

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, 22nd March, 2022 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Ewings
Vice Chairman Cllr Kimber

Cllr Coulson
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Southcott
Cllr Vachon

Cllr Heyworth
Cllr Sellis
Cllr Spettigue
Cllr Wood

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Crozier
Cllr Jory
Cllr Mott (Via Teams)
Cllr Yelland (via Teams)

Cllr Daniel
Cllr Leech
Cllr Pearce (via Teams)

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Place & Enterprise (remotely)
Democratic Services Specialist
Head of Environmental Health & Licensing
Democratic Services Officers (via Teams)

54. **Apologies for Absence**

*O&S 54

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs A Blackman, J Moody, D Moyse, and L Samuel.

55. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*O&S 55

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 February 2022 were confirmed by the Meeting as a true and

correct record, save for the insertion of the following onto bullet point five against item 5 of the agenda (*O&S 48 refers):

'It was agreed that it was far too early to come to a decision about how Council meetings were working.'

56. **Declarations of Interest**

*O&S 56

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.

57. **Public Forum**

*O&S 57

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

58. **Third Sector Partners - Citizens Advice**

*O&S 58

The Hub Lead Member with responsibility for Leisure, Health, and Wellbeing introduced the Chief Executive of Citizens Advice (CA), Vicki Rowe. Ms Rowe gave an overview of Citizens Advice Annual Report which will be published in April 2022 and outlined that debt, welfare benefits, and housing were the three main issues that they were called upon for help, totalling 60% of their requests. Fuel debt concerns were on the increase. It was highlighted that almost half of CA's 150 volunteers had been lost since the Pandemic and a recruitment campaign was running. Following an informative and interesting presentation, the Committee thanked Ms Rowe and CA for all they do for residents in West Devon. It was agreed that Members would raise the issue of volunteer recruitment at their Town and Parish Council meetings.

59. **Leisure Contract - Fusion Annual Report 2021**

*O&S 59

The Hub Lead Member with responsibility for Leisure introduced Mr Peter King from Fusion who proceeded to give an update to the Committee.

Following questions from Members, Mr King confirmed that there were outstanding maintenance issues on the centres but that these were in hand. It was confirmed that the website would be reviewed imminently but that the app was more user friendly and informative for clients. Some Members felt that a better website would be useful for increasing footfall into the Centres. The café at Meadowlands was going to reopen, and procurement was underway for someone to run the café.

Mr King was invited to come back in six months to update on progress and with the schedule of maintenance.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the contents of Fusion's Annual Report for 2021 and proposals for 2022. The Committee strongly recommended that the website needed significant improvements.

60. **Thematic Update - Economy**

*O&S 60

The Lead Hub Member for Thriving Economy introduced the report that provided the Committee with an update on current projects, each project being reviewed in turn.

TE1.1: It was highlighted that the marketing plan was constantly measured against performance and the project would require a holistic aim. It was confirmed that the team were working closely with business improvement with the aim of getting all commercial units occupied.

TE1.2: Progress on this project was noted as good, with thanks given to the officer.

TE1.3: Following discussion as to the recommendation to merge this project with TE1.1 for the next fiscal year, it was agreed that the decision to merge or not should remain with the officer and Hub Lead for Economy.

TE1.4: It was advised that the eco museum would be online by the end of the month, and a consultation porthole was hoped to be in place before the end of the financial year. An explanation of an eco museum was given.

TE1.5: It was detailed that the LGA (Local Government Association) had termed this project as trail blazing and path finding. The Broadband officer was working on enhanced engagement with the farming community.

TE1.6: All industrial estates had been visited and a subsequent database being developed. It was noted that a glossary of terms was required.

TE1.9: The Committee was informed that more activities would be coming forward over the next couple of months. It was confirmed that CCTV in Tavistock was the responsibility of the Town Council. The Officer confirmed she would send round the BID's regular reports and the address of their website.

TE1.10: It was outlined that there was significant activity in Okehampton, including a potential BID. The needs of the town and outlying hamlets had been identified over the last

year, with Okehampton Town Council having agreed to go forward with a feasibility study, with the inherent cost split 50:50 with the Council.

TE1.11: It was confirmed that monies had not been awarded in tranche one. Tranche two would open in April 2022, with submission required in June 2022. Following discussions with Devon County Council and Sustrans, it was hoped that Members would approve another application to tranche two. This application would need to include an element of cycling.

TE1.12: As the fund's opening had been delayed, this project was moved to year two of the corporate strategy. The Council had reached out to external stakeholders and had been approached by National Trust. Projects were being developed so that they would be 'shovel ready' when the grant applications opened.

The Committee thanked the Lead Hub Member and the officers for their work and noted that they had come a long way in a short space of time.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the progress of the Thriving Economy Delivery Plan; and
2. the Committee had made a series of recommendations (as set out in the minutes above) to the Thriving Economy Advisory Group on areas for further exploration.

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

*O&S 61

There were no updates.

62. **O&S Annual Work Programme**

*O&S 62

It was also confirmed that South West Mutual Bank would be contacted to ask for a written update to be provided to Members or for a representative to attend a future Committee Meeting to respond to Member questions.

Following a review of the agenda for the Committee meeting on 26 April 2022, the representations by third sector partners were to be moved to a future meeting to ensure there was sufficient time to review housing. Members were requested to send any questions they had to the officer now.

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

*O&S 53

- Committee Members were asked to update their Town and Parish Councils regarding the Citizen Advise recruitment campaign.
- Complains and Compliments for leisure centres to be given to Jon Parkinson for his regular monthly meetings with Fusion.
- Housing questions to Isabel Blake now for the next Committee meeting, 26 April 2022.
- It was noted that the new schematic reports and update were thorough and particularly useful. There had not been many questions because the report was well articulated and set the standard for the following schematic reports.

The Meeting concluded at 4.36 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
