

WEST DEVON COUNCIL



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Council** held on **Tuesday, 17th December, 2019** at **2.00 pm** at the **Butchers'** **Hall, Tavistock PL19 0AL**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Leech
Vice Chairman Cllr Mott

Cllr Bolton	Cllr Bridgewater
Cllr Cheadle	Cllr Coulson
Cllr Crozier	Cllr Davies
Cllr Daniel	Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Ewings	Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Hipse	Cllr Jory
Cllr Kemp	Cllr Kimber
Cllr Moyse	Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Pearce	Cllr Ratcliffe
Cllr Renders	Cllr Ridgers
Cllr Samuel	Cllr Sellis
Cllr Southcott	Cllr Spettigue
Cllr Vachon	Cllr Wood

In attendance:

Officers:
Deputy Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer
Section 151 Officer
Director – Governance and Assurance
Director – Place and Enterprise

47. **Apologies for Absence**
CM 47
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K Ball, J B Moody and J Yelland.
48. **Declarations of Interest**
CM 48
The Mayor invited Members to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but there were none made.

49. **Confirmation of Minutes**

CM 49

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon the motion being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Council agree the Minutes of the 26 September 2019 Meeting and the 28 November 2019 Special Meeting as a true and correct record."

50. **To receive the Minutes of the following Committees, to note the delegated decisions and to consider the adoption of those recommendations which require approval:**

CM 50

a. Development Management and Licensing Committee – 29 October 2019

It was moved by Cllr T G Pearce, seconded by Cllr P Crozier and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 29 October 2019 meeting be received and noted".

b. Audit Committee – 29 October 2019

It was moved by Cllr M Davies, seconded by Cllr P Crozier and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 29 October 2019 meeting be received and noted".

c. Hub Committee – 5 November 2019

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr R Cheadle and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 5 November 2019 meeting be received and noted, with the exception of Unstarred Minutes HC 45 (part 3 only) and HC 48".

In respect of the Unstarred Minutes:

i. HC 45 Budget Update Report 2020/21 to 2024/25

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that, with effect from 1 April 2020, the Council Tax Support Grant be withdrawn from Town and Parish Councils by 100% as part of the budget setting process."

ii. HC 48 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Council continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 with no changes."

d. Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 November 2019

It was moved by Cllr M V L Ewings, seconded by Cllr L Daniel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED**

and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 19 November 2019 meeting be received and noted".

51. **Climate Change Action Plan**

CM 51

Members considered a report that outlined progress in developing the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan and proposals for progressing its implementation along with proposed targets for reducing carbon emissions both organisationally and across the West Devon Borough.

In his introduction, the Chairman of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group informed that:

- a cost/benefit analysis would be undertaken on each of the actions contained within the Action Plan;
- the Council's own carbon footprint had now been calculated;
- it was vitally important that targets were aspirational, achievable and affordable; and
- there was a great deal of work to be undertaken by the Working Group (including the creation of a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy) and the Chairman wished to put on record his thanks for the hard work and commitment of both lead officers and Working Group Members.

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

- (a) It was confirmed that, such were the tight timescales associated with setting the 2020/21 Budget, that any potential significant budget implications arising from the Action Plan would feed into the 2021/22 Budget setting process. When looking at the cost/benefit analysis work that was to be undertaken, a Member emphasised the importance of consideration being given to how the Council would fund delivery of each of these actions;

Some Members proceeded to make reference to the ongoing budgetary pressures that were being faced by the Council and made the point that these were likely to be further exacerbated by delivering a number of the proposed actions that were contained within the Plan. These Members were therefore of the view that the Council would be facing some very difficult decisions in the upcoming months and years to ensure that it continued to deliver a balanced budget whilst addressing the Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency;

- (b) Officers advised that the proposed additional staffing resource was to be a shared officer with South Hams District Council and would cost £25,000 each for the two authorities. Officers also informed that a key task for the postholder would be to submit grant applications in an effort to gain additional funding from Central Government towards the delivery of the Action Plan;

- (c) Assurances were given to Members that every effort was being made to avoid duplication of work between local authorities and other partner agencies (e.g. utility companies). When multi-agency meetings were held, officers stated that one of the recurring themes was to ensure that work was not being unnecessarily duplicated;
- (d) Such was the recognised need for support from Central Government, that an additional recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:-

'The Council actively lobbies both Central Government and its local MPs to improve the standard of infrastructure and new development and to introduce incentives to make our homes as energy efficient and clean as possible.'

