

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **20<sup>th</sup>** day of **SEPTEMBER, 2016** at **2.00pm**

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

Cllr M J R Benson	Cllr C Edmonds
Cllr J B Moody	Cllr R J Oxborough
Cllr G Parker	Cllr R F D Sampson
Cllr L Samuel	

**Apologies:** Cllr J B Moody and Cllr R F D Sampson

**In attendance:** Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)  
Executive Director (Service Delivery and Commercial Development)  
Group Manager Commercial Services  
Group Manager Business Development  
COP Lead – Assets  
Operational Manager (Environment Services)  
S151 Officer  
Senior Case Manager – Strategy & Commissioning

**Other Members in attendance:**

Cllrs Leech, Musgrave, Pearce, Sellis and Yelland

- \*HC 15      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but none were made.
- \*HC 16      MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the Hub Committee Meeting held on 12th July, 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
- \*HC 17      URGENT BUSINESS**  
The Chairman had previously agreed to accept one item of urgent business being a report entitled 100% Business Rates Retention Consultation Response. The report was deemed urgent as there was a deadline for consultation responses to be sent to central government. The report was presented at the end of the meeting (Minute HC 22 refers).
- HC 18      MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**  
The Leader introduced a report that presented an annual review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The strategy was based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2021/22 which would help ensure resources were aligned to the outcomes in Our Plan.

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 the Council's longer term viability.

The Leader began by outlining the assumptions listed at Para 3 of the presented agenda report. The Leader and the s151 Officer gave further detail and responded to a number of detailed questions on elements within the report.

The Executive Director (Service Delivery and Commercial Development) responded to questions on Disabled Facilities Grants and how they were processed. The Leader asked that the Lead Hub Member for Health and Wellbeing monitor performance in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Hub Committee:

- i) Had considered the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and provided an indication of the budget principles to be adopted, with particular reference to:
  - the level of council tax increase,
  - the use of New Homes Bonus to support the revenue budget,
  - bringing forward income generation and budget savings and
  - maintaining the current Council policy on the minimum level of unearmarked reserves being £750,000 (see Section 10 of the presented agenda report);

**RECOMMENDED** to Council:

- ii) to accept the four year financial settlement being offered by the Government as set out in Section 2 of the presented agenda report,
- iii) that the approval of the Efficiency Statement (for the four year funding settlement) be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader, Lead Member for Support Services and the S151 Officer (Finance Community of Practice Lead).
- iv) to commence consultation with Town and Parish Councils, on an annual grant reduction of 8.6% for the next three years in the Local Council Tax Support Grant, as shown in Appendix E to the presented report.

**\*HC 19**

#### **WRITE OFF REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Support Services introduced a report 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 were written off by the s151 Officer under delegated authority. Permission was sought to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000.

In respect of the debts with a value of more than £5,000, Members were advised of how they had arisen.

It was requested by Members that an explanation of the financial impact of Housing Benefit write offs on the Council's own finances be appended to the next write off report to the Hub Committee.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

1. That, in accordance with Financial Regulations, that the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £16,651.92 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 be noted; and
2. The write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £23,660.98 as detailed in Table 3 be authorised.

**\*HC 20**

### **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

(Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be disclosed as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12(A) to the Act).

The Lead Member for Environment presented a report that set out a business case for a commercial development.

During discussion, a number of concerns were raised. The Group Manager Business Development and the COP Lead Assets responded to a number of queries.

It was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council to approve the expenditure as detailed within the presented report towards the commercial development and on being put to the vote this proposal was declared **LOST**.

With no alternative proposal coming forward, the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item and voted to re-admit members of the public to the meeting.

**\*HC 21**

### **REPORTS OF OTHER BODIES**

In view of Members not having received reports in full in respect of recommendations which were being made from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the Hub Committee, this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Hub Committee.

**\*HC 22**

### **100% BUSINESS RATES RETENTION CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The Lead Member for Support Services introduced an urgent report that set out a draft response to the government consultation paper on 100% Business Rates Retention Consultation.

The s151 Officer responded to queries in more detail and explained the risks associated with the government proposals which included how much of the business rates would be kept by the district and borough councils and also how many of the grants currently received by district councils would be included into a new combined payment under 100% Business Rates Retention.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

That authority to approve the final content of the Authority's response to the consultation document 'Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention' be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader, Member Lead for Support Services and the s151 Officer.

(The Meeting terminated at 5.20 pm)

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Chairman