

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 12th July 2018 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members

Councillor Mathews (Chair)

Councillors Chesters, Spear, Webber and Worden.

Also Present

Councillors R. Cann and Moore

Officers

Head of Resources (JT), Head of Operational Services (RM), Customer and Corporate Communications Manager (CH), Service Lead – Environmental Protection (AC) and Corporate and Community Services Officer (KJ).

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bonds, Ley, Patrinos and Roome.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2018 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

16 ORDER OF AGENDA

RESOLVED that item 9 “Compensation Payments” be considered before item 6 on the agenda.

17 COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

The Customer and Corporate Communications Manager (CH) presented the report “Compensation Payments” (circulated previously).

It was noted that the number of compensation payments made had appeared to have reduced.

In response to a question, the Head of Operational Services advised that the entry number 2 “Multiple missed recycling collections” related to multiple missed collections from one address. He added that there had been a few problems on the database where assisted collection requests had been incorrectly displayed. There had also been problems where properties which had previously been ‘black bag routes’ (rather than wheelie bins) due to problems with accessibility, had opted in to the green waste bin service. Therefore the access problems had not been flagged for the green waste service.

In response to a question regarding whether complainants were automatically issued with compensation payments, the Customer and Corporate Communications Manager confirmed that complainants did not apply for compensation, nor were automatically entitled to receive payments. Each case was judged on its merits and if the decision was made that a compensation payment was appropriate it would be offered to the customer and paid if the customer wished to accept it.

In response to a question about the payment of £500 paid during May 2018, the Customer and Corporate Communications Manager confirmed this was as advised by the LGO following a complaint about a service failure made to the ombudsman. She advised that, on average, only one or two ombudsman complaints were received each year.

RESOLVED that;

- (a) the figures for the compensation payments for the past three years be provided to the Committee (on future Compensation Reports) for comparison;
- (b) the report be noted.

18 RECYCLE MORE

The Head of Operational Services gave a presentation regarding the results of the trial for the Recycle More project.

The points in the presentation included:

- The purpose of the trial was to;
 1. Trial a new recycling and waste collection service to 3,400 households with unlimited recycling and a three-weekly residual waste collection service
 2. To influence how our customers manage their waste and to increase the amount that they recycle each week
 3. To reduce the amount of landfill waste that our customers produce by continuous and targeted education and communication.
- The trial areas were Forches, Bratton Fleming, Stoke Rivers, Landkey and Whiddon Valley. These areas were selected to ensure the trial was representative of the whole North Devon Council area.
- The importance of communication and stakeholder involvement.

- Graphs showing the percentages of black bin waste and recycling figures pre-trial and after the trial showed a clear increase in recycling rates.
- Pre-trial the figures were 77% black waste / 23% recycling. After the trial (as at November 2017) this had changed to 51% black waste and 49% recycling.
- 3,400 surveys were sent out, of which 319 were returned (9%)
- In conclusion, almost 90% felt they had been well informed of the changes and 70% had no problem storing residual waste for the three-week period.

The Head of Operational Services stated that he had expected changes in behaviour of the customers in the trial area, in respect of the recycling, within three to four collections, however, it had appeared that they were getting 'on board' with the changes and the changes were experienced within the first few weeks of the trial.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Operational Services advised:

- One of the five recycling advisors remained in post. The advisor had been working in the Forches area as the recycling rates had lowered there, and the number of black bin waste had increased. The advisors had revisited and since then the rates had improved.
- Where a household included young children who were still using nappies, an additional small bin had been provided if requested.
- A full report on the results of the trial would be presented to Executive in September 2018.
- The speed in which the public had adapted to the service changes was encouraging.
- The County, Parish and Town Councillors had been involved in the trial for the service changes, however, attendance at the meetings had been low.
- The overall aim of the service was for the level of black bin waste going to landfill to reduce to zero in 18 months to two years.
- The Service was currently at capacity and would require future investment in order to move forward if the trial was to be rolled out across the district.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Resources advised that the future infrastructure options would be costed prior to a final decision being made. The service would require investment and a capital bid would need to be considered.