When put to the vote, this additional recommendation was declared **CARRIED**;

- (e) With regard to the outcomes that were being generated from the Working Group, Members felt that it was important for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be in receipt of regular progress updates. As a result, it was requested that, when reviewing its Work Programme, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider scheduling in regular progress updates from the Working Group;
- (f) Having formally declared an Emergency, the importance of the Council displaying both leadership and ownership of the Climate Change agenda was reiterated by a number of Members.

It was then proposed by Cllr M Davies, seconded by Cllr S Hipsey and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. The Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be adopted;
2. The content of the Council's first Greenhouse Gas Inventory (as outlined at Section 5 of the presented agenda report) be noted;
3. The Council aims to reduce its organisational carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions) to net-zero by 2030;
4. The Council commits to working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to aim to reduce the Borough of West Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest;
5. The Council aims for a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the habitat value of its green and wooded public open space by 2025;
6. The Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group be requested to develop a Climate Change and Biodiversity

Strategy to be brought back to Council for its approval at its 22 September 2020 meeting;

7. An update on progress against the adopted aims be brought back to Council on an annual basis; and
8. The Council actively lobbies both Central Government and its local MPs to improve the standard of infrastructure and new development and to introduce incentives to make our homes as energy efficient and clean as possible."

52. **Draft Sustainable Procurement Policy**

CM 52

The Council considered a report that recommended that the draft Sustainable Procurement Policy (SPP) be adopted with its effectiveness being evaluated in a further six months' time.

In the ensuing discussion, the Corporate Procurement Officer gave an assurance that the cost implications would remain a key consideration when making procurement decisions in line with the revised SPP.

It was then proposed by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. the Sustainable Procurement Policy (as attached at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be adopted;
2. agreement be given to the six policies sitting under the 'Responsible Procurement Strategy' being replaced with the Sustainable Procurement Policy; and
3. a review be undertaken into the adopted Sustainable Procurement Policy in six months' time."

53. **Commercial Investment Strategy (Renewable Energy)**

CM 53

A report was considered that requested that Members approve the proposed amendments to the Commercial Investment Strategy and the Investment Strategy in order to enable the Council to invest (and to borrow to invest) in Renewable Energy.

In his introduction, the lead Hub Committee Member highlighted the proposed revisions to the Strategies and sought approval of an additional recommendation whereby the Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of Council to make any future minor amendments to these Strategies.

It was then proposed by Cllr C Edmonds, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. the updated Commercial Investment Strategy (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) and the updated Investment Strategy (as outlined at Appendix B of the presented agenda report) be approved; and
2. delegated authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to make any minor amendments to these Strategies."

54. **Community Infrastructure Levy**

CM54

A report was considered that set out the purpose, timetable and key issues in respect of the proposal to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

With no debate ensuing, it was then proposed by Cllr C Mott, seconded by Cllr T G Pearce and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that:

1. the proposed consultation exercise on the Community Infrastructure Levy be approved; and
2. internal and external workshops be convened to discuss the evidence base prior to consultation."

55. **Political Structures Working Group Findings**

CM 55

The Council considered a report that presented the most recent series of recommendations from the Political Structures Working Group.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the proposal to move Informal Council sessions from a Monday to a Tuesday. In highlighting the usefulness of these sessions, a number of Members welcomed the recommendation that would enable more Members to be able to attend in the future;
- (b) responses to the Member Survey. Some Members expressed their disappointment that only 14 Members had responded and urged their colleagues to complete future Surveys.

It was then proposed by Cllr L Samuel, seconded by Cllr R Musgrave and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that:

1. the status quo be retained in respect of the start times for Council and Committee meetings;
2. the Calendar of Meetings (to take effect from May 2020) programme Informal Council meetings on a Tuesday, providing that there are no clashes with scheduled Committee meetings; and

3. the Member Development Steering Group be asked at its next meeting on 7 January 2020 to advise on the training that would be appropriate to be delivered by Skype.”

56. **Calendar of Meeting 2020/21**

CM 56

The Council considered a report that sought approval of the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21.

In discussion, Members were thankful that the Calendar had been drafted well in advance to enable for them to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that they could attend relevant meetings.

It was then proposed by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr M Ewings and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21 (as presented at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved.”

57. **Annual Review of Health and Safety Policy Statement**

CM 57

Consideration was given to a report that sought Council approval to adopt a revised Health and Safety Policy Statement.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) When questioned, officers advised that any identified Health and Safety breaches would be reported to Members as part of the annual report on staffing matters. In addition, if lead officers considered any breach to be particularly serious, then Members would be advised at the earliest opportunity;
- (b) In welcoming the inclusion of Members in the Policy Statement, a request was also made for a Health and Safety related training session to be added to the Member Learning and Development Plan.

It was then proposed by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the revised Health and Safety Policy Statement (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be adopted and signed off by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of the Council.”

The Meeting concluded at 3.35 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
