

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 26th February, 2019** at **2.30 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Yelland
Vice Chairman Cllr Cheadle

Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Kimber
Cllr Moody
Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Sellis

Cllr Evans
Cllr McInnes
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Parker
Cllr Ridgers

In attendance:

Councillors:
Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Mott

Cllr Leech
Cllr Sanders

Officers:
Head of Paid Service
Group Manager – Customer First & Support Services
Section 151 Officer
Community Safety Specialist – South Devon & Dartmoor
Community Safety Partnership
Community Safety Partnership Chair

88. **Apologies for Absence**

* O&S 88

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs D W Cloke and J Sheldon

89. **Confirmation of Minutes - Meeting held on 15 January 2019**

* O&S 89

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 January 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

90. **Declarations of Interest**

* O&S 90

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

91. **Chairman's Announcement**

* O&S 91

The Chairman advised the meeting that a formal Scrutiny Proposal Form had recently been received from Cllr Parker (with the support of Cllrs Baldwin, Ball, Evans, Jory, Moody, Oxborough and Sellis).

Whilst using the recent proposal to construct a Hotel on the Abbey Rise Car Park, Tavistock as a learning example, the request had sought to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the procedures for proposing Development funded by the Borough Council.

In line with the adopted procedure, it was a requirement for such proposals to be determined within 7 days by a 'Panel' comprising of the Head of Paid Service; the Group Manager Support Services and Customer First (in his capacity as the Scrutiny Lead Officer); and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

In this instance, the 'Panel' had decided that this proposal should not be allowed for reasons that included:

- the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) having already been commissioned to undertake a review. As part of this review, it was intended that each of those Members who had supported the Proposal Form would be given the opportunity to be interviewed;
- reference to the design and impact on the Heritage Status of the Abbey Rise Car Park proposals. If funding had been approved for these proposals, then matters including design and impact on the Heritage Status would then have been dealt with in detail as part of the planning process;
- the future use of Unstarred Minutes. As a governance matter, it had been concluded that the Political Structures Working Group would be a more appropriate forum to consider this matter (as opposed to a Member Task and Finish Group);
- the importance of the review being concluded before the May 2019 elections. To ensure that this was achieved, it was intended that the review would be considered at the following formal meetings:-
 - o the Hub Committee meeting on 19 March 2019;
 - o a single agenda item Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting at 9.00am on 26 March 2019; and
 - o the full Council meeting at 4.00pm on 26 March 2019.

In reaching this decision, the Chairman stated that the strength of feeling that had been provoked by the recent proposals at the Abbey Rise Car Park and Okehampton Retail Hospitality Pod was very much appreciated. However, in the interests of transparency and fairness (and the overriding wish for the review to be completed before the elections), the proposed way forward had been concluded by the 'Panel' to be the most appropriate means of conducting a review.

Whilst she was not willing to invite questions (or debate) on this matter at this time, the Chairman did advise that she had received some questions prior to this meeting for which the Head of Paid Service would provide a reply. In so doing, the Head of Paid Service informed that:

- immediately after the Council decision had been taken on 12 February 2019 (Minute CM 54 a iv refers), the lead Hub Committee Member had requested that the Head of Paid Service and the Section 151 Officer commission the DAP to undertake an independent review;
- the Terms of Reference for the review would be circulated to Members upon the conclusion of this meeting; and
- the review would cost up to a maximum of £4,000. However, since the Commercial Property Strategy had already been identified as a project for inclusion in the Audit Plan for 2019/20, it was hoped that the total cost would be somewhat lower than £4,000 and ways of negating the costs were being discussed with the DAP.

92. **Public Forum**

* O&S 92

There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session.

93. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

* O&S 93

Members considered the latest version of the Hub Committee Forward Plan and noted its contents without any further comment.

94. **Leisure Contract - Fusion Annual Report 2018**

* O&S 94

It was noted that the Fusion Annual Report for 2018 had been deferred for consideration at the next Committee meeting on 2 April 2019.

95. **Community Safety Partnership**

* O&S 95

The Committee considered a report that provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as defined by Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) performance measuring. When questioned, the Chair of the CSP confirmed that it was incredibly difficult to quantify the success of the Partnership. However, the Chair proceeded to cite a number of qualitative examples of good practice and successes that had been achieved by the CSP;
- (b) levels of resources being allocated to the CSP. When questioned, the representatives advised that the levels of resources that were allocated to the South Devon and Dartmoor CSP were comparable with the other CSP's across Devon. In addition, the Committee was assured that all of the CSP's in the county worked collaboratively to maximise their effectiveness;
- (c) the County Lines practice. By way of an update, the representatives informed that County Lines remained a significant challenge to all CSP's and the importance of working in a multi-agency partnership approach was emphasised. Some Members expressed the view that there was an increasing need for Central Government to be lobbied in an attempt to obtain additional funding to address County Lines. In terms of the most appropriate means of lobbying, it was felt that a Member should be encouraged to submit a Motion to a future meeting of the Full Council. In light of the extent of the concerns raised, the Committee requested that a Member Briefing on County Lines be held in the upcoming months. Furthermore, the request was also made for a link to be circulated to all Members that signposted them to the 'bite size training sessions on the implications of County Lines and Cuckooing' that were referred to in the published agenda report;
- (d) the re-introduction of 'Tavistock Matters' meetings. A local Ward Member asked for her thanks to be formally recorded at the decision to re-introduce the 'Tavistock Matters' meetings;
- (e) relationships with secondary schools. The Committee was advised that the CSP had developed excellent working relationships with the secondary schools in the area. As a result, these relationships were widely recognised throughout Devon as being examples of best practice;
- (f) CSP meetings. The Council's appointed Member Representative on the CSP highlighted the vast number of activities that were covered by the Partnership. In extending praise to the representatives, the Member also emphasised that the meetings of the CSP were both effective and very well attended;
- (g) the importance of local Ward Members. In stressing the importance of grass roots intelligence, Members were also encouraged to report any potentially untoward incidents via the online form on the Police website. Members also requested that they be in receipt of regular intelligence updates from the CSP.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be supported and the comments expressed in the recorded minutes (above) be taken forward.

