

# West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>														
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, 17th October, 2017</b>														
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00 pm</b>														
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Chamber - Kilworthy Park</b>														
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Cllr Yelland <b>Vice Chairman</b> Cllr Cheadle</p> <p><i>Members:</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Cllr Baldwin</td> <td>Cllr Musgrave</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Cloke</td> <td>Cllr Pearce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Evans</td> <td>Cllr Ridgers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Kimber</td> <td>Cllr Roberts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Leech</td> <td>Cllr Sellis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr McInnes</td> <td>Cllr Sheldon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Moyse</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Musgrave	Cllr Cloke	Cllr Pearce	Cllr Evans	Cllr Ridgers	Cllr Kimber	Cllr Roberts	Cllr Leech	Cllr Sellis	Cllr McInnes	Cllr Sheldon	Cllr Moyse	
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Cllr McInnes	Cllr Sheldon														
Cllr Moyse															
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	<i>Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.</i>														
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<i>Democratic Services Senior Specialist – Darryl White</i>														

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Confirmation of Minutes** **1 - 6**  
Committee Meeting held on 5 September 2017
- 3. Declarations of Interest**  
Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.  
  
If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.
- 4. Items Requiring Urgent Attention**  
To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the Meeting as matters of urgency
- 5. Public Forum** **7 - 8**  
A period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public.
- 6. Hub Committee Forward Plan** **9 - 14**  
If any Member seeks further clarity, or wishes to raise issues regarding any future Hub Committee agenda item, please contact Member Services before **12.00 Noon on Friday 13 October 2017** to ensure that the lead officer(s) are aware of this request in advance of the meeting.
- 7. One Council Consultation Process** **15 - 22**
- 8. Task and Finish Group Updates**  
  
(a) **T18** (to formally closedown the Review);  
(b) **Discretionary Grant Funding Review**; and  
(c) **Performance Measures**.
- 9. Annual Work Programme 2017/18** **23 - 24**
- 10. Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this Meeting**



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# Agenda Item 2

At a Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **5<sup>th</sup>** day of **SEPTEMBER 2017** at **2.00 pm**.

**Present:**

Cllr R Cheadle – Vice-Chairman (in the Chair)	
Cllr R Baldwin	Cllr D W Cloke
Cllr J Evans	Cllr P Kimber
Cllr A F Leech	Cllr J R McInnes
Cllr D E Moyse	Cllr T G Pearce
Cllr P J Ridgers	Cllr A Roberts
Cllr D K A Sellis	

Head of Paid Service  
Development Management COP Lead  
Human Resources COP Lead  
Environmental Health COP Lead  
Specialist – Performance and Intelligence  
Senior Specialist – Democratic Services

**Also in Attendance:** Cllrs C Edmonds; B Lamb and J B Moody

- \*O&S 26      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs C R Musgrave, J Sheldon and J Yelland.
- \*O&S 27      CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**  
The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 July 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.
- \*O&S 28      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
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.
- \*O&S 29      PUBLIC FORUM**  
There were no issues raised during the Public Forum session at this meeting.
- \*O&S 30      HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**  
The most recent (published 29 August 2017) Hub Committee Forward Plan was presented for consideration.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Committee noted that the Housing Position Statement was still being developed and would therefore not be ready in time for consideration by the Hub Committee at its next meeting on 12 September 2017;
- (b) Similarly, the Head of Paid Service also confirmed that the Productivity Plan Joint Committee would not be ready for the consideration of the Hub Committee on 12 September 2017.

**\*O&S 31      PLANNING ENFORCEMENT SERVICE REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the current workload position and revisions to the Planning Enforcement Service in order to address the business need.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Members questioned the reasons for the Service workload being far higher in comparison to other local authorities. In reply, officers felt that there was a number of reasons for this trend that included:
  - the large geographical areas of West Devon and South Hams;
  - a number of misunderstandings in relation to what could (and could not) be developed without planning permission being required; and
  - residents within both the Borough and South Hams District generally being more interested (and aware) of what was going on within their local areas.

