

**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Strategy and Resources Committee held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Monday, 4th March, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Roome (Chair)

Councillors Bell, Clayton, D Knight, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, Maskell, Prowse, Wilkinson and Worden

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Customer Focus, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Place Manager (Town Centres), Head of Place, Property and Regeneration and Sustainability and Climate Officer

Also Present in person:

Councillors Haworth-Booth, Norman and Spear.

Also Present virtually:

Councillor Cann

**95. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crabb and Milton.

**96. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a correction on minute 87, Approval and Release of S106 Public Open Space Funds – Barnstaple, South Molton and Tawstock as follows:

RECOMMENDED that Council vary the capital programme by £358,019.97 and the funds be released subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for external projects.

**97. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

There were no items brought forward, which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency.

**98. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

Councillors C Leaver, Maskell and Roome declared an other registerable interest in item 10, Devolution Offer, as they were all Devon County Councillors.

**99. FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR THE ROLE OF A CLIMATE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS INTERN AT THE DEVON CLIMATE EMERGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee considered a report by the Sustainability and Climate Officer (circulated previously) regarding Funding Proposal for the role of a Climate and Engagement Communications Intern at the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

The Lead Member for Climate and Biodiversity, Cllr R Knight introduced the report as follows:

The Climate and Engagement and Communications Intern position was vacated in November 2023. Pressure on resources at Devon County Council mean that the position would not be replaced using the authority's funds. It was unlikely that Communications Officers within the partnership would be able to fulfil this role between them. Coordinating meetings and managing the newsletter and social media platforms took up a lot of time and required specialised attention. While North Devon Council communications Officers were willing to help, they considered a leading communications officer was necessary for the success of such a significant project.

At its meeting in December 2023 the Climate Task Force recommended that resourcing on behaviour change and engagement should be increased and monitoring the implementation of the plans needed a dedicated resource to carry this out effectively.

The Sustainability and Climate Officer advised that all the other Devon Authorities had agreed to contribute towards the post with the exception of South Hams, who were still going through their budget process and Plymouth, who had recently contributed to the partnership by leading on a £3million funding bid.

RESOLVED that, subject to other partners agreeing to contribute, £2,000 be allocated from the Environment Initiatives earmarked reserves for four years to fund a Climate Engagement and Communications Intern position as set out in the report.

**100. THE DEVON, CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY ADAPTATION STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report by the Sustainability and Climate Officer (circulated previously) regarding the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy.

The Sustainability and Climate Officer highlighted the following:

- The adopted Carbon reduction plan set out how the Council would cut down on carbon emissions.
- This Adaptation Strategy set out how to adapt to Climate change and the challenges that presented.
- The geographical area covered depicted a regional picture of circumstances which was easier to account for as opposed to pinpointing on a smaller geographical area.
- The proposal was to endorse this Strategy which in no way involved any additional officer hours or funding.

In response to a question in relation to ensuring all Town and Parish Councils were engaged with this Strategy. The Sustainability and Climate Officer advised that she was having a meeting to discuss this very issue and would ensure the information was disseminated.

The Chair added that the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) would be good ambassadors for distribution of the message as they had a considerable of Parish and Town Council members.

RESOLVED that the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy be endorsed.

**101.            STREET MARSHAL SCHEME**

The Committee considered a report by the Place Manager (Town Centres), (circulated previously), regarding the Street Marshal Scheme.

The Place Manager (Town Centres) highlighted the following:

- The Council had agreed, at a meeting in September 2023, to earmark reserves to extend the Street Marshal scheme from October 2023 until 31 March 2024.
- The extension was to allow Officers to explore funding opportunities to provide a long-term solution to the provision of street marshals in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.
- The Scheme initially only operated in Barnstaple and the extension was agreed to include Ilfracombe with an evaluation of the benefits of widening the provision to both towns reported to a future meeting.
- During the six month extension period the scheme had operated in Barnstaple five days a week and in Ilfracombe for two days a week.
- The scheme had contributed to a significant reduction in overall crime and incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reported to the Police.
- No towns in Devon were invited to apply for funding from the Safer Streets round 5.
- A further extension to fund this scheme by the Council was being sought as seen in the report at 2.1 to 2.4.
- The results of a recent survey of businesses and general public in both Barnstaple and Ilfracombe showed that:
  - 92% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in ASB
  - 80% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in violence
  - 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in criminal damage

- 93% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in street drinking
- 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in theft
- Businesses felt that the presence of street marshals had a positive impact on the day-to-day running of their business.
- 96% of Businesses felt that the street marshals had a positive impact on the community.

