

SOUTH HAMS JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Joint Development Management Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

held on

Thursday, 3rd September, 2020 at 10.00 am at the Via Skype

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Birch
Vice Chairman Cllr Smerdon

Cllr Brazil
Cllr Foss
Cllr Holway
Cllr Pringle
Cllr Abbott
Cllr Chown
Cllr Kemp
Cllr McKay
Cllr Pannell
Cllr Rose

Cllr Brown
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Pennington
Cllr Rowe
Cllr Austen
Cllr Jackson
Cllr Long
Cllr O'Callaghan
Cllr Reeve
Cllr Taylor

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Baldry
Cllr Hawkins
Cllr Pearce

Cllr Bastone
Cllr Hopwood

Officers:
Senior Leadership Team
Democratic Services Manager

6. Minutes of last Meeting

OSDM.6/20

The minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee held on 4 June 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

7. **Declarations of Interest**

OSDM.7/20

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

8. **Public Forum**

OSDM.8/20

In accordance with the Public Forum Procedure Rules, the Chairman informed that no questions had been received for consideration during the agenda item.

9. **Executive Forward Plan**

OSDM.9/20

The Joint Meeting was presented with the most recently published Executive Forward Plan.

In introducing the Plan, the Chairman confirmed that, in accordance with the adopted Procedure Rules, there had been no prior requests for updates to be received on any of the items listed.

10. **Draft Amended Budget 2020/21**

OSDM.10/20

Members considered a report that sought to recommend a series of options in order to produce an amended Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

In her introduction, the Leader of Council thanked Members for their invaluable contributions during the recent Budget Workshop and wished to put on record her gratitude for the hard work of the Section 151 Officer and her finance colleagues in producing such a comprehensive draft amended Budget for 2020/21.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) car parking income. In light of the summer season in the South Hams being busier than previously envisaged, a Member asked whether this had seen a positive impact on car parking income. In reply, officers advised that the information was still being compiled but would be available in time for the Executive meeting to be held on 17 September 2020;
- (b) the leisure contract. The Joint Meeting was reminded that a further report on the leisure contract was to be considered by the Council at its meeting to be held on 24 September 2020;
- (c) an amendment to part 1 of the motion. An amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

‘That the Joint Meeting recommend to the Executive to recommend to Council that the options 1 to 4 (as set out in Section 5.2 of the presented agenda report) be agreed (totalling £433,000) and the remainder of £880,000 be taken from the Unearmarked Reserve, in order to produce an Amended Revenue Budget for 2020-21.’

In their support for the amendment, some Members were of the view that it would be more appropriate (bearing in mind the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic being deemed an Emergency) for Unearmarked Reserves to be used to balance the Revenue Budget for 2020-21. In contrast, other Members felt that it would not be prudent to use Unearmarked Reserves and believed that Members should trust the advice of their highly respected Section 151 Officer.

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **LOST**.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Executive to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. the ten options totalling £1,313,000 (as summarised below) be approved in order to produce an Amended Revenue Budget for 2020/21:
 - use the third tranche of COVID-19 funding received from Central Government (£121,000);
 - use the New Burdens Government Grant funding received for the administration of the Business Rates Grants (£170,000);
 - utilise the 2019-20 Statement of Accounts underspend (£112,000);
 - use funding from the Strategic Change Transformation Programme (T18) Earmarked Reserve (£30,000);
 - cease the 2020/21 annual contribution towards building up a budget for future years for the Follaton Roof and Follaton Lift (£80,000);
 - use funding from Unearmarked Reserves (£200,000);
 - use funding from the Economic Regeneration (Business Rates Pilot Gain) Earmarked Reserve (£127,000);
 - cease the Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) contribution for the R&M Earmarked Reserve (£80,000);
 - use funding from the Business Rates Retention Reserve (£343,000);
 - and
 - cease making a contribution to the Planning Earmarked Reserve in 2020/21 (£50,000);
2. Unearmarked Reserves be replenished through a range of measures to be agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out at Section 5.8 of the presented agenda report;
3. it be noted that the future capacity of Reserves (as set out at Section 5.13 of the presented agenda report) may have to be called upon to meet any future financial challenges and/or additional requirements; and
4. the funding within the Business Rates Retention Fund be earmarked for employment land opportunities (as outlined at Section 8.7 of the presented agenda report).

11. **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery and Renewal Plan Development Update**

OSDM.11/20

The Joint Meeting was presented with a report that summarised what continued to be a highly effective response to the challenges of the Pandemic; detailed key recovery actions already completed or underway; and proposals to develop and implement the first iteration of the Council's long/medium term recovery and renewal plans.