In an attempt to mitigate some misunderstandings, it was noted that the COP Lead had attended a number of town and parish councils to deliver planning training and these sessions had each included reference to what constituted a valid breach of planning regulations;

- (b) With regard to the creation of a Local Enforcement Plan, officers hoped that this would be implemented before the end of December 2017;
- (c) It was confirmed that the proposed additional resource would be funded from within existing budgets largely by virtue of a re-allocation of duties within the Environmental Health Community Of Practice;
- (d) Some Members were of the view that there was a public perception that the Council was a soft touch that did not deal appropriately with enforcement complaints;
- (e) The Committee reiterated that there was a need for greater interaction between local Ward Members and those officers working in Planning Enforcement;

- (f) Upon the production of the latest schedule of enforcement cases, a Member requested that a brief progress update be added for each case.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee support the actions proposed and the ongoing monitoring of the Service by the Community Of Practice Lead and the Case Management Manager.

**\* O&S 32 SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the level of sickness absence amongst Council employees and the measures in place to manage and monitor short and long term absence.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the absences related to stress and depression being alarming. In acknowledging that the statistics were a cause for concern, officers informed that the figures related to two members of staff, one of which had now returned to work. In addition, the Council had recognised that people management was a key issue and front line managers were currently undertaking an in-house Training and Development Programme.

Furthermore, in recognising that staff were under a great deal of pressure, the Committee also welcomed the adoption of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. When questioned, the Head of Paid Service advised that members of the Senior Leadership Team supported one another and, whilst they were all working long hours, this was not considered to be a problem at this present time;

- (b) the shared workforce. In light of the Council sharing its workforce with South Hams District Council, the Committee was of the view that the production of separate performance reports for Human Resources related matters was no longer necessary;
- (c) the use of exit interviews. Officers confirmed that exit interviews were undertaken for staff leavers, with one of the purposes of these being to establish whether there were any trends and/or underlying concerns;
- (d) staff enjoyment of their job. Whilst there were causes for concern within the Staff Survey findings, Members did acknowledge the outcome whereby 84% of staff had stated that they enjoyed their job;

- (e) the counselling service. Officers confirmed that the Council offered a counselling service, with staff having the ability to self-refer themselves. For the purposes of this service, it was also noted that there was no distinction between work and personal reasons for staff being able to self-refer.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee acknowledges that the Council continues to proactively manage and monitor short and long-term absence and that the HR Lead Specialist continues to report to the Senior Leadership Team on a monthly basis.

**\* O&S 33**

**Q1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The Committee considered a report that presented the Quarter 1 performance measures for 2017/18.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) debtor write-offs. A Member expressed his disappointment that write-offs were no longer a part of the reported quarterly performance measures. In response, officers advised that write-offs were now reported quarterly to the Hub Committee. That being said, it was agreed that the merits of re-instating this particular performance measure would be investigated as part of the current Task and Finish Group review;
- (b) the T18 Programme timescales. Officers confirmed that this performance measure was now obsolete and it would not therefore be included in future quarterly performance reports.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the performance levels against target communicated in the Balanced Scorecard and the performance figures supplied in the background and the exception report be noted.

**O&S 34**

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

A report was considered by the Committee that presented the annual review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Committee was advised that a Lone Worker Policy for elected Members was currently being drafted and the consequent training need was recognised;



- (b) When questioned, officers confirmed that near misses were reported and accidents (and remedial measures) were reported to the Senior Leadership Team on a monthly basis;
- (c) A Member expressed his specific concerns that the draft Policy did not state that *'on receipt of a threat against the Councils including those by letter or suspect package suspicious letter or parcel'* staff should, in all instances, leave the premises first. In response, officers stated that it would be appropriate in some instances to leave the premises first and it was agreed that a discussion specifically on this point would be held between the officer and Member outside of this meeting.

It was then:

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that the revised policy (as attached at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be adopted and signed by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of Council.

**O&S 35      REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) 2000  
POLICY AND UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report that sought to:-

- Review the Council's RIPA Policy and approve guidance on Social Networking Sites in investigations;
- Update Members on the use of RIPA;
- Report on the role of the Office of Surveillance Commissioners; and
- Report on training for officers.

In discussion, Members particularly welcomed the Policy being reviewed to reflect the emerging trends in relation to social media.

It was then:

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That the Hub Committee be **RECOMMENDED** that the guidance on Social Networking Sites in investigations (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved and included in the Council's RIPA Policy; and
2. That the Committee note that there has been no RIPA Authorisations in the last three years.

