

At the Meeting of the **WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL** held **REMOTELY** on **TUESDAY** the **16th** day of **FEBRUARY 2021** at **4.00pm** pursuant to Notice given and Summons duly served.

Present

Cllr A F Leech – The Mayor (In the Chair)

Cllr K Ball	Cllr T Bolton
Cllr A Bridgewater	Cllr R Cheadle
Cllr A Coulson	Cllr P Crozier
Cllr L Daniel	Cllr M Davies
Cllr C Edmonds	Cllr M Ewings
Cllr N Heyworth	Cllr S Hipsey
Cllr N Jory	Cllr C Kemp
Cllr P Kimber	Cllr J B Moody
Cllr C Mott	Cllr D E Moyse
Cllr C R Musgrave	Cllr T G Pearce
Cllr B Ratcliffe	Cllr M Renders
Cllr P Ridgers	Cllr L Samuel
Cllr D K A Sellis	Cllr T Southcott
Cllr J Spettigue	Cllr P Vachon
Cllr L Wood	Cllr J Yelland

Senior Leadership Team
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager

CM 30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received for this meeting.

CM 31 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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 8 December 2020 Meeting as a true and correct record.”

CM 32 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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.

CM 33 BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor informed the meeting that he had no urgent items to be brought forward to this Meeting.

However, at this point of the Meeting, the Mayor did wish to formally record his thanks to the Doctors, Nurses and volunteers who were involved in the administration of the COVID-19 vaccination process across the West Devon Borough. Similarly, the Mayor also asked that his gratitude to all those Council officers who had devoted their time to the Pandemic be formally noted.

CM 34

MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

a. Hub Committee – 8 December 2020 and 2 February 2021

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 8 December 2020 and 2 February 2021 Committee Meetings be received and noted, with the exception of Recommendations HC 48, HC 49, HC 55, HC 56 and HC 58.”

In respect of the Recommendations:

i. HC 48: Month 7 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/21

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that:

3. £220,000 be transferred into a COVID Earmarked Reserve to protect against future COVID losses in 2021/22 (as set out in Section 1.8 of the agenda report presented to the Hub Committee meeting); and
4. £30,000 of Audio Visual equipment be funded for the Tavistock Guildhall Heritage project, with this being financed from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve (as set out in Section 7 of the agenda report presented to the Hub Committee meeting).

ii. HC 49: Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2021/22

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Council continue to be part of the Devon Business Rates Pool for 2021/22.”

(NB. in respect of recommendations HC 55 ‘Revenue Budget Proposals 2021/22’ and HC 56 ‘Capital Budget Proposals 2021/22’, it was noted that these would be considered as standalone agenda items later in the meeting (Minutes 35 and 36 respectively refer below).

iii. **HC 58: Devon Districts Procurement Strategy**

It was moved by Cllr N Jory, seconded by Cllr L Samuel and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy for 2019-2022 be adopted.”

b. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 November 2020**

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 10 November 2020 Committee Meeting be received and noted.”

c. **Development Management & Licensing Committee – 12 January 2021**

It was moved by Cllr T Pearce, seconded by Cllr M Renders and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **“RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 12 January 2021 Committee Meeting be received and noted.”

CM 35

DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Hub Committee draft recommendations on the Revenue Budget for 2021-22.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) the work of the Section 151 Officer and her finance colleagues. Members thanked the Section 151 Officer and her finance colleagues for their tireless work in ensuring that the Council was able to be presented with a balanced Revenue Budget for 2021/22;
- (b) the proposed £5 increase in Council Tax. Whilst recognising the detrimental inflationary impact and the consequent shortfall to the Base Budget, some Members still stated their opposition to the proposed increase and were of the view that it would be morally wrong to support such a proposal during the current Pandemic;
- (c) the proportion of total Council Tax that was actually the Borough Council precept. Some Members felt that, as the collecting authority, there were a number of public misconceptions over the Borough Council precept. As a result, it was felt that there was a need for the Communications Team to produce and publish messaging at the time of annual billing in an attempt to counter these misconceptions.

At the conclusion of the debate and, in accordance with statutory legislation, the Mayor then called for a recorded vote on part 1 only of the recommendation. The vote was subsequently recorded as follows:-

For the motion (28): Cllrs Ball, Bolton, Cheadle, Coulson, Crozier, Daniel, Davies, Edmonds, Ewings, Heyworth, Hipsey, Jory, Kemp, Kimber, Leech, Moody, Mott, Moyse, Musgrave, Pearce, Ratcliffe, Ridgers, Samuel, Sellis, Southcott, Spettigue, Vachon and Wood

Against the motion (2): Cllrs Bridgewater and Renders

Abstentions (0):

Absent (1): Cllr Yelland (*)

and the vote on part 1 of the recommendation was therefore declared **CARRIED**.

(NOTE (*): due to experiencing connection issues at the time of the recorded vote, Cllr Yelland was unable to take part in the vote.)

In accordance with statutory legislation, the Mayor then called for a recorded vote on parts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the recommendation. The vote on these parts was subsequently recorded as follows:-

For the motion (30): Cllrs Ball, Bolton, Bridgewater, Cheadle, Coulson, Crozier, Daniel, Davies, Edmonds, Ewings, Heyworth, Hipsey, Jory, Kemp, Kimber, Leech, Moody, Mott, Moyse, Musgrave, Pearce, Ratcliffe, Renders, Ridgers, Samuel, Sellis, Southcott, Spettigue, Vachon and Wood

Against the motion (0):

Abstentions (0):

Absent (1): Cllr Yelland (*)

and the vote was therefore declared **CARRIED**.

