

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held
on
Tuesday, 1st December, 2020 at 2.00 pm at the **Via Teams**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Jory
Vice Chairman Cllr Samuel

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Leech
Cllr Moody
Cllr Sellis

Cllr Mott
Cllr Cheadle
Cllr Pearce

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Crozier
Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Renders
Cllr Spettigue
Cllr Wood

Cllr Ewings
Cllr Hipsey
Cllr Kimber
Cllr Ratcliffe
Cllr Southcott
Cllr Vachon
Cllr Yelland

Officers:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director – Place & Enterprise
Director – Governance & Assurance
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Head of Housing, Revenues & Benefits
Specialists – Place Making
Specialist - Heritage

32. **Apologies for absence**

*HC 32

No apologies were received in advance of this meeting.

33. **Declarations of Interest**

*HC 33

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and these were declared as follows:

Cllr N Jory declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 3: 'Urgent Business' (Minute *HC 34 below refers) by virtue of his employment with the Business Information Point and left the meeting during consideration of this agenda item.

34. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

*HC 34

The Lead Member for Economy proceeded to advise that one urgent item had been agreed to be raised at this Committee meeting. The item related to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme and was considered urgent in line of the associated time constraints.

At this point, the meeting considered the urgent item and, in discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) monitoring the effectiveness of the Scheme. When questioned, officers gave an assurance that the effectiveness of the Scheme would be reported via the weekly Bulletin updates that were currently being issued to all Members;
- (b) the organisations that could be entitled to be in receipt of financial support from the business support element of the ARG scheme. It was noted that no decisions had been made on which organisations would be supported through this element of the scheme and each decision would be looked at on an individual case-by-case basis;
- (c) the work of officers in developing and administering the Scheme. The importance of this Scheme was reiterated by a number of Members and officers were thanked for their hard work and commitment in setting up and administering the Scheme so quickly.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Scheme (as outlined in Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report), including the Scheme of Delegation to administer the scheme contained therein, be noted; and
2. approval be given to the use of £50,000 from the ARG funding for wider business support measures (in addition to a potential further £50,000 that is subject to a separate report later on the agenda for approval for the Broadband Reserve (Minute HC 40 below refers)). (NB. this would bring the total ARG funding for wider business support to £100,000); and

3. authority be delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise and Head of Placemaking, in consultation with the lead Hub Committee Member for the Economy, to allocate expenditure from this Reserve.

35. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*HC 35

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 20 October 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

36. **Public Questions**

*HC 36

In accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules, there were no questions submitted by members of the public.

37. **Hub Committee Forward Plan**

*HC 37

Members were presented with the most recently published Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months.

The contents of the Forward Plan were duly noted.

38. **COVID-19 Recovery Plan Progress Update**

*HC 38

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the progress of the Task and Finish Groups and the Council's ongoing Response and Recovery activity.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) It was recognised that the Plan would be a constantly evolving document that would require regular monitoring by the Hub Committee;
- (b) In emphasising the importance and relevance of the financial situation, support was expressed for the proposed approach that was outlined in the presented agenda report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the Council's continuing response to the COVID-19 Pandemic be noted;
2. the Council's progress in developing and delivering the Recovery and Renewal Plan be noted;
3. the progress of the Localities and Communities and the Consultation and Engagement Task and Finish Groups be noted; and

4. officers be requested to finalise the Recovery and Renewal Plan in-line with the approach set out in the presented agenda report and present a final version to the next Council meeting for adoption.

39.

Housing Strategy Public Consultation

*HC 39

The Committee considered a report that sought to approve the draft Housing Strategy for a public consultation exercise that would commence on 7 December 2020 for a five week period.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) an updated version of the draft Strategy. Officers advised that the version of the draft Strategy that had been published with this Committee agenda had since been updated. The Committee was informed that there was one significant update to the originally published version that sought to recognise the potential pre-determination concerns associated with the following sentence:

'We will support an appropriately located planning application for an Extra Care housing scheme in West Devon'.

The Committee welcomed this revision which was reflected in the recommendation that was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED**;

- (b) feedback from the public consultation exercise. The lead Member hoped that the Council would be in receipt of a number of constructive representations during the proposed public consultation exercise;
- (c) the work of those officers involved in developing the draft Strategy;
- (d) mixed affordable housing tenures. Members expressed the hope that the Strategy would ultimately lead to an increased number of affordable homes being developed through a greater number of mixed housing tenures. In addition, Members hoped that the Strategy would enable the opportunity for more local residents to be able to at least own a share of their own home;
- (e) the deliverability of the Strategy. Officers confirmed that an Annual Delivery Plan would underpin the Strategy and it was hoped that the first version of this document would be published alongside the revised Strategy in March 2021;

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Hub Committee:

1. approve the updated ('Version 5') draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for consultation;

2. authorise the Head of Housing, Revenues and Benefits to carry out a public consultation exercise on the draft Housing Strategy; and
3. note that a report on the outcome of the consultation exercise will be presented to Members in March 2021.

40. **Broadband Community Support**

HC 40

A report was considered that set out how the Council would support communities that would not be included in the current Connecting Devon and Somerset programme.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the risks associated with the proposals. Whilst acknowledging that the Council would be liable in the event of any funding shortfall, Members were of the view that the risk of this occurrence was low;
- (b) the commitment and efforts of the Sydenham Damerel Community Fibre Partnership. A number of Members paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of the Partnership and felt that this scheme could be seen to be a flagship for other Community Groups that were suffering from a similarly poor standard of Broadband provision;
- (c) the customer service of BT Openreach. In terms of managing expectations, a Member wished to make the point that BT Openreach was often a difficult organisation to make contact with and it did not tend to deliver schemes at a particularly fast pace.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the development of a Broadband Community Support Strategy be approved to support the Council's Economic and Health & Wellbeing Objectives;
2. Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the creation of a Broadband Community Support Earmarked Reserve of £100,000, to be financed by transferring:
 - £50,000 from the existing Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve; and
 - £50,000 from the Business Rates Discretionary Fund (Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Scheme);
3. the Council enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sydenham Damerel Community Fibre Partnership on terms to be agreed by the Director of Customer Service Delivery, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services;

4. subject to completion of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Council enter into a contract with BT Openreach in order to provide a scheme in Sydenham Damerel on behalf of the Sydenham Damerel Community Fibre Partnership; and
5. the actions taken to date be noted and endorsed.

41. **Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2020-2025**

HC 41

The Committee considered a report that outlined the process for, and progress made in, reviewing the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plan. In addition, the report also requested that the final Plan be recommended for adoption.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the annual contributions from the Borough Council. When questioned, it was confirmed that the annual contribution from the Borough Council amounted to £4,000;
- (b) the potential benefits associated with World Heritage Status;
- (c) Peter Tavy and Mary Tavy. The local Ward Member for Peter Tavy and Mary Tavy parishes expressed his disappointment that these areas had been excluded from the Site area. In response, the lead Hub Committee Member (in her capacity as the Council's appointed representative on the Partnership) informed that she would relay these concerns at the next Board meeting.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Hub Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that the World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-2025 be endorsed for immediate adoption.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTES HC 40 PART 2 AND HC 41 WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 8 DECEMBER 2020, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2020 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
