

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **17<sup>th</sup>** day of **SEPTEMBER 2013** at **2.00pm**

**Present:**

Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman	
Cllr S C Bailey	Cllr R E Baldwin
Cllr W G Cann OBE	Cllr T J Hill
Cllr J R McInnes	Cllr C R Musgrave
Cllr T G Pearce	Cllr P J Ridgers

**Substitute:** Cllr R J Oxborough for Cllr C M Marsh

**In attendance:** Cllrs A Clish-Green, M Benson, D Horn, T Leech, J Moody, D Moyses and D Sellis

Chief Executive  
Corporate Directors (TW and AR)  
Head of Finance & Audit  
Member Services Manager  
Strategic Planning Manager  
Strategic Planning Officers

**\*RC 7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C M Marsh and E Sherrell.

**\*RC 8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed, but none were made.

**\*RC 9 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

**RC 10 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2017/18**  
The Chairman presented a report of the Chief Accountant (page 6 to the agenda) that provided an updated forecast of the financial situation for the four year period to 2017/18. The forecast was intended to provide a framework within which decisions could be made regarding the future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guaranteed West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

A number of questions of clarity were asked on key points within the report such as the proposal to recover the cost of Council Tax Support and the level of Council Tax Grant for Parishes. Some Members felt that the Council should support the recent letter to central Government sent by the leader of Devon County Council in relation to cuts and following some discussion an additional recommendation was agreed.

It was then **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. The Financial Strategy be accepted as a foundation document for the Council's budget setting process;
2. The minimum level of the Unearmarked General Fund Revenue Reserves be maintained to at least £750,000 (the current level stands at £1,030,000);
3. Members provide a set of 'minded to' views in order to guide the 2014/15 budget process:-
  - a) On the level of Council Tax Support Grant to be passed on to Parish and Town Councils (being the percentage reduction on the Council's government funding for 2014/15 – currently 13.66%)
  - b) To increase Council Tax by 1.9%
4. A letter be sent from West Devon Borough Council to the Secretary of State Mr Eric Pickles stating strong support for the letter previously sent to him by Devon County Council Leader Cllr John Hart dated 30 August 2013 and which sets out West Devon Borough Council's achievements in relation to shared services and confirms that we are facing the same problems of stringent cuts and the threat to our ability to continue to provide services for our community.

**\*RC 11**

### **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – PROGRESS TO DATE AND NEXT STEPS**

The Corporate Director (TW) presented a report (page 19 to the agenda) which summarised the work undertaken to date in developing a new Transformation Programme, in particular the findings of the proof of concept work which was an essential component of the report.

The Corporate Director took Members through the key points within the report, and drew Members attention to the risk matrix at the end of the report.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- In response to a question regarding how the £4.7m cost of the project could be met, the Corporate Director advised that the detail was being worked on in relation to how the costs and savings could be shared between West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council. There would be a phasing of costs over financial years, and financing options from existing resources such as New Homes Bonus, Unearmarked Reserves and the savings from the budget scouring exercise were discussed. Officers were confident at this stage that a sound financial investment strategy can be developed for both Councils which will finance the Programme over its lifetime;

- The Chief Executive confirmed that the more detailed financial analysis would be available in the report to Council on 4 November 2013;
- In response to a question regarding support being needed, the Corporate Director confirmed that this related to iESE Ltd and any cost had already been factored into the business plan;
- One Member raised concerns that the Programme was centred around delivering services through IT, but a recent report stated that 54% of over 60s were not online and the Council needed to consider all generations. The Chief Executive responded that the investment in IT would enable those who wanted to use IT to contact the Council to do so, thereby releasing staff time for those who wanted to contact the Council in a more traditional way;
- The Corporate Director confirmed that there had been no news yet on whether the bid for grant funding to the DCLG had been successful, but that the business plan was not relying on receiving it. The Chief Executive added that the bid was twofold, and requested funding from both the initial 'pot' of £9m and also the later pot of £100m;
- One Member stated that the proposed new way of working had arisen from necessity, and he was encouraged by officers' inventiveness. He felt Members were being consulted at each stage of the process and it was important to be supportive.

The Chief Executive concluded this item by stating that it was important for all Members to attend as many information sessions as possible to ensure they were informed enough to be able to make a decision when the report came to Council on 4 November, 2013. Members could also arrange to see the Chief Executive or Corporate Directors if they needed any further information.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The existing 2015 Transformation Programme, including its associated Member governance arrangements, be formally closed;
2. The findings of the proof of concept work be accepted and officers authorised to complete the work necessary to create a detailed business plan for Council's consideration on 4 November 2013;
3. The Council enter into a partnership with iESE Ltd; and
4. The risks identified at the end of the presented agenda report be noted.