(NOTE (*): due to experiencing connection issues at the time of the recorded vote, Cllr Yelland was unable to take part in the vote.)

It was consequently "**RESOLVED** that

1. an increase in Council Tax be set for 2021/22 of £5 (Band D of £241.63 for 2021/22 – an increase of 10 pence per week or £5 per year – equating to a 2.11% increase);
2. the financial pressures (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report and amounting to £434,000) be approved;
3. the net contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves of £42,500 (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved;

4. the proposed use of £192,772 of New Homes Bonus funding to fund the 2021/22 Revenue Budget (as set out in Section 4.24 of the presented agenda report) be approved;
5. the savings of £344,200 (as shown in Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved;
6. officers be requested to undertake further research before a final decision is taken for additional funding to be allocated to the Community Safety Partnership, with this research being reported back to Members as soon as is practically possible. (NB, this is in relation to the Business Case for additional funding for the Community Safety Partnership as per Section 5.2 and Appendix F of the presented agenda report);
7. the Total Net Expenditure of the Council is £7,301,695 for 2021/22;
8. £281,404 (the fifth tranche of COVID funding as set out in Sections 1.12 and 11.2 of the presented agenda report) be transferred into a COVID Earmarked Reserve to protect against future COVID losses in 2021/22;
9. the level of Reserves (as set out within the presented agenda report and the assessment of their adequacy and the robustness of budget estimates) be noted (NB. this is a requirement of Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003);
10. the Environmental Health charges (as set out in Appendix D of the presented agenda report) be approved with no proposed increases for 2021/22;
11. the level of Fees and Charges set out for Planning Applications and Enforcement (Appendix E of the presented agenda report refers) be approved with no proposed increases for 2021/22;
12. the proposed Fees and Charges for Street Naming be approved in accordance with Appendix E of the presented agenda report;
13. the proposed Section 106 Monitoring fee (as set out at Appendix E of the presented agenda report) be approved;
14. delegated authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the lead Hub Committee Member, to set the Local Land Charges as appropriate for cost recovery;
15. delegated authority be given to the relevant Head of Practice, in consultation with the relevant lead Executive Member, to adjust the Fees and Charges within their service area by inflation at suitable periodic intervals, reporting to the Hub Committee as deemed appropriate.”

CM 36

CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

Consideration was given to a report that presented the draft Capital Budget Proposals for 2021/22.

In discussion, officers confirmed that the long-term aspiration was for the waste fleet to be carbon neutral. However, the technology was currently unavailable (particularly in such a rural community) to be able to achieve this objective.

In accordance with statutory legislation, the Mayor then called for a recorded vote on the recommendation. The vote was subsequently recorded as follows:-

For the motion (31): Cllrs Ball, Bolton, Bridgewater, Cheadle, Coulson, Crozier, Daniel, Davies, Edmonds, Ewings, Heyworth, Hipsey, Jory, Kemp, Kimber, Leech, Moody, Mott, Moyse, Musgrave, Pearce, Ratcliffe, Renders, Ridgers, Samuel, Sellis, Southcott, Spettigue, Vachon, Wood and Yelland

Against the motion (0):

Abstentions (0):

Absent (0):

and the vote was therefore declared **CARRIED**.

It was consequently "**RESOLVED** that:

1. the Capital Programme for 2021/22 (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report and totalling £1,075,000) be approved;
2. the funding of the 2020/21 Capital Programme of £1,075,000 be approved from the funding sources set out in Section 4 of the presented agenda report."

CM 37

BUSINESS GRANTS

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on Business Grants.

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the following addition to part 2 of the recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**:

'In addition, the Council approve any overspend on the LRSG (Open) scheme to be funded from the ARG Scheme, rather than close the Open scheme, as take up for the ARG scheme is low compared to the Open scheme;'

During the debate on this addition, Members expressed their support for its inclusion;

- (b) the work of the team. Officers advised that the team was coping admirably with the extremely high workload and Members wished to record their thanks for their efforts in processing these much needed grant payments to local businesses;
- (c) businesses that were able to apply. When questioned, officers confirmed that any business that had been negatively impacted by the Pandemic were able to apply to the Council for a grant.

It was then “**RESOLVED** that:

1. the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) (Closed) Addendum and the Closed Business Lockdown Payment (CBLP) Scheme details be noted;
2. the changes made to the operation of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) (Open) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation be noted. In addition, the Council approve any overspend on the LRSG (Open) scheme to be funded from the ARG Scheme, rather than close the Open scheme, as take up for the ARG scheme is low compared to the Open scheme;
3. a further £320,000 (20%) be allocated under the ARG scheme towards strategic economic recovery projects and priorities;
4. ARG funding not issued by 31 December 2021 (in the form of direct business grants) be retained in a Business Support Earmarked Reserve for sustained economic support activities; and
5. authority be delegated to the Director for Place and Enterprise, in consultation with the Leader of Council; the lead Hub Committee Member for Finance and the Section 151 Officer to approve subsequent grant policies should we move back into local restrictions.”

(The Meeting terminated at 5.30 pm)

Mayor