

WEST DEVON COUNCIL



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Council** held on **Tuesday, 28th September, 2021** at **4.00 pm** at the **Chamber** **- Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Mott
Vice Chairman Cllr Pearce

Cllr Ball	Cllr Bolton
Cllr Bridgewater	Cllr Cheadle
Cllr Crozier	Cllr Davies
Cllr Daniel	Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Ewings	Cllr Hipsey
Cllr Jory	Cllr Kemp
Cllr Kimber	Cllr Leech
Cllr Moody	Cllr Moyse
Cllr Musgrave	Cllr Ratcliffe
Cllr Renders	Cllr Ridgers
Cllr Samuel	Cllr Sellis
Cllr Southcott	Cllr Spettigue
Cllr Vachon	Cllr Wood
Cllr Yelland	

In attendance:

Officers:
Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer
Section 151 Officer
Director – Governance & Assurance
Head of Strategy & Projects
Democratic Services Manager

33. **Apologies for Absence**

CM 33/21

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Coulson and Heyworth.

34. **Confirmation of Minutes**

CM 34/21

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr R Cheadle and upon the motion being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Council agree the Minutes of the 20 July 2021 meeting as a true record."

35. **Declarations of Interest**

CM 35/21

The Mayor invited Members to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but there were none made.

36. **To receive communications from the Mayor or person presiding**

CM 36/21

(a) Cllr Robin Musgrave

The Mayor advised the meeting that the Council had received formal notification from Cllr Musgrave of his intention, with effect from 30 September 2021, to resign from the Office of West Devon Borough Council.

At this point, Cllr Musgrave was invited to address the Council and he proceeded to express his pride at being a Member of the Council and he wished his fellow Members and officers his very best wishes for the future.

On behalf of the Council, Cllr Crozier then proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Musgrave for his exemplar service to the Council and the Bere Ferrers Community. This proposition was subsequently seconded by Cllr Cheadle and, when put to the vote, was declared **CARRIED**.

(b) Charity Golf Day

The Mayor thanked those Members who had taken part in her Charity Golf Day on Friday, 24 September 2021 and advised the Meeting that the event had raised in excess of £800 towards her chosen charity (the Farming Community Network).

(c) Upcoming Events

The Mayor made particular reference to the following upcoming events:

- The 150th anniversary celebrations for Okehampton Rail that were to be held on 2 October 2021;
- A Tavistock Community Barn Dance that was to take place on 9 October 2021; and
- A community celebration in Okehampton was to be held on 22 and 24 October 2021.

37.

To respond to any questions submitted by the public and to receive deputations or petitions under Council Procedure Rule 21

CM 37/21

The Mayor advised Members that officers had been informed of the wish for representatives of the West Devon Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill Alliance to formally submit a petition to this meeting in support of the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill.

As a result of the capacity restrictions in the Council Chamber associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic, officers read the following supporting statement on behalf of the representatives of the Alliance:

'The West Devon CEE Bill Alliance wanted to find out how others in the area feel about the climate and nature crisis and if they support the CEE Bill. To reach people, we started a petition and more importantly over the last few weeks we have been listening to and talking with people out and about in the Borough.

The main view from people we listened to was that as well as working to bring developing countries on board we need to be doing more in this country so that we get on track to meet our own targets. These people are doing what they can at a household level to reduce their impact. They were keen to support the CEE Bill and for many it was good to learn they have a means to do so through our democratic process.

Some people were most concerned about the vast quantity of emissions from China, they felt making reductions here is insignificant. As you can imagine, this was a good discussion point, as per head of population, China is way down the list with emissions, in addition a vast quantity of the emissions produced by China are due manufacture of goods that countries such as us import. When import / export emissions are put into calculations, this makes developed countries like the UK even more responsible for being leaders in change.

Sadly, a significant number of people had no hope and talked about it being too late. There was also the view that nothing can be done to change the activities of large companies. It was good to be able to talk with these folk about how government can regulate companies and that governments can and should be working together through international meetings such as the imminent COP 26.

People were interested in the role the Climate and Nature Assembly would play if the CEE Bill is enacted. The assembly would ensure a true cross section of the population are informed and consulted about options and contribute to government strategy. The rigour in the formation and methodology of the assembly means it would complement not replace the existing role of government advisors.

Many children and young people spoke with us. They were all concerned about the future and all had ideas about what we should do, some were anxious, many were hopeful. Under 16-year-olds can't sign

the petition but they wrote messages on paper leaves to attach to our tree of hope. Here are just a few:

"It's our job to fix this and we need to realise." "Save the fish and coral reefs." "We must save our world now." "Plant more trees." "Let's not wreck the earth." "You need to care it's my future that will be affected. Start doing stuff now." "Humans are destroying the world [that] they need to survive."

...and a quote that sums up the views of so many adults

"Please support climate action. We only have this planet for our children to inherit."

We ask you to vote for the motion to support this bill, your role in giving MPs a mandate to take action and in passing on the concerns and views of voters is so valuable.

