

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 11th October 2018 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members

Councillor Patrinos (Chair)

Councillors J. Cann, Croft, Crabb, Ley, Mathews, Spear, Webber, White and Worden.

Also Present

Councillors Mackie (present for minutes 36 to 41) and Tucker (present for minute 39 only).

Officers

Head of Corporate and Community Services (KM), Head of Resources (JT), Acting Economic Growth Manager (SN) and Corporate and Community Services Officer (KJ).

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

37 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd August 2018 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was announced:

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Councillor Worden | Item 41: Police and Crime Commission Update. | Declared a Personal Interest as his son was in the Police Force. |
|-------------------|--|--|

39 CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Acting Economic Growth Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Council's Car Parking Strategy. She advised the Committee of the following:

- A Cross Party Working Group had been set up (although they had not met since March 2018).

- Feedback had indicated that further research was required on the project.
- The report provided by Hydrock (Dated December 2017) had not included any surveys on overnight parking. This was not at the fault of Hydrock as this had not initially been requested. North Devon Council (NDC) had been working on obtaining a price for this additional work. This would be provided by Hydrock.
- A meeting with the North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) had advised that once the remaining research had been completed, the final report would need to be considered by Devon County Council (DCC) as there may be an impact to on-street parking and traffic flow.

The Committee noted the following;

- Some signage had been removed by DCC in preparation for the Tour of Britain. This had not been replaced.
- The problems in relation to illegal right-hand turns out of the Cattle Market Car Park at the exit on to Commercial Road. (Left hand turn only).
- Lack of on-street parking in South Molton.
- The advantages and disadvantages of pay-on-exit parking schemes.
- Business owners and workers in the town centre could purchase parking permits if required.
- Some Barnstaple car parks were currently under-utilised (such as Hardaway Head) and others were at capacity.
- Improved signage was required at Hardaway Head car park.
- Regents House had 75 spaces assigned for use by its staff as part of the lease, despite the building currently being unoccupied. This building, its lease, and the land on which it was sited, was under discussion with the owners as part of negotiations for NDC to sell the land. As part of the disposal it was agreed that 20 spaces would be released back to NDC. Access and the layout of the car park would need to be reconfigured.
- The use of the Barnstaple car parks was closely intertwined with the growth strategy for North Devon.
- Any changes to the size of parking spaces would affect the number of spaces provided.
- The car parking provision across the whole of the NDC area should be considered.

RESOLVED that if the Task and Finish Group wished to hold a further meeting that Members of the group should contact the Corporate and Community Services Officer to make arrangements.

40 **PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT**
QUARTER 1 2018/19.

The Committee considered a report to the Executive on 4th September 2018 by the Leader and Executive Team together with a minute extract (circulated

previously) regarding the Performance and Financial Management Quarter 1 of 2018/19.

The Head of Resources gave a presentation to the Committee relating to the Performance and Financial Management Quarter 1 of 2018/19. He drew the Committee's attention to the following:

- The salary vacancy savings achieved were as per the budget.
- The number of households signing up to the Green Waste service was expected to be similar to last year.
- The Council was part of a 100% Business Rate Pilot scheme, with the expected share of the additional funding being £0.600m. The update for the Devon-wide pilot was expected in quarter 2.
- Sales of recycled materials had reduced during the quarter by £0.15m. The drop in the market had resulted in the decrease in the resale value.
- New capital projects included improvements to the website (£0.016m) and Legal management system (£0.025m).
- The new ICT system for Planning had been achieved under-budget.

He provided the following detail in relation to Operational Services;

- The round-remodelling in Waste and recycling had been completed. It had been set at 20 rounds for 2018/19 year.
- The pressures on the service early in the year (due to vehicle issues) had resulted in the capital-spend being brought forward by one year.
- The increase in employee costs during 2017/18 had been due to the higher number of rounds being carried out. As the rounds had now been reduced to 20 the budget for staffing costs in 2018/19 was now under £4m.

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

- He had requested that the Service Heads develop ten-year capital plans. These would be required by February 2019. They would assist in the creation of the capital replacement and ICT plans, resulting in a longer term strategy.
- Investment projects, such as the Leisure Centre, Seven Brethren and area and Water-sports Centre would need to be looked at alongside all capital replacements when considering investment in vehicle replacement over the next ten years. Significant investment would be required over those ten years as all the vehicles currently owned would need to be replaced within that time. Some borrowing would be required to achieve this although reserves had been built up annually. These reserve contributions could be increased. Members would need to consider the larger plan when making decisions in future and could not make capital decisions in isolation. Vehicles and ICT were essential for the day-to-day work of the Authority. The Budget would be presented to Members in February 2019.
- The £0.213m over-spend experienced by Operational Services, particularly in Waste and recycling, was due to a reduction in income

(unfavourable market conditions) and increased vehicle costs. The £0.084m variance on budget from vehicle costs consisted of approximately 50% from additional maintenance costs and 50% increased fuel costs. The budget was set each year based on figures from the prior year and any known changes. The changes to the market for recycled materials were unforeseen.

