

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **18th** day of **JULY, 2017** at **2.00pm**

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

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| Cllr C Edmonds | Cllr N Jory |
| Cllr J B Moody | Cllr C Mott |
| Cllr R J Oxborough | Cllr G Parker |
| Cllr R F D Sampson | |

In attendance: Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)
S151 Officer
Group Manager Commercial Services
Group Manager Customer First and Support Services
Group Manager Business Development
COP Lead Housing, Revenues and Benefits
Specialist Assets
Specialist Democratic Services

Other Members in attendance:

Cllrs Baldwin, Ball, Cann OBE, Cheadle, Cloke, Evans, Leech, Moyses, Musgrave, Pearce and Yelland

***HC 06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

***HC 07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 20th June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

***HC 08 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION 2018/19 TO 2022/23**

Members were presented with a report that set out the Council's Medium Term Financial Position based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year time frame to 2022/23 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 West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

The Leader and s151 Officer responded to a number of questions in detail.

In respect of recommendation v, some Members felt able at this stage to give a view whilst others preferred to wait until after the forthcoming Budget Workshop. It was agreed that an in principle recommendation would assist officers for working purposes in preparing the budget.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- i. the forecast budget gap by 2020/21 of £1.1 million be noted;
- ii. the financial strategy of the Joint Steering Group (JSG) set out in paras 1.7 to 1.13 of the presented report be agreed;
- iii. the budget principles set out in para 1.14 be agreed
- iv. the current Council policy on the minimum level of unearmarked reserves being £750,000 be agreed;
- v. the five year Medium Term Financial Position (MTFP) be considered and the following be adopted in principle (for working purposes):
 - a) The level of council tax for 2018/19 be modelled at a £5 increase
 - b) That New Homes Bonus be used to support the revenue budget for 2018-19 onwards.

HC 09 PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE COUNCIL FOR WEST DEVON AND SOUTH HAMS

Members were presented with a comprehensive report that set out recommendations from the SH/WD Joint Steering Group (JSG) to agree in principle to establish a single second tier Council for West Devon and South Hams from 1 April 2019.

The Leader introduced the report and invited questions. The Leader, s151 Officer and Head of Paid Service responded to a number of questions, and a full debate then followed. Members agreed that they were taking a difficult decision and some Members felt this process was being rushed. Non Hub Committee Members stated that they had little involvement so far in discussions and did not have enough information to make a final decision. In response to this point, it was agreed that, assuming that both councils took the decision to consult on the establishment of a single council, then Member Workshops would be arranged parallel to the public consultation to ensure that Members had sufficient information to make a decision at a later full Council meeting.

Members accepted the financial driver for the decision, but some felt that the Council had other options available and did not need to proceed with this proposal at this time. Other Members were certain that this proposal had to be progressed.

One Member stated that the decision had to be for the benefit of the residents being represented across both West Devon and South Hams, and taking measures to ensure that local representation continued would be in residents' best interests. Another Member supported the proposal with the caveats that residents would be able to access Council premises within a reasonable distance of where they lived and that there was strong West Devon representation in the new Council to drive forward the wishes of West Devon residents.

One Member stated that the proposal was the logical next step although there would be issues to address such as property and governance. Finally, another Member felt that West Devon Borough Council was too small to survive in the current climate and, in order to support residents, this proposal would be a first step.

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

1. Agree in principle to establish a single second-tier Council for West Devon and South Hams from 1 April 2019;
2. Proceeds to consultation with the public and stakeholders from early August through to the end of September 2017;
3. Agree to bring to Council for approval, the outcome of the consultation together with the final proposal for submission to the Secretary of State.

HC 10

DELIVERY OF BEST VALUE FOR MONEY FRONT LINE SERVICES

(Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Members were presented with an exempt report that sought approval of recommendations to Council based on the advice of the SH/WD Joint Steering Group, in relation to the way in which front line services were provided and designed.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED**, based upon the advice of the Joint Steering Group, to:

1. Test the front line services in scope through competitive dialogue processes with combined procurements where the services allow;
2. Prepare a bid by a wholly owned company if a competitive and sustainable price for service can be proved against benchmarked current costs with the external market place; and
3. Continue to test market costs and income opportunities during the summer period to further inform the market position.

