

# WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held  
on  
**Tuesday, 27th October, 2015 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -  
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

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

Cllr Benson  
Cllr Oxborough  
Cllr Sampson

Cllr Moody  
Cllr Parker

## **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Cloke  
Cllr Evans  
Cllr McInnes  
Cllr Musgrave  
Cllr Sellis

Cllr Edmonds  
Cllr Leech  
Cllr Moyse  
Cllr Leech  
Cllr Stephens

Officers:

Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)  
Executive Director (Service Delivery and Commercial Development)  
Group Manager – Business Development  
Lead Specialist – Housing, Revenues & Benefits  
Case Manager – Housing, Revenues & Benefits  
Specialist – Place and Strategy  
S151 Officer

## 22. **Apologies for absence**

\*HC22

Apologies were received from Cllr W G Cann OBE and Cllr L Samuel.

23. **Declarations of Interest**

\*HC 23

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

24. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

\*HC 24

The Chairman advised that he had asked the Localities Manager to attend to update Members following a situation that had arisen at South Hams District Council, in relation to publicity material relating to Locality Officers. The Localities Manager presented a copy of the proposed publicity material to Members and sought their views. Members had suggestions for minor amendments, but on the whole were content with the material and did not feel the need for a further meeting to discuss this. The Localities Manager also responded to questions relating to the role of the Localities Officers. The Lead Specialist Communications and Media confirmed that press material would be issued on the Locality model once the new systems had settled.

25. **Procurement of Waste Cleansing Contract 2017**

\*HC 25

The Lead Member for Commercial Services and Contracts presented a report that sought approval to commence the tender process for the waste and cleansing contract, which would not compromise the parallel work to be carried out over the next few months relating to alternative delivery options.

It was then **RESOLVED**  
that:

1. Commencement of the tender process for the waste and cleansing contract be approved;
2. The procurement process be overseen by the Waste Working Group and reports on progress be regularly presented to the Hub Committee; and
3. Any changes considered necessary to the terms as highlighted be delegated to the Lead Specialist Recycling and Waste in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services and Contracts

26. **Devon Building Control Partnership**

\*HC 26

The Chairman advised that 'Item 6: Devon Building Control Partnership' would be deferred from this agenda and presented to the next meeting of the Hub Committee on 1 December 2015.

27. **Business Development Opportunities - Asset Management Strategy**

HC27

The Lead Member for Environment presented a report that recommended to Council that the updated Asset Management Strategy, as appended to the report, be approved.

Members discussed the Scheme of Delegation as shown in the report and asked that this be reviewed to determine whether the Leader or Lead Member would be more appropriate. As a result of the discussion the recommendation was amended.

It was then **RECOMMENDED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the updated Asset Management Strategy as detailed in Appendix One to the presented report, subject to a Scheme of Delegation review to be presented to the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2016.

28. **Neighbourhood Plan Protocols**

**\*HC 28**

The Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Housing presented a report that sought delegation to agree subsequent stages of the Neighbourhood Planning Process, in line with the previously agreed delegation to agree the Designation of Neighbourhood Plans.

It was then  
**RESOLVED**

1. That authority to approve the Neighbourhood Plan procedures as set out in Appendix 1 be delegated to the Lead Specialist – Place and Strategy in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Strategic Planning and Housing and the Ward Member (s) for the designated Neighbourhood Plan area; and
2. Subject to approval of recommendation 1, making appropriate changes to the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol be agreed.

29. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 onwards**

**\*HC 29**

The Leader presented a report that provided Members with the annual review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It was based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2020/21, which would help to ensure resources were aligned to the outcomes in Our Plan.

The COP Lead Finance answered a number of questions relating to the detail within the report. Members discussed the increase in financial risk and the volatility that could arise from changes to business rates legislation. Members also expressed the view that the capital budget for affordable Housing of £550,000 plus the uncommitted New Homes Bonus amounts of £63,000 (in year 15/16) and potentially £317,000 (in 16/17) should be put to use, by investing in the residential sector, for example. This would increase the capital value. The Group Manager – Business Development had been asked

to present a report containing options for consideration early in the New Year. Finally, Members agreed to accept the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee arising from their meeting on 6 October, 2015, and amended their resolution accordingly.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Hub Committee had considered the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy and provided an indication of the budget principles to be adopted, with particular reference to:

- a) the level of council tax increase being 1.99%;
- b) the use of New Homes Bonus to support the revenue budget;
- c) the amount of Council Tax Support Grant to be passed on to Parish and Town Councils be reduced by 11.2%;
- d) Other income generation and budget savings;
- e) Maintaining the current Council policy on the minimum level of unearmarked reserves being £750,000; and
- f) The anticipated 2016/17 budget surplus (£571,177) being ringfenced for future income generation opportunities and held in an earmarked reserve for that purpose.

30.

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

HC 30

The Leader presented a report that sought agreement to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2016/17 and for delegated authority to be given to the Finance Community of Practice Lead, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make amendments to the policy document to take account of any further changes in law, government guidance or policy that required urgent amendment.

The Case Manager updated Members on the impact of the House of Lords decision the previous evening in relation to tax credit changes.

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

1. to agree to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17:
  - 80% maximum liability restriction meaning that working age claimants pay a minimum of 20% towards their Council Tax bill
  - A property valuation band D restriction meaning that working age claimants living in larger properties do not receive greater levels of support than those living in small properties
  - An exceptional hardship fund to help those claimants experiencing severe financial difficulties;
2. That authority be delegated to the Finance Community of Practice Lead (s151 Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make amendments to the policy document to take

account of any further changes in law, government guidance or policy that require urgent amendment.

31. **Write Off Report**

\*HC 31

The Leader 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.

The COP Lead Finance outlined the detail of a specific case where a substantial sum of money was being written off. Members asked that the matter be referred to legal to ensure that every possible avenue to pursue the debt had been explored.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The write off by the s151 Officer of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £20,949.61, as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the presented report, be noted; and
2. The write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000, totalling £19,658.78 as detailed in Table 3 of the presented report be approved.

32. **Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee**

\*HC 32

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee were presented for approval, including the recommendation which had been addressed elsewhere on the agenda under Item 9 Medium Term Financial Strategy (Minute \*HC29 refers).

It was then **RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

The Meeting concluded at 4.30 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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