- Although the financial market may provide favourable interest rates at present it was not possible to take on more borrowing now, ahead of when needed, and then set the funds aside until a future, as yet unknown date, when the funds would be required for the Leisure Centre project. There would be costs on the budget involved in 'holding' those funds. The funds would not be secured until required.
- The potential new Leisure Centre building would be required to be operational in 2020, when the existing building could close.
- The final decision in relation to the Leisure Centre had not yet been made and would be subject to a report to Executive and Full Council.
- It was more economical to purchase vehicles for Waste and Recycling, rather than lease them.
- Agency staff were still being used in Waste and Recycling (not in the office) when required. Approximately 20 agency staff had migrated to become permanent staff, with more migrating in the last year. This had achieved some savings, however agency staff would always be required on occasion, to cover sickness and annual leave.
- The Council were unable to provide details of the comparable cost of the service when run by South Molton Recycle, however, in 2008, when the service was brought in-house it produced £0.250m of budget savings.
- Recycling rates were now 45.01% (the original target was 40%).
- There was an action plan in place to deal with Coastal Protection and Shoreline Management Plan. This fell within the role of the Resources team. The officer involved was working with other agencies/Local Authorities, etc, as part of a wider group.
- The £13,206 budget for Winter Storm Repairs was the residual grant money after the storm repairs were completed in Ilfracombe. This money had been set aside should it be recalled.
- The Tourism Strategy had been completed but was not yet available online. It would be published once the press release was ready.
- The reference in the report to the increase in litter collected from the Annual Litter Pick along the North Devon Link Road was to the total weight collected. It had doubled since the previous year.
- 484 recycling containers were delivered to households which had been identified as not actively recycling. Those households had been identified by the Waste and Recycling Team, however, the visiting recycling advisor had been funded by DCC.
- £1.2m capital investment had been set aside for acquiring properties for temporary accommodation for the homeless. During quarter 1 offers had been made on two two-bedroomed properties in Barnstaple (Long Meadow Drive). Offers had also been accepted on two three-bedroomed properties. These four purchases totalled £0.660m.
- The total number of applications on Devon Home Choice housing list had reduced following a review.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Corporate and Community Services confirmed that:

- In some parts of the 'Recycle More' trial area the recycling rate had now reached over 50%.
- The tonnage of food waste collected this year was similar to that of the previous year but exact figures could be provided.
- The Authority did prosecute for fly-tipping offences. It was possible that the incidents were increasing due to charges at the Recycling Centre at Seven Brethren although as it was DCC owned it was outside of the remit of NDC to change this.
- Although the report stated that 55 new affordable homes had been 'completed', but later in the report it stated that 43 affordable homes had been 'delivered' within the same period, the discrepancy was due to the figures being provided by different teams. 'Delivered', according to national indicators for the planning team, meant 'planning permissions issued'. However, in the Housing team they referred to completed build numbers.
- A security officer position was being considered for Lynton House, due to the increase in incidents and those presenting at Lynton House. No decision had been made yet.

The Chairman advised that, in relation to the Service Plan Action report, (appendix 5), he praised the work involved in reducing the number of entries, however he was concerned that many actions appeared to be incomplete, when he expected that works had, in fact, been done.

The Head of Resources confirmed that the report had already been updated, with more updates due. The quarter 2 report would show less outstanding items. He also explained that the Service Heads had reviewed the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). These were being updated to ensure that they were 'meaningful' and provided tangible information. Some KPIs would remain although many would be replaced with new, more current indicators.

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

41 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSION UPDATE

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

The Chairman advised the Committee of the following:

- At the recent meeting of the PCC the group agreed to support the Police and Crime Commissioner in her decision not to support the proposed merger between the Devon and Cornwall Police Force and the Dorset Police Force.

- Although it had been felt that she had previously been in support of a merger she had now decided not to as she felt that there was no public support.
- The legality of issues regarding the contributions collected from Council Tax payments was also discussed as there could be disparity in rates across the counties.
- A new retaining unit /Custody Centre was being built at Middlemoor.
- The merger was not going to go ahead.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

42 NHS UPDATE

The Chairman addressed the Committee and advised that the next Committee meeting, on 15th November 2018, would be primarily concerned with Health and Care Services. It would be set up as an 'Inquiry' with external speakers and attendees from Torridge District Council in attendance.

RESOLVED that;

- a) Any questions for the external attendees be forwarded to the Corporate and Community Services Officer,
- b) the update be noted.

43 EXEMPTIONS TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee considered and noted the report of Exemptions to Contract Procedure Rules (circulated previously).

The Head of Resources confirmed that the programme of replacing vehicles had been brought forward by one year.

44 WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

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

The Chairman considered a request to add "Monitoring of Noise levels at Batsworthy Cross" to the work programme. It was considered that this would be outside of the scope of the Committee and was not added. The Chairman agreed to consider this further if a written request was submitted by the Member.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.53 p.m.

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