

# WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held  
on  
**Tuesday, 24th January, 2017** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -  
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Sanders  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Baldwin

Cllr Benson  
Cllr Moody  
Cllr Parker  
Cllr Samuel

Cllr Edmonds  
Cllr Oxborough  
Cllr Sampson

## **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Cheadle  
Cllr Moyse  
Cllr Pearce  
Cllr Sellis  
Cllr Yelland

Cllr Leech  
Cllr Musgrave  
Cllr Roberts  
Cllr Sheldon

Officers:

Darren Arulvasagam

Group Manager Business  
Development

Catherine Bowen  
Lisa Buckle  
Helen Dobby  
Sophie Hosking  
Steve Jordan

Section 151 Officer  
Group Manager Commercial Services  
Executive Director  
Executive Director Head of Paid  
Service

Patrick Whymer

Lead Specialist DM

45. **Declarations of Interest**  
**\*HC 45**

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

46. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

**\*HC 46**

The Chairman advised that the Business Survey that the Council sent out to businesses within the Borough would be out within the next two days.

47. **Confirmation of Minutes**

**\*HC 47**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. **Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2017/18 (Cllr Sanders)**

**HC 48**

Members were presented with a report that set out how the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy was based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2021/22 which would help to ensure resources were aligned to the outcomes in Our Plan.

The forecast was intended to provide a framework within which decisions could be made regarding the future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guaranteed West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

The Leader presented the report and he and the s151 Officer responded to a number of detailed questions on facts presented within the report. In addition, questions were asked of the Specialist Affordable Housing, Operational Manager Environment Services and COP Lead Development Management in relation to specific Earmarked Reserves, cost pressures and capital bids and the amounts recommended for 2017/18.

Members had more detailed discussions and shared their views on the proposal to charge for garden waste (as detailed in Exempt Appendix F of the presented agenda report). The Executive Director (SD&CD) gave a detailed explanation in relation to the budget pressures that currently existed within the Planning Community of Practice.

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

- (i) to increase Council Tax by £5 (which equates to a Band D Council Tax of £218.39 for 2017/18, an increase of £5 per year or 10 pence per week). This equates to a Council Tax requirement of £4,356,612 (as shown in Appendix B of the presented agenda report));
- (ii) that the financial pressures as outlined in Appendix A of the presented agenda report (amounting to £735,571) be approved;

- (iii) that the contributions to Earmarked Reserves (amounting to £277,000) be approved;
- (iv) to approve the waste budget pressures (as outlined at Appendix F of the presented agenda report) in order to allow the final managed service award to be made in line with the resolution of Minutes HC41 and CM 27;
- (v) that the proposed savings of £473,171 (as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved;
- (vi) that the Collection Fund surplus of £178,000 be agreed;
- (vii) that an ICT Earmarked Reserve is created of £42,000 as set out in paragraph 6.15 of the presented agenda report.
- (viii) that £700,000 of New Homes Bonus funding be used to balance the 2017-18 Revenue Budget, subject to review by the s151 Officer of the £200,000 capital bid proposed for Affordable Housing.
- (ix) that £100,000 of the Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve be used to fund £50,000 for the Joint Local Plan and £50,000 for five additional case managers within Development Management for a period of one year (as outlined at paragraph 10.6 of the presented agenda report);
- (x) that the final figure for the Total Net Expenditure of the Council for 2017/18 is to be calculated by the S151 Officer, in light of the discussions and recommendations by the Hub Committee at this meeting, with the final figure being reported to Council on 7 February 2017 for approval;
- (xi) that the 2017/18 Capital Programme projects totalling £720,000 be approved as per paragraph 9.1 of the presented agenda report, subject to review by the s151 Officer of the £200,000 capital bid proposed for Affordable Housing;
- (xii) to approve financing the 2017/18 Capital Programme of £720,000 by using £238,000 of New Homes Bonus funding, £402,000 of Better Care Funding and £80,000 from the Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve (as per paragraph 9.1 of the presented agenda report), subject to review by the s151 Officer of the £200,000 capital bid proposed for Affordable Housing;
- (xiii) to transfer £9,880 of its allocation of New Homes Bonus for 2017/18 to an Earmarked Reserve called 'Community Investment Fund – Dartmoor National Park', to be applied for and drawn down by Dartmoor National Park as required. This amount is a one-off payment and the position will be considered annually by the Council as part of the budget process. The condition is that this is for use within the boundaries of the Borough Council only;

