

# WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on  
**Tuesday, 6th October, 2020 at 2.00 pm** at the **Via Skype**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Ewings  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Kimber

Cllr Bolton	Cllr Crozier
Cllr Daniel	Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Hipse	Cllr Kemp
Cllr Moyse	Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Ratcliffe	Cllr Southcott
Cllr Spettigue	Cllr Wood

## **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Cheadle	Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Jory	Cllr Leech
Cllr Moody	Cllr Mott
Cllr Pearce	Cllr Renders
Cllr Samuel	Cllr Sellis
Cllr Yelland	

Officers:  
Chief Executive  
Section 151 Officer  
Director of Governance & Assurance  
Director of Place & Enterprise  
Head of Strategy & Projects  
Head of ICT  
Democratic Services Manager  
Senior Specialist – Projects

## 23. **Apologies for Absence**

\*O&S 23

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllr A Coulson

24. **Confirmation of Minutes**  
\*O&S 24  
The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 September 2020 were confirmed by the Meeting as a true and correct record.
25. **Declarations of Interest**  
\*O&S 25  
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.
26. **Public Forum**  
\*O&S 26  
The Chairman informed that no formal requests had been received in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
27. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**  
\*O&S 27  
Whilst no prior requests had been received for updates on any future Hub Committee agenda items at this meeting, it was confirmed that each of the Task and Finish and Working Groups would be commencing with their work on the Council's draft Recovery Plan in the next few weeks.
28. **A386 Transport Infrastructure - Verbal Update from the Director of Place & Enterprise**  
\*O&S 28  
In his update, the Director of Place and Enterprise made particular reference to a constructive recent conversation that he had held with the Regional Director for Sustrans. The Committee noted that a feasibility report had been commissioned and would be available by the end of October 2020. Upon receipt of this report, it was intended that all partner agencies would look to establish a way forward with regard to improving cycling infrastructure.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) The Committee Chairman confirmed that she was in regular dialogue with the Devon County Council lead Cabinet Member. Whilst not the lead authority for the cycle project, officers confirmed that Devon County Council was committed to providing whatever support it could;
- (b) It was acknowledged that there were Section 106 monies available that could be used to support the cycle project;
- (c) The lead officer recognised that there was a need to improve the dialogue between the Borough Council and the Dartmoor National Park Authority on the cycle proposals and a meeting was to be set up in the upcoming weeks;

- (d) With regard to the Beeching Reversal Fund application that had been submitted by Devon County Council, there were no further updates at this current time.

29. **Future IT Project Update**

\*O&S 29

The Committee considered a report that presented a progress update on the Council's Future IT Project.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Committee felt that the manner in which the Council had been able to successfully adjust its working practices in light of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic was to the great credit of its ICT service;
- (b) Members were informed that, in response to Skype for Business being decommissioned, the Council was in the process of piloting the Microsoft Teams platform as an alternative. Once officers were ready to formally launch the Teams platform, it was confirmed that a variety of training opportunities would be made available for Members;
- (c) As part of the IT Project, it was noted that one of the main objectives was to improve the customer experience (and functionality) of the Council website;
- (d) The Committee recognised that there would be some inevitable system downtime as the Council transitioned across to a new website but that every step was being taken to ensure that this was kept to an absolute minimum. As a result of the impact, the lead Hub Committee Member emphasised the importance of all Members sharing on their own social media platforms any related communication messages that were released by the Council.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the progress of both the Future IT Project and the evaluation of risks be noted.

30. **Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2020**

O&S 30

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2020.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the role of local Ward Member(s). When questioned, officers advised that Ward Member(s) were currently not made aware of complaints to the Ombudsman that were related to their local

areas. In response to a request, the lead officer confirmed that he would give this point further consideration outside of this meeting;

- (b) the conclusions contained within the Review Letter. Members welcomed the positive tone of the Letter and felt that this was justification for the recent effort that had been put in by the Council to improving its internal complaints processes.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2020 (as attached at Appendices A and B of the presented agenda report) has been reviewed; and
2. That the steps set out to ensure that the Council continues to address complaints fairly (and in line with best practice) be noted.

31. **Verbal Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group**

\*O&S 31

The lead Hub Committee Member for Economy informed that the Council had now received a response from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in reply to concerns over Superfast Broadband provision in the West Devon Borough area. According to the letter, the Member advised that 88% of households in West Devon were capable of receiving Superfast Broadband and it was now the intention of the Working Group to lobby for this percentage to be increased.

With regard to a recent meeting between representatives of Connecting Devon and Somerset, it was agreed that a more detailed update would be provided to the next Committee meeting to be held on 10 November 2020.

32. **Verbal Update from the Financial Stability Review Group**

\*O&S 32

It was noted that the next meeting of the Review Group would be focusing on the draft budget setting proposals for 2021/22. In the event of any Members having both income generation or savings ideas, then they were encouraged to provide their thoughts to either the Section 151 Officer or the Review Group.

33. **Joint Local Plan - Verbal Update**

\*O&S 33

Members of the Joint Local Plan Partnership Board advised that, at the most recent Board meeting held on 21 September 2020, all Members had expressed their concerns over the contents of the draft Planning White Paper. Whilst the Board had supported the concept of a collective response being sent on behalf of all 3 partner authorities to the consultation exercise, it was also acknowledged that this did not preclude any Member from making representations in their own right.

The Members also advised that the Strategic Planning Manager had recently left the employ of the three Councils and they proceeded to pay tribute to the role that he had played in the adoption of the Joint Local Plan.

34. **Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)**

\*O&S 34

**(i) Engagement and Consultation**

It was noted that the membership of the Group had now been confirmed (Cllrs Cheadle, Daniel, Kemp, Kimber, Leech and Samuel) and a draft set of Terms of Reference had been prepared in anticipation of the first Group meeting.

**(ii) Localities and Clusters**

Similarly to the Engagement and Consultation Review, the Group composition had now been approved (Cllrs Heyworth, Hipsey, Moody, Moyse, Ratcliffe and Wood) and officers informed that the first meeting of the Group had been arranged to be held on Tuesday, 20 October 2020.

35. **Annual Work Programme**

\*O&S 35

The Committee considered the latest version of its draft Annual Work Programme for 2020/21 and, in discussion, the following updates were made:

- Members agreed a recommendation whereby it would now be more appropriate to receive quarterly updates from the Financial Stability Review Group; and
- The Committee supported the proposal whereby the 'Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Report' should be presented to the Audit Committee and therefore removed from the Work Programme.

36. **Members Learning and Development opportunities arising from this meeting**

\*O&S 36

The Committee was reminded of the earlier assurances (Minute O&S 29 above refers) that had been given whereby there would be a number of opportunities for Members to receive training on Microsoft Teams before the Council held its remote meetings over this platform.

The Meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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