

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Barum Room, Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 22nd June 2017 at 2.00p.m.

PRESENT: Members

Councillor Greenslade (Chair)

Councillors Chesters, Ley, Mathews, Meadlarkin, Patrinos, Roome, Webber and White.

Also present:

Officers:

Head of Resources (JT), Head of Corporate and Community Services (KM), Housing Services Manager (TR), Service Lead - Housing Market Balance (JJ), Corporate and Community Services Officers (KS) and (KD).

13 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bonds, Lucas and Worden.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meetings held on 13th April 2017 and 20th April 2017 (circulated previously) be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of Councillor Meadlarkin's apologies and for the minutes of 13th April 2017 the deletion on page five of the minutes under paragraph five of the word "salary" to read as follows:

"North Devon was challenged with some of England's lowest wage levels and highest housing costs".

15 ORDER OF AGENDA

The Chairman advised that in the absence of the Head of Operational Services, the Head of Resources and Head of Corporate and Community Services were present at the meeting to answer any queries that they could in relation to the roll out of the remodelled recycling rounds and food waste collection.

He advised that item nine on the agenda would be considered as the first item on the agenda to allow the Heads of Resources and Corporate and

Community Services to attend a meeting with the Consultants in relation to the remodelling of the rounds.

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

17 **PROPOSED ITEM FOR DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION
AT THE MEETING ON 6TH JULY 2017 WITH THE HEAD OF
OPERATIONAL SERVICES AND THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO NORTH DEVON
COUNCIL'S PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGES
TO REFUSE AND RECYCLING SERVICES**

The Head of Corporate and Community Services advised that following the submission of the questions by Councillor Patrinos further questions had arisen and therefore the proposed questions had been presented to the Committee to ascertain their views. He added that an update had been provided via the Weekly Information Sheet but that there had been further developments since that publication.

Councillor Patrinos addressed the Committee advising that he had approached the Monitoring Officer with the questions in accordance with the Constitution and that since that time the situation had deteriorated further.

The Chairman advised that the Head of Operational Services and the Executive Member for the Environment would be present at the meeting on 6th July 2017 to answer questions.

The Head of Corporate and Community Services addressed the Committee and provided an update regarding the latest situation. He advised that the trial area had been very successful in terms of the food waste collection and recycling and that as a result residual waste had reduced significantly. He also commended the work of the Recycling Advisors who were working hard within those areas. He added that across the district the amount of recycling presented at the kerbside had increased significantly with the amount of food waste far exceeding expectations with three to four skips in a day and that the vast quantities collected had not been anticipated. He explained that as a direct result of the increase in kerbside presentations, some of the rounds had not been completed and the Council had been working around the clock to catch up on missed collections with extra resources being brought in to ensure that collections were made on time. He explained that afternoon overtime shifts had been introduced with volunteer crews working up to 6.00pm to complete unfinished rounds. A meeting was scheduled for 3.00pm that afternoon to meet with the Consultants to discuss some of the re-modelled rounds and he commended the crews for their hard work during the roll out of the rounds and during the very hot spell, which had had an obvious impact upon the situation.

The Head of Resources added that the Consultants were working with the

Council to re-model the rounds. He added that the amount of food waste and cardboard collected had far exceeded expectations. He commended the crews for their hard work during the difficult period and advised that the service would need to match resources to pick up the increased levels of recycling. He explained that the introduction of the chargeable garden waste had seen a take up of 14,000 properties, which was an income level of £500K and in excess of the target built into the budget. The increased volume of recyclables and material income sales would finance the extra resources required to deliver the service and the anticipated net budget savings built into the budget would still be achieved. A review of the vehicle fleet was required with additional resource level required in the processing hall.

In relation to the various issues in relation to the roll out of the new recycling rounds and food waste collections service, the Committee raised the following issues:

- The lack of communication with Councillors.
- The impact of negative publicity for the Council.
- The non-collection of food that had not been bagged or wrapped up and the mixed messages being given to crews as to whether or not unwrapped food should be collected.
- Questioned how widespread the problem had been in terms of the areas affected.
- The failure in the delivery of caddies to some households across the district.
- The role of the consultants in the re-modelling of the rounds.
- That clarification be provided by the Head of Operational Services in relation to the storage of food waste caddies for residents living in terraced houses and flats.
- Questioned whether the crews were consulted in relation to the re-modelling of the rounds.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the following question be added to the list for discussion on 6th July 2017:
 - When will the service return to normal?
- (b) That better communication be established with the Members.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Refuse and Recycling and Customer Contact Centre staff for their continued hard work under very difficult circumstances.

The Committee thanked the Head of Resources and Head of Corporate and Community Services for their attendance at the meeting.

18 RMB CHIVENOR

The Chairman addressed the Committee and advised that the attendance by Simon Dart from the Environment Agency at the Committee on 20th April 2017 was very beneficial to the Committee.

He added that he had been in communications with the Sea Lord and other Peers and that a representative would be available to attend a future meeting of the Committee at the appropriate time to discuss the marines perspective.

RESOLVED, that the item remain on the agenda.

19 ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO LOOK AT REVIEW OF CAR PARKS

The Committee discussed the appointment of Members to a Working Group to look at the review of car parks.

The Committee requested confirmation as to when the final report would be ready and that once that was known a date be arranged for the first meeting.

