 3 award of £254,000 per annum. It

was also approved to contribute £50,000 per annum into a Vehicle Replacement Earmarked Reserve. Officers were also instructed to work with the successful bidder on the implementation of a three-weekly residual waste collection trial as soon as is practicable, subject to a report detailing potential savings and timescales being approved by the Hub Committee. (NB. the report will be presented within three months of the contract start date).

2.11 The TaxBase for 2019/20 was approved by the Senior Leadership Team on 17<sup>th</sup> December and has been confirmed at 20,176.57 – This is an increase of 58.72 Band D Equivalent properties from the 2018/19 TaxBase. (The increase of just under 59 Band D properties is less than the previously modelled assumption that the number of properties would increase by 160 per annum).

2.12 The table below shows the summary of changes:-

	<b>Total (£)</b>
<b>Budget Gap for 2019/20 reported to the Hub Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018</b>	<b>269,132</b>
<b><i>Additional Income/Savings</i></b>	
Increase in the allocation of Rural Services Delivery Grant from £372,638 for 19/20 to £464,365 – an increase of £91,727	(91,727)
One-off amount from the surplus national business rates funding held in the Government Levy Account (WDBC's share)	(25,000)
Savings from the re-procurement of the waste collection, recycling and cleansing services contract (Minute CM42)	(254,000)
<b><i>Reduction in savings or income modelled</i></b>	
TaxBase confirmed at 20,176.57 for 2019/20 (There are less additional properties and therefore this difference set out in 2.11 adds to the budget gap)	23,460
Legal savings (from providing services to Town and Parish Councils) previously put forward as part of the Budget Workshop are now thought to not be achievable with the current resource level	5,000
<b>Revised Budget Surplus for 2019/20 (reported January 2019) – This is recommended to be transferred to the Future Financial Stability Earmarked Reserve to assist in meeting the predicted budget gap of £504,242 in 2019/20</b>	<b>(73,135)</b>

### **3 ASSUMPTIONS FOR FINANCIAL MODELLING PURPOSES**

3.1 The National Employers made a final pay offer covering 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020. The majority of employees (those on salaries starting at £19,430 p.a.) have received an uplift of 2% on 1/4/18 and a further 2% on 1/4/19, with those on lower salaries receiving higher increases. The cost of this was £85,000 in 2018/19 and a further £95,000 in

2019/20. This has been reflected in Appendix A. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is not an expression of Council Policy on pay awards, but a means of ensuring an appropriate provision is made as part of the overall financial planning of the Council.

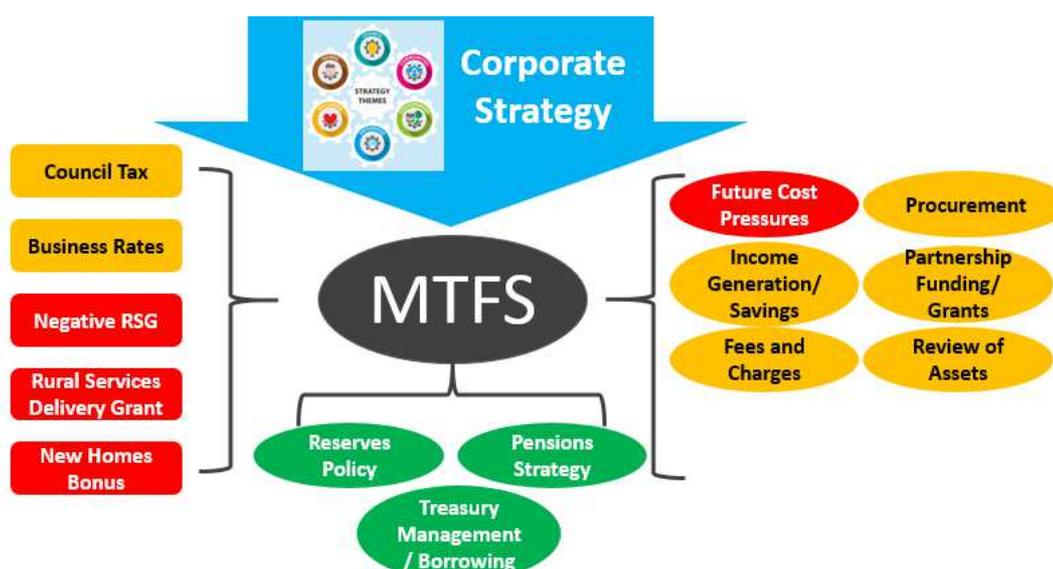
- 3.2 This report assumes inflation will run at 2% over the five year period. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) was 2.4% in October 2018.
- 3.3 The predicted interest rate forecast from our treasury management advisors, Link Services, is that interest rates will remain at 0.75% up to June 2019. By December 2020 the bank base rate is predicted to increase to 1.5%.
- 3.4 An increase in council tax of 2.99% for the next five years has been modelled for council tax purposes. This strategic principle was approved as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Minute CM33). This would equate to a Band D council tax for West Devon of £231.63 in 2019/20 as shown in Appendix B (an increase of £6.72 for the year which equates to 2.99%).
- 3.5 It has been assumed that the number of properties within the Borough will increase by 160 per annum from 2020/21 onwards – this is an increase of approx. 0.8%. (see note 2.11 for the 2019/20 increase of 59 Band D Equivalent properties and Members may wish to decrease this estimate in the future).

#### **4. THE COMPONENTS MAKING UP A MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)**

- 4.1 The Diagram below sets out all of the component parts which constitute the make-up of a Medium Term Financial Strategy. Appendix C of the MTFS report to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 went through each of these components in detail and made recommendations where appropriate.

Items in Green denote those elements where the Council has a large degree of control over the setting of policies and strategies. Items in Amber denote those components of the MTFS where the Council has a degree of control. Red items signal components where the Council has hardly any control over funding allocations which are decided by the Government and future cost pressures which can largely be outside of the Council's control or influence.

## Net Budget £7.3 million



### Council Tax

- 4.2 Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (Minute CM33) has set the strategic intention to raise council tax by the maximum allowed in any given year, without triggering a council tax referendum, to endeavour to continue to deliver services. The actual council tax for any given year will be decided by Council in the preceding February. (The council tax for 2019/20 will be set at the Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

### Business Rates

- 4.3 The income from Business Rates which West Devon Borough Council retained in 2017/18 was the funding baseline of £1,538,973 plus the pooling gain of £82,000. Estimates have been made of the Baseline funding Level for 2019/20 onwards as set out in Appendix B. This is £1.62m for 2019/20 and £1.66m for 2020/21. Negative RSG of £293,000 per annum from 2020/21 has been assumed to be deducted from the business rates funding as set out in 2.3.

### New Homes Bonus (NHB)

- 4.4 The Government has stated that 2019/20 represents the final year of NHB funding and from 2020 onwards they will explore how to incentivise housing growth most effectively and will consult on this issue. The financial modelling has included using £375,000 of New Homes Bonus funding for 2019/20 to fund the revenue base budget and this has then been reduced to £100,000 by 2020/21 and £50,000 by 2021/22 for modelling purposes.
- 4.5 For 2019/20 there are no changes to the New Homes Bonus baseline of 0.4% (the previous concern was that this could be increased to 0.6%). The baseline is the proportion of housing growth which is deducted as 'natural growth as such' before New Homes Bonus is paid

to a Council. The Council's New Homes Bonus allocation for 2019/20 has been confirmed at £500,595.

- 4.6 The table below sets out the suggested use of New Homes Bonus funding for 2019/20:-

<b>NHB</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
New Homes Bonus 2019-20 allocation	500,595
Suggested allocation:-	
To fund the Revenue Base Budget	(375,000)
To fund the Capital Programme for 2019/20* (This is mainly a £50,000 allocation for affordable housing)	(80,000)
Dartmoor National Park allocation**	TBA
Amount remaining unallocated	45,595

\*The Capital Programme Bids for 2019/20 are still being finalised and will be presented to the Hub Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019

\*\*Dartmoor National Park (DNP) – On an annual basis Dartmoor National Park request a share of the New Homes Bonus to reflect new homes delivered within the Park. The money is used to support a local community fund and, for example, joint work through the rural housing enabler. Members consider this on an annual basis as part of the Budget process.

