

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 19th November, 2019** at **2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Ewings
Vice Chairman Cllr Kimber

Cllr Ball	Cllr Coulson
Cllr Daniel	Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Kemp	Cllr Ratcliffe
Cllr Southcott	Cllr Spettigue
Cllr Wood	

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Edmonds	Cllr Leech
Cllr Moody	Cllr Pearce
Cllr Renders	Cllr Samuel
Cllr Sellis	Cllr Yelland

Officers:
Deputy Chief Executive
Senior Specialist – Democratic Services
Community Safety Partnership Representatives
Commissioning Manager
Monitoring Officer
Localities Team Leader
Specialist Manager
Section 151 Officer

47. **Apologies for Absence**

*O&S 47

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs T Bolton, D Moyse, R Musgrave and P Ridgers.

Whilst not Committee Members, apologies were also received for this meeting from Cllrs N Jory and C Mott.

48. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*O&S 48

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 October 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

49. **Declarations of Interest**

*O&S 49

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting but there was none made.

50. **Chairman's Announcements - Purdah**

*O&S 50

The Chairman reminded the Committee that 'Purdah' (a term commonly used to describe the pre-election period) had started on 6 November 2019 and would run until the General Election (12 December 2019).

During a Purdah period, there were strict rules on publicity that essentially stated that a Council must not issue any publicity (i.e. any form of communication) that a reasonable person would consider was giving support to a particular political party. However in their own right, Members were not required to comply with the same strict rules as long as they did not use any Council resources to do so.

51. **Public Forum**

*O&S 51

The Chairman informed that no formal requests had been received in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

52. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

*O&S 52

It was noted that no prior requests had been received for updates on any future Hub Committee agenda items at this meeting.

As previously notified, the Committee acknowledged that the next Hub Committee meeting had been rearranged to take place on Tuesday, 17 December 2019.

53. **Community Safety Partnership**

*O&S 53

A report was considered that provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as defined by Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) County Lines. Officers advised that there were challenges in the Tavistock area with regard to County Lines operations.

At this point, Members sought additional information and it was therefore **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that:

'in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.'

Once all Members were content that they had no further issues or questions to raise in exempt session, it was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that:

'the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting.'

In conclusion, officers advised that the CSP also offered detailed County Lines Briefings to any interested Members;

- (b) the Exploitation Prevention Toolkit. The Committee was informed that the CSP offered Exploitation Prevention training events and the next session was to be held at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock on 20 November 2019. In reply to a question, officers confirmed that any Members who were interested in this session were more than welcome to attend;
- (c) the dedication of lead officers. A number of Members paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of lead officers in maximising the effectiveness and success of the CSP. In taking the point a step further, some Members emphasised the benefits of this Partnership and recognised that, whilst need had increased, funding had decreased. As a result, a Member felt that consideration should be given to increasing the current level of resource that was allocated to the CSP;
- (d) support for armed forces veterans and their families. When questioned, officers advised that the CSP found it to be a challenge to identify veterans. However, the CSP was active in providing support to armed forces veterans and their families and it was agreed that further details on this aspect of work would be provided to an interested Member outside of this Committee meeting;

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee welcome the contents of the annual update and commend the work and effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership.

54.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

O&S 54

The Committee considered a report that detailed the scores achieved by the Council as part of a recent Institute of Customer Service Customer Satisfaction Benchmark Survey.

Whilst the Council's scores had improved in comparison to 2018, the report recognised that there was still further improvements to be made to be on a par with the top national performers across all sectors. Of particular note, the importance of the Council getting it 'right first time' was emphasised.

The report proceeded to recommend a series of next steps with a view to building on the progress that had been made to date and to further improve the Council's Customer Satisfaction scores.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- a) The Committee paid tribute to the improved Survey results and noted that these had been achieved without any additional resources being allocated;
- b) With regard to staff targets and monitoring, officers confirmed that customer satisfaction was a key performance measure for staff in their Personal Continuous Improvement discussions. In addition, improving customer satisfaction remained the emphasis for the annual staff away days and the latest round of these had just commenced;
- c) In reiterating the comments in the report that there was a need to build on the progress that had been made, some Members emphasised the importance of promoting channel shift and ensuring that residents were kept regularly informed;
- d) The Committee recognised the importance of a systematic approach to process improvements. It was therefore requested that Members (in their role as Community Leaders) be informed as and when significant process improvements were being rolled out.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey be welcomed and the Hub Committee be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the actions contained within Section 5 of the presented agenda report that are headed as follows:

- Customer Service Improvement Manager;
- Complaint Handling Review;
- Staff Meetings, Performance Monitoring and Training;
- IT Procurement and Improvement;
- Continued Surveying; and
- Progress Reporting.