**\* O&S 36 Task and Finish Group Updates**

**(a) Discretionary Grant Funding Review**

The Committee noted that the Group was to meet in due course.

**(b) Performance Measure**

By way of an update, it was noted that the first Group meeting had been held with the lead Specialist. The main outcome of this meeting was that each Group Member had been assigned an individual service area of the Council to focus upon.

The Committee was advised that the primary focus of the Group Members (within each of their service areas of responsibility) was three fold namely:

1. To establish whether the performance measure was still relevant;
2. If so, to consider why the measure was set at the current level and who was responsible for setting that target; and
3. To determine who (and why) would be responsible for adjusting these measures and/or target levels.

**\*O&S 37 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

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

- It was noted that an additional Committee meeting had been scheduled to take place on 17 October 2017. The main purpose for this meeting being convened was to consider the consultation process (and outcome) associated with the One Council proposal;
- With regard to Rural Broadband provision in the Borough, it was agreed that the Chairman would produce a Scrutiny Proposal Form for consideration. In the event of agreement ultimately being given to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review Rural Broadband provision, the Committee appointed Cllrs Cheadle, Cloke, Kimber, Pearce, Roberts and Sheldon for this purpose.

**\*O&S 38 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that Overview and Scrutiny related training would be arranged for all Members during the autumn.

In addition, the Committee noted that there was an identified need for a Member training session to be convened on the Lone Worker Policy and general health and safety awareness issues.

(The meeting terminated at 3.35 pm)

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Chairman

## **PUBLIC FORUM PROCEDURES**

### **(a) General**

Members of the public may raise issues and ask questions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This session will last for up to fifteen minutes at the beginning of each meeting, with any individual speaker having a maximum of three minutes to address the Committee.

### **(b) Notice of Questions**

An issue or question may only be raised by a member of the public provided that they have given written notice (which may be by electronic mail) to Darryl White ([darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk)) by 5.00pm on the Thursday, prior to the relevant meeting.

### **(c) Scope of Questions**

An issue may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if:

- it relates to a matter within the functions of the Planning and Licensing Committee;
- it is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- it is offensive, frivolous or defamatory;
- it is substantially the same as a question which has previously been put in the past six months; or
- it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

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## WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL: HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

This is the provisional forward plan for the six months starting 31 October 2017. It provides an indicative date for matters to be considered by the Hub Committee. Where possible, the Hub Committee will keep to the dates shown in the plan. However, it may be necessary for some items to be rescheduled and other items added.

The forward plan is published to publicise consultation dates and enable dialogue between the Hub Committee and all councillors, the public and other stakeholders. It will also assist the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the Hub Committee to account.

The Plan is published in hard copy and on the Council's website ([www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk))

**Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings of the Hub Committee, which are normally held at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, and normally start at 2.00 pm.**

**If advance notice has been given, questions can be put to the Hub Committee at the beginning of the meeting.**

The Hub Committee consists of nine Councillors. Each has responsibility for a particular area of the Council's work.

*Cllr Sanders – Leader*

*Cllr Samuel – Deputy Leader*

*Cllr Sampson – Lead Member for Commercial Services*

*Cllr Moody – Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing*

*Cllr Oxborough – Lead Member for Economy*

*Cllr Jory – Lead Member for Environment and Assets*

*Cllr Mott – Lead Member for Customer First*

*Cllr Edmonds - Lead Member for Resources and Performance*

*Cllr Parker – Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Housing*

Further information on the workings of the Hub Committee, including latest information on agenda items, can be obtained by contacting the Member Services Section by e-mail to [member.services@westdevon.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westdevon.gov.uk)

**All items listed in this Forward Plan will be discussed in public at the relevant meeting, unless otherwise indicated for the reasons shown**

**DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE HUB COMMITTEE**

Service	Title of Report and summary	Lead Officer and Member	Decision maker	Anticipated date of meeting
Strategy & Commissioning	<b>Productivity Plan Joint Committee</b> – an update on the work being carried out between partners towards the formation of a joint committee who will oversee the delivery of a productivity plan for the area	DA/Cllr Sanders	Council	Date tbc
Strategy & Commissioning	<b>Housing Position Statement</b>	TJ/Cllr Parker	Hub Committee	Date tbc
Commercial Services	<b>Parking Strategy</b>	CA/Cllr Sampson	Council	31 October 2017
SLT	<b>Transformation Programme Closedown</b> – to provide a closedown report of the T18 Transformation Programme	LB/Cllr Sanders	Hub Committee	28 November 2017
Support Services	<b>Write Off Report Q2 2017/18</b> – to advise Members of amounts written off and request approval to write off debts in excess of £5,000	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	31 October 2017
SLT	<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b> – to bring together all known factors affecting the Council's financial position and its financial sustainability, to provide a long term financial forecast	LB/Cllr Sanders	Council	31 October 2017
Support Services	<b>Insurance Procurement – Award of Contract</b> – to recommend to Council the award of the Insurance contract	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	31 October 2017
Customer First	<b>Leisure Contract – Meadowlands Lease Division</b>	CB/Cllr Jory		31 October 2017
Strategy & Commissioning	<b>Set up of a local authority lottery -</b>	DA/Cllr Samuel	Council	31 October 2017
Support Services	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring to September 2017 (six monthly position)</b> – a revenue budget monitoring	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	28 November 2017

	report to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved revenue budget for 2017/18, and to provide a forecast of the year end position			
Support Services	<b>Capital Programme Budget Monitoring to September 2017 (six monthly position)</b> – The report advises Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme for 2017/18, including an assessment of their financial position	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	28 November 2017
SLT	<b>Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2018/19</b> – to set out recommendations for the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 (including the council tax level for 2018/19)	LB/Cllr Sanders	Council	28 November 2017
SLT	<b>Draft Capital Budget Proposals 2018/19</b> – to set out recommendations for the Capital Programme budget for 2018/19	LB/Cllr Sanders	Council	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2018/19</b> – it is an annual requirement for the Council to revisit its existing council tax support scheme	IB/Cllr Moody	Council	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>Review of Business Rates Relief Policy</b> – to review the discretionary business rate relief policy and to include terms of reference for the rate relief panel	IB/Cllr Oxborough	Council	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>Direct Lets Scheme</b> – to consider introduction of a Direct Lets Scheme	IB/Cllr Moody	Council	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>Food Safety Audit</b> - to update Members on the findings of the recent FSA audit of the Council's performance when regulation food safety in businesses in West Devon	IL/Cllr Moody	Hub Committee	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>To consider adoption of an AntiSocial Behaviour Enforcement Policy</b>	JK/Cllr Moody	Council	28 November 2017

Customer First	<b>Annual Review of Health and Safety Policy</b>	IL/Cllr Moody	Council	28 November 2017
Customer First	<b>RIPA 2000 Policy and Update</b>	SN/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	28 November 2017
Support Services	<b>ICT Procurement Options</b> – to advise Members of the options in relation to ICT procurement	MW/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	28 November 2017
SLT	<b>Revenue Budget Proposals 2018/19</b> – to set out recommendations for the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 (including the council tax level for 2018/19)	LB/Cllr Sanders	Council	6 February 2018
SLT	<b>Capital Budget Proposals 2018/19</b> – to set out recommendations for the Capital Programme budget for 2018/19	LB/Cllr Sanders	Council	6 February 2018
Support Services	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 (nine monthly position)</b> – a revenue budget monitoring report to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved revenue budget for 2017/18, and to provide a forecast of the year end position	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	6 February 2018
Support Services	<b>Capital Programme Budget Monitoring 2017/18 (nine monthly position)</b> – to advise Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme, including an assessment of their financial position	LB/Cllr Edmonds	Hub Committee	6 February 2018

**\* Exempt Item (This means information contained in the report is not available to members of the public)**

SJ – Steve Jordan – Executive Director Strategy and Commissioning and Head of Paid Service

SH – Sophie Hosking – Executive Director Service Delivery and Commercial Development

LB – Lisa Buckle – Finance COP Lead and s151 Officer

HD – Helen Dobby – Group Manager Commercial Services

SM – Steve Mullineaux – Group Manager Support Services

CB – Chris Brook – COP Lead Assets

CBowen – Catherine Bowen – Monitoring Officer

DA – Darren Arulvasagam – Group Manager Business Development

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

IB – Isabel Blake – COP Lead Housing, Revenues and Benefits



JS – Jane Savage – Lead Specialist Waste Strategy  
IL – Ian Luscombe – COP Lead Environmental Health

LC – Lesley Crocker – COP Lead Communications  
RS – Rob Sekula  
RH – Rob Harkness



