

WEST DEVON HUB COMMITTEE



West Devon
Borough
Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Devon Hub Committee** held on **Tuesday, 12th April, 2022 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Jory
Vice Chairman

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Crozier
Cllr Ratcliffe

Cllr Pearce
Cllr Daniel

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Ewings (via Teams)
Cllr Yelland (via Teams)

Cllr Heyworth (via Teams)
Cllr Leech (via Teams)

Officers:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Director – Strategy & Governance
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Head of Strategy & Projects
Senior Specialists – Housing
Senior Specialist – Parking & Public Conveniences
Senior Specialist – Climate Change

78. **Apologies for absence**

*HC 78/21

There were apologies for absence received for this Meeting from Cllrs R Cheadle, C Mott and A F Leech.

79. **Declarations of Interest**
*HC 79/21
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and there were none made.
80. **Confirmation of Minutes**
*HC 80/21
The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 8 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.
81. **Public Questions -a period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public**
*HC 81/21
It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.
82. **Hub Forward Plan**
*HC 82/21
Members were presented with the Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months.
83. **Amendment of the Off Street Parking Places Order**
*HC 83/21
A report was considered that sought the implementation of changes within the Council's Off Street Parking Places Order so as to remain compliant with its enforcement following changes within the associated legislation.
- It was then **RESOLVED:**
1. That the Head of Assets be authorised to publish notice of proposals for the West Devon Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022 to consolidate with amendments the current Off-Street Parking Places Order; the amendments to be made to be to the relevant parts of the Order to reflect changes to legislation in respect of parking enforcement; and
 2. That the Head of Assets be requested to prepare a report summarising the representations received in response to the notice of proposals for consideration by the Hub Committee before making a decision whether to make the off-street parking places order as proposed or with modifications.
84. **Housing Strategy Year 2 Update and Homelessness Strategy 2022-27**
*HC 84/21
The Hub Committee was presented with a report that reviewed

progress made to date against the themes and priorities during the first year of the Housing Strategy and provided the new draft delivery plan for the second year. The report also sought approval for the adoption of the Joint South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 and Joint Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2022-23

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) With regard to the recently adopted Tenants Incentives Scheme, officers confirmed that they had already seen an increase in both interest and uptake of the Scheme;
- (b) In respect of defined Housing Need across the Borough, it was felt that this would be an appropriate topic for further consideration by all Members at a future Informal Council session;
- (c) To ensure that the long-term sustainability of rural villages was preserved, the importance of affordable housing being developed in these villages was reiterated;
- (d) With reference to the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough during 2021/22, it was agreed that details in respect of the locations of those that had been built would be included as part of the Thematic Delivery Plan review agenda item to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting to be held on 26 April 2022.

It was then:

RESOLVED

For Part 1 – Housing Strategy Year 2 Action Plan:

1. That Members review the progress to date on Better Homes, Better Lives; and
2. That Members endorse the Year 2 Action Plan;

For Part 2 - 2022/27 Homelessness Strategy:

1. That, with effect from 1 April 2022, Members approve the Joint South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy 2022-27; and
2. That, with effect from 1 April 2022, Members approve the Joint Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2022-23.

85. **Revenue and Benefits Service Review Update**

*HC 85/21

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the service review undertaken in 2021 across the Revenues and Benefits Service, and the actions taken since then to implement the

recommendations of the Review.

During discussion, reference was made to: -

- (a) a Member Briefing. The Committee welcomed the suggestion that a Member Briefing on the work of the Benefits Team be convened in the near future;
- (b) Council Tax Collection rates. Bearing in mind the economic pressures that were being faced by households, the fact that Collection rates had remained fairly consistent in recent times was considered to be to the great credit of local residents;
- (c) the workload of the Team. Members wished to record their thanks to the Revenue and Benefits Team for their tireless work since the offset of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the achievements of the Revenues and Benefits Team in maintaining core service delivery, whilst also ensuring that businesses and residents were supported throughout the pandemic through the administration of business grants, personal grants such as Track and Trace and administering benefits schemes, be recognised;
- (ii) the approach taken following the Revenues and Benefits Review and the subsequent Implementation Plan be endorsed;
- (iii) the progress of the Revenues & Benefits Implementation Plan be noted and a further update in six months' time be requested;
- (iv) the recruitment of a Head of Service for Revenues and Benefits, to be funded on a self-funding basis be endorsed and that next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will increase both the annual staffing budget by £30,000 (the Council's share of the staffing cost) and the annual income from council tax by £30,000 (to reflect the anticipated increase in council tax collection rates by at least 0.5%), be noted; and
- (v) it be endorsed that the stretching targets the new Head of Service will be set, will mean that the Council will continue to improve collection rates across council tax and business rates generating significant further income for the Borough Council.

86.

Climate Change & Biodiversity Action - Council Net-Zero Update

HC 86/21

Members considered a report that set out progress and the potential carbon savings (or biodiversity net gain) from significant projects aligned to two of the three aims as stated in its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy, these being Aim 1, reducing its carbon footprint

to net-zero by 2030 and Aim 3 increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% by 2025

The report also contained a business case to invest a further £300,000, in the form of a loan to Fusion Leisure (the chosen provider for the Councils' leisure facilities), to install solar arrays on the four leisure centres within the Borough.

In discussion the following points were made:

- (a) When questioned, officers confirmed that, due to the recent spiralling energy costs, the costs quoted in Section 6.2 of the published agenda report were now no longer reflective of the current situation;
- (b) In respect of community planting schemes, the importance of informing local town and parish councils that these were taking place was recognised;
- (c) Officers advised that initial structural survey works had been carried out and it had been concluded that Solar Panels could be installed on the roof of Meadowlands Leisure Centre.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

- 1. that the progress on plans aligned to the aim of the Council being net-zero by 2030 and increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% by 2025 be noted; and

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the lead Hub Member for Finance to:

- 2. approve and agree the lending terms to Fusion Leisure for a loan of up to £300,000 to facilitate solar panel installation across both WDBC Leisure Centres over the remaining term of the leisure contract, in accordance with treasury management advice; and
- 3. update the Council's Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 for a £300,000 loan provision to Fusion Leisure for the solar installation, in accordance with treasury management advice.

87. **A Plan for West Devon- Quarterly Progress Report**

*HC 87/21

Members considered a report that set out the Integrated Performance Management report covering the Quarter 4 period (from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022). The report also provided detail on a revised suite of operational Key Performance Indicators for the Hub Committee to consider.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the progress in achieving our plans as adopted in the Plan for West Devon be recognised;
- (ii) That the proposed Key Performance Indicators as set out in Appendix B of the presented report be endorsed; and
- (iii) That the Hub Committee commence work with Lead Officers on refining the 2023/24 delivery plans for consideration by Council in Autumn 2022.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM FRIDAY, 22 APRIL 2022, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTE HC 86/21 PARTS 2 AND 3 WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 24 MAY 2022, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18)

The Meeting concluded at 2.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
