

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held on **Tuesday, 11th June, 2024 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Ewings
Vice Chairman Cllr Renders

Cllr Edmonds	Cllr Elliott
Cllr Jory	Cllr Mann
Cllr Moody	Cllr Mott

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Cunningham	Cllr Dexter
Cllr Johnson	

Officers:

Senior Leadership Team
Head of Democratic Services
Monitoring Officer
Assistant Director – Strategy (via Teams)
Head of Revenues & Benefits
Head of Housing

- 1. Welcome**
*HC 1/24
In opening the meeting, the Leader welcomed Cllrs Elliott and Mann to their first Hub Committee meeting since recently being appointed at the Annual Council meeting (Minute CM.9/24 refers).
- 2. Apologies for absence**
*HC 2/24
An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Bridgewater.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

*HC 3/24

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

4. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*HC 4/24

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 9 April 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

5. **Public Questions**

*HC 5/24

It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.

6. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

*HC 6/24

Members were presented with the latest version of the Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months. The contents of the Plan were duly noted, subject to it being acknowledged that write-off reports were within the responsibility of the 'Performance and Resources' portfolio area as opposed to 'Community Wellbeing'.

7. **Corporate Peer Challenge 2024**

*HC 7/24

The Hub Committee considered a report that set out the findings and conclusions of the recently undertaken Corporate Peer Challenge.

In her introduction, the Leader emphasised the positivity contained within the concluding report and wished to pay particular tribute to the Senior Leadership Team and the officers who had led on providing administrative support before and during the Challenge.

During the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) Whilst the contents of the concluding report had been so positive, the importance of the Council not being complacent was also emphasised;
- (b) With regard to sharing the findings and conclusions of the report, officers were mindful that the Council was currently in a pre-election period. Upon the expiry of the pre-election period, information would be cascaded to key partners and stakeholders (including town and parish councils) accordingly;

- (c) The importance of the recommendations relating to community development and stakeholder engagement was noted and the importance of all Members demonstrating Community Leadership and supporting the recently established Community Development Team was recognised.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the positive assessment of West Devon Borough Council provided in the Local Government Association's feedback report following the Peer Challenge in March 2024 be noted; and
2. That the recommendations set out in the report and the proposal to collaborate with partners and key stakeholders to develop an action plan in response to the recommendations made, be endorsed.

8. Productivity Plan

*HC 8/24

Members considered a report that sought approval for the content and publication of Productivity Plan. The report also sought approval for authority to be delegated to the Director of Finance to make any minor amendments to the Productivity Plan arising through the meeting.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Officers informed Members that the Plan had been drafted for the benefit of the residents of West Devon;
- (b) To maximise the value of undertaking this piece of work, it was hoped that the Council would receive feedback on the Plan from Central Government.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the content and publication of the West Devon Productivity Plan (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved; and
2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to make any minor amendments to the Plan ahead of submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by the deadline of 19 July 2024.

9. Cost of Living Crisis: Plans for Household Support Fund Allocation (1 April to 30 September 2024) and 12 Month Review of the Revenues and Benefits Service

*HC 9/24

Consideration was given to a report that sought Member support for the implementation of a series of measures to support residents during the Cost of Living Crisis.

Following a comprehensive introduction from the lead Hub Committee Member, a number of Members congratulated her on delivering such an informative and interesting presentation. In addition, a number of Members recorded their thanks to the Head of Revenues and Benefits for her tireless efforts in generating service improvements.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the Head of Revenues and Benefits take immediate steps to:
 - a) progress support payments of £500 to Devon County Council Care Leavers known to be living at an address in the Borough on 1 June 2024;
 - b) progress support payments of £500 to Devon Care Leavers newly notified by Devon County Council to be living at an address in the Borough between 2 June and 30 September 2024; and
 - c) release the balance of the Household Support Fund for an open application process until 30 September 2024 or until the fund is fully spent, if sooner.
2. That the progress made by the Revenues and Benefits Service in the last 12 months be noted; and
3. That the intention to create a new post of Cost Of Living Support Officer (shared with South Hams District Council) to provide financial support, advice and signposting to residents, be noted.

10. **Housing - Parish Profiles**

*HC 10/24

The Hub Committee considered a report that sought approval for the introduction of 'Parish Profiles', an easily digestible, short document containing a range of data and information, designed to help provide a greater understanding of each demographic within a community and to help identify areas of need.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) The Parish Profile approach was considered to be excellent by Members and officers were thanked for their production;

- (b) As the Profiles concept evolved, some Members felt that consideration could be given to including reference to existing Outline and Reserved Matters planning applications within a town/parish and some comparative analysis between towns and parishes.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Parish Profile approach be endorsed.

11. **Q3 and Q4 2023/24 Write Off Report**

*HC 11/24

A report was considered that informed Members of the proposal to write-off a series of debts with a value of more than £5,000 for the period from 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024.

In reply to a question from the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee, the Section 151 Officer set out (for the information and reference of Members) the Council's current aged debt profile.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That it be noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer had authorised the write off of individual debts totalling £70,622.70 as detailed in paragraph 3 of the presented agenda report; and
2. That the write off of the individual debts totalling £131,967.22 as shown in Appendix A of the presented agenda report be approved.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON THURSDAY, 20 JUNE 2024, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)

The Meeting concluded at 2.55 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