# Agenda Item 7

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **17 October 2017**

Title: **One Council Consultation Process**

Portfolio Area: **Strategy & Commissioning**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **N/A**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Any views of the Committee will be reflected in the report to Special Council on 31 October 2017

Author: **Nadine Trout** Role: **Commissioning Manager**

Contact: [Nadine.Trout@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Nadine.Trout@swdevon.gov.uk)

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider the consultation process and responses and make recommendations to full Council accordingly.**

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Further to agreement by Council on 27 July 2017 to consult with the public on the One Council proposal, this report provides a detailed overview of the consultation process including how the consultation was devised and the range of methods used to engage with the public.
- 1.2** The consultation will close at midnight on 8 October 2017. As such the results of the consultation are not available at the time of publication of this report. However, the results and analysis will be supplied to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as soon after the 8 October as possible and before the Committee meets on the 17 October 2017.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** On the 27 July 2017 Council resolved to proceed to consultation with the public and stakeholders from early August through to the end of September 2017, with delegated authority being given to the SH/WD Joint Steering Group (JSG) to agree the final contents of the consultation document prior to its publication.
- 2.2** Council further resolved to task an independent person with reviewing the final version of the draft consultation document prior to its publication.

## **3. COMPILATION OF CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

### **3.1 Joint Steering Group**

The SH/WD Joint Steering Group met on the 1 August to discuss the compilation of a balanced key facts consultation document and a consultation process including survey questions. As a result of the meeting consultation documents were drafted and circulated to the JSG for comment. For full openness and transparency the Deputy Leader also circulated the documents to the wider council Membership for comment.

### **3.2 Specialist Independent Advisor**

The Local Government Association recommended an independent and experienced consultation specialist (The Campaign Company) to review the consultation documentation including the survey questions and proposed methods for engagement.

- 3.2.1** The Campaign Company are Members of the Consultation Institute and as such adhere to the Gunning and Cabinet Office Consultation Principles. On 10 August 2017 the Campaign Company made the following statement:

*"We believe that the One Council Consultation process is being conducted in a way that aims to be fair, transparent and compliant."*

- 3.2.2** The Campaign Company also made the following suggestions:

- a. The consultation take place over an 8 week as opposed to 6 week period
- b. The inclusion of an equalities statement
- c. Availability of financial background information
- d. The provision of paper surveys and if necessary surveys and consultation documents in easy read or other languages
- e. Availability of paper copies of the consultation at events

### **3.3 Consultation Sign Off**

After considering feedback from Members and following up on the suggestions made by the Campaign Company the Joint Steering Group finally approved sign off of the consultation on 11 August 2017. As a result the consultation went live on 14 August 2017 with an agreed finish date 8 weeks later of the 8 October 2017.

## **4. CONSULTATION METHODS**

### **4.1 Website**

A dedicated website went live on 14 August 2017. To ensure continuity of messaging the pages of the website directly mirror the content of the consultation key facts document. The website also contains further information as recommended by the Campaign Company, plus the promotion of engagement events, news items and videos further explaining the consultation.

### **4.2 Postcards**

The week commencing 28 August 2017 over 69,000 postcards were sent to every household in the South Hams District and West Devon Borough.

4.2.1 The postcards encourage residents to visit the consultation website and have their say by completing an online survey. The postcards also inform residents that the consultation runs until the 8 October 2017 and that paper surveys are available from our offices or by telephoning a dedicated number to request one.

4.2.2 The majority of the postcards were delivered using the Royal Mail Door to Door service whereby postcards are delivered to each household but are not individually addressed. Some postcards were also delivered using Royal Mail business postage whereby the postcards were posted in envelopes and addresses to individual households.

4.2.3 The reason postcards were delivered using different methods was to make the cost of the mailing efficient and ensure only residents in South Hams and West Devon received them. The Royal Mail Door to Door Service only costs 6 pence per item compared to 35 pence per item for business postage. The Door to Door Service however, is only cost effective when used for full post code areas within a district or borough boundary. The South Hams District and West Devon Borough includes some partial post codes whereby a post code like EX20 2 includes some residents inside the West Devon boundary as well as residents in neighbouring authorities too, in these instances business postage was used.

