

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **4th** day of **DECEMBER, 2018** at **10.00am**

Present: Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman
Cllr L Samuel – Vice Chairman

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| Cllr C Edmonds | Cllr N Jory |
| Cllr A F Leech | Cllr C Mott |
| Cllr A Roberts | Cllr R F D Sampson |

In attendance: Head of Paid Service
Group Manager Customer First and Support Services
Section 151 Officer
COP Lead Housing, Revenue and Benefits
Housing Benefit Specialist
Specialist Democratic Services

Other Members in attendance:
Cllrs Lamb, Moyse and Yelland.

***HC 54 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Oxborough.

***HC 55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

***HC 56 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 20 November 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HC 57 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Members were presented with a report that enabled Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2018/19, and provided a forecast for the year end position.

The Lead Member for Performance and Resources introduced the report. During discussion, one Member congratulated the HR team on the income they had generated, and the Head of Paid Service confirmed that officers hoped this would continue in future by working with consultants as their associates who specialised in that area of work. In response to a query regarding the car park income figures, the Head of Paid Service advised that charges had been introduced mid year, but that the Environment Services Manager was optimistic to be on budget by the end of the year.

It was then **RESOLVED:**

- i. That the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2018/19 financial year and the overall projected underspend of £57,000 be noted; and

ii. To **RECOMMEND** to Council to transfer £100,000 of the additional planning income into the Planning Policy and Major Developments Earmarked Reserve at the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

***HC 48**

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Members were presented with a report that advised them of the financial position as at 30 September 2018 for the purposes of budget monitoring. All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members therefore capital schemes were within budget.

The Lead Member for Performance and Resources introduced the report. There were questions regarding the underspent budget on DFGs to which the s151 officer responded that a further £49,000 was committed to be spent and £255,000 set aside in statement of need.

Another Member sought clarity over the installation of the turnstile at the Parklands Leisure Centre, as it prevented those using the café from accessing the public conveniences. In response, a local Ward Member advised that the public convenience that could be accessed which had been a male toilet, should have been converted to a unisex toilet.

Finally, the Head of Paid Service confirmed that the proposal to install pay on entry machines at specific public conveniences intended those machines to take both card and cash.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be endorsed.

***HC 49**

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019-20 ONWARDS UPDATE REPORT

Members were presented with a report that updated them on the forecast budget gap for 2019/20 and set out the current options and timescales for closing the budget gap to achieve long term financial sustainability.

The Leader advised that he would not introduce the report in detail but sought questions from other Members.

During discussion, Members discussed whether the Financial Stability Review Group was the right group to progress budget options with the forthcoming budget deficit in mind. Members generally concluded that the Group was the right vehicle and whilst there was a view that the Leader should be included in the membership rather than have the Group report to him, it was felt that the current membership of the Group was made up of Members with the right qualifications to undertake the role.

Members were disappointed that only 17 Members had completed the online budget survey. Whilst it was accepted that not every Member could attend every meeting, there was no reason not to complete a budget survey. Some Members were concerned that there might be a lack of understanding amongst Members regarding the seriousness of the budget situation.

Finally, the Deputy Leader asked that thanks be noted to staff following the recent Peer Review, as in her view officers worked tirelessly.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the forecast budget gap for 2019/20 of £0.269 million and the position for future years be noted;
- (ii) the current options identified and timescales for closing the budget gap in 2019/20 and future years, to achieve long term financial sustainability be noted; and
- (iii) the recommendations of the Financial Stability Review Group on Earmarked Reserves (10.2 and 10.3) be approved and that these be recommended in the final Budget Proposals report for 2019-20, presented to Council on 12th February 2019, be agreed.

***HC 50**

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019/20

Members were presented with a report in line with the annual requirement for Councils to revisit their existing council tax support schemes and make a decision as to whether to replace or revise them.

The Housing Benefit Specialist outlined the background to the report by explaining the current means tested scheme and the proposed 4 band scheme. The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing then introduced the report.

Members asked a number of detailed questions and as a result, some Members felt that a briefing for the wider membership would be appropriate, prior to the scheme being presented to full Council. Officers did reiterate that whilst a small number of people may be disadvantaged by the introduction of the proposed scheme, it did align better with Universal Credit that had now been rolled out across the Borough, so would be better both from a customer perspective and for the Council. In addition, measures were in place in the form of the Exceptional Hardship Fund, which was a discretionary fund for those in specific need.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the results to date of the Public Consultation for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Section 4 of the report be noted, and
2. the proposed approach (to adopt a 4 band scheme ranging from 85% to 25%) for the allocation and management of the new Council Tax Reduction strategy be endorsed.

(The meeting terminated at 11.40 am)

Chairman

**(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF
HC57 (2) WHICH IS A RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL
ON 15 JANUARY 2019 WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE
FROM WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2018 UNLESS CALLED IN,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).**