Thank you for your work.

*Best wishes,
David Williams, Sian Aubrey, Chris Simpson, Graham Palmer, Sara Palmer, Jacky Hudswell.*

(PETITION: Signed by 426 people living in West Devon, over the age of 16)."

The Mayor proceeded to receive the petition on behalf of the Council and informed that a response would be provided to the Alliance representatives in accordance with the Council's adopted Petition Scheme.

38. **To consider (if any) motions of which notice has been duly submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15**

CM.38/21

It was moved by Cllr L Daniel and seconded by Cllr L Wood:

"This Council has formally recognised the climate and biodiversity emergency (May 2019), has signed The Devon Climate Declaration (July 2019) and has a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy [WDBC Climate Strategy](#).

This Council is committed to actions to change behaviour to address the causes of this situation and mitigate the impacts.

In line with the above, this Council supports the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill proposed by a coalition of scientists, academics and lawyers with the aim of bringing the UK's climate policy into one with evolving scientific evidence. This proposed Bill is also supported by 110 cross-party members of parliament. Nationally we need a strong legislative framework that embeds the Government's targets in law, enabling us as supportive players, to plan and develop our future trajectories, to fit in with those targets.

Council therefore resolves to:

- i. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill*
- ii. Inform the local media of their decision.*
- iii. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill.*
- iv. Write to the [CEE Bill Alliance](#), the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk).*

In her introduction, Cllr Daniel made particular reference to the petition that had been submitted by the CEE Bill Alliance and the contents of the supporting statement (Minute CM.37/21 above refers). As the Bill was making its way through Parliamentary processes, Cllr Daniel hoped that the Council would provide its full backing by virtue of supporting her Motion on Notice.

During the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) In recognition of the Emergency declared by the Borough Council in May 2019, a number of Members reiterated their ongoing commitment to the Climate Change and Biodiversity agenda;
- (b) Some concerns were highlighted over aspects of the CEE Bill that included:
 - the proposed establishment of an unaccountable Citizens' Assembly; and
 - the potential for political confusion in light of the Government's Environment Bill;
- (c) An amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

"This Council has formally recognised the climate and biodiversity emergency (May 2019), has signed The Devon Climate Declaration (July 2019) and has a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy WDBC Climate Strategy.

This Council is committed to actions to change behaviour to address the causes of this situation and mitigate the impacts.

In line with the above, this Council supports the need for a strong legislative framework that embeds the Government's targets in law, enabling us as supportive players, to plan and develop our future trajectories, to fit in with those targets.

Council therefore resolves to:

- i. Support the Government's Environment Bill*
- ii. Inform the local media of their decision.*
- iii. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill.*

iv. Continue to support Devon County Council through the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership."

In support of the amendment, Members felt that it recognised the steps that had already been undertaken by both the Council and Devon County Council and, when put to the vote, the amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then **"RESOLVED** that this Council has formally recognised the climate and biodiversity emergency (May 2019,) has signed The Devon Climate Declaration (July 2019) and has a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy WDBC Climate Strategy.

This Council is committed to actions to change behaviour to address the causes of this situation and mitigate the impacts.

In line with the above, this Council supports the need for a strong legislative framework that embeds the Government's targets in law, enabling us as supportive players, to plan and develop our future trajectories, to fit in with those targets.

Council therefore resolves to:

- i. Support the Government's Environment Bill
- ii. Inform the local media of their decision.
- iii. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill.
- iv. Continue to support Devon County Council through the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership."

39.

To receive the Minutes of the following Committees. to note the delegated decisions and to consider the adoption of those Recommendations which require approval:

CM 39/21

a. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 22 June 2021

It was moved by Cllr M Ewings, seconded by Cllr P Kimber and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 22 June 2021 meeting be received and noted".

b. Audit Committee – 29 June 2021 and 7 September 2021

It was moved by Cllr M Davies, seconded by Cllr K Ball and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 29 June 2021 and 7 September 2021 meetings be received and noted".

c. Hub Committee – 21 September 2021

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 21 September 2021 meeting be received and noted, with the exception of Recommendations HC 24/21, HC 25/21, HC 27/21, HC 28/21, HC 29/21 and HC 30/21."

In respect of the Recommendations:

It was noted that Recommendation HC 24/21 (A Plan for West Devon) was to be considered as a standalone agenda item later in the Meeting (Minute CM 40/21 below refers).

HC 25/21: ORCS Funding – Electric Charging Points

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. a Collaboration Agreement be entered into with the Devon and Torbay Residential Chargepoint Scheme for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points;
2. the potential sites (as listed in paragraph 1.3 of the presented agenda report to the Hub Committee Meeting) be approved as the location(s) for the installation of Electric Charging Points; and
3. a lease be entered into with the appointed supplier for a ten year period."

