

# WEST DEVON COUNCIL



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

## **Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Devon Council** held on **Tuesday, 19th December, 2023** at **4.00 pm** at the **Chamber - Kilworthy Park**

Present:        **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Daniel  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Sellis

Cllr Ball	Cllr Blackman
Cllr Bridgewater	Cllr Calder
Cllr Casbolt	Cllr Cheadle
Cllr Cunningham	Cllr Dexter
Cllr Edmonds	Cllr Elliott
Cllr Guthrie	Cllr Johnson
Cllr Jory	Cllr Kimber
Cllr Moody	Cllr Mott
Cllr Oxborough	Cllr Renders
Cllr Saxby	Cllr Southcott
Cllr Squire	Cllr Vachon
Cllr Watts	Cllr Viney
Cllr West	Cllr Mann

### **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Officers:

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director - Governance & Assurance  
Head of Assets  
Head of Communications, Media & Design  
Head of Democratic Services  
Monitoring Officer  
Principal Civil Engineer  
Section 151 Officer

49. **Apologies for Absence**

CM 49/23

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ewings, Leech and Wakeham.

50. **Confirmation of Minutes**

CM 50/23

It was moved by Cllr L Daniel, seconded by Cllr M Renders and upon the motion being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Council agree the Minutes of the 3 October 2023 meeting."

51. **Declarations of Interest**

CM 51/23

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.

52. **Business brought forward by or with the consent of the Mayor**

CM 52/23

The Mayor proceeded to inform the meeting that she had agreed for three items of urgent business to be considered. These items were deemed to be urgent in light of the time constraints associated with each matter.

a) From Cllr Mott

"That in recognition of 2023 being the 40th Anniversary of the Council's association with Wesseling, Germany, the Council send a letter acknowledging this milestone and expressing our good wishes for the festive season and the New Year."

There being no debate, it was then:

**RESOLVED**

That, in recognition of 2023 being the 40th Anniversary of the Council's association with Wesseling, Germany, the Council send a letter acknowledging this milestone and expressing our good wishes for the festive season and the New Year.

b) Update on the work of SSAFA (Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Family Association)

The Council's lead Member for the SSAFA, Cllr Ball proceeded to give an update on Grants that had recently been paid to assist ex-Servicemen and Women and their families within the Borough Council area.

In concluding, Cllr Ball requested that Members contact him if they were aware of any current or past serving armed forces personnel within their respective local Wards who required support and/or assistance.

c) Proposals for on-street parking charges by Devon County Council

Members considered an urgent report that sought the delegation of authority for the Lead Member for People and Communities, in consultation with the Director of Customer Services, to respond to Devon County Council's consultation on the introduction of Pay and Display Car Parking Charges in Okehampton and Tavistock.

The item was considered urgent as the consultation period coincided with the Christmas break and there was no meeting of the Full Council scheduled before the deadline for receipt of consultation responses by the County Council.

During the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

(a) A number of Members expressed the view that, if adopted, the proposals would be very detrimental to the local town centre economy;

(b) An additional (part 2) of the recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

'2. the Council write directly to Devon County Council seeking an *urgent meeting with key Members of the County Council, Borough Council, Okehampton and Tavistock Town Councils and other key stakeholders, with the set objective of understanding the rationale, full implications and impact of the proposals.*'

In debate, this addition was welcomed and, when put to the vote, was declared **CARRIED** and therefore became part of the substantive motion;

(c) Members also felt it to be regrettable that the public consultation period was being undertaken over the festive period. As a consequence, all Members were felt to have an important role to play in promoting awareness of the proposals (and the consultation exercise) within their respective local Wards;

(d) It was noted that both Tavistock and Okehampton Town Councils had been very proactive in their opposition to the proposals and the importance of a united voice with the Borough Council was emphasised.

It was then proposed by Cllr A Bridgewater, seconded by Cllr C Mott and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that:

1. Cllr Adam Bridgewater as Lead Member for People and Communities, in consultation with the Director of Customer Service and Delivery, be authorised to respond to the proposals for on-street parking charges in Okehampton and Tavistock on behalf of the Borough Council; and
2. the Council write directly to Devon County Council seeking an urgent meeting with key Members of the County Council, Borough Council, Okehampton and Tavistock Town Councils and other key stakeholders, with the set objective of understanding the rationale, full implications and impact of the proposals."

