

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 11th July, 2017** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Yelland
Vice Chairman Cllr Cheadle

Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Evans
Cllr Leech
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Roberts
Cllr Sheldon

Cllr Cloke
Cllr Kimber
Cllr McInnes
Cllr Musgrave
Cllr Ridgers
Cllr Sellis

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Mott
Cllr Sanders

Cllr Jory
Cllr Oxborough

Officers:

Steve Jordan

Sophie Hosking
Darren Arulvasagam

Executive Director Head of Paid Service
Executive Director
Group Manager Business Development

Specialist - Assets

14. **Apologies for Absence**

*O&S 14

There were no apologies for absence given to this meeting.

15. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*O&S 15

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

16. **Declarations of Interest**

*O&S 16

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there were none made.

17. **Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules**

O&S 17

At the Annual Council meeting held on 23 May 2017, Members were presented with a report on the Council Constitution (Minute CM 8 refers). As a result of the discussion at that meeting and the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 June 2017 (Minute O&S 05 refers), a revised set of draft Overview and Scrutiny Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules were presented to the Committee for its consideration.

In considering these draft documents, the Committee requested that the following amendments be incorporated:

(a) *Specific Functions Para 2.1(ii)* (page 1 of the published agenda refers) be revised to read:

'assist the Council in the development of its Budget and any policies it chooses to adopt.'

(b) *Scrutiny Para 2.2(ii)* (page 2 of the published agenda refers) to delete the following words:

'and Council officers.'

(c) *Scrutiny Para 6.3* (page 8 of the published agenda refers) be amended to read:

'Call-in may be exercised only by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.'

(d) *Scrutiny Para 6.3.4* (page 8 of the published agenda refers) be updated to read:

'Before the expiry of the three working days, the Head of Paid Service shall call-in a decision for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if so requested by the Chairman, any three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any five non-Hub Committee Members.'

(e) Paragraph 7.5 (page 10 of the published agenda refers) be reinstated to read:

'Party Whip: Whipping arrangements are not permitted at formal (or informal) meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.'

It was then:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that, subject to inclusion of the suggested amendments above, the revised Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules be approved.

18. **Public Forum**

*O&S 18

There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session at this meeting.

19. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

*O&S 19

The most recent (published June 2017) Hub Committee Forward Plan was presented for consideration.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In light of the corporate emphasis being given to assets, it was agreed that the title for the 'Lead Member for Environment' should be updated to read the 'Lead Member for Environment and Assets';
- (b) To refresh the wider membership, the Committee requested that all Members be sent the latest version of the roles and responsibilities for each Hub Committee Member;
- (c) For clarity, Members were advised that, in the first instance, the Waste Working Group now reported its findings to the SH/WD Joint Steering Group (JSG).

20. **Villages in Action Presentation**

*O&S 20

The Committee received a presentation from the Project Director and Project Manager from Carn to Cove. In so doing, Members were informed that Carn to Cove was Cornwall's performing arts scheme for rural communities in the county.

Following the announcement of Villages In Action (VIA) that they were withdrawing from organising rural touring in Devon and the closure of the office in May 2017, the Committee was advised that Carn to Cove, at the invitation of the Board of Trustees of VIA, had stepped in to run a caretaker season for Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018.

In concluding their presentation, the representatives thanked the Council for its £4,000 grant to VIA and hoped that, in the future, the authority would decide to restore its contribution back to the 2015/16 level of £8,000 per annum.

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) funding from other partners and stakeholders. When questioned, the representatives advised that VIA had not received any funding from Devon County Council this year. In addition, a number of Members were of the view that, since they were not subject to capping restrictions, there was significant potential for town and parish councils to financially contribute and work more closely with VIA. In accepting the point, the representatives advised that Carn to Cove made regular representations to town and parish councils in Cornwall. However, support at borough and unitary council level was also considered to be of critical importance;
- (b) revenue from the box office. The Committee was advised that the main financial contributor to VIA was revenue gained through the box office;
- (c) financial accountability. A Member stated her disappointment that the presentation did not provide any evidence regarding how the £4,000 contribution from the Council was being spent. To be minded to support any future funding increases, the Member felt that she would need to see far greater financial accountability and a more detailed budgetary breakdown from the organisation;
- (d) offering a menu of events. The Committee was informed that it was the decision of each village to decide which type of events they held by choosing from a pre-determined menu. It was confirmed that the menu of events included provision for themes including: dance, theatre, music, puppetry, storytelling, poetry and film;
- (e) the future for VIA. Whilst the board of trustees was considering future options for VIA, there was an overriding wish to retain the brand. The Carn to Cove representatives confirmed that their organisation was not looking at taking over long-term responsibility for VIA.