- 4.7 District Councils such as West Devon have also suffered a large reduction in their New Homes Bonus funding (£0.5 million in 17/18) due to the number of years payments being reduced from six years to five years in 17/18 and four years from 18/19 onwards. The New Homes Bonus funding being released is to contribute towards adult social care costs, a function carried out by Unitary and County Councils.

### **Pensions Strategy (Actuarial Valuation)**

- 4.8 The Council has taken specialist pension advice on the options for the Council's Pension position (informing the actuarial valuation), with the aim of reducing the current deficit contributions, increasing affordability, whilst best managing the pension deficit. Options are being presented to the Council's Audit Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> January to consider.

### **Treasury Management and Borrowing Strategy**

- 4.9 The Council has taken external treasury management advice on the Council's overall borrowing levels and debt levels. The Council set an Upper Limit on External Borrowing (for all Council services) as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy of £50 million. In February 2019, the Council will consider its Capital Strategy and Treasury

Management Strategy which will contain the new requirements issued by MHCLG in February 2018 of the new guidance.

### **Partnership Funding/Grants**

- 4.10 Following reports to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (26<sup>th</sup> June) and the Hub Committee, it has been approved by Council (Minute CM24 – Council 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018) to reduce funding to Partnerships by £14,000 for 2019/20.

### **Commercial Property and Review of Assets**

- 4.11 The Invest to Earn Group are considering commercial property business cases within the Commercial Property acquisition strategy. A report on the funding for the initial years of the development projects will be presented to the Hub Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- 4.12 The Council's Asset Base is £22.3 million at 31 March 2018. The Council will continually review and challenge its asset base in order to deliver the optimum value for money from the Council's Assets.

### **Results of the Members' Budget Survey 2018**

- 4.13 A Members' Budget Workshop was held on 8<sup>th</sup> October and the budget reductions which were supported from the results of the Members' Budget Survey (which were attached in Exempt Appendix C of the report to the Hub Committee in December 2018) have been reflected within the savings schedule of this budget report. The budget savings have been highlighted in grey in Appendix A.

## **5 BUDGET PRESSURES, SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION**

- 5.1 Financial modelling has been undertaken for the next five years to predict the Council's financial situation for the short and medium term.
- 5.2 ***Appendix A*** to the Medium Term Financial Position sets out the Budget Pressures forecast for the next five years and the additional savings and income forecast. ***These figures in Appendix A show the changes to the existing base budget.***

(As set out in Appendix A)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Cost Pressures	£420,000	£465,000	£260,000	£260,000	£335,000
Contributions to Earmarked Reserves	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000
Savings and additional income	(684,700)	(266,200)	(171,200)	(391,200)	(1,200)

## 6. OVERALL POSITION – BUDGET GAP

6.1 Appendix B illustrates the overall financial forecast for the forthcoming five years. The Council's Net Budget is £7.3 million in 2018/19. A Summary forecast is shown below of the potential budget situation if all of the budget pressures and the savings and income generation in Appendix A were approved. It also shows the situation if the Council Tax is increased by 2.99% (shown in Appendix B).

6.2 The following table illustrates the predicted budget gap from 2019/20 onwards for the Council as shown in Appendix B:

Cumulative Budget Gap	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	Total Aggregated Budget Gap £
Modelling as set out in Appendix B  (See Note 1 below)	Nil – A balanced Budget is set out in these budget proposals	504,242	415,733	47,605	143,341	1,110,921

Note 1 - The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and there has been an increase in the allocation of Rural Services Delivery Grant from £372,638 for 19/20 to £464,365 – an increase of £91,727.

It is important to note that this additional funding for the provision of rural services has only been confirmed for one year (2019/20). This extra funding, alongside other changes to the budget position which was reported to the Hub Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December (set out in Section 2), has resulted in a one-off budget surplus for 2019/20 of £73,135. This is recommended to be transferred to the Future Financial

Stability Earmarked Reserve to assist in meeting the predicted budget gap of £504,242 in 2020/21.

- 6.3 In the Modelling in Appendix B, the total budget gap is £504,242 in 2020/21 and this is predicted to decrease to £415,733 in 2021/22 (the £415,733 assumes the budget gap in 20/21 of £504,242 has not been closed). The aggregated Budget Gap is £1.11 million.

## 7 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND TIMESCALES

- 7.1 The Council is progressing various options for closing the budget gap for 2020/21 onwards, to achieve long term financial sustainability. The table below sets out a timescale for those options and the various strands that the Council is exploring.

Option	Possible Budget Impact	Timescale
<p><b>Public Conveniences</b> A budget saving of £50,000 in 2019/20 has been included within the total budget savings modelled.</p>	£50,000	A further update report will be presented to the Hub Committee on 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2019.
<p><b>Pensions Strategy (Actuarial Valuation)</b> The Council is in the process of receiving specialist pension's advice on its Pensions position (informing the actuarial valuation). Options will be reported to the January Audit Committee.</p>	To be quantified (could be up to £100,000 or more)	Report to the Audit Committee 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2019
<p><b>Waste Procurement</b> The savings (£254,000 per annum) from the waste procurement are now included within the modelling within this budget report.</p> <p>As per Council Minute CM42 (4<sup>th</sup> December 2018), Officers were also instructed to work with the successful bidder on the implementation of a three-weekly residual waste collection trial as soon as is practicable, subject to a report detailing potential savings and timescales being approved by the Hub Committee. (NB. the report will</p>	To be quantified	By the end of June 2019

<b>Option</b>	<b>Possible Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
be presented within three months of the contract start date).		
<p><b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme</b> The grant to Town and Parish Councils has been reduced by 8.6% over the four year period of the finance settlement. Members have an option over whether to withdraw funding in 2020/21.</p>	£59,000 for 2020/21 onwards	<p>To be considered as part of the 2020/21 Budget process</p> <p>Early consideration by Summer 2019</p>
<p><b>Asset Review</b> The Invest to Earn Group are considering commercial property business cases within the Commercial Property acquisition strategy. A report on the funding for the initial years of the development projects will be presented to the Hub Committee on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.</p>	To be quantified	29th January 2019
<b>Funding Options</b>		
<p><b>Negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG)</b> The draft Finance Settlement published in December 2018 confirmed the Government's intention that negative RSG will be withdrawn in 2019/20.</p> <p>This budget report has already factored in that there will be no negative RSG for 2019-20. It is assumed that negative RSG of £293,000 per annum will continue to happen for 2020/21 onwards.</p> <p>See Section 2.3 for more explanation</p>	Negative RSG of £293,000 for 2020/21 onwards has been built into this budget report.	<p>The draft Finance Settlement for 2019/20 has only confirmed that negative RSG will be withdrawn for 2019/20 only.</p> <p>The position for 2020/21 onwards is not known and it is assumed that negative RSG of £293,000 per annum will be in place.</p>

Option	Possible Budget Impact	Timescale
<p><b>New Homes Bonus allocations for 2020/21 onwards</b></p> <p>The Government has stated that 2019/20 represents the final year of NHB funding and from 2020 onwards they will explore how to incentivise housing growth most effectively and will consult on this issue. The financial modelling has included using £375,000 of New Homes Bonus funding for 2019/20 to fund the revenue base budget and this has then been reduced to £100,000 by 2020/21 and £50,000 by 2021/22 for modelling purposes.</p> <p>It is not known what NHB allocations (or a similar scheme) will be in future years when the NHB scheme is replaced. This remains a risk for the Council.</p>	To be assessed	Awaiting further announcements from the Government
<p><b>Use of Reserves as a temporary measure</b></p> <p>The Council could temporarily utilise Reserves to balance an element of the 2020/21 budget, whilst longer term solutions are being implemented. This would be a very short term solution though.</p>	To be assessed	To be decided as part of the Budget Process

7.2 Through the Financial Stability Review Group, further measures are being considered to balance the 2020/21 onwards budget positions.