HC 27/21: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. the strategic intention be set to raise Council Tax by the maximum allowed in any given year, without triggering a Council Tax Referendum, to endeavour to continue to deliver services. (NB the actual council tax for any given year will be decided by Council in the preceding February);
2. the principle of using funding in the Business Rates Retention Reserve, to smooth out the anticipated volatility in business rates income over the next three years be adopted (as set out in section 3.19 of the published agenda report). (NB. the volatility is due to the business rates baseline reset anticipated in 2023/24 (this will mean that the Council will have negative revenue support grant) and the predicted loss of business rates pooling gains at the same time);
3. the Council continue to respond to Government consultations on Business Rates Reform;
4. the Council continue to actively lobby and engage with the Government, Devon MPs, South West Councils and other sector bodies such as the District Councils' Network and the Rural Services Network, for a realistic business rates baseline to be set for the Council for 2023 onwards, when the business rates reset happens;

5. the Council continue to lobby in support of the Government eliminating Negative Revenue Support Grant in 2022/23 (and thereafter) and continues to lobby for Rural Services Delivery Grant allocations which adequately reflect the cost of rural service provision; and
6. the forecast budget gap for 2022/23 of £78,731 (1% of the current Net Budget of £7.3million) and the position for future years be noted."

HC 28/21: Month 4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that funding of £190,000 be utilised from the COVID-19 Losses Earmarked Reserve in 2021/22 to fund COVID-19 expenditure in 2021/22 and the projected net losses on car parking income in 2021/22."

HC 29/21: Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the 2021/22 budget for Community Project Grants be increased from £15,000 to £30,000, with the additional £15,000 being funded from the New Homes Bonus Reserve."

HC 30/21: Planning Improvement Plan

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the cost of temporary planning staffing resources of £60,400 (the Borough Council share of the cost) be funded from the additional planning income generated in 2021/22 (as set out in Section 2.6 of the published agenda report presented to the Hub Committee meeting)."

40. **'A Plan for West Devon'**

CM 40/21

Consideration was given to a report that summarised the responses to the public consultation exercise on the draft 'A Plan for West Devon' and recommended that the draft Strategy be adopted.

In his introduction, the Leader highlighted that:

- all Members and lead officers should be thanked for ensuring that the draft Strategy was delivered on such a short timescale. In so doing, the Leader acknowledged that the tight timescale had impacted upon the timing and length of the public consultation exercise. Nonetheless, the responses received during the public consultation exercise had been very positive; and
- the consultation response received from Devon County Council (DCC) informing that the draft Strategy was very closely aligned to

the equivalent plan being developed by DCC. The Leader felt this to be very encouraging.

During the subsequent discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) At the invitation of the Mayor, the Section 151 Officer was asked for her views on the affordability of the draft Strategy. In so doing, the Officer expressed the view that the resource requirements were affordable to the Council;
- (b) The importance of regular monitoring of the thematic delivery plans was recognised. In addition, Members noted that the Hub Advisory Groups would have an equally important role to play in the ongoing monitoring process;
- (c) A number of Members echoed the introductory comments of the Leader and put on record their thanks to both lead officers and lead Members for achieving both an excellent draft Strategy and underpinning thematic delivery plans. A Member also made the point that the lead Members and Hub Advisory Groups would have a key role to play in evaluating the finer details that were contained within each of the consultation responses that had been received;
- (d) The greater emphasis being given to performance management and SMART targets within the draft Strategy was welcomed;
- (e) Whilst accepting that the Plans would evolve, a Member asked that the relevant Hub Advisory Groups give consideration to:
 - An increased emphasis being given to young people; and
 - The need to look at potential measures being imposed to restrict the number of second and holiday homes in the Borough.

It was then proposed by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr C Edmonds and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **RESOLVED** that:

1. the results of the consultation on the draft 'A Plan for West Devon' Strategy be noted;
2. the 'A Plan for West Devon' and the thematic delivery plans be adopted;
3. the allocation of existing funding (as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the published agenda report) be noted;
4. the additional £122,000 of cost pressures for 2022/23 and £168,000 for 2023/24 be approved (NB. the £168,000 includes the £122,000, therefore an additional £46,000 in 2023/24); and

5. £246,000 of Earmarked Reserves be used for the content of the Delivery Plans (as set out in Section 7 of the published agenda report).”

41. **Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Plan**

CM 41/21

The Council considered a report that sought to approve the making (adoption) of the Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The local Ward Members thanked the Neighbourhood Planning Group for all their hard work in reaching this point;
- (b) It was confirmed that the reference to ‘Highampton’ in the published agenda report was an error that should be ignored;
- (c) The Chairman of the Development Management & Licensing Committee reminded the Meeting that Neighbourhood Plans had only limited weight in planning terms until they were formally made (adopted). As a result, Members urged local Neighbourhood Planning Groups to make swift progress in their respective plans and Developers to take heed of the contents of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

It was then proposed by Cllr C Mott, seconded by Cllr T Southcott and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Development Plan be made (adopted).”

42. **Waiver of Six-Month Councillor Attendance Rule**

CM 42/21

As previously advised, the Mayor reminded Members that this agenda item had been withdrawn from the Summons in advance of this Council meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 5.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
