

# WEST DEVON AUDIT COMMITTEE



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Audit Committee**  
held on  
**Tuesday, 7th September, 2021** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -  
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Davies  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Ball

Cllr Bridgewater  
Cllr Yelland

Cllr Renders

**In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Edmonds

Officers:

Section 151 Officer

Deputy Section 151 Officer

Democratic Services Manager

6. **Confirmation of Minutes**

\*AC 6

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 29 June 2021 were confirmed by the Committee as a true and correct record.

7. **Draft Statement of Accounts and Draft Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021**

\*AC 7

A report was considered that set out the draft Statement of Accounts and draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020-2021.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

(a) the £75,000 underspend for the 2020/21 Financial Year. The Committee paid tribute to the financial management of the Council

in obtaining an underspend despite the COVID-19 Pandemic being so prevalent during 2020/21 and wished for its thanks to be formally recorded to the Chief Executive, the Leader of Council, the Section 151 Officer and her finance team. Members were also of the view that the decision of the Council to adopt an amended budget for 2020/21 in September 2020 had proven to be the correct decision;

- (b) the future of Servaco Limited (the Council's trading company). Having noted that the company had not traded in 2020/21, the Committee was informed that its future was to be reviewed during 2021/22;
- (c) the increase in short-term borrowing from £590,000 to £603,000. The Deputy Section 151 Officer confirmed that this increase was largely attributed to the re-classification of some borrowing from long-term to short-term and the annuity payment profiles;
- (d) current staff guidance on working from home. In response to a question, the Section 151 Officer advised that the most recent staff guidance that had been issued was that staff were able to work from the office should it be necessary and there was a desk booking system in place to support the process;
- (e) the Member Locality Fund. In light of there being a £2,000 underspend in the Fund, the Committee requested that all Members be reminded that the Fund was in existence and should be utilised to support community schemes;
- (f) the Seamoor Lotto. With regard to the effectiveness of the Lotto scheme, the Committee was of the view that £27,000 that had been raised for good causes across the Borough and South Hams District in 2020/21 was a positive outcome. Furthermore, Members were of the view that there was scope to improve the effectiveness of the Lotto through increased promotion;
- (g) the pension scheme. In reply to some detailed questions relating to the scheme, Members requested that a representative from the Devon County Council Pension Fund be invited to attend a future Committee meeting to conduct a short presentation and respond to Member questions;
- (h) Section 106 monitoring. It was noted that a detailed report on all aspects of Section 106 expenditure was to be presented to the next Hub Committee meeting to be held on 21 September 2021;
- (i) Council Tax and Business Rates collection rates. For 2020/21, it was noted that Council Tax collection rates were 2% above the national average and the Business Rates collection rates were slightly lower than the national average. It was confirmed that this was consistent with the results that were experienced by other Local Authorities across Devon. Given the impact of the COVID-19

Pandemic, the Committee felt that the collection figures were to the great credit of both local residents and local businesses;

- (j) the Leisure Contract. In reply to a question, the Section 151 Officer confirmed that an update report on Leisure was scheduled for consideration by the Hub Committee at its meeting to be held on 2 November 2021.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the draft Statement of Accounts and draft Annual Governance Statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 be noted.

The Meeting concluded at 3.05 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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