53. **To receive communications from the Mayor or person presiding**

CM 53/23

The Mayor proceeded to inform the meeting of:

**(a) Mayor's Young Persons Environment Award**

The Mayor took pleasure in advising those present that Whitchurch Primary School and Okehampton Brownies had won recent Mayor's Young Persons Environment Awards and confirmed that the prizes would be awarded to each early in the New Year.

54. **To respond to any questions submitted by the public and to receive deputations or petitions under Council Procedure Rule 21**

CM 54/23

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Mayor advised that the Council had received notification from Mr Graham Parker of his intention to formally submit a petition to this Council Meeting regarding Tavistock Bus Routes. Specifically, the petition stated that:

*'We, the undersigned, are dismayed that our local bus services have been depleted and withdrawn without consultation with the people of Tavistock. We ask our elected representatives to protest on behalf of all users of these services and to work with us to:*

- *Reinstate the 89 local bus services replacing the new 86 and 89 buses; and*
- *Reinstate the 104 and 105 services for our children.*

The Mayor proceeded to exercise her discretion to invite Mr Parker to present his Petition and to address the Council. During his address, Mr Parker made particular reference to the new service costing three times more than the previous service and his hope that the Borough Council and Tavistock Town Council could work together in an attempt to reinstate these bus services.

55. **Questions On Notice**

CM 55/23

Members noted that no Questions on Notice had been received from the membership in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

56. **Motions On Notice**

**CM 56/23**

The Mayor advised that no Motions on Notice had been received from the membership in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

57. **To receive the Minutes of the following Committees, to note the delegated decisions and to consider the adoption of those Minutes which require approval**

CM 57/23

**(a) Development Management & Licensing Committee – 3 October, 31 October and 21 November 2023**

It was moved by Cllr R Cheadle, seconded by Cllr T Southcott and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings held on 3 October 2023, 31 October 2023 and 21 November 2023 be received and noted."

**(b) Audit & Governance Committee – 10 October 2023 and 5 December 2023**

It was moved by Cllr G Dexter, seconded by Cllr A Bridgewater and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 and 5 December 2023 be received and noted, with the exception of recommendation AC 30."

In respect of the Recommendation:

**AC 30 Strategic Risk Update and Framework**

The Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee introduced and made reference to the Risk Framework, summarising to Members the key points.

Firstly, that the Council recognised that it had a responsibility to manage risks and opportunities effectively, to control its risks and liabilities, to protect its employees and communities against potential losses, minimise uncertainty in achieving these goals and objectives and maximise the chances of achieving its vision.

Secondly, Risk Management was an integral part of the Council's Corporate Governance Arrangements and thirdly that the Council would be open in its approach to the management of risk and opportunity and defined the role of Staff, Management, the Performance Board, the Audit Committee and our Internal Auditors.

Thirdly, it set out clearly the reporting arrangements which were designed to ensure that Risk Management was embedded throughout the Council. This included monthly reporting to the Performance Board, Quarterly reports on Strategic Risk to the Hub Committee, six monthly reports to the Audit & Governance Committee and a consideration of risk within the Council's Annual Governance Statement and an Annual Review of risk.

Finally, all Members were asked to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Framework and were asked to let the Committee Chairman have any feedback.

It was then moved by Cllr G Dexter, seconded by Cllr A Bridgewater and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that the updated Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy be adopted;

**(c) Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2023**

It was moved by Cllr P Kimber, seconded by Cllr C West and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 be received and noted."

**(d) Hub Committee – 21 November 2023**

It was moved by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr C Mott and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 be received and noted, with the exception of recommendations HC 29/23 and HC 35/23."