7.3 The diagram below shows the Government timetable of key dates. The key dates will be in May 2019 when more details will be known about the Funding Reform and Spending Review 2019. In November 2019, the baseline funding for business rates and the impact of

transitional arrangements will be known.



## 8 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL BORROWING

8.1 The Capital Programme is set by the Council and may be funded by sale proceeds from the disposal of assets (capital receipts), external grants and contributions, directly from revenue or from borrowing. The Capital Programme Bids for 2019/20 are still being finalised and will be presented to the Hub Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

8.2 **Commercial Property Acquisition Strategy** – The Council has agreed a commercial property acquisition strategy of up to £37.45 million. To date, three investment properties have been purchased with a value of just over £20 million in aggregate. Purchases made within the strategy will be capital expenditure. The Invest to Earn Group are considering commercial property business cases within the Commercial Property acquisition strategy. A report on the funding for the initial years of the development projects will be presented to the Hub Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

8.3 **Prudential Borrowing** - The Council will consider the use of prudential borrowing to support capital investment to deliver services and will ensure that the full costs of borrowing are taken into account when investment decisions are made.

## 9. Sensitivity analysis and risk analysis

9.1 The Council carries out sensitivity analysis and risk analysis of its Budget Proposals and this was shown in Appendix F to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## 10. Earmarked and Unearmarked Reserves

10.1 The current levels of Reserves are £1.2 million Unearmarked Reserves and Earmarked Reserves of £4 million. The Council's Net Budget is £7.3 million for 2018/19. Therefore Unearmarked Reserves equate to 16% of the Council's Net Budget. A full list of Reserves was attached in Appendix E to the Budget report to the Hub Committee in December 2018.

10.2 The Financial Stability Review Group has reviewed the Earmarked Reserves and has identified several historic lower value Earmarked reserves which have no current commitments and no recent expenditure. These are listed below and they total £84,937. It is recommended that this amount is allocated instead to the ICT Reserve which is currently depleted and has no resource remaining.

- W0901 – Grounds Maintenance Reserve - £49,068
- W0909 – Millwood Homes Reserve - £15,000
- W0923 – CLG Assets Community Value - £7,855
- W0898 – Landscaping - £5,220
- W0907 - New Burdens Reserve - £3,294
- W0908 – World Heritage - £4,500
- **TOTAL £84,937**

10.3 The annual contributions to Reserves of £25,000 to the Planning Earmarked Reserve and £25,000 to the ICT Reserve were supported by the Financial Stability Review Group (FSRG). The FSRG were also of the opinion that the cost pressure for Elections of £50,000 could be removed, in light of the amount held in Reserves of £24,000 for Elections. It was agreed to remove the £50,000 cost pressure in 2019/20 and replace this with an annual contribution to the Elections Earmarked Reserve of £20,000.

10.4 On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 (Minute CM42), Council approved a contribution of £50,000 per annum into a Vehicle Replacement Earmarked Reserve for the waste collection, recycling and cleansing services contract.

10.5 **Budget Monitoring** – The latest Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring report shows the actual net revenue expenditure is forecast to be under budget by £57,000 when compared against the total budget set for 2018/19. This is mainly due to additional planning income following the receipt of several large planning applications in the second quarter of 2018/19.

## 11 NEXT STEPS

11.1 This MTFS is the starting point for developing a meaningful five year strategy that sets out the strategic intention for all of the different strands of funding available to the Council. This was approved at

Council in September 2018. The Council is now able to rely on this to inform future decisions.

- 11.2 Officers will continue to work with the Cross Party Member Working Group (Financial Stability Review Group) and the results of this will be incorporated into future Budget reports. Section 7 sets out the potential timescales against the areas identified.
- 11.3 The table below shows the budget timetable for the future budget meetings for the 2019/20 Budget.

29 January 2019	Hub Committee – To recommend Final Budget Proposals to Council for 2019/20
<b>7 February 19</b>	<b>Date which Council Procedure Rule 16 applies</b>
12 February 19	Full Council – To approve Final Budget Proposals for 2019/20 and set the WDBC share of the Council Tax
19 February 19	Council Tax Resolution Panel – to agree the Council Tax Resolution for 2019/20 (This is WDBC share plus all other precepting authorities share).

**Note 1-** Council Procedure Rule 16 states that ‘Where a member intends to move a motion or amendment in relation to the Budget, the text of that motion or amendment must be put in writing and submitted to the Head of Paid Service by 9.00am on the third working day before the meeting, in order that officers may have sufficient time to consider and advise the Council of the financial implications of any such motion or amendment’. As per the timetable above, this would need to be submitted by 9am on Thursday 7 February 19.

## 12. IMPLICATIONS

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Hub Committee is responsible for recommending to Council the budgetary framework. It is the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Budget proposals being proposed by the Council. In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, Council must decide the general level of Reserves

		and the use of Earmarked Reserves.  The preparation of the Budget report is evidence that the Council has considered and taken into account all relevant information and proper advice when determining its financial arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements, and in particular, that it will set a lawful budget.
Financial	Y	In the Modelling in Appendix B, the total budget gap is £504,242 in 2020/21 and this is predicted to decrease to £415,733 in 2021/22 (the £415,733 assumes the budget gap in 20/21 of £504,242 has not been closed). The aggregated Budget Gap is £1.11 million.
Risk	Y	Each of the budget options taken forward by Members will consider the risks of the option.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		Equality Impact Assessments are completed for the budget proposals.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

### Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Budget pressures and savings

Appendix B – Modelling of the Budget Position

Appendix C – Local Government Finance Settlement analysis

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**WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

	<b>BASE 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Yr1 2019/20 £</b>	<b>Yr2 2020/21 £</b>	<b>Yr3 2021/22 £</b>	<b>Yr4 2022/23 £</b>	<b>Yr5 2023/24 £</b>
<b>BUDGET PRESSURES</b>						
Waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract (estimate)	190,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Inflation on the street cleaning and public conveniences	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
ICT future service provision	0	0	150,000	0	0	0
Triennial Pension revaluation	25,000	0	75,000	0	0	75,000
Inflation on goods and services	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Increase in salaries - increments and pay and grading	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Increase in salaries - pay increase at 2% modelled (1% for 20/21 onwards)	85,000	95,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Maintenance of trees	40,000	0	(20,000)	0	0	0
Reduction in Recycling credits	25,000	0	0	0	0	0
ICT support contracts - increase the budget to better align to actual expenditure	65,000	95,000	0	0	0	0
Reduce income target for Kilworthy Park to align to actual income received	25,000	0	0	0	0	0
Reduction in Housing Benefit administration subsidy	16,500	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
National Insurance and National Living Wage	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Provision for salary costs for steady state review	20,000	0	0	0	0	0
IT - replace ageing network switches	15,000	0	0	0	0	0
Waste - lease renewal	15,000	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue implication of the waste capital bid in 2017/18 capital programme	13,000	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL IDENTIFIED BUDGET PRESSURES</b>	<b>674,500</b>	<b>420,000</b>	<b>465,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>335,000</b>

**WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

	<b>BASE 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Yr1 2019/20 £</b>	<b>Yr2 2020/21 £</b>	<b>Yr3 2021/22 £</b>	<b>Yr4 2022/23 £</b>	<b>Yr5 2022/23 £</b>
<b>Contribution to Earmarked Reserves</b> <b>(This line shows the annual contributions into the Reserve)</b>						
Contribution to IT Development Reserve (£25K per annum)	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Contribution to Planning Reserve (£25K per annum)	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Contribution to Elections Reserve (20K per annum)	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Contribution to Vehicles Replacement Reserve (£50K per annum) - see 10.4 - Minute CM42	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Transformation Project (T18) - Approved at 9th December 2014 Council (One-off investment costs) Contribution to Strategic Change Reserve to meet redundancy and pension costs - Contributions reduce to zero in 2019/20	10,000	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Contribution to Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>

**SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION IDENTIFIED**

	<b>BASE 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Yr1 2019/20 £</b>	<b>Yr2 2020/21 £</b>	<b>Yr3 2021/22 £</b>	<b>Yr4 2022/23 £</b>	<b>Yr5 2023/24 £</b>
Income from investments in commercial property	100,000	100,000	20,000	40,000	120,000	0
Re-procurement of contracts (e.g. savings from Leisure contract)	0	0	100,000	130,000	270,000	0
Re-procurement of waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract (The £50K contribution to the Vehicle Replacement Earmarked Reserve is deducted from these savings to give a net saving of £254,000 per annum as per 2.10)	0	304,000	0	0	0	0
Opt-in charged garden waste service	122,500	0	0	0	0	0
Car parking income from a review of charges	180,000	0	0	0	0	0
Additional car parking income (to reflect current increase in use in 2017/18)	40,000	0	0	0	0	0
Public Conveniences	0	50,000	0	0	0	0
Review of Accommodation/Office requirements (effective 1 April 2018)	82,000	0	0	0	0	0
Kilworthy Park - reduction in operating costs	0	0	50,000	0	0	0
Housing Benefit recoveries of overpayments (increase income target to reflect actual income being achieved)	85,000	50,000	0	0	0	0
Cessation of accepting cash and cheques (effective 1 April 2018)	35,000	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Fees (increase income target to reflect actual income being achieved)	15,000	50,000	0	0	0	0
Senior Leadership Team - Interim arrangement	0	34,000	0	0	0	0
Reduction in Partnership funding (Minute CM24 - Council 24th July 2018)	15,330	14,000	0	0	0	0
Extra treasury management income	20,000	0	20,000	0	0	0
Trade waste income	15,000	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate consultancy income	0	20,000	0	0	0	0
Introduction of Direct Lets Scheme	10,000	12,000	0	0	0	0
Energy Certification for Eco Schemes	0	10,000	0	0	0	0
Paperless Committee agendas	3,500	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Reduction Scheme - 8.6% reduction in Town and Parish Grant	6,100	5,500	59,000	0	0	0
Charging for duty planning service	6,500	3,500	0	0	0	0
Advertising on websites and e-bulletins	0	3,500	0	0	0	0
Charging for food advice/ environmental health fees and charges	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
Savings from the re-procurement of the Insurance contract	35,000	0	0	0	0	0
Review corporate training budgets	0	15,000	0	0	0	0
Reduction in ICT contracts	0	12,000	16,000	0	0	0
Implement e-billing in council tax	0	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Saving on external audit fees for 2018-19	8,000	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION</b>	<b>783,930</b>	<b>684,700</b>	<b>266,200</b>	<b>171,200</b>	<b>391,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>

Note - Items shaded in Grey denote the savings and additional income considered at the Members' Budget Workshop which have received support from the Members' Budget Survey (Exempt Appendix C of the report to the Hub Committee in December 2018)

<b>Modelling assumptions: Assumes Council Tax is increased by 2.99% annually and that negative Revenue Support Grant is eliminated in 19/20 (as proposed in the 2019/20 Finance Settlement)</b>						
Line	BASE	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr 4	Yr5
No.	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23	2023/24 £
No. Modelling for the financial years 2018/19 onwards						
1 Base budget brought forward	7,423,225	7,313,795	7,049,096	6,743,654	6,920,962	7,157,890
2 Budget pressures (as per Appendix A)	674,500	420,000	465,000	260,000	260,000	335,000
3 Savings already identified (as per Appendix A)	(783,930)	(684,700)	(266,200)	(171,200)	(391,200)	(1,200)
<b>4 Projected Net Expenditure:</b>	<b>7,313,795</b>	<b>7,049,095</b>	<b>7,247,896</b>	<b>6,832,454</b>	<b>6,789,762</b>	<b>7,491,690</b>
<b>Funded By:-</b>						
5 <b>Council Tax income</b> - Modelling a 2.99% increase in council tax each year (Taxbase 19/20 = 20,176.57 Band D Equivalent properties)	4,524,706	4,673,499	4,851,289	5,035,597	5,226,525	5,424,590
6 Collection Fund Surplus	96,000	84,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
7 Revenue Support Grant (Nil from 2018/19 onwards)	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 Localised Business Rates (baseline funding level - includes Rural Services Delivery Grant of £464,365 in 2018/19 due to Pilot status)	2,049,573	1,620,367	1,661,000	1,704,000	1,750,000	1,790,000
9 Tariff/Top Up Adjustment amount (negative RSG - assume Nil in 19/20)	0	0	(293,000)	(293,000)	(293,000)	(293,000)
10 Business Rates - Pilot Gain	460,000	0	0	0	0	0
11 Funding from Rural Services Delivery Grant (included in line 8 for 2018/19)	0	464,365	464,365	464,365	464,365	464,365
12 Funding from New Homes Bonus	560,000	375,000	100,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
13 Less: Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	-60,000	-120,000	-120,000	-120,000	-120,000	-120,000
14 WDBC share of national Business Rates Levy surplus (one-off for 19/20)	0	25,000	0	0	0	0
15 Less: Contribution to Future Financial Stability Earmarked Reserve	-316,484	-73,135				
<b>16 Total Projected Funding Sources</b>	<b>7,313,795</b>	<b>7,049,096</b>	<b>6,743,654</b>	<b>6,920,962</b>	<b>7,157,890</b>	<b>7,395,955</b>
<b>Budget gap/(surplus) per year</b>						
17 (Projected Expenditure line 4 - Projected Funding line 16)	0	0	504,242	-88,509	-368,128	95,735
	0					
<b>Actual Predicted Cumulative Budget Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>504,242</b>	<b>415,733</b>	<b>47,605</b>	<b>143,341</b>
<b>Aggregated Budget Gap (if no action is taken in each individual year to close the budget gap annually)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>504,242</b>	<b>919,975</b>	<b>967,580</b>	<b>1,110,921</b>

<b>Modelling Assumptions: (Assumes an increase in Band D Equivalent properties of 160 per annum)</b>						
Council Tax (Band D) (an increase of 2.99% per annum has been modelled)	224.91	231.63	238.55	245.68	253.02	260.59
Council TaxBase	20,117.85	20,176.57	20,336.57	20,496.57	20,656.57	20,816.57

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## Local Government Finance Settlement analysis for West Devon Borough Council

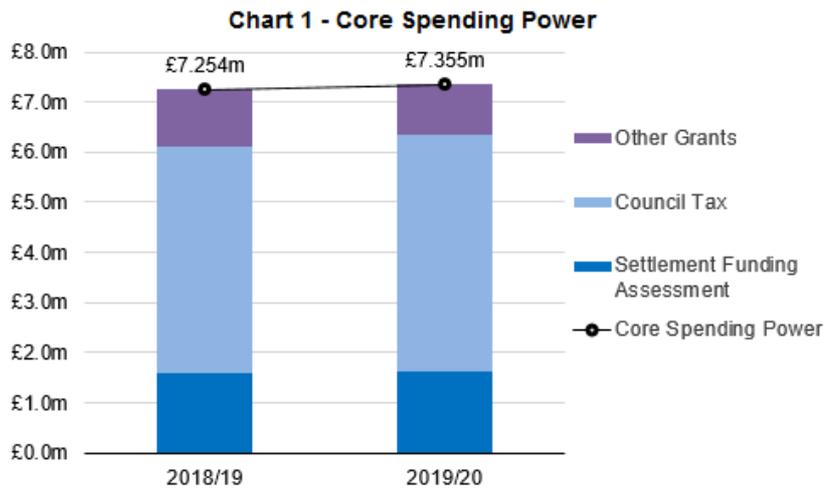
### West Devon - Core Spending Power (£m)

