

# WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held  
on  
**Tuesday, 2nd November, 2021** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -  
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Jory  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Cheadle

Cllr Edmonds  
Cllr Crozier  
Cllr Ratcliffe

Cllr Mott  
Cllr Daniel

**In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Renders  
Cllr Yelland

Cllr Wood (via Teams)

Officers:

Chief Executive  
Monitoring Officer  
Section 151 Officer  
Director of Governance & Assurance  
Director of Place & Enterprise  
Democratic Services Manager  
Head of Development Management  
Senior Specialist – Place Making  
Head of Environmental Health (via Teams)  
Senior Specialist – Environmental Health  
Specialist – Leisure (via Teams)

32. **Minutes Silence**

\*HC 32/21

As a mark of respect following the tragic recent deaths of Sir David Amess MP and Mr James Brokenshire MP, those Members and Officers in attendance stood and observed a minutes silence in their memory.

33. **Apologies for absence**  
\*HC 33/21  
There were apologies for absence received for this Meeting from Cllrs A F Leech and T G Pearce.
34. **Declarations of Interest**  
\*HC 34/21  
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and there were none made.
35. **Confirmation of Minutes**  
\*HC 35/21  
The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 21 September 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.
36. **Public questions**  
\*HC 36/21  
It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.
37. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**  
\*HC 37/21  
Members were presented with the Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months.
- In discussion, it was agreed that the Leader would discuss with officers the need to schedule in further reviews of the thematic delivery plans that would underpin the recently adopted 'Plan for West Devon' and that this would be reflected in the next published edition of the Forward Plan.
- The Leader also made reference to the recent discussions that had taken place in respect of the housing situation and it was his intention to request that officers present a Housing Options review paper to the next Hub Committee meeting to be held on 7 December 2021. This addition was welcomed by the wider Committee membership.
38. **Planning Improvement Plan - Phase 2 Resources**  
HC 38/21  
Consideration was given to a report that set out the latest phase (phase 2) of the Planning Improvement Plan. In particular, the report outlined the assessed need in terms of additional planning and legal specialist officers to support the planning and enforcement functions.
- It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. Council be **RECOMMENDED** to employ six additional permanent posts (shared with South Hams District Council), being four planning specialists and two legal specialists, at an annual cost of £71,000 (the WDBC share of the costs), to be funded from additional planning income;
2. Council be **RECOMMENDED** to increase the staffing budget by £71,000 and to increase the planning income target for 2022/23 onwards by £71,000; and
3. It be noted that a further (phase 3) report will be presented to the Hub Committee at its next meeting to be held on 7 December 2021.

39. **Tenancy Strategy Review 2021**

**\*HC 39/21**

Consideration was given to a report that sought approval of an updated Tenancy Strategy for 2021.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A lengthy discussion ensued with regard to housing disposals in the Borough and, whilst it was acknowledged that the Council had limited powers in this respect, it was noted that the Chief Executive would reflect the concerns raised by Members at an upcoming meeting with his counterparts from the three largest Registered Social Landlords in the Borough. Furthermore, it was agreed that the issue of housing disposals would be included as part of the Housing Options paper that was to be presented to the next Hub Committee meeting on 7 December 2021 (Minute \*HC 37/21 above refers);
- (b) Officers confirmed that the Council's Environmental Health service had a role to play in the event of poor quality housing standards being found within the Housing Stock of a Registered Social Landlord.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the updated Tenancy Strategy (as set out at Appendix 2 of the presented agenda report) be approved; and
2. authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the lead Hub Committee Member for Homes, to make any necessary minor amendments prior to formal publication.

40. **Fusion Lifestyle -Leisure Contract Support Update**

**\*HC 40/21**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the performance of the Fusion contract to date; wider market trends; and the financial information on Fusion's performance in 2021.

In debate, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In light of Members wishing to ask questions on aspects of the exempt appendices, it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that:

'In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.'

Once all Members were content that they had no further questions on the exempt appendices, it was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that: 'the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting'.

- (b) Some Members expressed their concerns over aspects of Fusion's current performance that included:

- the general cleanliness within the Leisure Centres;
- the attitude of some staff members; and
- the apparent lack of any promotion or marketing campaigns to encourage increased Centre membership.

As a result of these concerns, coupled with an imminent performance meeting being held between Council officers and Fusion representatives, the following alternative recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**:-

1. *That the performance of the Fusion contract to date; wider market trends; and the financial information on Fusion's performance in 2021 be noted; and*
2. *That consideration of the contract variation and changes to the management fee profile be deferred pending further discussions with Fusion and that a further report be presented by the Director of Place and Enterprise to the next meeting of the Hub Committee.*

- (c) It was agreed that reference to a sample of the monitoring results of both the water quality and air handling units within the Centres would be included as part of the agenda report to be presented to the next meeting of the Hub Committee;

- (d) Members noted that there was a commitment to re-establish the Leisure Centre Task and Finish Group during this Council Administration.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the performance of the Fusion contract to date; wider market trends; and the financial information on Fusion's performance in 2021 be noted;
2. consideration of the contract variation and changes to the management fee profile be deferred pending further discussions with Fusion and that a further report be presented by the Director of Place and Enterprise to the next meeting of the Hub Committee.

41. **Public Space Protection Order - Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour**

HC 41/21

A report was considered that sought to recommend to Council that an Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order should be made in relation to an area within the West Devon Borough.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Some concerns were raised that adoption of the Order may unduly raise public aspirations especially when considering the current resource pressures on both the Police and the Borough Council;
- (b) It was noted that adoption of the Order would enable for the removal of alcohol from individuals and groups in that area who were deemed to be creating a disturbance and/or public nuisance;
- (c) Whilst noting that there were other areas within Tavistock that were generating a number of instances of Anti-Social Behaviour, Members also recognised that this report had been presented in response to a direct request from Tavistock Town Council;
- (d) Members emphasised the need for a communications and public awareness strategy to be adopted to underpin this Order.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to agree the Tavistock Meadows Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order 2021 (as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report).

42. **Write-Off Report for Quarter 1 and 2**

\*HC 42/21

The Committee considered a report that informed Members of the proposal to write-off a series of debts with a value of more than £5,000 for the period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

In discussion, the lead Hub Committee Member for Communications highlighted the recently adopted Consultation and Engagement Strategy and felt that this agenda item was an example of a matter that could warrant further clarification to the general public. In expanding upon the point, the Member felt that the adopted Strategy required greater recognition in the Council's Committee report template.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. it be noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £50,262.73 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the presented agenda report; and
2. approval be given to the write-off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 (totalling £12,357.71) as set out in Table 3 of the presented agenda report.

43.

**Reports of Other Bodies:**

HC 43/21

**(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 5 October 2021**

**(i) Devon Home Choice Review**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council continue to be a member of Devon Home Choice.

**(ii) Lamerton Housing Report**

It was **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt a position to lobby Central Government and our local MPs to close the loophole that allows Small Business Rates Relief to second homeowners who rent their home out for 140 or more days per year.

***(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM THURSDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2021, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTES HC 38/21 PARTS 1 AND 2, HC 41/21, HC 43/21(a)(ii) WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18)***

The Meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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