HC 11

BUSINESS RATES – LOCALLY ADMINISTERED BUSINESS RATE RELIEF POLICY

The Lead Member for Economy presented a report that asked Members to consider and recommend the appended policy to administer the four year funding agreement, awarded by central Government, to support those who have seen an increase in their rates bill due to the 2017 revaluation exercise.

Members sought clarity on the specific wording of the Policy and it was agreed that it should relate to West Devon (not Devon) in paragraphs 2.2 and 3.2.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that following consultation with Devon County Council, Devon & Cornwall Police and Devon & Somerset Fire Rescue the Locally Administered Business Rate Relief Policy be adopted, subject to inclusion of the amendment as detailed in the minutes above.

HC 12

REVIEW OF WDBC COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEMES

Members were presented with a report that set out the results of a review of existing Council community grant schemes, including options for streamlining or improving the schemes. The review had been requested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report made recommendations to streamline the schemes and to ensure an increased level of applications to the schemes, ultimately maximising the ability of these schemes to deliver beneficial projects to West Devon communities.

The Lead Member for Customer First introduced the report and advised Members that a similar report had recently been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At that Committee, an additional recommendation was added as follows:

“where there is a lack of consensus amongst local Ward Member(s) about whether to support an application, local Ward Members be in receipt of the final decision (and a brief statement outlining the rationale behind this decision) on whether or not an application to the ‘Community Grant’ scheme has been successful.”

The Hub Committee Members discussed the proposed additional recommendation but did not feel it was necessary and instead could be dealt with by officers communicating all grant decisions to Ward Members. In addition, there was a great deal of debate on presented Recommendation 5. In view of the differing views, it was agreed that this Recommendation should be deferred and the Arts Task and Finish Group would be asked to provide more information to support the recommendation, prior to Hub Committee coming to a view.

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

1. Incorporate the Sports Grant into a ‘Community Grant’ scheme, retaining £2,000 as a revenue line to cover ‘training/coaching grants’;
2. Exclude applications to the Community Grant from projects within Dartmoor National Park which have already received support from the DNPA Sustainable Communities Fund;
3. Support production of a one page summary of grant schemes which officers and Members can use to increase and sustain the level of promotion to local communities;
4. Support ongoing officer engagement with DCC to refocus the TAP scheme criteria on its original purpose, and reinstate the process that is outlined at paragraph 7.3 of the presented report.

***HC 13**

TAMAR TRAILS OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Members were presented with a report that set out an appraisal of options available to the Council to seek to close the annual deficit on the Tamar Trails.

The Lead Member for Customer First introduced the report. The Specialist (Assets) in responding to questions confirmed that he had looked at all possible options in drafting this report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The increase of the Tamar Trails marketing budget line by £4,000 for two years be supported;
2. Further consideration by officers (with partners) of the feasibility of Options 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12 as presented in Appendix A to the report through the Tamar Trails Partnership, with a view to informing an ‘Active Tamar’ bid, be supported;

3. The encouragement of races and events on the Trails with the establishment of a suitable charging mechanism (Option 13 of presented Appendix A) be supported; and
4. The annual reporting of income and expenditure and progress against the Options to Overview and Scrutiny Committee be supported.

HC 14 EVENTS POLICY ADOPTION

Members were presented with a report that made recommendations following a review regarding the running of events held on Council owned land within West Devon and South Hams.

The Lead Member introduced the report.

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

1. To approve the proposed policy as detailed in Appendix 1, subject to minor wording changes as delegated to the Group Manager Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Hub Committee Member; and
2. That, once live, the policy be reviewed annually and the fees levied reviewed as part of the regular WDBC fee and charge setting process.

***HC 15 RECOMMENDATIONS TO HUB COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE T18 REPORT**

Following presentation of the T18 Review report to the Hub Committee on 16 May 2017, Members had asked that the conclusions be considered by a Working Group and presented back to the Hub Committee. Those conclusions were set out within the presented report.

The Lead Member, who was also the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the report. A minor amendment to the presented recommendation was made.

It was then **RESOLVED** that for any significant project including any for which a Joint Steering Group is required, a written management plan (including timescales, finances, objectives and outcomes) is required. This would be accompanied with:

- Supporting policies in place
- Regular member reporting via briefing papers and workshops
- Defined contracts with outside bodies
- An analysis of the timing of program against risk factors

(The meeting terminated at 6.35pm)