Core Spending Power	2018/2019 (£m)	2019/2020 (£m)	Change %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7.254</b>	<b>7.355</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Breakdown of amounts:</b>			
Business Rates	1.585	1.622	2.3%
Revenue Support Grant	Nil	Nil	-
Assumed Council Tax (this is a Government assumed figure, not the actual council tax raised)	4.525	4.716	4.2%
<b>Other Grants</b>	1.144	1.017	-11.1%
(Includes Rural Services Delivery Grant of £0.464m each year and the New Homes Bonus allocation which has decreased from £0.643m in 18/19 to £0.501m in 19/20)			
Other: Levy surplus returned (National Business Rates surplus money)		0.025	(not part of the Core Spending Power calculation)

The figures quoted in the Finance Settlement will be on the basis of Core Spending Power (the terminology used by the Government) and therefore it will be stated in the finance settlement that West Devon Borough Council has had a 1.4% increase in funding.

However from the analysis of the calculation, it can be seen that the majority of this increase in funding is coming from an assumed Council Tax increase of 4.2%. (This Government figure will be based on the assumption that Councils will increase their council tax by the limit of 2.99%, plus building in some property growth).

The rest of the increase is mainly due to an increase in Business Rates funding for 2019/20, less a reduction in New Homes Bonus funding.



**How much has West Devon’s Government funding decreased by over the last four years?**

Answer: 38.2% since 2016/17, as shown below. The chart shows how much reduction in funding the Council has had since 2016/17. This shows the reduction in Revenue Support Grant (to Nil in 2018/19 onwards) and funding from Business Rates. Council Tax funding is excluded from these calculations.

**Chart 2 – Reduction in Funding Charts - Change in Settlement Funding Assessment (Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant) by class of Local Authority**

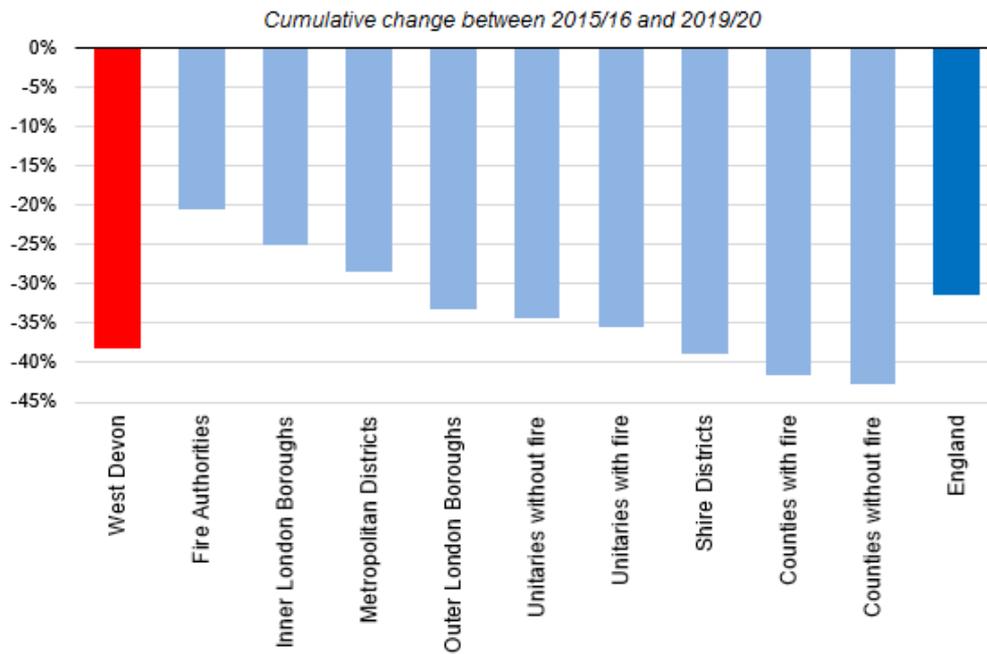
*Overall over the four year funding settlement, it can be seen that West Devon has had a 38.2% reduction in Government funding. This compares against 38.8% for the average for Shire Districts.*

Note: The reason that West Devon is showing an increase of 2.3% in its Government funding in 2019/20 is because in both of the years 18/19 and 19/20, the Council received Nil Revenue Support Grant and therefore the chart just shows the 2.3% increase in the Business Rates Baseline. (There is no reduction in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to offset this, as the RSG is already Nil in both years).

Authority group	Services			Change in SFA from previous year				Cumulative change since 2015/16
	Lower tier	Upper tier	Fire	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
West Devon	✓			-18.7%	-17.3%	-10.0%	2.3%	-38.2%
Unitaries without fire	✓	✓		-13.6%	-11.5%	-7.1%	-7.5%	-34.4%
Metropolitan Districts	✓	✓		-10.9%	-9.0%	-5.6%	-6.4%	-28.4%
Inner London Boroughs	✓	✓		-9.6%	-7.8%	-4.7%	-5.6%	-25.1%
Outer London Boroughs	✓	✓		-13.0%	-11.0%	-6.8%	-7.4%	-33.2%
Unitaries with fire	✓	✓	✓	-13.6%	-11.8%	-7.4%	-8.4%	-35.4%
Counties with fire		✓	✓	-16.7%	-15.1%	-9.9%	-8.6%	-41.7%
Counties without fire		✓		-17.0%	-15.0%	-9.9%	-9.9%	-42.7%
Shire Districts	✓			-16.9%	-15.0%	-8.0%	-5.8%	-38.8%
Fire Authorities			✓	-6.8%	-8.9%	-4.1%	-2.4%	-20.6%
England				-12.4%	-10.6%	-6.3%	-6.5%	-31.4%

## Reduction in SFA (Settlement Funding Assessment) between 2015/16 and 2019/20

Note: Settlement Funding Assessment is made up of Business Rates funding and Revenue Support Grant (Government Grant) – Revenue Support Grant was reduced to Nil in 2018/19 for West Devon Borough Council



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# Agenda Item 9

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
Date: **15 January 2019**  
Title: **Corporate Strategy Key Performance Indicators**  
Portfolio Area: **Resources and Performance**  
Wards Affected: **All Wards**  
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N**

Date next steps can be taken: **Hub and Council**  
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

Author: **Nadine Trout** Role: **Commissioning Manager**

Contact: [Nadine.Trout@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Nadine.Trout@swdevon.gov.uk)

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee RECOMMENDS to the Hub Committee to endorse the proposed actions as detailed in section 5 of this report.**

### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 This report is presented by the portfolio holder for Resources and Performance and details progress made to date in developing key performance indicators.

1.2 The report also includes recommended next steps to improve Corporate Strategy reporting.

### **2. Background**

2.1 In May 2018 Council adopted a new Corporate Strategy including a core purpose, guiding principles and six high level themes to guide Council delivery over the next 5 years, see Appendix A.

2.2 Throughout the summer of 2018 the Corporate Strategy themes were promoted to local residents via roadshows and an online engagement portal where residents were encouraged to share their views. Responses were varied but common responses focused on the need for truly affordable local housing, the need for car parking in new developments and the importance of keeping the Borough clean and tidy.

- 2.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 October 2018 agreed to the formation of a Corporate Strategy KPI Task and Finish Group comprising Councillors Cheadle, Moody and Pearce. On 7 November 2018 the Task and Finish Group met to discuss potential KPIs, the session was chaired by Cllr Edmonds in his capacity as Resources and Performance portfolio holder with COP leaders in attendance.
- 2.4 A Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Review visit took place 27-30 November 2018. A key element of the Peer Review being to provide feedback on the Council's understanding of local context and priority setting.

