

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **29<sup>th</sup>** day of **APRIL 2014** at **2.00pm**

**Present:**

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

**Substitute:**

Cllr M J R Benson for Cllr J R McInnes
Cllr J Sheldon for Cllr C M Marsh

**In attendance:**

Cllr A F Leech	Cllr J B Moody
Cllr N Morgan	Cllr D K A Sellis

Executive Director (Resources)  
Head of Planning, Economy and Community  
Economic Development Officer  
Head of ICT and Customer Services  
Member Services Manager

- \*RC 41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J R McInnes for whom Cllr M J R Benson acted as substitute and Cllr C M Marsh for whom Cllr J Sheldon acted as substitute.
- \*RC 42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but none were made.
- \*RC 43 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meetings held on 29 January 2014 and 18 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.
- RC 44 OUR PLAN**  
The Chairman introduced a report that sought formal approval of the principle of 'Our Plan' as the Council's single overarching strategic plan for West Devon. As the Local Plan will form a central part of the plan, this report also seeks approval of the Local Development Scheme and the Regulation 18 Document for consultation purposes. Further, approval was sought to sign the Duty to Cooperate Memorandum of Understanding which is also now part of our formal planning process. Finally, approval was also sought for the corporate Community Engagement Strategy.

The Chairman advised Members that there would be a small amendment to the recommendation i) as this would be amended to a recommendation to Council. This was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and on being put to the vote declared **CARRIED**.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the principle of 'Our Plan' being the single, over-arching strategic plan for the West Devon Borough Council;
- (ii) the Local Plan 'Local Development Scheme' be approved;
- (iii) the Regulation 18 Document for consultation purposes be approved;
- (iv) the signing of the Duty to Cooperate Memorandum of Understanding be approved;
- (v) the corporate Community Engagement Strategy be approved; and
- (vi) the engagement timetable be noted.

**\*RC 45 TAVISTOCK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW**

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of Planning, Economy and Community (page 49 to the agenda) that set out the process involved in reviewing the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as part of the development of a Stage 2 Bid for Tavistock under the Heritage Lottery's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). The report recommended approval of the documents for future planning purposes subject to any comments Members may wish to make.

A Member stated that he was apprehensive about the impact of the Management Plan and he had heard that some traders were concerned at the changes being recommended. Other Members felt Tavistock was in a better situation and welcomed the document. The Economic Development Officer advised that the proposals within the THI Bid would achieve significant heritage and health and safety improvements that, as a package, would help to regenerate the town.

Finally it was suggested that recommendation 3 be amended to include the wording 'non material' rather than 'inconsequential'. This was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and on being put to the vote declared **CARRIED**.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. use of the revised version of the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal as a background document to inform the Conservation Area Management Plan be agreed;

2. the reviewed version of the Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan to be used as part of the Council's evidence to inform future plan making and the determination of relevant planning applications be agreed; and
3. any non material changes considered necessary to the documents are delegated to the Head of Planning, Economy and Community in consultation with the Chairman of Resources Committee be agreed.

**\*RC 46**

**TAVISTOCK PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY**

The Economic Development Officer presented a report of the Head of Planning, Economy and Community (page 64 to the agenda) that set out the context and process for the development of a Public Realm Strategy for Tavistock. The report outlined recent consultations and set out the overall Strategy and proposals to bring forward improvements to public spaces included in the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme. The report sought approval of the Strategy for future planning policy purposes.

The Chairman asked for confirmation that approval of the document at this stage would not result in Members having to agree to further expense to prevent the whole scheme being jeopardised. The Economic Development Officer confirmed that any further financial implications would be reported to the Resources Committee and there would be a number of options allowing Members to have a free choice in the future. He also confirmed that the £6,000 referred to in this report and the previous report was a one off contribution to the development stage of the THI Bid which was now complete.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the use of the Tavistock Public Realm Strategy as part of the Council's evidence base to inform future plan making and the determination of relevant planning applications be approved; and
2. officers be requested to submit any specific proposals in respect of the Borough Council's property interests to the appropriate committee in due course.

**RC 47**

**RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY**

The Head of ICT and Customer Services presented a report (page 69 to the agenda) that advised Members of the new approach to verifying claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction and sought approval of the Risk Based Verification Policy.

The Head of ICT and Customer Services took Members through the key elements and explained how the new Policy would have advantages for the claimant in that payment claims would be made more quickly, and advantages to the local authority as it would reduce workload. In response to questions he advised how the Policy would reduce fraud as it would concentrate resources on high risk cases. The Executive Director (Resources) added that the new Policy would result in a significant improvement in the customer experience for the majority of customers.

Members welcomed this Policy, particularly as it would result in claims being paid more quickly which would assist customers and may help to prevent arrears.

It was then **RECOMMENDED** that Council be requested to approve the Risk Based Verification Policy as set out in the exempt Appendix 1 to the presented report.

**\*RC 48**

**WRITE OFF REPORT**

The Head of ICT and Customer Services presented a report (page 85 to the agenda) 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 are written off by the Head of Finance and Audit under delegated authority. These debts were listed in the presented report for information. The report sought authority to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000, details of which were outlined in Table 3 of the report.

Members were also asked to note the appendices to the presented report that included the reports for each of the previous quarters for this financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) In accordance with Financial Regulations, the Head of Finance and Audit had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £32,309.04 as detailed in Table 1 and 2 of the presented report be noted; and
- (ii) Authority to write off individual debts in excess of £5,000 as detailed in Table 3 of the report be granted; and
- (iii) Appendices A, B and C of the presented report setting out the write off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts for 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2013, 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013 and 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2013 be noted.

(The Meeting terminated at 2.55 pm)