The Chairman informed of his intention for the Meeting to consider the draft Recovery and Renewal Plan on a theme by theme basis:

Theme 1: Business and Economy

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) The lead Executive Member advised that, whilst still very much in its infancy, he was committed to developing the Business Forum concept as the Plan continued to evolve;
- (b) An addition was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** for inclusion in the Plan that read as follows:

To include the following addition in accordance with action 1.5: 'Engage with existing businesses to understand what support they need':

'Support taxpayers who currently find themselves excluded from meaningful support.'

The proposer highlighted that there were still local taxpayers who were not able to obtain meaningful support from Central Government for a variety of reasons and he considered it to be important for the Council to do everything that it could to assist these people.

The Joint Meeting proceeded to recommend that this addition should be included in the draft Plan;

Theme 2: Place and Environment

In discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) the importance of the Climate Change and Biodiversity agenda being an underpinning issue throughout every aspect of the draft Plan;
- (b) increasing wildflower spaces and protecting wildlife corridors. Some Members singled out these actions for particular focus and felt that the Council should place significant emphasis on these matters. In addition, the view was expressed that the Council should look towards working in partnership with those local town and parish councils who had also declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency;
- (c) the need to utilise external advisors. To deliver on a number of the proposed actions, a Member felt that the Council should be looking to take

advantage of the wealth of external local knowledge and expertise that was residing within the South Hams area;

- (d) the proposal to influence the development of active travel schemes. Support was expressed for the inclusion of this action within the draft Plan.

Theme 3: Residents, Communities and Partnerships

The Joint Meeting expressed its support for the content of the draft Plan as presented.

Theme 4: Service Recovery and Redesign

The Joint Meeting expressed its support for the content of the draft Plan as presented.

Theme 5: Communications and Governance

In discussion on this Theme, particular reference was made to:

- (a) the format of the Council Constitution. The need to re-design the Council Constitution to ensure that it was a more reader friendly document was recognised;
- (b) an amendment to the draft Plan was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

'To consider utilising three day fallow periods before and after a single meeting to open up our rooms without the need for cleaning, together with broadcast streaming to include off-site attendees.'

In debate, there was support expressed for this matter to be considered at a future meeting of the Accommodation Strategy Member Working Group and it was therefore recommended that this amendment should be included in the draft Plan.

Theme 6: Financial Stability

A Member was of the view that this Theme was the most important contained within the draft Plan and the focus of the Council should be on the delivery of its statutory services.

Recommendation

Once all of the Themes had been considered by Members, an additional two parts to the report recommendation were **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:

6. *That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that a Member Working Group be formed to oversee the work of the Recovery Management Team/Group/Strategy (as set out at Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report). The remit of this Working Group will be to set*

priorities and direct officers accordingly. This Group to become effective immediately following the Full Council meeting to be held on 24 September 2020; and

7. *That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee invite a representative and relevant officer from Team Devon to an informal meeting of all Members to set out its plans and actions in respect of all those items listed in Appendix 1 to the presented agenda report as being its initial responsibility for instigation.*

In discussion on the amendment, the following points were raised:

- (a) When questioned, the Chief Executive informed that Team Devon consisted of a set of working relationships between Devon County Council and the District Councils across Devon;
- (b) With regard to the proposal to establish a Member Working Group, supporters of the amendment emphasised the importance of elected Members overseeing the work of the Recovery Management Team.

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Executive to:

1. Note the Council's continuing response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic;
2. Note the outputs of the Member Workshops as detailed in Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report;
3. Note progress on the development of the Recovery and Renewal Action Plan ('the Plan');
4. Take into account the conclusions of the Joint meeting on the Plan (as set out in the detailed minutes above);
5. Request that an update on progress against development of the Plan be brought back to an additional Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel / Development Management Committee to be arranged to take place at 2.00pm on 19 November 2020;

That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

6. A Member Working Group be formed to oversee the work of the Responsible Team/Group/Strategy (as set out at Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report) specifically the Recovery Management Team. The remit of this Working Group being to set priorities and direct officers accordingly, with this Group to become effective immediately following the Full Council meeting to be held on 24 September 2020; and

That the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee:

7. Invite a representative and relevant officer from Team Devon to an informal meeting of all Members to set out its plans and actions in respect of all those items set out in Appendix 1 to the presented agenda report as being its initial responsibility for instigation.

The Meeting concluded at 12.00 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