96. **Safeguarding Update**

* O&S 96

Members considered a report that provided an opportunity to scrutinise and review Safeguarding practice and procedure following an Internal Audit review in October 2017 that concluded that Safeguarding should be highlighted as a standalone topic due to its complexity.

During discussion, both the lead Hub Committee Member and the Members in attendance recognised the significance and relevance of Safeguarding and the proposal to receive an annual update was welcomed.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That Members:

1. review safeguarding as an annual standing agenda item;
2. contact the lead officer with any suggestions for other Safeguarding related items that should be included in the next published report;
3. note how the Council meets its Safeguarding duties and the consequent measures in place and associated risks;
4. support the inclusion of Safeguarding Briefings for Members after the local elections in May 2019; and
5. support a Safeguarding Policy review being undertaken during 2019/20.

97. **Quarter 3 Performance Measures**

* O&S 97

Members considered the Performance Measures for Quarter 3 for 2018/19 and noted that performance had generally continued at a high level, with only two measures ('% of Benefits change of circumstances completed online' and '% of calls answered in 20 seconds') necessitating an Exception Report for this Quarter.

In debate, the following points were raised:-

- (i) Any Members who were experiencing access issues with the Pentana app were encouraged to contact officers accordingly; and
- (ii) There was widespread support expressed for the proposed new format for displaying performance reports.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- 1. 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; and
- 2. That the proposed format has been considered and approved.

98. **Customer Satisfaction Progress Update: Standing Agenda Item**

* O&S 98

The Chairman exercised her discretion to defer consideration of the latest progress update to the Committee meeting on 2 April 2019.

99. **Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item**

* O&S 99

It was noted that no update would be given to this meeting.

100. **Financial Stability Review Group Update: Standing Agenda Item**

* O&S 100

It was noted that no update would be given to this meeting.

101. **Task and Finish Group Updates:**

O&S 101

(a) Northern Link Area Outreach Services

The Committee was presented with an updated report following its decision at the meeting held on 15 January 2019 that: *'the Task and Finish Group be reconvened to produce a number of evidence based recommendations that will then be reported back to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee'* (Minute *O&S 85 refers).

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

- (i) The Committee supported the suggestion whereby its standing agenda item on 'Customer Satisfaction Progress Updates' should include the wish to examine the level of communication between the Council and its customers. Members also requested that a detailed standalone agenda item be presented to the Committee on this matter within the next six months. This request was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, on being put to the vote, was declared **CARRIED**;

- (ii) A local Ward Member expressed his disappointment that, despite having asked on a number of separate occasions, there was still no adequate promotion or advertising of the Outreach Service that was being provided at the Ockment Centre. In response, officers reminded those in attendance that the Council's approved strategy was to encourage channel shift by reducing face to face contact whilst increasing online (self-serve) contact. Therefore, any such promotion of a face to face contact service was effectively in contradiction to the Council's strategy.

Nonetheless, the majority of Members still felt that the review that was to be instigated by the lead Hub Committee Member for Customer First should still include consideration of the advertising and promotion of any future service provision and a motion to reflect this view was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Hub Committee be **RECOMMENDED**:

1. That, evidenced by the low footfall through the Ockment Centre, the lead Member for Customer First instigates a review (that includes the advertising and promotion of any future service provision) on how future service provision in the Okehampton and outlying areas could be provided and brings forward proposals to the Hub Committee; and
2. To note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will undertake a detailed examination of the level of communication between the Council and its customers through face to face, telephone and the internet. (NB. this will also include those customers with limited access and/or skills of IT and will take the form of):
 - o The standing agenda item that the Committee received on Customer Satisfaction Progress Updates; and
 - o A detailed standalone agenda item being presented to the Committee within the next six months.

102. **Annual Work Programme 2018/19**

* O&S 102

The Chairman introduced the latest version of the Work Programme for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year and noted its content without any further debate.

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

* O&S 103

It was noted that the following Learning and Development opportunities had arisen from this meeting:-

- The need to convene a Member Briefing on County Lines in the upcoming months; and
- The wish for Safeguarding to be included during the 2019 Member Induction Programme.

The Meeting concluded at 5.15 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