The Place Manager (Town Centres), in response to a question on deploying the marshals to other towns and villages confirmed discussions with other parish and town councils could be held and that there could be flexibility to use marshals in other areas.

In response to a question in relation to money being saved by not funding this resource in light of there being CCTV, Police and security at Green Lanes. The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive responded that external funding to continue this service was currently not forthcoming and that earmarked reserves had been made available to continue the service without interruption while external funding could be looked into further. The visual presence of street marshals in the town centre had shown to be of great benefit for the businesses and shoppers in the town.

In response to a question about whether the requested deadline extension of 30 June 2024 was long enough to secure alternative funding. The Place Manager (Town Centres) advised that the deadline was needed and hoped a solution would be found by then.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The Contract Procedure Rules be waived and approved that a new contract be entered into, up to 30 June 2024, with the existing provider (subject to agreeing terms), on the basis that they have been delivering the service for the last 15 months and have established trusted, invaluable contacts and relationships with Council staff, Police, businesses, Town Council and wider community;
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine the exact operating hours of the scheme in consultation with key partners such as the Police and Town Councils, based on demand and available budget;
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine whether an external contract is the most effective and efficient operating model to deliver the service in the medium to long term or whether employing staff directly would be better value and provide a better service; and
- (d) The cost of the Street Marshal scheme be funded from the Town Centre Management earmarked reserve and any financial contribution from Town Councils' as set out in section 5 of the report.

**102. REVIEW OF THE NORTH DEVON COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2024**

The Committee considered a report by the Parking Manager (circulated previously) regarding the Review of the North Devon Council (Off Street parking Places) Order 2024.

The Head of Place, Property and Regeneration highlighted the following:

- The Off Street Parking order had been reviewed and adopted by Strategy and Resources at a meeting earlier this year.
- The report today contained a small number of additional updates required to complete the review.
- The amendments could be seen at section 4.1 to 4.8 of the report.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised the Committee that a full review of the parking strategy was underway and once complete a report would be presented at a future meeting for Members consideration.

Councillor Lane asked for it to be noted that he had received confirmation from the Carpark Manager that there were in fact no car parking spaces in Swimbridge and he asked that Swimbridge be removed from the Order.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The amendments to the Off Street Parking Order as listed be approved:
  - (i) Barnstaple: Lower Pilton – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)).
  - (ii) Braunton: (a) Caen Street Car Park – the removal of D3 (Monday to Saturday inclusive) and (b) Chaloners Road Car Park – the removal of D3 (Monday to Saturday inclusive)
  - (iii) Combe Martin: (a) Kiln Car Park – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times) and (b) The Parade Car Park – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times).
  - (iv) Ilfracombe: (a) Hele – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)) and (b) Ropery Road Car park – the addition of H3 (8:00am to 8:00pm from 15 March to 31 October).
  - (v) Instow: (a) Instow Marine Car park – the removal of H2 (8:00am to 6:00pm), (b) Instow Marine Car park – the addition of H22 (8:00am to 10:00pm) and (c) Instow Marine Car park – the increase of permits to £175.00.
  - (vi) Lynton and Lynmouth: (a) Manor Foreshore – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times) and (b) Manor Gardens Roadway – the removal of all codes except H21 (parking prohibited at any time).
  - (vii) South Molton: (a) Sheep Pen Car park – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)) and (b) South Molton Central – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)).

- (viii) Charges: (a) the removal of C58 in its entirety (£120 per annum for Adelaide Terrace Resident's Association only) and (b) the addition of C62 (3hrs: £3.90, 4hrs: £5.20, 5hrs: £6.50, 6hrs: £7.80, 7hrs: £9.10 and All Day: £10.00); and

- (b) Delegated power be given to the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to make the Order following the consultation subject to there being no material objections or amendments necessary.

**103. DEVON AND TORBAY DEVOLUTION OFFER**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Devon and Torbay Devolution Offer.