### **3 Outcomes/outputs**

- 3.1 The Task and Finish Group identified a set of key performance indicators, see Appendix B.
- 3.2 The Peer Review recognised work on the Corporate Strategy to date but suggested the Council needed to set a powerful vision for the next 5-10 years, and develop clearer strategies aligned to each Corporate theme.

### **4 Options available and consideration of risk**

#### **4.1 Do nothing option**

The Council could chose to disregard the initial findings of the Peer Review. However, in doing so the Council would be failing to act on valuable feedback and a chance to hone and improve Council strategy and performance.

#### **4.2 Take action option**

By setting steps as detailed in section 5 the Council is proactively responding to Peer Review feedback and more importantly creating clear strategies in line with each corporate theme. It is therefore deemed appropriate to pursue this option.

### **5. Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1 It is recognised the KPIs in Appendix B are a good starting point, can help inform the 2018/19 Annual Report, and are useful for officers and Members to check operational performance at any given time and track performance trends. However, more work is needed to articulate desired outcomes for our communities under each of the corporate strategic themes so that Members can scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives for our communities.
- 5.2 It is therefore suggested officers develop each of the corporate themes by pulling together a comprehensive audit per theme encompassing the following for Spring 2019:
- a) Evidence
  - b) Service offering
  - c) Policies
  - d) Projects and action plans

- e) Stakeholders and Partners
- f) Lead officers and Members
- g) Objectives and Outcomes

- 5.3 Once officers have completed this initial data gathering exercise it is suggested Members and residents are canvassed for their views via targeted focus groups.
- 5.4 A clear set of strategies per theme could then be drafted and presented to Council at the beginning of the new political term and form an integral part of the Member induction process.
- 5.5 From June 2019 onwards Overview and Scrutiny focus on one of the corporate themes each meeting and look in depth at how the Council is performing against the objectives and outcomes set out in the strategy. It is suggested scrutiny of each theme would not be limited to only performance statistics; but also feedback from customers and stakeholders and updates from relevant portfolio leads including upcoming service improvements.
- 5.6 Adopting the above approach would negate the need for ad hoc reports being presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and quarterly monitoring reports covering all services. Instead reports would be collated and presented by corporate theme and in doing so would be set in context and provide a more thorough overview of each theme.
- 5.7 Operational performance indicators, including those listed in Appendix B, will continue to be published on the Council's performance management system which is accessible to all Members who may review any of the indicators at any time.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Overview & Scrutiny Committee have a responsibility to assist the Council in identifying areas for improvement and to make any necessary recommendations to the Hub and Council.
Financial	Y	There are no financial implication as a result of this report that have not already been budgeted for.
Risk	Y	A failure to review and act upon Peer Review feedback could lead to: Lack of coherent delivery Reputational harm Ineffective use of resources Poor quality service These risks are mitigated by: The recommendations outlined in this report

Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Safeguarding		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None – no policy or service change is proposed in this report.
Other implications		-

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – West Devon Corporate Strategy

Appendix B – Corporate Strategy KPIs

# 5 year Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2023



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

## Our Core Purpose

To make a positive impact on the lives of local people by providing valued and easy to use services.

## Our Guiding Principles

- ▶ Provide value for money and good customer service
- ▶ Be open, honest, listening and responsive
- ▶ Work with partners and communities for mutual benefit
- ▶ Be open minded and embrace change

## Our Challenges

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- ▶ Withdrawal of core central government funding
- ▶ Setting a balanced budget without cutting statutory services
- ▶ It costs more to deliver services in a rural area
- ▶ High house prices and a dwindling working age population
- ▶ Managing development without compromising our high quality natural and built environment

## How we will measure success

- ▶ Provide key performance indicators for each corporate strategy theme
- ▶ Benchmark performance against national standards
- ▶ Monitor progress quarterly through our Overview & Scrutiny process
- ▶ Refine service standards through targeted annual delivery plans
- ▶ Report annually through our Annual Report process

## Corporate Strategy Themes

### COUNCIL

Delivering efficient and effective services



### HOMES

Enabling homes that meet the needs of all



### ENTERPRISE

Creating places for enterprise to thrive and business to grow



### COMMUNITIES

Council and residents working together to create strong and empowered communities



### ENVIRONMENT

Protecting, conserving and enhancing our built and natural environment



### WELLBEING

Supporting positive, safe and healthy lifestyles and helping those most in need



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## SUGGESTED TASK & FINISH CORPORATE STRATEGY KPIs

**Text highlighted in yellow notes national performance figures available and are shown at the end of this document**

### Council

#### Delivering efficient and effective services

- ◆ Increase customer satisfaction, **target to exceed the national local council average**<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Increase right first time services, **target to exceed the national local council average**<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Increase keeping customers informed, **target to exceed the national local council average**<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Increase council tax collection, **target top national quartile**
- ◆ Value for money, **target to achieve an independent value for money opinion**
- ◆ Council income/expenditure, **target within x% variance**

<sup>1</sup> 63.4 points, or by 5 points per annum; <sup>2</sup> 56.3% (could also use complaints data); <sup>3</sup> 6.2 points

### Homes

#### Enabling homes that meet the needs of all

- ◆ Affordable homes delivered, **target\***
- ◆ Total homes delivered, **target\***
- ◆ Community housing initiatives, **target of 15 units over 5 Years**
- ◆ Homelessness prevention, **20% increase in number of preventions**
- ◆ Temporary accommodation, **15% reduction in temporary accommodation use**

\*Figures to be informed by JLP targets and not to include the Dartmoor National Park – figs hopefully available by March i.e. adoption of JLP

### Enterprise

#### Creating places for enterprise to thrive and business to grow

- ◆ Business unit rental, **target of 80% business rental achieved**
- ◆ Businesses support, **target to deliver support to over 60 businesses**
- ◆ Business rates **target increase collection rates by x**
- ◆ Employment land brought forward, **target\***

\* Figures to be informed by JLP targets and not to include the Dartmoor National Park

### Communities

#### Council and residents working together to create strong and empowered communities

- ◆ S106 community based funding, **target achieve 100% spend**
- ◆ Neighbourhood plans, **target complete 100% of plans within timeframe\***
- ◆ Community led car parking tariffs, **target work with 4 communities over next 5 years**
- ◆ Devolution of council owned assets (public conveniences) **target?**
- ◆ Promote Lotto, **target raise x for local good causes?**

\*6 weeks for Regulation16 and within 8 weeks for a referendum

### Environment

#### Protecting, conserving and enhancing our built and natural environment

- ◆ Listed building consent, **target 80% of applications within timeframe\***
- ◆ Planning enforcement, **target 100% investigations in line with policy**
- ◆ Speed of planning decisions, **target 80% of applications processed in a timely manner\***
- ◆ Energy efficiency, **target 100 household grants awarded**

## Environment continued

- Missed bins, **target less than 75 missed bins per 100,000**
- Recycling, **target increase 55% baseline for recycling and composting of household waste**
- Fly tip enforcement, **target 100% enforcement fly tips on public land where evidence is present**

\* planning applications processed within 8 weeks or agreed time - minor developments

## Wellbeing

Supporting positive, safe and healthy lifestyles and helping those most in need

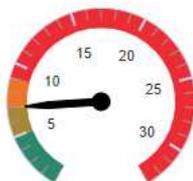
- Food safety, **target 85% with a hygiene rating of 5 stars**
- Disabled facility grants, **target process 100% applications within timeframe**
- Benefit claims processing times, **target top national quartile**
- Housing waiting list, **target reduce by x**
- Households in temporary accommodation, **target reduce by x**
- Leisure centre use, **target increased participation at council owned leisure centres**

## West Devon Boroug Council compared to national performance

West Devon compared to All English district local authorities Quantiles dashboard



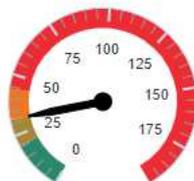
Time taken to process housing benefit change events 2018/19 Q1



7 Mean



Total households on the housing waiting list at 1st April per 1,000 households 2016/17



31.7 per 1,000 households



Number of households living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households (Quarterly) 2017/18 Q4



0.2 per 1,000



% of planning applications processed within 8 weeks or agreed time - minor developments - Quarterly 2017/18 Q4



93 %



Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting 2016/17



53.80 %



Council tax not collected as a percentage of council tax due 2017/18



2.42 %



## **Concluding Report of the Northern Link Area Outreach Services Task and Finish Group**

### **Introduction**

The permanently manned WDBC Okehampton office in St James Street was closed in the Spring of 2018 and replaced by the introduction of a part time service from the Ockment Centre. Members raised concerns on whether this may have impacted unreasonably on residents in the Okehampton area and the O&S Committee therefore agreed to establish a Task & Finish Group to investigate and report.

