

At an Informal Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **27<sup>th</sup>** day of **JULY 2021** at **2:00 pm**.

**Present in Chambers:** Cllr M Ewings – Chairman  
Cllr P Kimber – Vice-Chairman

Cllr C Kemp  
Cllr D Sellis

Cllr T Southcott  
Cllr P Vachon

Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Governance and Assurance  
Senior Specialist – Climate Change  
Democratic Services Officers  
Customer Service Improvement Manager  
Senior Specialist – Place Making  
Senior Specialist – Housing  
Community Digital Specialist  
Specialist – IT

**Also in Attendance:** Cllrs C Edmonds, N Jory, and B Ratcliffe

Due to the number of Members attending the meeting via Teams and not physically in the Chamber, the meeting was not quorate and therefore was classified as an informal meeting. The meeting was therefore informed that all decisions would therefore be carried over to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September 2021 for formal consideration.

## **DEVON HOME CHOICE REVIEW**

The Lead Member for Housing presented a review of Devon Home Choice (DHC) that sought to recommend that the Council remain a member of the organisation. In reply to questions, it was clarified that:

- The DHC website provider was confirmed as the previous provider following the recent tender process. A Member outlined how the log in process could be confusing and officers reiterated that they were always happy to help someone to register;
- The housing register was confirmed as being interrogated regularly and market needs assessed. Smaller houses had been requested previously on social housing needs and applications but it was agreed that there was a move towards a need for houses with 3 and 4 bedrooms, which would be reflected in future planning applications.

- It was confirmed that there was evidence of people moving into the area and working remotely outside of the Borough. Officers confirmed this was outside the remit of the Council.
- Any mutually organised housing exchanges would involve interviews with the Housing Association.
- The criteria for local connections and an explanation of 'deliberately worsening your situation' were outlined.

It was then agreed that, at the next Committee meeting, the Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Hub Committee that the Council continues to be a Member of Devon Home Choice.

## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

In his update, the Hub Committee Lead Member for Resources and Performance introduced the Performance Management Report and highlighted that:

- This was a snapshot taken at the end of June 2021.
- The system relied on manual updating but a new performance management framework was being developed to support the new Corporate Strategy once it had been adopted in September.
- Most reporting areas showed an improvement on pre-lockdown figures and thanks were extended to the officers
- Some service areas were under pressure with Revenues & Benefits, Planning, and Legal all having internal service reviews being carried out at the moment
- Qbuster technology was being introduced which allowed customers to request a call back that kept their place in the telephone queue.
- There were now 58 liberty processes that were live online and user feedback had been consistently positive on these.
- The Future IT project was ongoing
- New IT systems had been rolled out at the same time as the Covid pandemic had hit. The Customer Service Improvement Manager's role was to progress IT but he had been moved over to work on Business Grants producing delays in the project. Some automated messages had raised more calls, but were now being looked at as the Customer Services team was now back working on traditional council business and resolving those issues.
- The 'pingdemic' had impacted most on waste as isolating office staff could continue to work remotely but this was not possible for the waste teams.

- It was confirmed that increasing tasks able to be performed online would free up phone call resource to support those residents with no internet access or capability.

The Committee agreed to make the following **RECOMMENDATIONS** to the next meeting:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the performance figures shown in the Pentana report.
2. That Members have reviewed the information provided in the dashboards and provide feedback to the portfolio holder on any additional measures required to scrutinise performance.

## **RURAL BROADBAND: VERBAL UPDATE**

In her update, the new Community Digital Specialist Officer highlighted that:

- Good publicity for this project would be vital. Members would be advised before the project went live.
- If anyone was interested there was now a contact form to complete on the Council's website.
- The Council was looking for broadband champions in the community.
- It was a two year project and would be in contact with suppliers over this time.
- Eight different community groups were already involved and the Council was looking to facilitate more
- The appointment of the Community Broadband Specialist was seen as a positive step forward in rolling out broadband provision to the Community. The complexities of all the different options in the market place were acknowledged but the officer was already developing good relationships with various suppliers and pulling together this difficult and complex area. A local MP had expressed delight at the appointment of the officer and had suggested other Local Authorities might do similar.
- The Community Broadband Specialist would be asked to attend quarterly Committee meetings to give an update, ie October 2021, January 2022, and March 2022.