

At a Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, TAVISTOCK on **TUESDAY** the 12th day of **MARCH 2013** at **2.00 pm**.

Present:

Cllr D W Cloke – Chairman	
Cllr S C Bailey – Vice-Chairman	
Cllr K A Clish-Green	Cllr C Hall
Cllr L J G Hockridge	Cllr D M Horn
Cllr J B Moody	Cllr D K A Sellis
Cllr J Sheldon	Cllr D Whitcomb

Corporate Director (AR)
Head of ICT & Customer Services
Natural Environment & Recreation Manager
Housing Services Manager
Member Services Manager
Member Services Admin Officer
Housing Team Manager
Street Scene Manager

In Attendance: Cllr W G Cann OBE

Kate Royston – South West Devon Community Energy Partnership

***O&S 33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
No apologies for absence were received.

***O&S 34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members and officers were asked to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting but none were made.

***O&S 35 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT – BROADBAND PROVISION**
The Chairman advised Members that Councillor Sheldon was to act as Lead Member for the provision of Superfast Broadband for West Devon and South Hams. The next meeting of the Rural Broadband Task and Finish Group was due to take place on Wednesday 17th April, during which Councillor Sheldon would attend and provide an up-date to Members accordingly.

***O&S 36 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

***O&S 37 PRESENTATION BY KATE ROYSTON ON THE SOUTH WEST DEVON COMMUNITY ENERGY PARTNERSHIP**
Members received a presentation from Kate Royston on the South West Devon Community Energy Partnership which was followed by a question and answer session for Members.

O&S 38 REVIEW OF THE CONNECT PARTNERSHIP AND RELATED DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Director presented a report (page 3 to the agenda) to advise Members of the outcome of a review of the Connect Partnership by the Connect Partnership Board and officers. The review had been prompted by a combination of Member feedback, the outcome of the Peer Review and reducing staffing and financial capacity both within the Council and partner agencies. Section 4 of the presented report suggested a way forward for Members' consideration.

A Member commented that they preferred how the Connect Strategy has now been condensed down and how combining all of this into one document was a good idea.

A finding of the recent Peer Review report was that the Connect Strategy and Delivery Plans contained a large amount of work to do for an Authority the size of the Borough Council.

Concern was also raised again that Members did not know who the Lead Members were or their level of responsibility. A list of the current Lead Members and their responsibilities was to be circulated to all Members.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that the suggested way forward for the Connect Partnership and the related delivery arrangements, set out at paragraph 4 of the report, be adopted.

***O&S 39 DEVON HOME CHOICE – SCOPING FOR TASK AND FINISH WORK**

Members received a presentation from the Housing Services Manager about the Devon Home Choice service. A question and answer session for Members then followed, during which the following points were raised:

The Chairman advised Members that he had already spoken to the Housing Services Manager and the Housing Team Manager to discuss potential problems that may arise if the Council explored other options. All Local Authorities were currently reviewing this service as the contract was due for renewal.

A Member raised concern that 15% of applicants experienced difficulty in completing application forms and how the Council needed to ensure that the most vulnerable were safeguarded. In reply, the Housing Team Manager advised that there was an easy read version available, that the application forms were available in different colours, in Braille, home visits were available or that applicants could call into the office and get help from an Officer in completing the form.

A Member asked how tenants were assessed before being able to go into the house they had chosen. In reply, the Housing Team Manager advised that home visits were carried out, references were required and checks were undertaken by the landlord to make sure that the tenants were assessed correctly.

In response to Members querying whether the service worked for the Officers, the Housing Services Manager stated that whilst not perfect, the system was easier than the old points based system and saved time.

To conclude this item, it was agreed that Members were happy with the current procedures and not for any changes to be made at present. The Housing Services Manager was due to attend a meeting on 17 April 2013 to give feedback. Following this meeting, the Housing Services Manager and the Housing Team Manager would report back to the Chairman of the Committee, who would then be able to provide an update to the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting, due to take place on 4 June 2013.

***O&S 40**

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3

The Head of ICT & Customer Services presented a report (page 14 to the agenda) to provide Members with information on Key Performance Indicators where performance was 10% or more above or below target at the end of quarter 3 2012-13. The information was set out with the Balanced Scorecard showing broad performance levels, indicators at 'red' status providing additional information and a standard information report giving background information and context to workload.

The Head of ICT & Customer Services went through in detail the first five indicators at red status for two consecutive quarters. This was followed by a general discussion from Members.

No questions were raised regarding the average days sickness as the current number of staff on long term sick leave had been significantly reduced, with only one member of staff currently on long term sick leave.

Regarding end to end time for change of circumstances, the Head of ICT & Customer Services advised Members that from the start of the new financial year, this indicator was predicted to no longer be at red status but at green status. Members wanted to congratulate the Officers concerned for all their hard work on resolving this and for the savings therefore made.

A general discussion took place from Members regarding car parking issues. A suggestion was made that some statistical analysis be undertaken to determine busy and quiet periods for car parking in an attempt to try and encourage more people to use the car parks. The Street Scene Manager advised that this was now possible and her team would do all they could to help on this matter. Two Members of the O&S Committee were happy to look into this in further detail and report back on their findings. A Member made comment that it was possible that some visitors to the town would not necessarily go into the town centre to park but that they would perhaps park at the supermarkets and then walk to the town or catch the bus in. It was felt that this could be having an impact on why the figures for car parking charges were down.

A short discussion was had regarding income collected: Land Charges but it was felt that there was very little control over this and that the targets were to be revised.

A general discussion took place from Members regarding the average time to process minor planning applications. The general feeling was that Members were already concerned that this indicator had been at red status for the last two quarters dealing with minor planning applications and concern was raised for how this department would cope in the future when larger planning applications were received. It was also noted that two members of staff from this department were to be leaving soon and there were concerns for staffing issues. Members felt it was very important to get the right numbers of staff in the Planning Department so that applications could be processed within timescales.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:-

- (i) Members note the Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 and consider the action detailed to improve future performance; and
- (ii) for all of the five indicators at red status for two consecutive quarters as detailed in para 2.4 of the presented report, the following action be taken:
 - Average days sickness/FTE – agree with action response as per the presented report.
 - End to end time for change of circumstances – agree with action response as per the presented report and to note the Members thanks for the Officers hard work and significant savings made.
 - Car parking income (quarterly target – non cumulative) – query action response as per the presented report. A small Task & Finish Group to be set up to analyse car parking statistics and report back to the Committee.
 - Income collected: Land Charges – this indicator is to be removed.
 - Average time to process minor planning applications – query action response as per the presented report.

***O&S 41 2013/14 WORK PROGRAMME SUGGESTIONS**

The Chairman asked the Members for their suggestions to add to the 2013/14 Work Programme. One suggestion was that O&S could invite Health Watch Devon to give a presentation at a forthcoming meeting. No further suggestions were made but it was noted that any suggestions could be added to the current Work Programme from May 2013 onwards.

***O&S 42 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000: REPORT ON INSPECTION AND AUTHORISATION**

As a standing item on the agenda, Members noted that there had been no requested to use the powers under RIPA during the last quarter.

(The meeting terminated at 4.10 pm)

