

**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

23 June 2022

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhirst (Chair), C Slade (Vice-Chair), Y Atkinson, J Brook, P Bullivant, J Hodgson, R Radford, I Roome, J Trail and J Wilton-Love

Apologies:-

Councillors M Asvachin, J Berry, R Chesterton, P Crabb and M Hartnell

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors R Croad, A Davis (remotely), R Gilbert and S Hughes

* 49

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2022 and the special held on 10 May 2022 be signed as correct records.

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Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

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Public Participation

There were no oral representations from Members of the Public.

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Scrutiny Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny updated the Committee on the work programme following a recent Masterclass on the programme available via: [Scrutiny Work Programme - Democracy in Devon](#). Items could also be addressed via the Standing Over Groups or masterclasses as appropriate.

In regard to the Loneliness Spotlight Review, the Chair of the Review referred to NHS Area Reviews across the County (in which the Member was involved for their area) which should be referenced in the Spotlight Review and the work should be delayed until those reviews had been completed.

* **53** **COVID-19 Update**

The Consultant in Public Health (Intelligence) updated the Committee (*presentation attached*) on COVID -19 Insights Devon, the ONS national picture, ONS infection survey (weekly), percentage of the population with C-19, hospital and intensive care admissions, death rates, level of antibody cover in the population, long COVID-19 data; positivity rates and headline information.

Key messages included: that COVID -19 was still here, the importance of the continued vaccination programmes and uptake, personal hygiene measures including face-covers in crowded areas; and isolation measures when tested positive (or with symptoms).

Members' question related to the vaccination programme for 75 + population and for 5 – 11 year olds on which further information would be sent.

* **54** **Domestic Abuse: Responsibilities and Responses**

(Councillor R Croad (Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality) attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke at the invitation of the Committee to introduce the Report)

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Communities (SC/22/2) on the changing context in national policy on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls outlining the Council's developing responses to these changes, including the Council's progress in delivering the new statutory duty placed on the Council under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021. The Report explored the need for further development of the Council's Violence against Women and Girls' strategic intentions.

Members' comments and discussion points with the Head of Communities; and the Strategic Lead - Violence against Women and Girls included:

- the need to develop benchmark metrics/quantitative data to help measure progress and analysis as part of the workstreams and with the development of the strategy over time;
- the recent development of the Plymouth Violence Against Women and Girls Commission from which there would also be learning for Devon;
- the importance of increased safe accommodation as reflected in the Workstreams detailed in the Report;
- the key importance of education (as a preventative measure) within the County Council, across all partners and communities;
- the close working with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary at all levels and through the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board;
- recognition within the strategic intentions that abuse was also experienced by men; and

- an example of a research project within the Metropolitan Police Force which would also potentially be a good source of additional learning.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor A Dewhirst, and **SECONDED** by Councillor C Slade and

RESOLVED that quantitative data/information (as well as qualitative) be used within the development of the strategic intentions to assess impacts of initiatives and that the Domestic Violence Scrutiny champion be part of the discussions on the work stream of multi-agency working around safety of women and children including connecting with academic work.

* **55** **Domestic Violence: Election of Champion**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor A Dewhirst, **SECONDED** by Councillor C Slade and

RESOLVED that Councillor Y Atkinson be appointed Member Champion, Domestic Violence in order to support the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality to better understand the Council's responses across its services.

* **56** **Election of Commissioning Liaison Member**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor A Dewhirst, **SECONDED** by Councillor C Slade and

RESOLVED that Councillors Y Atkinson and I Roome be appointed Commissioning Liaison Members for this Committee, to help support the relevant Cabinet Members and Directors /Heads of Service, in developing a fuller understanding of commissioning processes, and provide a link between Cabinet and Scrutiny on commissioning and commissioned services.

* **57** **Treasury Management Annual Stewardship Report**

(Councillor R Gilbert attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee in so far as it related to the creation of the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport and local proposed infrastructure expenditure in South Devon)

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/22/67) on the outturn position, performance and key matters arising from the Council's Treasury and Debt Management activities during the 2021/22 financial year. This followed agreement of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2021/22 by Council in February 2021 and formed part of the published budget book for the year. The Report covered the minimum revenue position, borrowing, the outturn position, prudential indicators; and a 2022/23 update.

Members' comments and discussion points with the Council's Investment Manager and Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills included:

- confirmation that there had been no rise in outstanding debt and the current debt was at a fixed rate; and
- confirmation that the proposed £15m for capital works in relation to the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport related to infrastructure improvements (carbon reduction initiative and highway improvements) in South Devon.

