

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held
on
Tuesday, 20th June, 2017 at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Sanders
Vice Chairman Cllr Samuel

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Moody
Cllr Parker
Cllr Mott

Cllr Jory
Cllr Oxborough
Cllr Sampson

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Lamb
Cllr Cloke

Cllr Leech
Cllr Yelland

Officers:

Darren Arulvasagam

Group Manager Business
Development

Sophie Hosking
Steve Jordan

Executive Director
Executive Director Head of Paid
Service

Lisa Buckle

Section 151 Officer

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 16th May 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- *HC 75 should be amended from "a Working Group of Members to comprise of the Task and Finish Review Group and Cllrs Edmonds and **Sampson** from the Hub Committee" to "a Working Group of Members to comprise of the Task and Finish Review Group and Cllrs Edmonds and **Moody** from the Hub Committee";
- *HC 76 title should be amended from "Future Garden Waste Design" to "Future Garden Waste Service Design"; and
- *HC 77 should be amended to read that the "Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Housing" (rather than "Lead Member for Strategic Housing").

3. **Lead Member Update - Cllr Sanders**

***HC 03**

Cllr Sanders updated Members following the discussions held at the SH/WD JSG meeting that had taken place on the morning of 20 June 2017. His update included the following points:

Single Council Proposal

- A joint meeting had been scheduled for all Members of West Devon Borough Council and Members of South Hams District Council on 21st July. This would be a chance to meet with Department of Communities and Local Government and Local Government Association representatives and ask any questions on the One Council proposal;
- A number of options were being considered to deal with council tax equalisation;
- A draft set of consultation questions had been prepared for Members to consider;
- Any consultation should run for at least 6 weeks over August and September 2017, as there would be events during August where there would be opportunity for face to face contact with residents;
- Currently there was a recommendation for an Executive Leader and Cabinet model for a single new Council. Further work would be undertaken to explore the role of the opposition in this model. He did acknowledge that there may be an issue at West Devon over the role of the Ceremonial Mayor;
- Financial modelling assumed that there would be no reduction in Members until 2023 – although this would be down for the Boundary Commission to decide and the Minister may put interim measures in place;
- The recommendation to Hub Committee would be along the lines of "That Council be recommended to agree in principle to proceed with a single council and commence public consultation which will then be considered by Members in October 2017."

Outsource or wholly owned company

- An outline report was being developed with a number of proposals to be considered further at the SH/WD JSG meeting in July and a final set of proposals on the way forward would be presented at the JSG August meeting.

4. Investment in Commercial Property (Cllr Sanders)

HC 04

Members were presented with a report that set out the business case, based on advice received, for the Investment in Commercial Property Strategy. The objective of the proposed strategy was to generate revenue streams to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Council enabling it to deliver, and where possible improve, frontline services in line with the Council's adopted strategy and objectives.

The Leader introduced the report and invited questions. The s151 Officer and Group Manager Business Development responded to questions on risk mitigation and timing of key stages of the proposal. During discussion, Members expressed their support for the proposal. The future budget gap required innovative proposals to come forward and this was considered to be an example of a proposal that could help to close that gap. Members were mindful of the risks but accepted that the Strategy included methods to mitigate the majority of their concerns. Members also noted that a key issue would be to seek the appropriate specialist support.

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

1. Approve and implement the proposed commercial property investment strategy as detailed in Appendix A;
2. Agree that officers conclude an appropriate procurement process to commission specialists to work on behalf of the Council in relation to the proposed commercial property investment strategy;
3. Delegate individual commercial property portfolio purchase and disposal decisions to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the s151 Officer, the Leader and the appointed Chair of the 'Invest to Earn' Group; and
4. Borrow funds on fixed rate terms from the appropriate source in order to pursue this strategy. To complete tranche 1 this would require borrowing of up to £26.75 million (£25 million plus acquisition costs of 7%).

5. Write-off Report (Cllr Moody)

***HC 05**

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance introduced a report that informed Members of the debt written off for revenue streams within the Revenue and Benefits service. Debts up to the value of £5,000 were written off by the s151 Officer under delegated authority. Permission was sought to write off individual debts with a

value of more than £5,000. In respect of the debts with a value of more than £5,000, Members were advised of how they had arisen.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

1. That, in accordance with Financial Regulations, that the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £96,248.56 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 be noted; and
2. The write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £5,898.04 as detailed in Table 3 be authorised.

The Meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
