

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **28th** day of **NOVEMBER, 2017** at **2.00pm**

Present: Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman

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

In attendance: Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)
Executive Director (Service Delivery and Commercial Development)
Section 151 Officer
Deputy Section 151 Officer
Group Manager Business Development
CoP Lead Assets
CoP Lead Environmental Health
Senior Specialist Place and Strategy
Specialist (Revenues)
Specialist, Housing Benefits
Specialist Housing
Senior Specialist, Environmental Health
Specialist Democratic Services

Other Members in attendance:

Cllrs Cheadle, Evans, Kimber, Lamb, Leech, Moyse, Musgrave, Pearce, Sheldon and Yelland

***HC 38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received for this meeting.

***HC 39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and the following were made:

Cllr N Jory declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 7: Medium Term Financial Position 2018/19 by virtue of the report mentioning the Business Information Point and him being in receipt of part time employment from this organisation. He left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Cllrs C Edmonds, C Mott, J Moody, G Parker and P R Sanders abstained from the vote on Item 17: Residential Property Purchase, by virtue of being Members or Substitute Members of the Development Management and Licensing Committee and not wishing to fetter their ability to take part in the decision on any planning application that may arise as a result of the proposal.

***HC 40 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 31 October 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HC 41

QUARTER 2 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18

Members were presented with a report that enabled them to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2017/18, and provided a forecast for the year end position. The report also included a recommendation relating to the transfer of underspend on Homelessness Prevention into the Homelessness Earmarked Reserve at the end of the 2017/18 financial year.

The Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2017/18 financial year and the overall projected underspend of £25,000 be noted; and
- 2) That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to transfer the underspend on Homelessness Prevention into the Homelessness Earmarked Reserve at the end of the 2017/18 financial year (this is expected to be £65,000).

*HC 42

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18

Members were presented with a report that advised of the financial position as at 31 October 2017 for the purposes of budget monitoring. All capital projects were within the individual capital budgets approved by Members and therefore capital schemes were within budget.

The Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

*HC 43

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION 2018/19 ONWARDS

Members were presented with a comprehensive report that set out the latest financial position for West Devon Borough Council including the savings realised through shared services with South Hams District Council, the revised projected budget gap following the work undertaken in the Members' Budget Workshop, and the formation of a cross party Member Group to look at options for securing financial stability in the longer term.

The Leader introduced the report and responded to questions arising on matters within the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. progress and the content of the latest Budget Proposals for 2018/19 to date be noted; and
2. it be noted that the Partnership Task & Finish Group will make recommendations to the January Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding recommended future funding levels for the Council's various Partnerships (as outlined in presented Appendix F).

HC 44

HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST – JOINT COMMITTEE

Members were presented with a report that sought approval of the recommendations arising from the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Leaders to form a Joint Committee. The key role of the Joint Committee would be to develop, agree and ensure the implementation of the Productivity Strategy which could only be achieved by working, where appropriate, in collaboration with the individual constituent authorities and the LEP.

The Leader introduced the report. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- the merits of Cornwall being included within the Heart of the South West area were recognised;
- whether or not the resource put into the Joint Committee would result in action; and
- in terms of assessing the performance of the Productivity Plan, the Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning) advised that performance would be measured through a delivery plan but, at this stage, the Committee was looking at the overall Strategy.

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

- a) Approve the recommendation of the HotSW Leaders (meeting as a shadow Joint Committee) to form a Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West;
- b) Approve the Arrangements and Inter-Authority Agreement documents set out in appendices A and B for the establishment of the Joint Committee with the commencement date of Monday 22 January 2018;
- d) Appoint the Leader and the Deputy Leader as the Council's named representative and substitute named representative on the Joint Committee;
- c) Appoint Somerset County Council as the Administering Authority for the Joint Committee for a 2 year period commencing 22 January 2018;
- e) Approve the transfer of the remaining joint devolution budget to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee for the remainder of 2017/18 financial year subject to approval of any expenditure by the Administering Authority;
- f) Approve an initial contribution of £1,400 for 2018/19 to fund the administration and the work programme of the Joint Committee, noting that any expenditure will be subject to the approval of the Administering Authority;
- g) Agree that the key function of the Joint Committee is to approve the Productivity Strategy (it is intended to bring the Strategy to the Joint Committee for approval by February 2018);
- h) Authorise the initial work programme of the Joint Committee aimed at the successful delivery of the Productivity Strategy; and
- i) Agree the proposed meeting arrangements for the Joint Committee including the timetable of meetings for the Joint Committee as proposed in paragraph 2.14 of the presented agenda report.

HC 45

LOW COST SELF AND CUSTOM BUILD INITIATIVE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Members were presented with a report that sought approval to implement the custom self-build initiative through the current policy (H37) and the emerging policy TTV31. It was expected that the initiative would increase the supply of accessible affordable homes for local people within the Borough.

Importantly, homes built through the initiative would be affordable by virtue of the caveats that applicants and subsequent owners would need to adhere to.

The Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Housing introduced the report and responded to questions.

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

1. To implement the custom self-build initiative through the current policy (H37) and the emerging policy TTV31;
2. That the initiative is included in the emerging SPD;
3. That the New Burdens funding is committed to additional staff resource; and
4. That Hub Committee **RESOLVES** to review the supply and progress of the custom self-build initiative periodically.

