

WEST DEVON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday, 16th November, 2021 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Ewings
Vice Chairman Cllr Kimber

Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Sellis
Cllr Vachon

Cllr Hipsey
Cllr Moyse
Cllr Southcott
Cllr Wood

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Ball
Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Mott (via Teams)
Cllr Ratcliffe

Cllr Crozier
Cllr Jory
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Yelland

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive
Director – Place & Enterprise
Director – Governance & Assurance
Democratic Services Manager
Head of Strategy & Projects
Customer Service Improvement Manager
Community Safety Specialist (via Teams)
Localities Team Leader

Also In attendance:

Cllr Andrea Davies – Devon County Council (DCC) Lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment & Transport
Mr Jamie Hulland – DCC Transportation Strategy & Road Safety Manager
Mr Damian Jones – DCC Head of the Transport Co-Ordination Service
Mrs Becca Hewitt – Community Safety Partnership Chair (via Teams)

20. **Apologies for Absence**
*O&S 20
Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs A Coulson, J Moody, L Samuel and J Spettigue.
21. **Confirmation of Minutes**
*O&S 21
The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2021 were confirmed by the Meeting as a true and correct record.
22. **Declarations of Interest**
*O&S 22
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 were none made.
23. **Public Forum**
*O&S 23
The Chairman confirmed that no formal requests had been received in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
24. **Public Transport in West Devon**
*O&S 24
The Chairman introduced Cllr Andrea Davis (the Devon County Council (DCC) lead Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport); Mr Jamie Hlland (DCC Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager); and Mr Damien Jones (DCC Head of the Transport Co-Ordination Service) to respond to Member questions that were pertinent to Cllr Davis' Cabinet areas of responsibility.

In so doing, particular reference was made to:

- the local and regional significance of the start of the rail service from Okehampton. A number of Members echoed the comments of Cllr Davis that the introduction of the rail service from Okehampton was a massive achievement. In highlighting the importance of a phased approach to the Dartmoor Line project, it was hoped that the service could ultimately be extended to Tavistock and Cllr Davis wished to put on record her thanks to the Devon County Council local Ward Member for Tavistock, who had been instrumental in reaching this point in the project. Furthermore, local Ward Members emphasised both the importance of the proposed railway station at Okehampton Parkway and that Station Road would not be able to cope with the additional vehicular movements that would be generated;
- the need to discourage and reduce car usage. The meeting recognised that buses were almost the forgotten mode of transport

and yet remained an efficient method of mass transit. The representatives advised the meeting that the County Council had submitted a copy of its proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan in response to the Central Government consultation on the National Bus Strategy (link to response: [National Bus Strategy - Devon's Response - Travel Devon](#));

- partnership working. The achievements that had been made to date were largely attributed to the effective partnership working between stakeholders including: the County and Borough Councils, local MPs, Network Rail and Great Western Rail. It was noted that, in line with the phased approach of the project, the continuation of such positive partnership working would be absolutely vital;
- the bids that had been submitted to the Central Government Levelling Up Fund. In reflecting the views from across the County, Cllr Davis and a number of Members expressed their disappointment that all of the bids that had been submitted to the Levelling Up Fund had been unsuccessful. It was noted that a feedback meeting was to be held in the upcoming weeks and it was felt that this would be particularly useful to ascertain why each of the bids had proven to be unsuccessful;
- the need for improved transport hubs throughout Devon were recognised by Members and officers alike. In addition, there was an identified need for increased provision of secure bike storage at such hubs. This was felt to be particularly pertinent when considering: the Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency; the Health and Wellbeing benefits associated with cycling; and the trend for young people to cycle as opposed to learn to drive a car;
- the potential cycle route from Yelverton to Roborough. Whilst there remained some challenging discussions to be held, the County Council representatives remained committed to ensuring that a cycle route was deliverable from Yelverton to Roborough. When questioned, the representatives also confirmed that they would provide an update on the ability to fill the two gaps along the tarka trail cycle route outside of this Committee meeting.