The Committee confirmed that they wished to pass on their congratulations to the Operational Services team, the Head of Operational Services, and the Lead Member, for their success in the trial.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

19 SERVICE PERFORMANCE FIGURES FOR WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES, COLLECTION OF REFUSE UPDATE, GREEN WASTE SERVICE

The Head of Operational Services provided an update regarding the service performance figures for waste and recycling services, collection of refuse update and the green waste service.

He advised the Committee of the following:

- Between 28th May and 1st June 2018 there had been a period of unprecedented vehicle breakdowns which resulted in a high level of missed collections across the service. Vehicle services and MOTs had already been scheduled for this period.
- During the same period the number of vehicle technicians was lower than usual as one of the five posts was vacant (since been filled) whilst another technician was on sick leave.
- The operating hours had been increased from 5am to 5pm to help alleviate the problems.
- Diagnostic software has been purchased which would assist when repairing and servicing vehicles.
- A stock of commonly-used vehicle parts has been set up in order to reduce waiting times for vehicle repairs. Those stocks would be replenished as required.
- Two vehicles had been hired. One has since been returned. The remaining vehicle has been retained and was due to be purchased.
- Some vehicles purchased in future would be pre-registered, eliminating the 26 week delivery time.
- One new vehicle, and one registered in 2014, had been purchased. Two further purchases of refuse vehicles (expected to be between 2013 and 2015) would be made to be used as a spare fleet team.
- The fleet was created based on 17 rounds (as advised by the consultants) however the service was currently operating 20 to 21 rounds. This had adversely affected the spare vehicles.
- The planned vehicle purchases had already been accounted for within the budget, although their purchases had been accelerated.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Head of Operational Services confirmed that agency staff were regularly used by the service in order to assist during periods of leave and sickness, or when posts were vacant.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

20 AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Service Lead Environmental Protection provided an update regarding Air Quality.

He advised the Committee of the following:

- A productive meeting had been held with Devon County Council (DCC) Officers where they had confirmed their support for the District Council's latest round of monitoring.

Councillor Mathews declared a personal interest as a Devon County Council Member.

The Service Lead Environmental Protection advised the Committee:

- During the past year there had been no recorded levels exceeding the EU threshold limit. The limit for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) was 40 µg/m³. The levels in Braunton had not exceeded this figure.
- The latest report by the Authority had been accepted by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The information was now on the website.
- Braunton Parish Council (BPC) had been contacted and a meeting had been arranged to discuss their acceptance of the report to DEFRA

Councillor Spear addressed the Committee and confirmed that the meeting held last Monday had been positive although some had queried the calculation of the current levels in Braunton. He hoped a planning document for Braunton would enable any planning problems to be mitigated and assist in the efforts to reduce pollution levels. He emphasised the need for Braunton Parish Council to work together with the Authority.

Councillor Chesters confirmed that although the figures assessed by Braunton Parish Council did not match those of North Devon Council she agreed DCC and DEFRA want to see one figure and she felt that BPC had 'muddied the waters' with their additional data and that they should now move on and accept the figures as calculated by NDC and work together to now move on to find a solution.

In response the Service Lead Environmental Protection confirmed that progress had been made and that a further update would be available at the next meeting with BPC in four weeks' time. He also confirmed that no other areas being monitored had exceeded the EU limit. Only Braunton had levels which were of concern and if any other areas increased then they too would be looked at as priority.

The Committee discussed the effects of the 'school run' on the pollution levels near schools, as parents' vehicles' engines were running idle whilst waiting for the children. The resulting spikes exceed safe levels. The future of electric cars was considered and the traffic routes through the village, and other towns in the region.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

21 **PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT**
QUARTER 4 2017/18.

The Committee considered a report to the Executive on 4th June 2018 by the Leader and Executive Team together with a minute extract (circulated previously) regarding the Performance and Financial Management Quarter 4 of 2017/18.

