

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **15<sup>th</sup>** day of **JULY 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 A F Leech
Cllr J R McInnes		Cllr T G Pearce
Cllr P J Ridgers		Cllr E H Sherrell

**In attendance:** Cllr M J R Benson Cllr J Sheldon

Executive Director (Resources)  
Head of Finance and Audit  
Economic Development Manager  
Personnel Manager  
Strategic Planning Officer  
Member Services Manager

**\*RC 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C R Musgrave.

**\*RC 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**\*RC 3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 29 April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

**RC 4 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME 2018**

The Chairman introduced a report that provided a budget monitoring update which included a request for the release of funding for key programme expenditure milestones two and three.

During discussion the following points were made:

- One Member queried where the decision was made that the underspend of £170,000 on the Final Accounts for 2013-14 was being used to invest in the Transformation Programme. In response, the Head of Finance and Audit advised that Members had previously agreed to use £200,000 of Unearmarked Reserves as part of the financing solution for the Transformation Programme (Council Minute CM 49). At the time that decision was taken, Members were expecting an underspend on the budget for 2013-14 as this had been predicted in the revenue budget monitoring reports.

Any underspend on the closure of the Final Accounts automatically goes into Unearmarked Reserves;

- The budget for Transformation Programme T18 had not been increased and currently would be achieved within budget;
- One Member stated that he had heard concerns from staff in respect of the interview and assessment process currently being undertaken for Phase 1(a). The Chairman had heard that the process was challenging but was concerned at the comments made and advised that the Executive Director (Resources) would look into this;
- One Member asked if the benefits of the ICT contract meant that quality of the system had been sacrificed. He also asked if the system was compatible with other local authorities. The Executive Director (Resources) responded that the benefits detailed in the report were secured during the 'open dialogue' phase of the procurement and were not on offer at the start of the process. In terms of compatibility, there were two major suppliers of similar systems and the Council had chosen one of them. It would be impossible to align compatibility to all authorities within Devon but many councils in the south west did use the chosen supplier;
- One Member asked if safeguards were in place in respect of penalty clauses if the supplier did not deliver what was expected, and if the Leader was confident that the authority was in a strong position. In response, the Leader advised that he was as confident as possible bearing in mind that no contract was watertight and he was also confident in respect of the external consultants that the Council was working with to deliver the Transformation Programme.
- Another Member who had taken part in the procurement exercise stated that he was satisfied that proper process had been followed. He also stated that if any issues did arise they would happen within the next six to nine months (unlike a building contract where there could be problems that did not surface for a number of years).

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

- (i) note the progress to date on the Transformation Programme 2018; and,
- (ii) authorise the release of the funding for key programme expenditure milestones two and three totalling £1,302,200 as shown in presented Appendix A.

**RC 5****CONNECT STRATEGY AND PRIORITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE 2014-15**

The Chairman presented a report of the Community Manager that set out the final Connect Strategy update with actions for 2014/15 and requested that the update be considered and approval recommended to Council.

One Member noted that there was little emphasis on income generation. He felt this was a matter that should be in the minds of Members and officers when developing policies and strategies. In response, the Economy Manager advised that the report was light touch as the focus was now on Our Plan, which would include income generation as part of the annual financial and improvement plans. The Executive Director (Resources) added that income generation relied on innovation and this would require a change of culture within the organisation. A Member added that whilst West Devon Borough Council had been innovative in terms of local government, a shift was now needed to achieve innovation in a commercial sense.

Finally, a Member was pleased that the need to widen strategic goals to work with the most vulnerable people had been recognised.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the Connect Strategy annual update for 2014-15 be approved and adopted.

**RC 6****LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME DISCRETIONS POLICY**

The Personnel Manager presented a report that set out how the Council would apply the discretions available to it in the application of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.

During discussion, he advised Members that the policy had been crafted to give the maximum discretion to the Council. He then took Members through each recommendation and provided clarity.

In response to a question in relation to why this policy was necessary, the Chairman advised that local authorities were now required to make such decisions and this was not moving away from national terms and conditions. The Personnel Manager added that the recommendations included were those suggested by Peninsula Pensions who were the administering authority for the Devon Pension Fund.

One Member queried the number of times that discretions were likely to be used and was pleased to hear that it was few, as a number of discretion awards could add up to a significant sum.

Finally, the Personnel Manager confirmed that normal retirement age now mirrored the State Pension Age.

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

- (i) agree the discretions as set out in the presented Policy (appendix A to the report refers);
- (ii) agree that a decision taken under the Policy with a financial cost of more than £10,000 is delegated to the Resources Committee; and
- (iii) agree that a decision taken under the Policy with a financial cost of less than £10,000 is delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader.

**\*RC 7**

#### **APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA FOR THE BERE PENINSULA**

The Strategic Planning Officer introduced a report that outlined how the Bere Ferrers Parish Council submitted an application to the Council to designate a plan area in respect of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the Bere Peninsula.

The Strategic Planning Officer provided clarity in respect of Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. The Chairman confirmed that any application for financial support would be to central government and would not result in a cost to the Council.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Members approve the designation of the Bere Peninsula Plan Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan; and,
- (ii) Members support an application for financial support from central government to help cover the costs of the Local Authority associated with preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

**\*RC 8**

#### **BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of Finance and Audit which asked Members to consider arrangements for the existing bank contract with Nat West that expired on 31 March 2015.

During discussion, the Chairman noted that no mention had been made in respect of Torridge District Council being a member of the joint tendering exercise. The Head of Finance and Audit confirmed that since publication, discussions with Torridge had confirmed that they used Co-operative Bank and would like to be part of the joint tendering exercise. An amendment was made to the recommendation as follows:

It was **RESOLVED** that West Devon Borough Council participate in a joint tendering exercise with South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and Torridge District Council for the procurement of banking services with a view to implementing a new contract prior to 1 April 2015.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.05 pm)