RESOLVED, that the whole Committee be appointed to the Working Group.

20 UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Committee welcomed the Housing Services Manager and the Service Lead - Housing Market Balance to the meeting.

The Housing Services Manager outlined the areas of discussion to the Committee, which covered the following:

- Performance statistics.
- Policy Context update.
- Opportunities.
- Risks.

She took the Committee through the performance statistics, which were detailed in charts one to six of the tabled paper.

In response to a number of questions, the Housing Services Manager and the Service Lead - Housing Market Balance provided answers in relation to the following:

- There were currently 3,000 people on the housing waiting list.
- There were 73 social rented units completed in 2016 (70% of all affordable housing delivered against a target of 75%).
- There was now fewer grants from government to provide affordable housing.

- That a comparative figure could be added for planning permissions granted against actual build out.
- That all developers were treated equally in accordance with the Local Plan.
- That 15 Castle Street would be ready to receive tenants in the following few weeks.
- That residents occupied temporary accommodation within the North Devon area for an average of approximately 60 days against a national profile of up to five years.
- There had not been a vast amount of affordable units delivered in the Ilfracombe area owing to the lack of new builds within the area.

The Service Lead - Housing Market Balance advised that the new Local Plan was due for adoption at the end of the year and added that the Affordable Housing Policy would follow. She explained that the Government's consultation

process had taken place in relation to Housing and Planning White Paper but added that there was currently no final published outcome due to government issues. She advised that the staffing resources had now been addressed with 1.8 Full Time Equivalents working within the team and that this additional member of staff focussed mainly on the planning consultation aspect of the service. She added that there were plans to purchase Council owned temporary accommodation units and that they were investigating ownership models as the most efficient way to obtain accommodation as the current monthly amount being paid to the Travelodge alone was £13,000. She added that completion rates for housing developments within the North Devon area were higher than the rest of England but national comparative data for 2016-17 would not be published until after July. However, the Council had no control over when developers built out. She explained that in 2016/17 on developers with on site affordable housing 1,233 dwellings were given planning permission and of these units a total of 371 units were affordable homes, which equated to 30%. However, the Council needed to be mindful that not all granted applications happened immediately and that sometimes there would be a shortfall in delivery:

- Many sites get outline planning permission with all matters reserved, this means that the principle of development in that location and the numbers involved has been approved; it does not mean they can start on site. Further steps and time are needed to submit Reserved Matters. Often Land Partnerships also need time to find interested developers.
- The affordable housing threshold and Vacant Building Credit has had a huge impact on supply.
- In order to assist with the viability of a scheme, the Council had in certain cases agreed that developers could front load a scheme with open market housing at stage one and the affordable housing following on in phases two and three.
- She added that in most cases the Section 106 (S106) agreement stated delivery of up to 50% of open market units prior to the delivery of affordable housing to allow for sufficient finances to develop them.

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- Renegotiating viability as encouraged by Government mainly affects the affordable housing element of a s106 package. Such viability work can decrease numbers and cause delays.
- NDC fights for the provision of genuinely affordable housing at social rent levels – this is our greatest need. This avoids trapping people in the welfare system in order to afford higher rents.
- The Council had also taken the decision to utilise the New Homes Bonus for revenue due to the Government's cuts to Local Authority funding but this could be used to grant fund affordable housing and increase its supply in the area (like Cornwall Council).

She added that if any Members were interested in Community Parish Funding for the forthcoming year to liaise with her.

The Committee noted that rural areas/villages were greatly impacted upon by the affordable housing threshold, which removed the requirement for affordable housing provision on sites of five or less and requires an off-site contribution only on sites of 6-10 units. This applied to all areas other than exception sites.

The Committee agreed that as there were a number of planning issues raised during the course of the discussions that when the next update was provided to the Committee that the Chief Planning Officer also be invited to attend the meeting.

The Committee thanked the Housing Services Manager and the Service Lead - Housing Market Balance for their attendance at the meeting.

21 NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (NHS) SUCCESS REGIME

The Chairman addressed the Committee and advised following a period of no information an announcement was made by the NHS Success Regime on 20th June 2017.

The Committee welcomed the news that the plan was to retain the acute services at the main four hospitals within the Devon area. However, they highlighted that there was no certainty of financial resources and that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had not released any further information. There were also serious questions to be followed up in terms of deliverability of the plans.

The Chairman stressed the importance of maintaining pressure on the Success Regime to ensure that the proposals were delivered as planned.

The Committee agreed that there was a requirement to press for a definitive list of the services which would be retained at the North Devon District Hospital.

The Committee raised concerns in relation to the increase in the population of North Devon in the future together with the aging population. There were a number of surgeries closing and merging within the North Devon area and the increase in Doctors patient lists as a result and issues with getting appointments would only hamper the situation further.

The Committee noted the huge pressure on employees working at the hospital during the difficult period of uncertainty and offered their thanks to all staff for their continued dedication.

RESOLVED, that the item remain on the agenda.

22 DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Councillor Mathews advised that he had no update to provide to the Committee at the current time as the next meeting was not scheduled until July 2017.

He added that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be present at the next meeting of the Crime and Disorder Sub-Committee, which was scheduled to be held on 16th November 2017.

23 WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the work programme be noted; and
- (b) that the issue of the consideration of equalities in relation to car parks be added to the work programme.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 4.09 p.m.

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.