The Head of Resources gave a presentation to the Committee relating to the Performance and Financial Management Quarter 4 of 2017/18. He drew the Committee's attention to the following:

- The Revenue Budget was approved at £11.945m
- As at 31st December 2017, reporting net budget deficit of £0.012m
- As at 31st March 2018 final outturn, the net budget surplus was (£0.504m). The breakdown of variations on appendix 1 was as follows:
 1. (£0.220m) additional collection fund income – Council Tax and Business Rates
 2. (£0.070m) lower car park costs and additional income
 3. (£0.070m) reduced spend on economic development
 4. (£0.080m) additional savings from staffing budget
- Recycle More – Service changes introduced June 2017:
 1. Garden Waste take up exceeded expectations and pilot area had been positive.
 2. Recycling changes resulted in one-off additional costs in 2017/18 (out-turn £0.373m over budget, resulting in original savings target built into budget not being achieved).
 3. 2018/19 and future; WebAspx support and training. Round re-modelling costs fed into 2018/19 budget.
 4. Should resolve round inefficiency seen in 2017/18 and protect the Authority going forward.
- Revenue Budget 2017/18 options for the £0.504m final outturn surplus included:
 1. £0.264m Provisions–Voluntary Redundancy / early retirements
 2. £0.030m Provisions – other
 3. £0.070m Economic Development Reserve
 4. £0.030m Office Technology Reserve
 5. £0.040m Repairs Fund Reserve
 6. £0.040m Office Accommodation Reserve
 7. £0.030m CCTV Reserve
- Actual balance of the General Fund at 31st March 2018 was £1.161m (9.7% of the net budget). The recommended level was 5%-10%.
- The balance of the earmarked reserves as at 1st April 2017 was £6.520m. The balance as at 31st March 2018 was £5.647m.
- The total capital programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 was £10.583m at February 2018.
- This included the purchase of two properties to be used as temporary housing. A further two properties were being considered for purchase.

- The actual spend in 2017/18 was £2.454m, with a balance of £8.048m rolled into 2018/19 to 2020/21.
- Business case for further capital investment (of £0.052m) was recommended by project appraisal to be considered for funding if resources allowed. The project for a new Committee Administration System scored 'high'.
- Additional capital receipts funding 2017/18 included:
 1. Balance Leisure Centre Refurbishment/retention (£0.071m) settlement negotiated by the Head of Corporate and Community Services.
 2. Additional Right to Buy receipts – from additional sales in 2017/18 (£0.216m).
 3. Other movements £0.004m
 4. Net additional receipts + (£0.283m)
- The Capital Programme for 2018/19 was £8.626m, £0.451m for 2019/20 and £0.175m for 2020/21. Total over the three years of £9.252m.
- Changes for the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts:
 1. The Draft Accounts were signed by the Chief Financial Officer on 29th May 2018.
 2. External Audit scheduled to start 23rd July 2018.
 3. Audit Findings Report to the Audit Committee on 14th August 2018.
 4. Audited Accounts to Full Council on 14th August 2018.
 5. The requirement to be published by 31st July 2018 would not be met. External Audit had advised the Government that this date would not be met due to resourcing pressures of their own, rather than any fault of the Authority.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Resources confirmed that:

- The Authority was currently refurbishing the ground floor of the bus station. This would then allow previously un-utilised areas to be used. It had been considered to be used by the security contractor. This could help with security issues in the building and surrounding bus station.
- An income was received from the bus/coach companies using the bus station.
- Although the levels of homelessness had reduced since winter, the levels were still higher than desired. The two properties purchased were both in Barnstaple but future purchases may be made in South Molton or Ilfracombe depending on housing need.

RESOLVED that the decisions and recommendations of the Executive be endorsed.

22 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2017/18.

The Committee considered a report to the Executive on 2nd July 2018 by the Chief Financial Officer with a minute extract (circulated previously) regarding the Annual Treasury Management Report of 2017/18.