The Chief Executive introduced Phil Adams, Service Manager, Economic Inclusion, Skills and Knowledge Economy / Programme Lead, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Devolution at Devon County Council who gave the Committee a presentation on the proposed Devon and Torbay Devolution as follows:

- Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from central government to local government.
- Decisions can be made closer to the communities and businesses they affect.
- It would mean more effective, better targeted public services, greater growth and stronger partnerships between public, private and community leaders in local areas.
- It is the Government's ambition for every part of England that wants a devolution deal to have one by 2030.
- Devolution deals agreed or proposed to date cover 60% of England's population.
- The devolution framework continues to evolve, Combined County Authorities (CCA) were a new model that have been designed for rural areas.
- There were different levels of deal on offer depending on the type of governance model.
- The powers and funding available now ranged from the highest level 4 to the lowest level 1.
- A non-mayoral governance, such as Devon, attracted Level 2 powers, other level 2 proposed deals currently accepted by government were from Cornwall, Lancashire (Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council, and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council) as well as Devon and Torbay.
- A Combined County Authority would give the area a stronger voice in Whitehall.
- The priorities of the Authority would include:
  - Maximising our economic potential – skills and education; and supporting local businesses
  - Addressing our housing pressures
  - Improving local transport
  - Meeting net carbon zero ambitions
  - Delivering investment in Devon and Torbay
  - Creating a strong and sustainable local economy

- Benefits of the deal would help in areas such as Economy and Growth, Skills and adult education, housing, transport and net zero and low carbon.
- The immediate impacts of the devolution offer for 2024-25 would mean local control over the Adult Education Budget, input into the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan, Democratic control of the functions and roles of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Capital funding of £16million for Green Homes investment programme, green business transition, green skills capacity building, transition to low carbon shipping, stronger partnership with Homes England and a platform for further devolution over time.
- The Principles of the CCA would be:
  - Effective Leadership
  - Sensible Geography
  - Flexibility
  - Appropriate accountability
  - Partnership
  - Inclusivity
  - Additionality
  - Subsidiarity
  - Collaboration
- The CCA would consist of Constituent Members – Three members each nominated by Devon County Council and Torbay Council.
- Non-Constituent Members – up to four members, including two representatives of the Devon District Councils.
- Associate Members – two members representing business and skills sectors.
- There would be A CCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an Audit Committee, Advisory Boards and the Team Devon Joint Committee – made up of representatives of the Devon District Councils, National Park Authorities and Devon Association of Local Councils.
- The six constituent members would have full voting rights.
- Non- constituent members will have voting rights on all but a small list of reserved matters. Reserved matters included approval of annual CCA budget, constitution changes, the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and significant financial decisions.
- The Act did not allow associate members to vote.
- There would be no casting vote for the Chair.
- It was hoped that the intent of the CCA would be to seek consensus on decisions between all members, with that principle to be embedded within the Constitution.
- The Constitution was still being drafted.
- Assurance would be provided in the form of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee.
- The political balance of the CCA would be a reflection of the political balance of the constituent authorities.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not be a member of the same political party as their Lead Member.
- Both the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committee's would include at least two members of each constituent authority and there would be District Council representatives on both committees.
- The Audit Committee would include an independent member.

- The consultation that was being run to establish the Devon and Torbay CCA was open until 24 March 2024.
- A submission to Government would be made in April with the Secretary of State seeking Parliamentary approval during May.
- A letter from the Secretary of State to the two Councils seeking consent to the Statutory Instrument would be expected in June.
- The Statutory Instrument would be laid in Parliament in July this would take 6-8 weeks.
- If legislative process was approved the regulation order would be signed creating the CCA expected in October.
- More information can be found at [www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk](http://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk)

The Committee debated the issues and concerns they had with the proposal. The Chief Executive summarised the points that the Committee raised as follows:

- On the whole members agreed in principle with the devolution offer and the idea of more local powers to make decisions.
- There were concerns around the democratic deficit.
- Concerns around the District councils not being involved in heavy decisions – around major investment projects as an example.
- A Member appointed to the Board by Devon County Council should be a representative for the North Devon area.
- Greater clarity around what a reserved decision was for example which decisions District Councils would not be a part of.
- Transport functions it was felt District Councils should be involved in those in some way.
- Major investment decisions it was felt District Councils should be involved in the making of them somehow.
- Delivery of projects at a local level.
- Skills delivery.
- The use of the Devon Housing Task force for the delivery of housing.
- Ensuring the relationship District Council already has with Homes England wasn't damaged by having another layer of Council.
- The Pipeline of projects referred to in paragraph 69; "...combining their skills and capacity to reduce the barriers to affordable housing delivery, regeneration and wider housing growth through the development of a shared development pipeline for the region.", of the document – District Councils should be involved around this pipeline of projects.
- Mention of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Business support being delivered locally.
- A strong accountability process was very important with District members involved in that.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Council were in principle in agreement with the formation of a CCA. To give the Chief Executive delegated power to formulate the response to be shared with the Leader and the three party leaders.



Chair

The meeting ended at 12.33 pm

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