

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the 2nd day of **DECEMBER 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 A F Leech Cllr C R Musgrave
Cllr T G Pearce

Substitute:
Cllr R F D Sampson for Cllr T J Hill
Cllr M J R Benson for Cllr J R McInnes
Cllr D E Moyse for Cllr P J Ridgers

In attendance:
Executive Director (Resources)
Head of Finance and Audit
Member Services Manager

***RC 18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T J Hill for whom Cllr R F D Sampson substituted, Cllr J R McInnes for whom Cllr M J R Benson substituted, Cllr P J Ridgers for whom Cllr D E Moyse substituted and Cllr E H Sherrell.

***RC 19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

***RC 20 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 7 October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

***RC 21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2015/16 TO 2018/19**

The Chairman introduced a report that provided a forecast for the year 2015/16 and a forecast for the four years to 2018/19. 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.

The Finance Community of Practice (COP) Lead updated Members on the bid for Transformation Funding from central Government. She confirmed that the bid had been successful and a report would be presented to the Council meeting on 9 December 2014 which would set out more detail, but that she had recommended a percentage split of the monies received in line with the percentage split of investment costs. She went on to respond to specific queries, and during discussion the following points were raised:

- One Member noted the projected increase in payment of New Homes Bonus to Dartmoor National Park (DNP) for years 2017/18 and 2018/19. The Finance COP advised that the figures were based on predictions from DNP and that a new set of predictions had recently been received. The updated figures would be included in the next report to the Resources Committee on 3 February 2015 however it was made clear that payments to DNP were set one year at a time and were not determined by predictions (they were calculated on actual figures);
- A Member was disappointed that the budget for village halls and community projects was not increasing. In response, the Finance COP advised that there were funds in the budget and that the budget was not currently coming under pressure (demand was not exceeding the budget available). If it did, then the budget could be reviewed;
- The Finance COP advised that a report on options in relation to the strategic leisure review would be presented to the Community Services Committee in January 2015;
- One Member raised concerns in relation to the TAP Fund as he was aware that monies applied for some time ago had not been used for the purpose intended. A number of Members felt that an audit trail would be appropriate to monitor those applications which had been granted TAP Fund monies. Other Members reported that the TAP Fund worked perfectly well in their parishes. Members concluded that a report should be presented to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration. The Executive Director reminded Members that the intention with the TAP Fund was for it to be less restrictive than other funding streams.

It was then **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report, and request a report be presented to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2015 setting out details of the TAP Fund process and how it was monitored.

***RC 22 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014-15 QUARTER 2 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Chairman presented a report of the Finance Business Partner that gave Members an indication of the potential year-end financial position of West Devon Borough Council for the revenue budgets for 2014/15 and to bring to Members' attention any significant variance from the revenue budgets set. The report enabled Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budgets for 2014/15.

One Member raised concerns over the paragraph in the presented agenda report relating to homelessness, particularly the reference to staff shortages impacting on delivery of the service. The Finance COP and Executive Director confirmed that this was an historic situation that had now been rectified.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2014/15 financial year for the revenue budget be noted.

***RC 23 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2014-15 SPEND TO 31 OCTOBER 2014**

The Chairman presented a report of the Capital Accountant that advised Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme, including an assessment of their financial positions.

He advised Members that he had raised concerns in relation to the budget for affordable housing. In his view, the amount of money in the budget could be better used by purchasing property that could help with affordable housing, or equally, could be used to address the issues over homelessness by providing temporary accommodation.

The Finance COP advised that whilst the money could be used, she urged caution until the outcome of Phase 1b of the T18 Programme was known. Members discussed this and shared their views, and it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and on being put to the vote **CARRIED**, that a report be presented to the next Resources Committee on 3 February 2015 which would detail options in relation to affordable housing, housing options and homelessness and best use of the affordable housing budget.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the report be noted, and that a report be presented to the next Resources Committee on 3 February 2015 in relation to affordable housing, housing options, homelessness and the affordable housing budget.

***RC 24 WRITE OFF REPORT**

The Chairman presented a report that outlined how the Council was responsible for the collection of Sundry Debts including housing benefits overpayments, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates and informed Members of the debt written off for these revenue streams. The report reminded the Committee that debts up to the value of £5,000 were written off by the s151 Officer, under delegated authority. Permission was sought from the Committee to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000. The report covered the period 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014.

The Finance COP responded to a number of queries, and the Chairman reminded Members that addressing overpayments and measures taken to avoid write offs would be the subject of a report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2015.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) In accordance with Financial Regulations, the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £62,643.96 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.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.15 pm)