HC 46

BUSINESS RATES – SECTION 47 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATE RELIEF POLICY

Members were presented with a report that sought consideration and recommendation of the Business Rate Relief Policy covering the decision made by the Rate Relief Panel under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act.

The Lead Member for Economy introduced the report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that a Business Rate Relief Policy for the discretionary relief awarded by the Rate Relief Panel be adopted.

HC 47

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/19

Members were presented with a report that set out how it was an annual requirement for Councils to revisit their existing council tax support scheme and make a decision as to whether to replace or revise it.

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report. During discussion, Members expressed the view that the proposal set out in the report was worthwhile.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2018/19 with the uprate of Personal Allowances, Premiums and Non Dependent deductions in line with national welfare benefits.

HC 48

DIRECT LETS SCHEME

Members were presented with a report that asked to consider the introduction of a private sector letting scheme in West Devon. The purpose of a private sector letting scheme was to recruit private sector landlords to let their properties via the Local Authority letting scheme with the Local Authority acting as a managing agent. Such schemes were designed to increase the availability of affordable quality housing to address housing need in the West Devon area. The proposed scheme was a key action in the five year homeless strategy.

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report and responded to questions. During debate, Members expressed their support for the scheme.

It was then **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council:

1. The introduction of a Local Authority Lettings Scheme for private rented accommodation managed by local authority staff; and
2. Approval for the appointment of one 0.6 FTE L7 Case Manager for the delivery of the scheme.

HC 49

PURCHASE OF 18 NORTH ROAD, OKEHAMPTON

Members were presented with a report that sought authority to purchase the residential property 18 North Road, Okehampton.

The Lead Member for Assets introduced the report. During discussion Members were keen to support the proposal.

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

1. purchase the residential property 18 North Road, Okehampton to support future development ambitions for Wonnacotts Meadow and to provide short term emergency accommodation for families in this area;
2. fund the purchase set out in Appendix A, along with legal and associated costs, from the Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) Earmarked Reserve; and
3. authorise the CoP Lead Assets in consultation with the s151 Officer and Lead member for Assets to conclude the purchase on the terms agreed as referred to in Appendix A of the presented agenda report.

*HC 50

ICT PROCUREMENT OPTIONS

Members were presented with a report that set out how the Council was seeking to procure a modern cloud hostable system or systems capable of realising further efficiencies and financial savings while delivery improved customer facing services, workflow and back office systems with seamless integration. The report set out the progress made so far.

The Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced the report. The Group Manager set out the two parts of the process as being evaluation and procurement, and confirmed that Members would be involved in both parts of the process.

It was then **RESOLVED** that officers be supported in their investigation and evaluation of computer systems capable of replacing the current solution acquired under T18 (as set out in paragraph 4 of the presented report)..

***HC 51 FOOD SAFETY AUDIT REPORT**

Members were presented with a report that outlined the Action Plan that had been developed to implement the recommendations contained within the Food Standards Agency's Audit Report arising from the Food Standards Agency Audit carried out in July 2017. The report also introduced the Food Safety Service Plan 2017/18.

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing introduced the report. He and the CoP Lead Environmental Health responded to questions. During discussion, the CoP Lead confirmed that the actions included within the service plan could be undertaken within budget. One Member asked if food safety advice should be charged for and, in response, the CoP Lead stated that it may be prudent to explore charging but this should be balanced against the regulatory work that was carried out.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Committee had been given the opportunity to comment upon the content of the Food Standards Agency Audit and the Action Plan being implemented to maintain and improve performance within the Food Safety function be endorsed; and
2. The content of the Food Safety Service Plan 2017/18 be agreed and endorsed.

HC 52 ANNUAL REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Members were presented with a report that set out how the Council was required to prepare a written health and safety policy statement and that the policy should be agreed and signed off by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of Council. The policy was required to be reviewed annually and where appropriate, revised to reflect any significant change within the organisation. The updated policy was attached at Appendix A.

The Leader introduced the report and it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also considered the draft Policy at its meeting on and had recommended that it be approved (Minute O&S 34 refers)

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the revised Health and Safety Policy be adopted and that it is signed by the Head of Paid Service and Leader of the Council.

HC 53 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PURCHASE

(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 for the acquisition of 18 new build residential units.

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

1. That subject to specialist external legal and treasury management advice, Council should formally agree to acquire up to 18 residential units as outlined in appendix 3 of this report.
2. To borrow up to £2.55 million from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to fund the acquisition costs
3. To increase the borrowing limits of the Council by £2.55 million in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. (NB. A revised treasury management strategy will be presented to Council on 5 December 2017);
4. Subject to approval of points 1 to 3 above, that the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Assets and the s151 officer, is given delegated authority to agree (without further recourse to the Council):
 - a) Any minor deviations from the draft terms detailed in Appendix 3. A major deviation (overall spend) will be returned to Council for consideration.
 - b) the structure of the borrowing to cover the acquisition (up to a maximum of £2.55m)
 - c) Which properties will be sold or which will be retained to let
 - d) The terms applicable to any sale or property let.
5. That the Business Development Group Manager, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service, the s151 officer and the Lead Member for Assets, identify the most appropriate structure to hold any properties retained to let. If a new company structure is required, this will be brought back to this committee and Council for approval in due course.

(The meeting terminated at 4.50 pm)

Chairman