

# WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 17th October, 2017** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Yelland  
**Vice Chairman**

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 Cann OBE  
Cllr Jory  
Cllr Moody  
Cllr Parker  
Cllr Samuel

Cllr Edmonds  
Cllr Lamb  
Cllr Mott  
Cllr Sampson  
Cllr Sanders

Officers:

Head of Paid Service  
Executive Director – Service Delivery & Commercial Development  
Commissioning Manager

## 39. **Apologies for Absence**

**\*O&S 39**

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllr R Chedale.

40. **Confirmation of Minutes**  
**\*O&S 40**  
The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.
41. **Declarations of Interest**  
**\*O&S 41**  
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.
42. **Public Forum**  
**\*O&S 42**  
There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session at this meeting.
43. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**  
**\*O&S 43**  
The most recent Hub Committee Forward Plan was presented for consideration.  
In discussion, the Committee was advised that the 'Set up of a Local Authority Lottery' agenda item, that was scheduled for consideration by the Hub Committee at its meeting on 31 October 2017, would ultimately require the approval of the full Council.
44. **One Council Consultation Process**  
**\*O&S 44**  
Consideration was given to a report that provided a detailed overview of the One Council Consultation process, including how the consultation was devised and the range of methods used to engage with the public.  
  
In her introduction, the Committee Chairman emphasised that the purpose of this agenda item was not to focus on the merits of the proposal, but to ensure that the consultation process had been fair, reasonable and balanced.  
  
In discussion, reference was made to:-  
  
(a) the recent press release. The Leader was aware of a number of concerns that had been raised at the recent press release that had been issued. The Leader stated that it was his personal view that a press release should have been held back until after the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been given the opportunity to scrutinise the consultation process and check that the applied methodology had been deemed to be sound;  
  
(b) the ICT glitch. The Leader reiterated that the glitch was outside of the control of the Council and had occurred on the last day of the

consultation period. Officers proceeded to advise that mitigating measures (including extending the consultation period by one day) were put into place to minimise the impact of this unfortunate disruption;

- (c) the telephone survey. Members acknowledged that the telephone survey had been statistically representative of the Borough population in terms of age and gender and should be considered to be the most statistically valid and representative aspect of the consultation process;
- (d) Council Tax Equalisation. In reply to a question, officers confirmed that the questions related to Council Tax Equalisation were only considered by respondents to the South Hams survey;
- (e) the restriction on IT equipment. A Member expressed the view that the provision whereby a piece of IT equipment could only be used once to provide a survey response had been too restrictive. In reply, the Leader advised that a risk analysis had been undertaken and it had been concluded that a greater risk would have arisen from multiple responses being generated from the same piece of IT equipment;
- (f) the ability to obtain a paper copy of the survey. The Committee noted that the postcards that had been delivered to each household in the Borough had made it clear that residents could request a paper copy of the survey;
- (g) establishing a standalone Facebook consultation page. The view was expressed that, instead of a signposting page approach being adopted, a greater number of responses would have been made during the consultation process if the survey had been directly available from a standalone Facebook consultation page;
- (h) the low response rates from the business sector. When questioned, officers informed that they had engaged the Federation of Small Businesses for Devon; the Business Information Point in Okehampton; the local Chambers of Commerce and the Business Voice mailing list;
- (i) town and parish council responses. Whilst some Members felt that a 52% response rate from town and parish councils was low, the point was made that, in light of the lack of alternative options, a number had not felt in a position to make an evidence based submission to the survey. The Committee was also informed that, whilst aware that the consultation period had expired, Tavistock Town Council would be formally considering the proposal at its meeting later today;
- (j) the wording of the questions. Based upon feedback he had received, a Member stated that there was a perception amongst

some residents that the questions had been somewhat leading towards encouraging a positive response to the survey;

- (k) the timing of the Committee meeting. A Member expressed his personal disappointment that the Committee meeting was not held at the exact same time as the equivalent Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting at South Hams District Council.

In conclusion, a number of Members stated their belief that the consultation process had been robust and sound.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee has considered the consultation process and response.

45. **Task and Finish Group Updates**

**\* O&S 45**

**(a) T18**

The Chairman advised that the Hub Committee had endorsed the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 18 July 2017 (Minute \*HC 15 refers). In formally closing it down, the Committee wished to thank the Group Members for their contributions during the Review.

**(b) Discretionary Grant Funding Review**

In making reference to the linkages with some of the questions in the Member Budget Survey, the Chairman emphasised the importance of all Members completing the questionnaire during the current consultation process.

**(c) Performance Measure**

By way of an update, it was noted that the Group was still gathering information in advance of its next meeting on 29 November 2017. In addition, the Group remained on target to produce its final recommendations early in the New Year.

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

**\*O&S 46**

The Chairman introduced the latest version of the Work Programme for the next 12 months and the following updates were highlighted:

- The Committee agreed that the three partner annual updates that had been programmed for the meeting on 7 November 2017 should be deferred for consideration at the Draft Budget 2018/19 meeting on 16 January 2018 and re-titled: 'Grant Funding: Update Report';

- Following the request at the last Committee meeting, it was noted that a Scrutiny Proposal Form had been produced on Rural Broadband Provision in the Borough (Minute \*O&S 37 refers). It had been agreed that, as a way forward, the Committee would formally request that a meeting of the Rural Broadband Working Group be arranged in the upcoming weeks and that renewed energy be given to this Group in an attempt to influence an improvement in rural broadband provision in the Borough. It was also agreed that consideration should be given to co-opting additional interested Members on to the Working Group.

47. **Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this Meeting**

**\*O&S 47**

The Chairman advised the Committee that a trainer had been sourced to deliver the Overview and Scrutiny related training and a date would be fixed in due course.

In addition, the Committee noted that a Member training session would be convened on the Lone Worker Policy and general health and safety awareness issues in the upcoming months.

The Meeting concluded at 3.25 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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