

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **28<sup>th</sup>** day of **JANUARY 2014** at **2.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman  
Cllr R E Baldwin – Vice-Chairman

Cllr W G Cann OBE Cllr T J Hill  
Cllr C M Marsh Cllr J R McInnes  
Cllr C R Musgrave Cllr T G Pearce  
Cllr P J Ridgers

**Substitute:** Cllr J Sheldon for Cllr S C Bailey

**In attendance:** Cllrs M J R Benson, A F Leech, J B Moody, N Morgan  
and D K A Sellis

Executive Director (Resources)  
Chief Accountant  
Head of Finance & Audit  
Head of ICT and Customer Services  
Strategic Planning Officer  
Member Services Manager

- \*RC 31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E H Sherrell and Cllr S C Bailey for whom Cllr J Sheldon acted as substitute.
- \*RC 32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed, and Cllrs C M Marsh, J R McInnes and P R Sanders each declared a personal interest in item 6 (Minute RC 35 refers) by virtue of being Members of Dartmoor National Park and they remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.
- \*RC 33 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 10 December 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.
- \*RC 34 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 – QUARTER 3 – 31 DECEMBER 2013**  
The Chairman presented a report of the Chief Accountant (page 1 to the agenda) that gave Members an indication of the potential year end financial position of West Devon Borough Council for the revenue and capital budgets for 2013/14 and brought to Members' attention any significant variance from the revenue and capital budgets set. The report enabled Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budgets for 2013/14.

The Chairman and Chief Accountant both answered a number of questions in relation to the detail in the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2013/14 financial year for the revenue budget be noted; and
- (ii) The progress on the capital programme to 31 December 2013 be noted.

**RC 35 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2014/15 TO 2017/18**

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of Finance and Audit and the Chief Accountant (page 12 to the agenda) that provided an updated forecast of the budget situation for the year 2014/15 and updated forecast for the four years 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 guarantees West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

The Chairman took Members through the key elements of the report and responded to questions. The following points were raised:

- Members asked that a report be tabled to the appropriate Committee in the future to enable Members to look at discharging their responsibilities in respect of public conveniences;
- The Head of Finance and Audit outlined the position in respect of the Devonwide Business Rates Pool;
- Members were concerned that the government was yet to provide guidance on the council tax threshold. There was also concern about whether a threshold would apply to town and parish councils;
- A Member noted that the procedure in relation to an allocation of New Homes Bonus to Dartmoor National Park seemed bureaucratic. The Head of Finance and Audit set out the proposed procedure, being an annual letter to the Council to set out the projects that the funding would be used towards. Members were pleased to note however that there would be an allocation of funds;
- A Member was pleased to note the commitment to Village Halls and Community Projects in future years.

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

- (i) In order to set a balanced budget for 2014-15:

EITHER\*

- an increase in Council Tax of 1.9% is agreed (which equates to a Band D council tax of £204.50 for 2014/15, an increase of £3.81 per year or 7 pence per week). This option equates to a Council Tax requirement of £3,923,435 (as shown in Appendix B1)

OR

- A Nil increase in Council Tax is agreed (the Band D Council Tax for West Devon Borough Council will remain at £200.69 for 2014/15) and the Council will accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant of 1% being offered by the Government. This option equates to a Council Tax requirement of £3,850,338 (as shown in Appendix B2)

\* The modelling is based on 0.1% below the threshold for Council Tax increases, which is currently 2%. The final threshold for 2014-15 is expected to be announced after the Financial Settlement has been finalised at the end of January.

- (ii) The financial pressures in Appendix A of £350,000 be accepted
- (iii) The proposed savings of £381,553 set out in Appendix A be adopted
- (iv) An additional £304,413 (if council tax is increased by 1.9% as per Appendix B1) or £334,697 (if council tax is frozen as per Appendix B2) of New Homes Bonus Grant is used to balance the 2014-15 Budget. (This is in addition to the £353,076 of New Homes Bonus already built into the budget assumptions to be used for 2014-15).
- (v) Approval of the 2014/15 Capital Programme projects totalling £841,000 as per 7.1 be agreed.
- (vi) Financing the 2014/15 Capital Programme of £841,000 by using £555,000 of New Homes Bonus funding, £186,000 of Government grant and £100,000 of Capital Resources (as per 7.1) be agreed
- (vii) The Council transfers £18,688 of its allocation of New Homes Bonus for 2014/15 to an Earmarked Reserve called 'Community Investment Fund – Dartmoor National Park', to be applied for and drawn down by Dartmoor National Park as required. This amount is a one-off payment and the position will be considered annually by the Council as part of the budget process. The condition is that this is for use within the boundaries of the Borough Council only.

- (viii) The Council Tax Support Grant of £103,138 be passed onto Town and Parish Councils. (This is a reduction of 13.66% from 2013/14) as per 4.3.
- (ix) The minimum level of the Unearmarked Revenue Reserves be maintained to at least £750,000 as per Section 6.1
- (x) The level of reserves as set out within this report and the assessment of their adequacy and the robustness of budget estimates be noted. This is a requirement of Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003.

**RC 36            AUTHORISATION FOR RIPA APPLICATIONS TO MAGISTRATES COURT**

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of ICT and Customer Services (page 31 to the agenda) that advised Members of the mandatory change in procedure in authorising covert investigation techniques in pursuance of potential investigations.

The Head of ICT and Customer Services responded to questions in relation to how often this had been used and also outlined the possible future position in respect of a Single Fraud Investigation Service. He also requested an additional recommendation to enable changes to the staff listed in the exempt Appendix to be delegated to the Head of Paid Service.

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

1. the nominated officers listed in exempt Appendix A are authorised to represent the Council in applying for judicial approval to use covert techniques in the pursuance of a potential investigation; and
2. authority to change the names of authorised officers outlined in Appendix A be delegated to the Head of Paid Service.

**\*RC 37            EAST OF OKEHAMPTON MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

The Strategic Planning Officer presented a report (page 36 to the agenda) that asked Members to adopt the SPD, which had been prepared to provide guidance for the development of the allocated development sites to the east of Okehampton, to use as a material planning consideration when determining applications for development on the allocated sites to the east of Okehampton.

The Strategic Planning Officer identified the more significant changes to the document presented at Appendix A, and confirmed to Members that it would not set policy but would set a framework of a consistent set of

principles to be applied when planning applications for the area were to be considered. She also advised of some of the concerns that were raised during the consultation and how the Council had responded to these concerns.

During discussion on this item a number of Members thanked the officer for her hard work in relation to the document. Strong concerns were raised that work had been carried out based on assumptions from Devon County Council that were later changed. Whilst there were good reasons for the changes, the manner in which they were carried out did not help the working relationship between the two Councils.

Members also discussed how important it was for future planning applications to have design and materials specified to ensure that they would blend in with the surrounding buildings and landscape. The Strategic Planning Officer confirmed that a Design Panel would be set up to help with a consistent approach to design.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- I. The East of Okehampton Masterplan SPD be adopted, to use as a material planning consideration when determining applications for development on the allocated sites to the east of Okehampton; and
- II. Any inconsequential changes considered necessary to the SPD are delegated to the Head of Planning, Economy and Community in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Committee.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.20 pm)

---

**Chairman**