4.2.4 Three people have complained to the Commissioning Manager that residents in their area have not received post cards. In order to investigate this further the Royal Mail need the addresses of 5 households in a given post code. None of the complainants have provided these details and as such the matter has not been pursued.

### **4.3 Surveys – Online, Telephone and Paper**

Care has been taken to ensure all survey formats whether online, by telephone or on paper contain the same questions. All respondents have also been able to make open comments in addition to answering set questions.

- 4.3.1 Some concerns have been raised about the Council Tax Equalisation question being compulsory for South Hams residents. The reason for this is if Council agree to pursue the One Council proposal it is important that the thoughts of all respondents concerning the equalisation period (regardless of whether they support the proposal) is given due consideration. The Department of Communities and Local Government has made it clear that the Council would need to clearly evidence a proposed equalisation period. It is also important to note, the Campaign Company endorsed this line of questioning.
- 4.3.2 Where possible provision has been made to ensure that respondents only submit a consultation survey response once. As such paper surveys have been sequentially numbered to ensure they are not photocopied and filled in multiple times by the same applicant. Paper surveys where possible have only been provided on receipt of a name and postal address.
- 4.3.3 The online survey only allows a survey to be submitted once on any given device (smart phone, tablet, laptop or home computer). Again this is in a bid to try and stop multiple responses from the same individual. If however, an individual owns a number of devices they could submit a number of responses. To mitigate this the survey records the IP address of each respondent and when the results are collated there will be clear evidence to show if the same IP address has been used on multiple occasions. However it is also recognised that more than several people may all be using the same IP address.
- 4.3.4 The telephone survey (which has been contracted to a local research company) will ensure contact is made with a demographically representative sample of residents. Before conducting a telephone survey the research company will ask residents whether they have already completed a paper or online survey and if so they will not continue with the call. This is again to mitigate duplicate responses.
- 4.3.5 Ultimately Members will be relying on survey respondents to act honestly.

#### **4.4 Press & Social Media**

The Council has adopted a phased communication approach to the One Council Consultation. Prior to the consultation going live the Communications Team spent time setting the scene by relaying the following key messages via videos from the leaders, social media, press releases and member and staff workshops and briefings:

- Why the councils are considering the One Council proposal
- The financial position of both councils
- What you get for your council tax
- The services the council provides

- 4.4.1 During the consultation the Communications Team has ensured the promotion of the consultation and events by working with councillors, locality officers and Town and Parish councils to share the following key messages and enable as many people as possible to have access to the consultation material and respond.

**Key Messages from the Communication Team**

- What the proposal is about
- What the timeframes are
- Where to find the facts and key information
- That councillors have not made their minds up yet
- That the councils are being open with financial information
- That councillors are keen to talk at engagement events
- Let Towns and Parishes know that we will come and talk to them
- Let residents know how to have their say or talk to the council

- 4.4.2 The Communications Team has also ensured a timely response to questions on social media and used social media to promote the consultation events and videos. In addition the team has harnessed digital media to issue e-bulletins to the business community and ensured digital footers have been added to all Council emails to promote the consultation and a link to the online survey.

- 4.4.3 Throughout the consultation the Council has issued regular press releases to local press, radio and TV to ensure a high profile of the consultation and to relay key facts and address any mistruths. Unfortunately the media has not always chosen to publish these press releases. Results of media coverage will be shared with Members at the close of the consultation.

**4.5 Consultation Engagement Events**

Joint Steering Group members were keen to ensure as many events as possible were held to promote the consultation. As such 12 public events took place between 10 August and 23 September at Bere Alston, Chagford, Exbourne, Hatherleigh, Lifton, North Tawton, Okehampton, Princetown and Tavistock.

- 4.5.1 In planning the public consultation events care was taken where possible to use heavy footfall locations. Events were also held in the late afternoon/early evening or weekends to allow for a wide range of attendance. Banners and posters were used to promote events and paper copies of the Key Facts document, FAQs and surveys were made available at all events and a record was taken of event footfall and key issues.
- 4.5.2 Two dedicated events were held solely for town and parish councils. Members have also attended a wide range of town and parish council meetings to discuss the proposal. A breakdown of attendance at these meetings and the public consultation events will be provided when the consultation closes.