The Chair welcomed the successful and prudent approach adopted within the Treasury Management Strategy.

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Connecting Devon and Somerset Update

(Councillor R Gilbert attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee to introduce the report)

The Committee received and noted the Report of the Head of Economy, Enterprise, and Skills (EES/22/4) on an update on broadband coverage across Devon and progress of the publicly subsidised Airband and Openreach contracts and the Mobile Boost programme. It also set out the approach for Project Gigabit, the national broadband programme led by Government.

Members' discussion points with the Cabinet Member and Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills included:

- the ongoing challenges experienced across the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) contracts, including capacity and workforce, availability of components, supply chains and access to infrastructure and assets that were affecting the delivery of new broadband services;
- the capacity within the industry to resource build and the current lack of skilled resource nationally and further exacerbated by remoteness from major population centres; and the resulting staff turnover and difficulties in securing stable partners in areas like civil and fibre design;
- whilst changes in legislation around the shared use of passive infrastructure, such as ducts and poles, had made a significant improvement in pace and cost of delivery across the industry, this was ultimately a finite resource and the Head of Service undertook to provide Members with more information in this area and in regard to the Rural Gigabit Voucher programme (section 6 of the Report Vouchers and Community Approaches refers); and
- all live contracts were in delay, but it was anticipated that 97.82% of homes and businesses would have a superfast or gigabit capable service by the end of 2024 (401,880 premises).

The Chair thanked the Officers and the Cabinet Member for the report and commended the progress made.

* 59

Civil Parking Enforcement Annual Report

(Councillor S Hughes attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee and introduced the Report)

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/22/6) on the Service's Annual and an update on the review of Pay & Display tariffs proposed for 2022/23 and the next steps.

Member comments and discussion points with the Cabinet Member, the Traffic Management Group Manager and Traffic Management Team Leader included:

- the excellent quality and clarity of the Annual Report (attached to the report) which had received a national award and recognition and aimed to inform the public on the performance of the service; and the current and past Annual Reports were available at: [How parking is regulated - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/transport/roads/how-parking-is-regulated);
- the review of Pay and Display Tariffs (which had last been carried out in 2019/20) set to assist in managing parking stock effectively, to minimise congestion and assist in ensuring the right parking opportunities were available to support town centres (Details of tariffs at Appendix 2 of the report); and which had been subject to an Impact Assessment; and the IA methodology was explained;
- the revenue from parking charges was utilised to support the parking enforcement service and invest in public transport support across the County (and not hypothecated for any one area according to revenue generation, Exeter for example), to support the Safer Camera Partnership and Country Park, along with other key work; and the income and expenditure was reported to the Cabinet each year and also included in the Civil Parking Enforcement Annual Report;
- confirmation that there were no proposals for purely cashless pay and display;
- the substantial increase in pay and display charges in central Newton Abbot and Teignmouth the rationale for which would be provided to Committee members; and
- the challenges faced by the Service in the recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) across the County and the flexible approach in the allocation of CEO resources; and the next step which proposed that Tariff charges would be progressed via the Cabinet Member Decision process.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their report and publication of the Annual Report which had received national recognition for its clarity.

* **60** **Locality Budget Annual Report 2021/2022**

(Councillor R Croad, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality attended in accordance with Standing Order 25).

The Committee considered the Report of Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value, and Head of Communities (SC/22/3) on the annual statement which summarised the allocations approved by Members submitted for audit and monitoring purposes.

The Chair and Members referred to the importance of the locality budget process which enabled them to give grants in response to local needs within electoral divisions by supporting projects or activities that benefited the people and communities they represented. Members also noted the diminished spending during the pandemic.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor J Brook, and **SECONDED** by Councillor I Roome and

RESOLVED that the Locality Budget Statement for 2021/22 be approved.

* **61** **Climate Change Standing Overview Group Report**

(Councillor A Davis (Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport) attended (remotely) and spoke at the invitation of the Committee in regard to socioeconomic impacts of climate change and referred to the Peninsula Transport Partnership which could also look at issues faced by rural communities).

The Committee received and noted that update report of a meeting of the Standing Overview Group which had been held on 13 May 2022. The Report outlined the topics covered, highlighted the key points raised during discussion and detailed any agreed actions.

A Member referred to the socioeconomic impacts (section 4.4 of the Report refers) particularly in rural and farming communities; and the Head of Scrutiny confirmed that this would be added to the Group's work programme.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the compilation of the Report.

* **62** **Items Previously Circulated**

The Committee noted the item previously circulated since the last meeting relating to Highways Performance.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.53 pm