### **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference of the T&F Group were agreed and were:

This T&F Group will undertake a review of the current service being provided to the residents of Okehampton and outlying areas by the arrangements now in place and form a view on whether any changes are warranted. A report, with any recommendations considered appropriate will be presented to the O&S committee in January 2019.

The review will take the opportunity to consult as widely as possible with residents, officers and agencies in coming to their conclusions. It will also, where appropriate, look at data collected relevant to the service before and since the change to see whether service levels are being captured appropriately and whether these reflect actual experience.

### **Membership**

The membership of the T&F Group were:

Cllr Ric Cheadle - Chair  
Cllr Julie Yelland  
Cllr Tony Leech  
Cllr Lois Samuel  
Cllr Caroline Mott  
Cllr Mike Davies  
Cllr Kevin Ball

### **T&F Group Modus Operandi**

T&F members agreed that evidence would be collated from a variety of sources. A questionnaire was posted on WDBC's website and advertised in the local paper inviting residents to respond, a number of agencies active in the Okehampton area and known to have had used the services available from the St James Street office were targeted and invited to complete a more detailed questionnaire and Members were at liberty to collect evidence from their constituents. In addition, Mrs Lord, who mans the Ockment Centre, was interviewed and an enquiry also made to the Call Centre to ask if issues connected with the service change had been raised when residents rang WDBC for assistance.

## **Timescale**

In order to be able to report early in January 2019, it was agreed that the evidence to support the study should be gathered by mid December 2018.

## **Evidence**

The results of the questionnaire are at Annex A and Agency responses received at Annex B and the results of a separate survey arranged by Cllr Leech is at Annex C. Notes of the interview with Mrs Lord who mans the Ockment Centre office are at Annex D. Evidence from other quarters are discussed in the body of the report.

## **The Report**

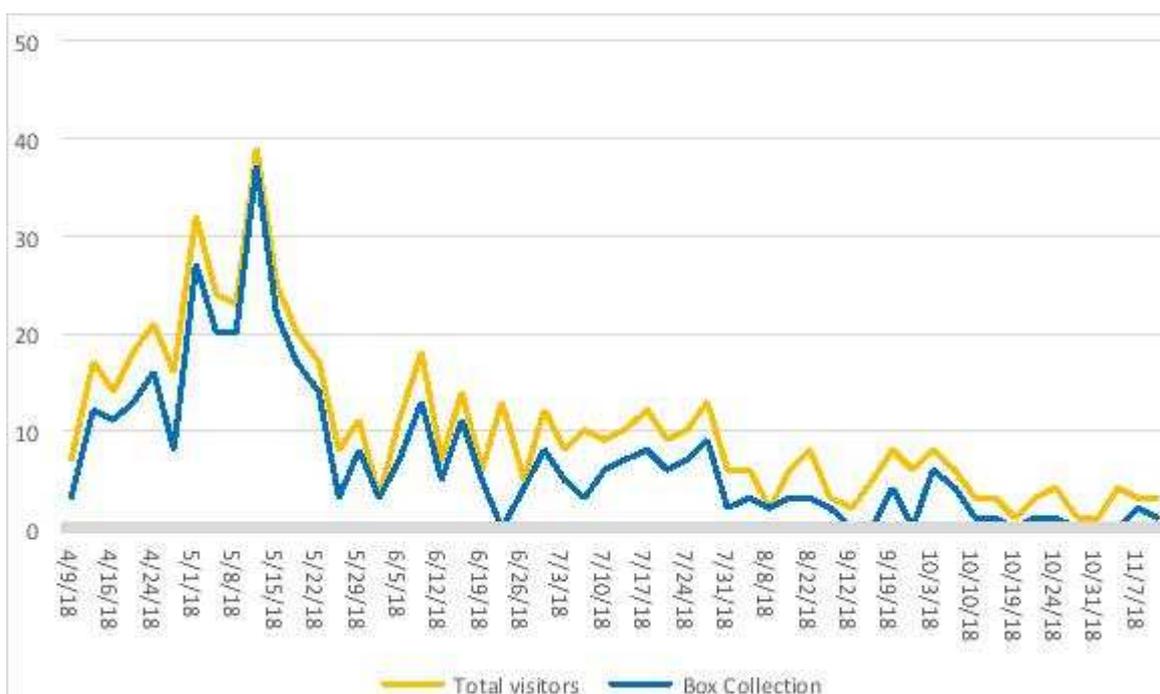
The decision to close the St James Street office in Okehampton and move from a permanent (5 day) manned service to a part time (2 day) service operated from the Ockment Centre was made early in 2018 in response to budget pressures.

This decision coincided with two others; the first was the ending of cash and cheque payments being made by residents (in order for WDBC to move to electronic banking) and the second was to require residents to separate recyclable refuse into separate containers. These two decisions were relevant as the first would reduce the footfall through the Okehampton office and the second, in the short term, would increase it as many residents required to collect the 'second' recycling box.

Having made the move to the Ockment Centre in April 2018 and agreed to man the new office on a two day per week basis, manning arrangements were amended to reduce this to one day per week for the month of August as the footfall was anticipated to be low. Since then, the office has been manned on a two day per week basis.

A summary of the footfall through the Ockment Centre between September and November (the visits log) is shown below and a spreadsheet showing the reason for each visit is at

Annex C. This clearly shows the impact of the need to manage the supply of recycling boxes diminishing as residents' demands were satisfied resulting in the steady state of



around 2 -3 visits on each day the Centre was manned. There were no similar statistics for the St James Street footfall although given that one of the main reasons people would have visited would have been to make cash payments, having ceased this service, a like-for-like comparison would have been difficult to make.

Analysts of residents' comments on the questionnaire and the visits log illustrate a predictably mixed picture. There is no doubt that a number of those who responded feel that the reduction in their access to a 'face-to-face' interaction with WDBC is a loss but little evidence that this has prevented their ability to resolve the issues they had and from the responses it was possible to draw the view that some did not realise an alternative had been introduced. There was, however, a concern expressed that the alternative to a 'face-to-face meeting', to contact WDBC via the Call Centre, was far from satisfactory. This broad view was echoed in some of the Okehampton based Agency responses who largely viewed the change as negative as under the previous arrangements they could access local WD staff directly (who would in turn, chase problems) but now, more often, they too needed to do so via the Call Centre.

The T&F Group drew the conclusion that residents' frustration with WDBC was principally with the 'Call Centre approach' heralded in by T18 rather than as a direct result of reducing the Okehampton Office hours. To validate this conclusion, the Call Centre Manager was asked whether reference to the reduction in the Okehampton service was a cause of concern raised by those contacting the Call Centre and it was not.