#### **4.6 Stakeholder Letters**

During the first week of the consultation letters and or emails were sent to nearly 100 partners and stakeholders advising of the consultation and providing information on how to find out more. The types of stakeholders include the following:

- All neighbouring authorities
- Housing Associations
- Devon & Cornwall Police
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Business groups, networks and associations
- Voluntary sector
- Significant grant funding recipients

4.6.1 In addition to the above background information, letters and emails were sent to all Town and Parish Councils.

4.6.2 Each stakeholder was asked to provide a formal response to the consultation by the 8 October 2017 and to share any comments they might have. A summary of these responses will be circulated to Members when the consultation closes.

#### **5. OUTCOMES**

**5.1** As stated in the Executive Summary the results of the consultation aren't yet known. It is recognised however, by independent consultants, namely the Campaign Company that the consultation has been planned on good consultation principles. The results of the consultation will be circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members before the 17 October 2017.

**5.2** It is anticipated Overview & Scrutiny Panel will take a view on the survey analysis and results and will ask Council to consider the following:

- Overall numbers of responses
- Split between the South Hams District and West Devon Borough
- Yes/No split
- Council tax equalisation period
- Any significant differences between the phone responses and the online/paper responses
- Any shortcomings in the methodology
- Common themes with regard to benefits, concerns and Member representation
- Any conclusions to be drawn from the numbers of respondents/non-respondents



## **6. CONSULTATION OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND CONSIDERATION OF RISK**

**6.1** In order to consider submitting a proposal to the Secretary of State the Council needs to demonstrate it has consulted with the public. The Secretary of State has not been prescriptive in how the Council undertakes a consultation. However the Council has sought specialist independent advice to ensure the consultation is inclusive and fair. If a proposal is submitted it will include the full results of the consultation for the Secretary of State to consider when weighing up the merits of the proposal and making his decision.

**6.2** Some have questioned why the Council has not undertaken a referendum ensuring one person one vote. The reasons for this are as follows:

- There is no statutory requirement for a referendum
- A referendum would cost West Devon Borough Council at least £100,000

## **7. CONSULTATION COSTS**

**7.1** The following table provides a breakdown of West Devon Borough Council's consultation costs:

Website including online survey	£773
Events venue hire	£142
Postcard print	£312
Telephone Survey	£3,884
Postcards – Door to Door Delivery	£916
Postcards – Business Class Delivery	£3,965
Key Facts, FAQs, banners print costs	£747
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,739</b>

7.1.1 Note the cost of the telephone survey and website represents 50% of the total cost. The remaining 50% has been met by South Hams District Council.

7.1.2 The postcard costs relate only to postcards sent to West Devon residents.

7.1.3 In addition to the costs listed above it is estimated independent analysis and collation of the results will cost West Devon Borough Council approximately £375.

## 8.0

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Relevant to proposals Y/N</b>	<b>Details and proposed measures to address</b>
Legal/Governance	Y	Overview & Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility to make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or its Committees and/or any joint committee on matters which affect the Council's area or the inhabitants of that area.
Financial	N	Consultation expenditure is budgeted for.
Risk	Y	As outlined in section 6.0 of the report
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity	Y	The consultation contains an equality statement.
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

### **Further Information**

All documents associated with the consultation can be seen as pdfs at:  
[www.onecouncil.org.uk/further-information](http://www.onecouncil.org.uk/further-information)

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – 2017-18**

Date of Meeting	Report	Lead Officer / Member
7 November 2017	South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership – Annual Update	Louisa Daley
	West Devon Citizens Advice Bureau – Annual Update	Louisa Daley
	West Devon CVS – Annual Update	Louisa Daley
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Kathy Trant
	Locality Service: Twelve Month Review	
	Q2 Performance Indicators	Jim Davis
	Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item	Tom Jones
	Task and Finish Group Updates	
	Ombudsman Annual Letter	Sue Nightingale
	General Data Protection Regulations	Neil Hawke
6 January 2018	Draft Budget 2018/19	Lisa Buckle
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Kathy Trant
	Task and Finish Group Updates	
27 February 2018	Q3 Performance Indicators	Jim Davis
	Executive Forward Plan	Kathy Trant
	Task and Finish Group Updates	
	Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item	Tom Jones
8 May 2018	Q4 Performance Indicators	Jim Davis
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Kathy Trant
	Task and Finish Group Updates	
	Joint Local Plan: Standing Agenda Item	Tom Jones

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