55. **Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2019**

*O&S 55

Members considered a report that presented the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's (LGO) Annual Review Letter 2019 regarding Ombudsman complaints that had been received against the Council for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

In discussion, it was recognised that the improvements that had been made to customer satisfaction (Minute O&S 54 above refers) had been a key factor in the reduction in complaints to the Ombudsman.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee has reviewed the Ombudsman Annual Letter for 2019.

56. **Peer Review Action Plan: Political Governance Arrangements**

*O&S 56

The Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the progress against the Peer Challenge Action Plan but was limited to Recommendation 2 of the Peer Challenge: 'Strengthening the Council's Political Governance Arrangements'.

In the ensuing debate, it was confirmed that the Political Structures Working Group had given consideration to more shared working opportunities with South Hams District Council. To progress this work further, a meeting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairman of both Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees was to be convened in early 2020.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee acknowledge the progress made to date on the delivery of the governance recommendations in the Peer Challenge Action Plan in relation to recommendation 2: 'Strengthening the Council's Political Governance Arrangements'.

57. **2019 Member Induction Review: Verbal Update**

*O&S 57

By way of a reminder, the Chairman made a plea for all Members to complete the recent Induction Survey before the results were presented to the next Committee meeting.

In addition, the importance of all Members completing the recent Surveys into the 2020/21 Budget and Committee Meeting Start Times was also emphasised.

58. **Locality Service - Annual Report**

*O&S 58

The Committee considered the annual report of the Locality Service. The report noted that the service continued to evolve and covered service elements that had been previously covered by a number of service areas across the Council.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) the Team working at reduced capacity. When questioned, it was confirmed that the Team was still operating at reduced capacity and officers were monitoring this situation;
- (b) dog patrols. The Committee was informed that the Mobile Locality Officer focus was on providing a visible presence and to educate dog owners. In acknowledging that dog fouling was an area of high concern for town and parish councils, officers advised that the Team undertake out of hours inspections and proceeded to encourage Members (and Clerks) to report any issues to the Localities mailbox.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorses continuation of the Locality Model pending ongoing monitoring and a further report being presented to the Committee in November 2020.

59. **Operational Performance: April - September 2019**

*O&S 59

A report was considered that presented the operational performance of the Council during the period April to September 2019. Furthermore, the report also set out a proposed approach to future monitoring of operational performance.

In discussion, there was widespread support for the proposed new approach.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the operational performance of the Council during the period between April and September 2019 be noted; and
2. That the draft live performance dashboard has been considered and the proposed new approach endorsed.

60. **Financial Stability Review Group -Member Briefing Note**

*O&S 60

The Section 151 Officer presented her Briefing Note that had informed that the Group had last met on 22 October 2019.

During the debate, a number of Members highlighted the recent draft Budget Setting Workshop and felt that it had been an excellent session.

61. **Task and Finish Group Updates:**

*O&S 61

(a) Leisure Review

By way of an update, the Committee was informed that:

- a face-to-face and online customer survey had been undertaken;
- the Group had conducted a site visit to the Meadowlands and Parklands Leisure Centres;
- the initial view of the Group was that the future of the Leisure Contract was very positive; and
- the Group remained on target to present its concluding report to the next Committee meeting on 14 January 2020.

62. **Annual Work Programme 2019/20**

*O&S 62

The Committee considered the latest version of its Work Programme for the remainder of the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

In discussion, it was agreed that:-

- the Safeguarding Annual Report would be presented to the next Committee meeting on 14 January 2020; and
- the Enforcement: Verbal Update would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 25 February 2020

63. **Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from the Meeting**

*O&S 63

The Committee was reminded that:

- the Community Safety Partnership was offering detailed County Lines Briefings to any interested Members; and
- an Exploitation Prevention training event was to be held at Kilworthy Park, Tavistock on 20 November 2019.

The Meeting concluded at 3.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