Upon the conclusion of the agenda item, a number of Members wished to put on record their thanks to the DCC lead officers and Cabinet Member for providing such a promising and exciting update. Furthermore, a number of the aspirations that had been set out during this agenda item would fulfil many of the Borough Council's targets in relation to Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing and improved connectivity that were contained within the recently adopted 'A Plan for West Devon'.

25. **South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership**

*O&S 25

Consideration was given to a report that provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) each of the key achievements that were set out within the published agenda report. The Community Safety Partnership representatives provided the Committee with additional information on each of the key achievements. Members subsequently recognised the amount of good work that was being undertaken by the Partnership;
- (b) the Council's appointed representative on the Partnership. The Committee Chairman informed the meeting that, as part of her role as the Council's appointed representative on the Partnership, she was fully prepared to escalate any related issues on behalf of any Member of the Council;
- (c) the invaluable ongoing support provided by the Borough Council. The Partnership representatives extended their thanks to the Council for its unwavering support for the Partnership.

26. **Maximising Council Resources Thematic Delivery Update**

*O&S 26

In line with the recently adopted 'A Plan for West Devon', the Committee considered a report that set out an update on the priority focus area of 'Maximising Council Resources' and was the first such thematic update report to be considered since the adoption of the Plan.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The importance of Member attendance at their respective Hub Advisory Groups was emphasised;
- (b) With regard to the new Environmental Health system, Members questioned how user friendly it was proving to be for officers. In reply, officers committed to providing a response outside of this meeting;
- (c) Widespread support was expressed for the upcoming Staff Awards Event that sought to recognise the outstanding achievements and work that had been carried out by Council officers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Having been informed that the Event would be streamed via Microsoft Teams, it was agreed that all Members would be sent an invitation;
- (d) As part of Action R1.10 (suitability of Council Asset Base), a Member highlighted the dire shortage of storage space for rental across the Borough. In reply, it was agreed that this should be given further consideration at a future meeting of the Hub Advisory Group.

27. **Performance Update Report**

*O&S 27

Consideration was given to a report that provided a high level update of performance (for the period from July to September 2021) across the Council.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Members welcomed the fact that a service review was to be undertaken into the Contact Centre during 2022;
- (b) In respect of the consistent increases in missed bin collections, officers confirmed that the contract did contain penalty clauses and these were being applied.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the performance figures for the period from July to September 2021.

28. **Localities Team Update**

*O&S 28

Members considered a report that provided an annual update on the workings of the Locality Service and how it had evolved from its initial inception in 2015.

In discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) the success and effectiveness of the Service. A number of Members paid tribute to the sheer volume of work that was carried out by the Team and asked that their thanks be forwarded accordingly. By way of a reminder, the lead Hub Committee Member did ask that all Members continue to report issues via the generic email address and to not bypass it and contact members of the Team direct;
- (b) the future of the Link Committees. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with regard to the Council reinstating its three Link Committees.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee continues to support the Locality Model pending ongoing monitoring and a further report being presented to the Committee in twelve months' time.

29. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21**

O&S 29

The Committee considered a covering report that presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21.

In discussion, Members recognised the amount of work that had been carried out by the Committee and thanked the lead officers for their help and support.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21.

30. **Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)**

*O&S 30

There were no updates.

31. **O&S Annual Work Programme - 2021/22**

*O&S 31

In discussion on the latest Work Programme, Members made the following points:

- (a) Such had been the effectiveness of the agenda item on public transport in West Devon (Minute *O&S 24 above refers) that the Committee requested that the lead Devon County Council officers and Cabinet Member be invited to attend a future meeting to provide a further update;
- (b) With regard to the attendance of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty representative at the next Committee meeting to be held on 18 January 2022, Members were encouraged to submit their questions in advance of this meeting.

32. **Member Learning and Development Opportunities Arising from this Meeting**

*O&S 32

Members were reminded to contact the Council's appointed representative on the Community Safety Partnership if they had any related issues that required escalation.

The Meeting concluded at 4.10 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