The current footfall through the Ockment Centre is small (around 3 visits each day) and the T&F Group accepted that this was a reflection of the deliberate move away from face-to-face business transactions towards electronic and telephone interaction. The T&F Group were, however, concerned that residents may not have appreciated that the Ockment Centre offered an alternative. It is not signposted nor is any reference made to it on the Ockment

Centre itself. The survey arranged by Cllr Leech was answered by 46 residents, 34 of which had not registered the change and were therefore unaware of the alternative arrangements.

The change in the Okehampton office service cannot be seen in isolation of other changes and it became clear that on occasions, the Locality Officer would now visit less mobile residents in order to assist with issues (such as document transfer etc).

It is clear that not all residents are 'e-business' proficient and not all have respectable broadband speed. Although the majority of residents contacting WDBC have acclimatised to the changes brought in by T18, a small number have not, and some residents rely on being able to meet with a member of WD staff to resolve issues. It must be of some concern that it is undoubtedly those who struggle the most with change such as 'e-business' may be the very people who are vulnerable and in most need of our support. Indeed, the very people we would wish to have heard from may be those who either would not, or could not, complete an on-line survey.

## Conclusions

- 1. The number of residents visiting the Ockment Centre to interface with WDBC is small in comparison to the total number of interactions between residents and WDBC. Given the footfall, there would appear to be no case to revert to a more permanent presence;**
- 2. It does not appear that the changes (of location and hours of availability) have been well communicated and the current service is not well advertised. WDBC should consider how to address this concern; and**
- 3. There are clearly residents, and not solely in the Okehampton area, who will struggle to communicate and manage transactions electronically. For these residents, the alternative, if face-to-face meetings are less available, is the telephone and there is evidence both in this report and elsewhere that WDBC needs to improve this aspect of its business.**

## Supporting Documents:

Annex A - WD Website Questionnaire responses

Annex B - Agency responses

Annex C - Cllr Leech's Survey

Annex D - Notes of visit to Ockment Centre (16/11/18)

OCKMENT CENTRE LOG

DATE	NUMBER OF VISITORS	BENEFITS	CT	WASTE RECYC	BOXES	STREETS	HOUSING	PLANNING	DCC	OTHER/NOTES	LOCATION
09/04/18	7			2		3		1		1	
13/04/18	17			4		12		1			
16/04/18	14	1		1		11		1			
20/04/18	18			2	1	13		1		1 Homeless	
24/04/18	21	2			1	16				1 Homeless. 1 Licencing	
27/04/18	16	2		2	1	8		3			
01/05/18	32	3			1	27				1 homeless	
04/05/18	24	3				20				1 homeless	
08/05/18	23	1		2		20					
11/05/18	39	1		1		37					
15/05/18	25	3				22					
18/05/18	20					17		3			
22/05/18	17	1		1		14		1			
25/05/18	8			3		3		2			
29/05/18	11	2		1		8					
01/06/18	3					3					
05/06/18	11	1		1		7		1		1 x EH Noise nuisance issue	
08/06/18	18	1		3		13		1			
12/06/18	7					5		2			
15/06/18	14	2		1		11					
19/06/18	6	1				5					
22/06/18	13	2		3	3			4		1 x GM query	
26/06/18	5	1				4					
29/06/18	12	1		1		8		2			
03/07/18	8	1		1		5		1			
06/07/18	10			3		3		4			
10/07/18	9	2			1	6					
13/07/18	10	2		1		7					
17/07/18	12	2		1		8			1		
20/07/18	9			3		6					
24/07/18	10	2		1		7					
27/07/18	13	2		2		9					
31/07/18	6	3				2		1			
03/08/18	6	1		1		3		1			
08/08/18	2					2					
15/08/18	6	1		1		3		1			
22/08/18	8	4		1		3				note 4 Benefits were advisory letters for rent increase from Liverty	
05/09/18	3					2		1			1 x Oke
12/09/18	2	1			1						1 x Oke 1 x H'leigh
14/09/18	5	2		1	2						5xOke
19/09/18	8	3			1	4					7 x Oke 1 x Ntawton
21/09/18	6	1		2	3						3 x Oke, 1 each Chagford, Sticklepath and Hatherleigh
03/10/18	8	1		1		6					7 x Oke, 1 x Spreyton
05/10/18	6	2				4					5 x Oke, 1 x Hatherleigh
10/10/18	3	2				1					2xOke, 1 x Throwleigh
12/10/18	3					1		2			3 x Oke,
24/10/18	4	3				1					4 x Oke
26/10/18	1							1			1 x Oke
31/10/18	1							1			1 x Oke
02/11/18	4	2		2							4 x Oke
07/11/18	3			1		2					3 x Oke
09/11/18	3			1	1	1					3 x Oke

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**Concluding Report of the Northern Link Area Outreach Services Task and Finish Group: Annex C - survey conducted by Cllr Leech**

The two questions asked were:

Were you aware that WBDC help customer service days in the Ockment centre?  
Have you seen any advertising for this service?

From 46 responses:

34 said no to both questions.

2 said yes to both, one of which said that it was via word of mouth only.

6 comments. These ranged from concerns about the WBDC telephone system, concerns about arranging for recycling boxes and waste removal, one saying that although they contacted WD by phone, they were not told that they could collect recycling boxes from the Ockment Centre and one response was unrepeatable.

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## **Concluding Report of the Northern Link Area Outreach Services Task and Finish Group: Annex D - Notes from Ockment Centre visit**

Cllr Yelland and I visited the Ockment Centre today (16th Nov) and met with Dil Lord and Richard Easthope. We took the opportunity to also meet with CAB. The CVS office was not manned.

Notes were:

Since the St James Office closed, the Ockment Centre office has been manned two days a week (Wed & Fri) with the exception of a month in the summer when it was judged that the footfall only merited one day a week.

The current footfall is 'around 3 per day'. It has fallen considerably now that the 'second recycling bin' initiative is no longer a cause of visits. One other factor for the reduction is that where people have difficulty visiting Okehampton, the Locality team, being mobile, is able to conduct 'home visits' to resolve issues.

The CAB saw the change as negative. Previously they could refer some CAB callers to the St James Street WDBC team who would then access specialist staff within WD to resolve issues such as homelessness. Now, this involves the CAB making the call and this, they claim, often results in the call going unanswered and delay in sorting out issues. We concluded that this was more an issue of the processes within WD than a function of the manning of the WD Okehampton office.

The Ockment Centre is not well 'signposted' (in fact there are no physical signs at all externally or internally) whereas the St James Street Centre was well established and therefore well known. The reception staff at the Ockment Centre do their best to help 'guide' people. Given that the WD office is only manned two days each week, visitors to the Centre looking to access WD support inevitable end up at the CAB door. We asked if there was data to assess the change on the CAB but there wasn't and the view was therefore anecdotal. (While not a matter for this review, it was considered that a separate action to look at how the CAB access WD Officers may be worthwhile).

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – February to April 2019

Date of Meeting	Report	Lead Officer / Member
26 February 2019	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Kathy Trant / Cllr Sanders
	Planning Enforcement Plan / Protocol and Actions – Review	Pat Whymer / Cllr Roberts
	Joint Local Plan Update ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Tom Jones / Cllr Mott
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Lisa Buckle / Cllr Jory
	Fusion Annual Report	Jon Parkinson / Cllr Sampson
	Q3 Performance Indicators	Jim Davis / Cllr Edmonds
	Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	Louisa Daley / Cllr Samuel
	Customer Satisfaction Progress Update ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Nadine Trout / Cllr Roberts
	Safeguarding Update	Louisa Daley / Cllr Leech
Page 81 April 2019	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Kathy Trant / Cllr Sanders
	Joint Local Plan Update ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Tom Jones / Cllr Mott
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Lisa Buckle / Cllr Jory
	Customer Satisfaction Progress Update ( <i>standing agenda item</i> )	Nadine Trout / Cllr Roberts
	Draft O+S Annual Report 2018/19	Darryl White

Future Item(s) to be programmed:  
Community Housing Briefing (Rob Ellis)

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