Upon the conclusion of this agenda item, the Committee Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance, presentation and informative responses to Member questions.

21. **Review of WDBC Community Grant Schemes**

O&S 21

Members were presented with a report that presented them with a review of existing Council Community Grant schemes, including options for streamlining or improving these schemes.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In citing a particular example during which local Ward Members had not agreed on whether or not a Community Grant application was supported, an additional recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to read as follows:-

'That, where there is a lack of consensus amongst local Ward Member(s) about whether to support an application, local Ward Members be in receipt of the final decision (and a brief statement outlining the rationale behind this decision) on whether or not an application to the 'Community Grant' scheme has been successful.'

When put to the vote, this addition was declared **CARRIED**.

In respect of the Arts Task and Finish Group recommendations specifically relating to Villages In Action and Museum funding, some concerns were raised that, if supported, the Council would be committing monies without seeing the full future budget picture. In reply, assurances were given that the Task and Finish Group was not recommending the commitment of any specific sums of money in these areas at this time;

- (b) A Member felt it to be important that clubs who were applying to obtain a Sports Grant should be registered as 'Community Amateur Sports Clubs' (CASC). As a compromise, other Members highlighted the extent of the changes being proposed to the Community Fund and the consequent need for a Public Relations (PR) exercise to be undertaken. It was therefore requested that specific reference be made in the PR to those registered as CASC being eligible to apply for funding from the refreshed Community Grant scheme.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. the Sports Grant be incorporated into a 'Community Grant' scheme, retaining £2,000 as a revenue line to cover 'training/coaching grants';

2. applications to the Community Grant from projects within Dartmoor National Park, which have already received support from the DNPA Sustainable Communities Fund, be excluded;
3. production be supported of a one page summary of grant schemes which officers and Members can use to increase and sustain the level of promotion to local communities;
4. support be given to ongoing officer engagement with DCC to refocus the TAP scheme criteria on its original purpose and reinstate the process that is outlined at paragraph 7.3 of the presented agenda report;
5. the Arts Task & Finish recommendations (as shown in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the presented agenda report) regarding revenue funding to communities be approved; and
6. where there is a lack of consensus amongst local Ward Member(s) about whether to support an application, local Ward Members be in receipt of the final decision (and a brief statement outlining the rationale behind this decision) on whether or not an application to the 'Community Grant' scheme has been successful.
- 7.

22. **Joint Local Plan Update: Standing Agenda Item**

* O&S 22

In providing his update, the Head of Paid Service advised that the team were currently sifting through the consultation responses received during the Regulation 19 stage. Furthermore, officers were in the process of preparing the final document to go forward for submission and they were aiming to achieve this before the end of July 2017.

Finally, the Head of Paid Service repeated his commitment to keep all Members fully informed of progress that was being made on the Joint Local Plan.

23. **Scrutiny Proposal Forms:**

* O&S 23

(a) Discretionary Grant Funding Review

The Committee endorsed the request for a Task and Finish Group to be established to review existing sources of discretionary grant funding.

Having endorsed the request, nominations to serve on the Group were sought and it was agreed that the membership would consist of: Cllrs Cloke, Moyse and Yelland.

(b) Performance Measure

The Committee proceeded to consider a request to establish a Joint SH/WD Task and Finish Group to review the current set of Council Performance Indicators.

In agreeing to the request, the Committee appointed Cllrs Cheadle and Leech to serve on the Group. Since officers were ideally aiming for three Members of each Council to be appointed to serve on this Group, it was agreed that Members of the Audit and Hub Committees should be invited to express their interest.

24. **Annual Work Programme 2017/18**

*O&S 24

The Chairman introduced the latest version of the Work Programme for the next 12 months and advised that the Planning Enforcement Service Review report was currently being drafted by officers. In the event of any Members having specific issues that they wished to be included in this report then they were asked to contact officers accordingly.

25. **Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this meeting**

*O&S 25

The Chairman reminded the Committee that she had asked for Overview and Scrutiny related training to be arranged for all Members during the autumn.

The Meeting concluded at 3.55pm

Signed by:

Chairman
