

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held
on
Tuesday, 7th June, 2016 at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Sanders
Vice Chairman

Cllr M J R Benson
Moody
Parker
Samuel

Edmonds
Oxborough
Sampson

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cann
Evans
Pearce
Yelland

Cloke
Leech
Sellis

Officers:

1. **Declarations of Interest**

***HC 01**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but none were made.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes**

***HC 02**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee Meeting held on 19 April 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to minor amendments being incorporated as follows:

1. To Minute HC 73: the addition of the words 'in principle' and changing 'introduce' for 'adopt' to read as follows:

'Members appreciated the need to adopt the proposal in principle at this stage rather than wait until a new contract was in place.'

2. To Minute HC 74: the word 'proven' be changed to 'proved' to read as follows:

'One Member admitted he had initially been sceptical of the proposals when introduced, but accepted that they had *proven* to increase income and footfall to the towns.'

3. **Future garden waste service design (Cllr Sampson)**

HC 03

The Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services presented a further report as requested at the Annual Council meeting on 10 May 2016 (Minute CM 9 a refers) that expanded the detail of Option C as set out in the original report, presented to Hub Committee on 19 April 2016. The recommendations generated by the Hub Committee in this respect would be forwarded to the full Council for a decision.

There was a lengthy and detailed debate on this item and a number of Members were clearly concerned with the principle of the proposal. However, other Members noted the budget deficit pressures that the Council was facing and the need to make increasingly difficult commercial decisions to ensure the long term future of the authority. The point was made by some Members that it was no longer feasible to consider discretionary services without the need to charge for them. Members asked a number of detailed questions about the figures presented in the report. Members also recognised the reputational risk of introducing this charge, however, in the event of the recommendation being approved by the Council, it was noted that in the subsequent publicity, the need to introduce the charge because of the future budget gap should be emphasised. In addition, research indicated that the proposed charge, whilst only an indicative figure currently, was lower than comparable authorities who already charged for the service.

Members were advised that the second recommendation relating to concessions had been the subject of some debate within the Waste Working Group and the recommendation as presented was supported by only a minority of Working Group Members. One Member sought to amend Recommendation 2 to include concessions for those residents who were aged 65 and over. This was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote was subsequently declared **LOST**.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that at the time that the waste services contract is formally procured:

1. An opt-in financially sustainable, garden waste recycling service with collection from reusable sacks be approved;
2. Concessions to the service are applied for residents on low incomes;
3. A comprehensive publicity campaign be delivered highlighting the positive messaging around the retention of the service despite budgetary cuts and that the Council has considered the fairest method for residents;
4. A structured campaign be delivered to promote home composting, as the best environmental option, along with community composting; and
5. Any changes considered necessary to the terms as highlighted be delegated to the Lead Specialist Waste Strategy (Strategy and Commissioning) in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services.

4. **Tavistock Business Improvement District (Cllr Oxborough)**

***HC 04**

The Lead Hub Member for Economy presented a report that sought delegated authority to vote on behalf of the Council at the BID ballot, based on the merits of the BID business plan. He set out the background, and in responding to questions, the Lead Member confirmed that the Council was not yet in a position to support the BID as not all the relevant information had been received. The Group Manager Business Development referred to the criteria for determining whether a BID proposal was valid, which had been circulated to Members in a separate document.

It was then **RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Group Manager Business Development, in consultation with the Leader and Hub Committee Lead Member, to vote on behalf of the Council at the BID ballot (as the owner and operator of business rated properties within the BID area), based on the merits of the business plan.

5. **Consultation on proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 (Cllr Samuel)**

***HC 05**

The Lead Hub Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced a report that sought approval of the proposed public consultation document relating to changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, aligning the current scheme with Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

The Leader confirmed that the proposed scheme would bring all Devon authorities in line with one another. The Housing Benefit Case Manager explained that issues had been raised nationally as a result of consultation and therefore it was important to seek approval of the document for consultation. A later report would be presented to the Hub Committee once consultation responses had been received and work completed on a scheme for 2017/18.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the proposed public consultation document (as presented at Appendix 1 of the agenda report) on the changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, aligning the current scheme with Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, be approved.

6. **Planning Obligations Thresholds (Cllr Parker)**

HC 06

The Lead Hub Member for Strategic Planning and Housing presented a report that sought approval of recommendations in relation to Planning Obligations, following a recent Court of Appeal decision.

The Lead Member provided the background to the report to Members and responded to a number of questions. The Solicitor also provided confirmation on specific issues relating to the law and classifications in terms of the areas within West Devon.

There was some discussion in respect of the recommendations and it was proposed and seconded that they be amended from the presented version.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

1. That it be noted that the National Planning Policy Guidance incorporating revised policies 013 – 020 and 031 is a material planning consideration carrying great weight in the determination of planning applications;

2. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that in areas with special designations, planning obligations to provide Affordable Housing in accordance with the Core Strategy will be sought from planning applications for 6 or more units of residential accommodation; and
3. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that in Tavistock and Okehampton if the planning site does not fall within a designated special area, planning obligations will be sought on 11 units or more.

7. **Transitional Resources (Cllr Edmonds)**

HC 07

The Lead Hub Member for Performance and Resources presented a report that sought approval of additional resources for a fixed term transitional period and made recommendations in relation to the budget for Disabled Facilities Grants. The Lead Member set out the background and detail of the report.

Points raised during discussion included the following:

- The request was being made following a review of resources and linking in with the progress of the IT stream of the Transformation Programme. It was also noted that this request would prevent the need to come back to Members on a piecemeal basis for additional resource;
- There was a separate piece of work being carried out on the resilience and capacity of the IT systems;
- The Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning) confirmed that this request for resources would address the current issues and senior managers were aware that the extra temporary resources must deliver results;
- Members requested that regular update reports be provided and it was confirmed that monthly briefing updates would be presented to the Hub Committee but quarterly reports containing more detail would also be presented as set out in the presented report;
- Finally, Members requested that there was a Scrutiny review of the T18 Programme. It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and on being put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee be asked to produce Terms of Reference for an interim review of the T18 Programme.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

1. To approve the use of temporary, fixed term transitional resources to improve service levels and customer satisfaction;
2. To approve the use of £215,522 of unused New Homes Bonus funding (as shown in Section 5 of the presented agenda report) to fund the temporary transitional staffing resources as set out in Appendix A;
3. To allocate the remaining £58,478 (of the £274,000 unused New Homes Bonus funding as shown in Section 5 of the presented agenda report) as a contingency budget for Disabled Facilities Grants; and
4. That the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee be asked to undertake an interim review of the T18 Programme, with the Terms of Reference for this Review being agreed by the Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning) in consultation with the Lead Member for Customer First and Lead Member for Economy;

The Meeting concluded at 5.05 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
