

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held
on
Tuesday, 23rd July, 2024 at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber -
Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Ewings
Vice Chairman Cllr Renders

Cllr Bridgewater
Cllr Elliott
Cllr Mann
Cllr Mott

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Jory
Cllr Moody

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Cunningham
Cllr Greenberry-Pullen
Cllr West

Cllr Daniel (via Teams)
Cllr Johnson

Officers:

Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Head of Democratic Services
Monitoring Officer
Director- Place & Enterprise
Assistant Director – Strategy
Head of Housing
Principal Natural Resources & Greenspaces Officers
Senior Strategic Planning Officer

12. **Declarations of Interest**

*HC 12/24

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

13. **Confirmation of Minutes**
*HC 13/24
The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 11 June 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.
14. **Public questions**
*HC 14/24
It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.
15. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**
*HC 15/24
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.
- In discussion, the following points were raised:
- (a) With regard to the lead Members for the following agenda items, these were updated as follows:
- The '*Tamar Valley National Landscape Management Plan*' agenda item falling within the Climate and Biodiversity portfolio area (Minute *HC 20/24 below refers);
 - The '*Plan for Community Development*' agenda item falling within the Community Wellbeing portfolio area. At the request of the lead Member, the Committee also agreed that this agenda item should be deferred from the meeting to be held on 24 September to the later meeting scheduled to take place on 3 December 2024, with the intention being for an Advisory Group meeting to be held beforehand to enable all Members the opportunity to influence the draft Plan; and
 - The '*Institute of Customer Satisfaction Survey Results*' agenda item (that was scheduled for consideration at the 3 December 2024 Committee meeting) falling within the Customer Experience and Accessible Services portfolio area;
- (b) Given the likely length of the agenda for the meeting to be held on 24 September 2024, officers committed to looking for a suitable date in the Member Calendar to convene an additional Hub Committee meeting.
16. **2023/24 Draft Revenue and Capital Outturn**
*HC 16/24
The Hub Committee considered a report that provided the draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2023/24
- During the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) It was acknowledged that the Council was undertaking a number of measures in an attempt to offset the significant financial pressures arising from the costs of temporary accommodation. However, it was also noted that these measures would not fully counter the costs associated with temporary accommodation and the issue would remain a significant financial issue for the Council for the foreseeable future;
- (b) A number of Members wished to put on record their thanks to the excellent work of the Section 151 Officer and the Finance Team.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the draft Revenue and Capital outturn figures for the 2023/24 financial year, including the overall Revenue outturn position of a surplus of £149,000 for 2023/24 (1.7% of the total Budget £8.588 million), be noted.

17. **Corporate Peer Challenge: Outline Plan**

*HC 17/24

The Hub Committee was presented with a report that set out the outline Action Plan prepared in response to the recently undertaken Corporate Peer Challenge.

In discussion, it was recognised that the Action Plan was evolving (and would be re-presented to the Hub Committee at its meeting to be held on 24 September 2024) and officers committed to sending an updated version to Committee Members (for their comment) following this meeting.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the outline action plan in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report, be endorsed; and
2. That the intention to further develop the Action Plan (for agreement at the Hub Committee meeting to be held on 24 September 2024) be noted.

18. **Integrated Performance Monitoring Report April - June 2024**

*HC 18/24

A report was considered that provided a progress update on the first quarter of the 2024/25 operational year against delivery of the 'Council Plan'.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Since this was the first edition of the Monitoring Report being presented to the Committee, Members thanked officers for its format and layout, which was felt to be well presented and therefore reader friendly;
- (b) The three actions that were currently classified as being '*overdue / significant issues*' in the Monitoring Report were highlighted and recognised as being issues that required close attention by both lead officers and the respective lead Hub Committee Members.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the positive progress in delivering against actions in the adopted Council Plan be recognised; and
2. That the summary of the key operational performance and strategic risk profile of the Council be noted.

19. **Housing Update - Verbal Update**

*HC 19/24

The Deputy Leader provided an update on recent activity that had been undertaken that was relevant to the Council's declared Housing Crisis.

In so doing, he made particular reference to:

- the recently published report of the Devon Housing Commission. The lead Member urged all Members to read what was an excellently produced report;
- the recent launch of the West Devon Housing Offer. Having been launched, if any Members were aware of any interested landowners within their local Ward(s), they were asked to make contact with the lead Member and/or Housing Officers;
- the Town and Parish Profiles were now publicly available and contact had been made with all Town and Parish Council Clerks;
- the '20 Plymouth Road' project being on track, with it still being intended that the first tenants would be welcomed in the Autumn;
- the '3 Springhill' project still being on target for a late Summer completion;
- there currently being 14 households residing in temporary accommodation in the Borough – 12 single tenants and 2 families; and
- the pre-application work on the Princetown site was ongoing.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) A number of Members echoed the views of the lead Member in respect of the report produced by the Devon Housing Commission.

The Task Force representatives were all thanked for their tireless efforts in producing such a powerful report and the importance of all local authorities now acting upon its recommendations (before the evidence became out of date) was emphasised.

To ensure that the momentum was maintained, it was agreed that both a Housing Advisory Group meeting and an all-Member Briefing would be arranged in the upcoming weeks to enable for Members to give detailed consideration to the contents of the report;

- (b) In reply to a specific request, it was agreed that officers would be asked to provide a Council Tax Band by Band breakdown of those properties in the Borough area that were currently defined as empty.

20. **Tamar Valley National Landscape - 2025-2030 Management Plan - Consultation Draft**

*HC 20/24

In line with the Statutory requirements for Local Authorities to produce Management Plans for National Landscapes in their area, Members considered a report that sought support for a public consultation to be held in advance of the finalised Tamar Valley National Landscape Management Plan being adopted in early 2025

During the ensuing debate, the ambition that was set out within the draft Plan was highlighted and Members were encouraged to make their representations during the public consultation exercise.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That a public consultation on the Draft of the Management Plan be supported;
2. That authority be delegated to the Director for Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity, for the final content of the Council's formal response to the Consultation; and
3. That the final Management Plan be considered for adoption by the Hub Committee at its meeting scheduled to take place on 11 March 2025.

21. **Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan**

*HC 21/24

The Hub Committee considered a report that sought approval for the Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan to not proceed to Referendum.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Members felt that the report made for a difficult read and its contents were quite disheartening;
- (b) In terms of next steps and lessons to be learned following this meeting, it would now be a matter for both the Town Council and Parish Council to consider how they both wished to proceed and the matter would therefore rest with the local communities in those areas. However, it was emphasised that officers were available to provide support and advice and it was noted that local Ward Members also had a role to play in this regard;
- (c) Whilst not taking effect until 2027, it was noted that the recent decision in respect of the Community Governance Review could have an impact should there be community appetite to re-start the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- (d) Officers confirmed that since the adopted Joint Local Plan policies remained robust, the lack of a Neighbourhood Plan in this area would not result in these communities being in a vulnerable position to developers.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the Examiner's report for the Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be received;
2. That the recommendations made by the Examiner's report and the reasons for them be acknowledged;
3. That it be agreed that the Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan (as set out at Appendix B of the presented agenda report) did not meet the Basic Conditions.
4. That, as recommended by the Examiner, the Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to Referendum; and
5. That the Director of Strategy and Governance be authorised to publish the Regulation 18 Decision Statement (as set out at Appendix C of the presented agenda report).

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON THURSDAY, 1 AUGUST 2024, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)

The Meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