- (xiv) that the Council Tax Support Grant paid to Town and Parish Councils be reduced by 8.6% for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. This equates to a payment of £70,841 for 2017/18;
- (xv) that the minimum level of the Unearmarked Revenue Reserves be maintained at £750,000 as per Section 10 of the presented agenda report;
- (xvi) that the level of reserves as set out within the presented agenda report and the assessment of their adequacy and the robustness of budget estimates be noted. This is a requirement of Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003;
- (xvii) to freeze car parking charges for 2017/18 and that charges be reviewed by the Car Parking Strategy Group in 2018-19; and
- (xviii) that an opt-in charged garden waste service, as set out in Exempt Appendix F to the presented agenda report be adopted, with authority being delegated to the Group Manager Commercial Services, in consultation with the Waste Working Group, to present the detail to the Council meeting on 7 February 2017.

49. **Local Authority Controlled Company Proposals (Cllr Sanders)**  
**HC 49**

Members were presented with a report that set out how the Council had been exploring the possibility of establishing a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) jointly with South Hams District Council. A Joint Steering Group (JSG) consisting of Members from both Councils had been formed to consider further detailed information and to make a final recommendation to the Council in respect of the LACC Proposal. Having fully considered the matter, the JSG had concluded that there were no legal or technical matters that would prevent the Councils implementing a LACC.

However, there were significant additional initial costs (particularly Pensions contributions) in establishing a LACC and therefore the recommendation to both Councils was to not proceed with the implementation of a LACC as currently proposed. The full JSG recommendations were set out in Appendix 1 to the presented report. The JSG recognised the value of holding regular meetings to discuss matters affecting both Councils (such as shared services arrangements and particularly around exploring further options to meet both Councils' financial challenges) and recommended that these meetings continue to consider future opportunities.

The Leader presented the report and responded to questions. He confirmed that the revised terms of reference for the JSG would be circulated to the wider membership. He also confirmed that a broad scope of options would be drawn up for consideration. Members then discussed the implications on the waste contract for West Devon

Borough Council and the Solicitor was able to provide advice on the Council's current position.

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

1. the recommendations of the Joint Steering Group (as at presented Appendix 1) be noted;
2. the Joint Steering Group continue to meet with revised terms of reference being put into place to consider other options in respect of shared arrangements and financial challenges with South Hams District Council;
3. the first priority from West Devon Borough Council is for the Joint Steering Group to consider options for establishing a reduced scope LACC with the priority on delivering Waste and associated services;
4. the revised terms of reference for the Joint Steering Group be delegated to the Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Independent Group; and
5. the remaining funding for the LACC project be earmarked to fund further work by the Joint Steering Group within their revised terms of reference.

50. **Investment Options (Cllr Baldwin)**

**HC 50**

Members were presented with a report that set out the rationale for not proceeding with a previously approved principle of utilising the Invest to Earn reserve to acquire two properties within West Devon and instead recommended investment into CCLA's Local Authorities' Property Fund. It was recommended that a sum of £500,000 be invested.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and responded to questions. One of his key points was that this should be viewed as a longer term investment of at least five to ten years. Whilst the latest position in respect of progressing with a LACC led some Members to urge caution before any investment was made, a majority of Members felt that the Council had waited long enough and it was important to move quickly to secure better rates as soon as possible.

It was then **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. the sum of £500,000 from the earmarked 'Invest to Earn' reserve be used to invest in CCLA's (CCLA Investment Management Limited's) Local Authorities Property Fund as detailed in section 5 of the presented agenda report, with the investment being placed at the beginning of the 2017/18 financial year; and
2. a Member Working Group be set up to work with officers to evaluate other invest to earn, income and efficiency opportunities for future consideration by the Council.

51. **ICT Strategy 2017-2019 (Cllr Edmonds)**

**HC 51**

Members were presented with a report that sought approval of the presented ICT Strategy.

The Lead Member for Support Services introduced the report and the Executive Directors responded to questions and updated Members on the latest position with Civica. Members raised a number of points in respect of the Council website and were advised that the new version would be launched very soon. In addition, there were minor points made in respect of the content of the ICT Strategy document.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the ICT Strategy Document.

The Meeting concluded at 5.00 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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