In respect of the Recommendations:

**HC 29/23 Review of Capital Programme (Capital Programme Monitoring) and Review of Earmarked Reserves**

It was moved by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr C Mott and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED**:

- 1) that three capital projects be withdrawn from the current Capital Programme, these being Parklands Leisure Centre contribution to moveable floor (£50,000), Tavistock Viaduct (£20,000) and the Springhill Temporary Accommodation

project (£193,200) (following the Hub Committee decision to put the project on hold whilst other options were explored). It was noted that the review of the capital programme had freed up capital resources of £263,200 which was potentially available for future corporate priorities and could be re-purposed;

- 2) that all other capital projects, in line with the existing capital projects within the overall Capital Programme, be progressed;
- 3) that the content of the Capital Programme Monitoring Report in Appendix C of the agenda report presented to the Hub Committee Meeting which set out the current expenditure on capital projects between April 2023 and September 2023 of £1.692m, (being 21% of the profiled budget for 2023/24), be noted;
- 4) that the revised capital allocation for the UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) scheme for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as set out in section 3.2 of the report considered by the Hub Committee, be noted;
- 5) that the addition of £26,632 to the capital programme for a new boiler at Okehampton Business Centre be noted (to be financed from the Maintenance Earmarked Reserve, set out in section 3.3 of the agenda report presented to the Hub Committee); and
- 6) that the outcome of the review of revenue reserves, releasing revenue reserves of up to £871,000 which was potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging Corporate Strategy, be approved."

### **HC 35/23 Climate Change – EV Strategy Update**

It was moved by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr I Saxby and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that the Electric Vehicle Strategy 2023-2025 (as set out at Appendix B of the agenda report presented to the Hub Committee) be adopted."

58.

### **Scheme of Members Allowances Review**

CM 58/23

Members considered a report that set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel following its meeting held on 23 November 2023

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Given the workload, some Members welcomed the recommendation for the Panel to keep under review the merits of whether or not Development Management and Licensing Committee Members should be in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance;
- (b) Members wished to record their thanks to the Independent Remuneration Panel representatives for giving up their time to compile such a balanced set of proposals.

It was then proposed by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr R Oxborough and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that, the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances (as set out at paragraph 3 of the presented agenda report) be agreed and that the revised draft Scheme of Members Allowances (as shown at Appendix C of the presented report) be adopted with immediate effect, with any consequent increases in Allowances being backdated to 9 May 2023."

59.

### **Member Appointments**

CM 59/23

Members considered a report that requested consideration of a proposal for the Council to withdraw from the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee and to support the dissolution of the Body.

The report also advised Members that with effect from Wednesday, 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales had become 'National Landscapes' and in view of the fact that the Council made formal appointments at its Annual meeting each May to the 'Tamar Valley AONB Partnership Committee', respectively, that these would now need to be re-titled accordingly.

It was then proposed by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr R Oxborough and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and "**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) with effect from 31 December 2023, the Council withdraw from the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee and the dissolution of the Joint Committee be supported; and
- 2) it be noted that the 'Tamar Valley AONB Partnership Committee' had been re-titled to the: 'Tamar Valley National Landscapes Committee'."



60.

**20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock PL19 8AY - Conversion of Existing Office Accommodation to Residential Units**

CM 60/23

Members considered a report that provided an update and made a series of recommendations with regard to the Council owned property at 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock, PL19 8AY.

During the ensuing discussion, particular reference was made to the total project cost. Whilst noting the outcome of the tender submissions, some Members remained of the view that the total project cost was expensive.

Since Members wished to discuss the issue of costings in more detail and it was therefore **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that, "in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in order to avoid the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act".

Once all Members were content that they had no further questions or issues to raise in exempt session, it was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that "the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting."

It was then proposed by Cllr M Renders, seconded by Cllr C West and upon being submitted to the Meeting was declared to be **CARRIED** and **"RESOLVED** that;

1. the repurposing of No. 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock PL19 8AY from office accommodation to 3 x residential units in accordance with Planning Consent Ref: 1318/23/FUL, be approved;
2. the total project cost of £650,000 to be funded as follows:
  - Internal borrowing in the form of a 50 year loan of up to £500,000 at a fixed interest rate of 3%; and
  - £150,000 in housing revenue grants;
3. the Head of Assets be authorised to make the contract awards necessary for the delivery of the Project; and
4. the programme dependency on the following issues be noted:
  - a. Securing a Bat Mitigation Licence from Natural England; and
  - b. Works being restricted to the active bat season (1st March to 31st Oct)."

The Meeting concluded at 5.25 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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