

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, 25th July, 2023 at 2.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Kimber
Vice Chairman Cllr Johnson

Cllr Blackman
Cllr Casbolt
Cllr Southcott
Cllr Vachon
Cllr Wakeham

Cllr Calder
Cllr Elliott
Cllr Squire
Cllr Viney
Cllr West

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Daniel
Cllr Ewings
Cllr Renders

Cllr Edmonds
Cllr Mott (via Teams)
Cllr Saxby

Officers:

Director of Customer Service and Delivery
Director of Strategy and Governance
Assistant Director Of Strategy and Governance
Democratic Services Specialist

1. **Apologies for Absence**

*O&S 1/23

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs S Guthrie and U Mann.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes**

*O&S 2/23

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 March 2023 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

*O&S 3/23

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.

4. **Public Forum**

*O&S 4/23

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

5. **The Overview and Scrutiny Function**

*O&S 5/23

The Leader of the Council (and previous Committee Chair), Cllr Ewings gave an introduction as to how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee functioned.

The Director of Customer Service and Delivery proceeded to take Committee Members through the functions of the Committee and explained how Members could ask for items to be discussed on their future work programme. He stated that the Committee focused its scrutiny on Lead Hub Committee Members and not lead Officers. He discussed the value of Tasks and Finish Groups being established and suggested that looking at two items and ideally no more than three at each Committee meeting would provide the time for a good debate on each item.

In addition, the Lead Hub Committee Member for Resources explained how the Hub Advisory Groups worked and the important forum that these provided for all Members to consider matters in-depth.

6. **Performance Update to June 2023**

*O&S 6/23

The Lead Hub Member presented the report to the Committee.

In regard to enforcement cases, a triage system would be in place with better communication to the complainant. The Director of Strategy and Governance stressed the strain on the legal team given the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges being experienced in that team. In an attempt to mitigate these challenges, a recruitment process for five lawyers was currently taking place.

In discussing the housing figures, a question was asked on whether Ukrainian families where hosts were no longer able to house them were able to find accommodation in the Borough. The response was that some families had been able to acquire their own rental properties but also the Council was looking to acquire housing through the Local Authority Housing Fund. There were five of these properties in West Devon and a report would be presented to a future Hub Committee meeting on this subject area.

A Member asked if applications for Temporary Event Notice licenses could be sent to local Ward Members if they had been granted.

In reply to specific questions on housing benefits and changes of circumstances, it was confirmed that a Member briefing on housing benefits was scheduled for September

that would provide an opportunity for such detailed issues to be raised with the relevant officers being in attendance.

In discussion over waste figures, the introduction of the deposit return scheme within the next year should see a reduction in waste being generated at source.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee note:

1. the key service performance of the Council (as set out in Appendix A to the published agenda report); and
2. the intention to provide more regular updates on Key Performance Indicators to the Committee to ensure more timely reporting of data.

7. **Annual Work Programme 2023/24**

*O&S 7/23

The Committee discussed potential work topics that it would like to include on its Work Programme.

- Antisocial behaviour and developing and enhancing youth programmes;
- South West Water - Water pollution and sewerage discharge into rivers;
- Devon County Council - Transport routes and potholes;
- Waste and recycling collections;
- Housing Statistics for temporary accommodation and Homes for Ukraine;
- Fusion Leisure; and
- Wildlife wardens

It was noted that there were some established platform routes already in place for some potential items to be considered (e.g. via the Hub Advisory Groups and established local Community Groups).

The Meeting concluded at 4.05 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