**\*RC 12**

### **PLYMOUTH AND PENINSULA CITY DEAL – TO DETERMINE THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE OFFER TO BE SUBMITTED TO GOVERNMENT**

The Corporate Director (AR) presented a report (page 56 to the agenda) which set out that Plymouth City Council and strategic partners within the sub-region had been developing a 'City Deal' with the Government. The Government's objective was to address the long term economic challenges affecting the City Deal area. The report asked that Members agree the principles of the Plymouth and Peninsula City Deal proposals which would be presented as a draft to Government in October 2013.

The Corporate Director took Members through the key points of the report. He confirmed that at this stage there was no direct financial implication to the Council, however, Members did query how much senior officer time had gone into this and whether the value should be monitored to ensure payback. The Corporate Director did advise Members that future national and European funding streams were likely to come through either the Local Enterprise Partnership or City Deal and therefore it was important to take an active role and demonstrate a strong sub-region.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Director (AR) be granted delegated authority to agree the submission of the City Deal negotiating Document to Government, in consultation with the Leader, on behalf of West Devon Borough Council.

### **RC 13**

#### **CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP FRAMEWORK**

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of Environment Services and the Communications Manager (page 63 to the agenda) that looked at the opportunities available to the Council through the implementation of a consistent corporate policy in relation to sponsorship of appropriate Council assets.

Following a brief discussion, it was then **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. The Framework document (presented as Appendix A to the report) to be used by Service areas in maximising sponsorship opportunities be approved; and
2. Sponsorship opportunities below the value of £10,000 are agreed through use of the framework by the relevant Chairman and Vice Chairman in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service, with larger opportunities being presented to the Resources Committee on a case by case basis.

### **\*RC 14**

#### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT 31 MARCH 2013**

The Chairman presented a report of the Chief Accountant (page 69 to the agenda) that showed Members the financial position of the Council's Capital Programme for the year 2012/13, and brought any significant variations from budget to Members attention and recommended reductions to the Capital Programme budget.

In response to a question relating to unspent Affordable Housing funding from 2012/13, the Head of Finance and Audit was able to advise that the funding from one year had not been enough to get schemes off the ground but that added to the allocation for 2013/14 would now be sufficient to support the development of a pipeline of affordable housing schemes.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Members agree the amounts of the reduction in capital budgets for 2013/14 of £290,000 (as set out in Appendix B to the presented report); and
- (ii) Members agree the reduction in the use of New Homes Bonus for the Capital Programme by £290,000 from £495,000 to £205,000.

**\*RC 15 EAST OF OKEHAMPTON MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

The Chairman presented a report of the Strategic Planning Officer (page 77 to the agenda) that asked Members to approve the 'Draft East of Okehampton masterplan SPD' (the draft masterplan) for consultation.

The Chairman advised Members that a great deal of background work had taken place with the relevant Members from Okehampton.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- i. The content of the draft masterplan be approved;
- ii. Publication of the draft masterplan for the statutory minimum four week consultation period be agreed; and
- iii. Any minor changes considered necessary to the draft masterplan and arrangements for the consultation be delegated to the Head of Planning, Economy and Community in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Committee.

**\*RC 16 INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY: CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The Vice Chairman presented a report of the Strategic Planning Officer which set out a summary of the responses of consultees to the draft Interim Planning Guidance for Renewable Energy, recommended changes to the draft Guidance to take consultee's comments into account and recommended the adoption of the amended Guidance for use in the planning process.

As there were no questions it was then **RESOLVED** that:

- i. The draft Guidance notes as proposed in the appendix to the report (as available on the website) be amended, and any further minor amendments be delegated to the Head of Planning, Economy and Community in consultation with the Chair of the Resources Committee; and
- ii. The amended documents be adopted for use on the planning process and published on the Council's website.

## RC 17

### **FIVE YEAR LAND SUPPLY STATEMENT 2013**

The Chairman presented a report of the Strategic Planning Officer (page 161 to the agenda) which asked Members to agree that the Council has a deliverable supply of housing as evidenced in the Five Year Land Supply Statement 2013. He advised Members that the Council had a duty under the National Planning Policy Framework to demonstrate a five year supply of specific deliverable sites. He also advised that, if agreed today, this decision would be a recommendation to Council. Confirmation of the Five Year Land Supply by the full Council would enable a stronger position in terms of defending planning appeals on unallocated sites.

The Strategic Planning Officer outlined the sites that were included as those with outstanding planning permission, those under construction and allocated sites. In response to a question regarding the Council not having an Empty Homes Strategy, she confirmed that this was a piece of work that was in hand with the Environmental Health team.

Finally, a Member suggested that a similar statement would be helpful in terms of renewable energy.

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

1. the Council has 5.4 years of housing land supply as evidenced in the Five Year Land Supply Statement 2013; and
2. the Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement 2013 be published on the Council's website.

(The Meeting terminated at 4.15 pm)