The Head of Resources drew the Committee's attention to the following points within the report:

- This was the outturn Annual Treasury Management Report for 2017/18
- At the beginning and end of 2017/18 the Council's treasury position was as follows:

	31/03/17 Principal £000	Rate / Return	31/03/18 Principal £000	Rate / Return
Total Debt	£2,000	2.08%	£2,000	2.02%
Capital Finance Requirement (CFR)	£6,469		£5,009	
Over / (under) borrowing	(£4,469)		(£3,009)	
Total Investments	£4,960	0.47%	£10,735	0.34%
Net debt / (investments)	(£2,960)		(£8,735)	

- The internal borrowing on council reserves reduced the amount of external borrowing required.
- The Capital Financing Requirement General Fund was budgeted for 31st March 2018 at £5.454m. The actual figure was £5.009m.
- A £1m deposit made to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) in January 2013 had now been repaid to the Authority in January 2018.
- The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.
- In December 2017 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), issued a revised Treasury Management Code and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes, and a revised Prudential Code. One recommendation was that local authorities should produce a new report to Members to give a high level summary of the overall capital strategy and to enable Members to see how the cash resources of the Authority had been apportioned between treasury and non-treasury investments. A further report would be produced for Members during 2018/19 when the implications of these new codes have been assessed as to the likely impact on the Authority and to update its treasury management practices accordingly.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Resources confirmed that Butchers Row, Barnstaple, was owned by the Authority, and planning had recently been granted for the change of use of one of the units.

Councillor Chesters stated that Devon County Highways should look at the road itself and consider the access to the Market and Butchers Row.

The Chairman confirmed that the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) had been considering this, including the possible pedestrianising of the road.

RESOLVED that the decisions and recommendations of the Executive be endorsed.

23 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSION UPDATE

The Chairman addressed the Committee regarding the latest information from the Police and Crime Commission (PCC).

Councillor Worden declared a Personal interest as his son would soon be working for the Devon and Cornwall Police Authority and Councillor Worden had been appointed as a Police Advocat.

The Chairman advised the Committee of the following:

- The number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the Devon and Cornwall Police had reduced from 360 to 200. The Chief Constable wanted to maintain a level of 200 PCSOs.
- The Chief Constable had advised that in order to maintain the previous level of 360 it would equate to losing 200 warranted officers.
- Since 2010, the staffing levels had reduced by 1000. This had been 600 officers and 400 staff.
- There were no plans for compulsory redundancies of any PCSOs.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had allocated £200,000 to support Local Authorities wishing to invest in a CCTV monitoring hub.
- A business case for a potential merger with Dorset Police would need to be submitted by 12th October 2018. Subject to ministerial agreement, an order would be issued under s32 of the Police Act 1996 (and laid before Parliament by 7th November 2019) in order to comply with the electoral commission guidelines ahead of the election in 2020. There would be no formal statutory tests as this would be a voluntary merger.
- A programme of engagement would be put in place, with partners, stakeholders and the public. As the Chairman understood it; the PCC would not support the merger if it did not have the full support of the public.
- The PCC and the Chief Constable had agreed on a number of areas to consider concerning road safety. This would enhance the policing strategy in Devon and Cornwall. This would be due for completion by July 2018.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the figures included in the update “in order to maintain the previous level of 360 it would equate to

losing 200 warranted officers” be queried with the Chief Constable;

(b) the update be noted.

24 NHS UPDATE

The Clerk addressed the Committee regarding the National Health Service Update. The Clerk advised the new CEO of the North Devon District Hospital (NDDH) was Suzanne Tracey and that she would be the CEO for both the NDDH and the Royal Devon and Exeter (RDE). This would be for a period of up to two years. The new CEO had been invited to attend a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She had requested a meeting beforehand with the Committee’s Chairman. The details of which were currently being arranged.

25 WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Work Programme / Forward Plan (circulated previously).

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.

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