

## CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 June 2017

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhurst (Chairman), P Colthorpe, Y Atkinson, K Ball, R Bloxham, J Brodie, J Brook, C Chugg, P Crabb, A Eastman, R Edgell, A Saywell and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors M Asvachin, I Hall and M Shaw

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors J Brazil, A Davis and R Croad

\* 1

**Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2017 and of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held on 23 March 2017 be signed as correct records.

\* 2

**Matter of Urgency: Fire Safety in Devon Schools**

(An item taken under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

Fire Safety at Devon Schools

The Chairman had decided that the Committee should consider this item as a matter of urgency in order that Members may be apprised of the steps being taken to review and ensure the safety of local authority school buildings following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London.

The Acting Chief Officer for Highway Infrastructure and Waste reported that:

- the Council had commissioned NPS to carry out investigative work on the construction methods used in Devon schools in readiness for any Government directives and/or recommendations;
- the Department for Education had sent to all local authorities, Academy Trusts, Diocesan Authorities and other responsible bodies involving schools, a questionnaire for completion and return this week focussing on premises of four storeys or above and residential accommodation for children; Devon had three schools that provided residential accommodation for children;
- the Council's Estates and Asset Management team had already responded to the Department for Communities and Local Government indicating that while Devon County Council was not a stock holding local authority, fire safety processes and procedures were being reviewed; the Council's only 'high rise' property was currently unoccupied (former office premises) and had been checked by the Fire Service last week; the Estates confirmed that the Council had control measures in place for regularly testing and servicing building fire safety equipment and also fire risk assessments in place for each property.

- fire risk assessments in schools had for some years been the responsibility of schools directly and periodic checks and visits were made by Health and Safety;
- sprinklers were not automatically put into schools, due in part to the burden of responsibility that would be placed on schools for maintenance, instead emphasis was on providing compartmentation and where possible exit routes to classrooms for quick evacuation and safeguarding of life.

\* **3**      **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from Members of the Public.

\* **4**      **Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet Member Remits and Co-ordination of Scrutiny Activity**

The Committee noted the current Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Committees and revised Cabinet Member Remits which had been circulated for information.

The Head of Scrutiny also reported on the role of the Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees in co-ordinating the activities of Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups and on agreed ways of working and the independence of Scrutiny Committees.

\* **5**      **Introduction to Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity**

The Committee received the Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity introducing Members to the different service areas of her responsibilities and identifying areas of business that Members may wish to consider adding to their work programme.

The Chief Officer and Members discussed, inter alia:

- the statutory duty around community safety at County and District level and the need to work in a preventative way;
- the impact of flooding and the suggestion of a dashboard identifying areas where work was being undertaken;
- the lack of good social housing and need for that to be included in strategic planning and joint working;
- Emergency Planning responsibilities and the ability to cope if faced with a catastrophic event;
- Domestic violence and sexual abuse, and the work previously undertaken by People's Scrutiny; also the Safer Devon Partnership who were leading on this work and the potential of having a Joint Masterclass with Health and Adult Care Scrutiny.

\* **6**      **Introduction to Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste**

The Committee received the Report of the Acting Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/17/39) introducing Members to the service and identifying areas of business that Members may wish to consider including in their work programme.

In discussion with Members on the areas for potential Scrutiny, the following points arose:

- Members would like to see the continuing regular monitoring of closed landfill site management;
- the Acting Chief Officer would provide further information on the Shared Savings Scheme to Members;

- the inclusion of Use of the Community Enhancement Fund, Air Quality and Co-ordinating Highway Activity in the work programme.

\* 7 **Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband Programme and Mobile Phone Connectivity**

The Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills updated Members (following previous reports from Place Scrutiny Committee in March 2017) on the Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband Programme (CDS) and Mobile Phone Coverage, namely:

- Phase One:
  - BT had reported that over 282,000 premises had now been connected to superfast broadband across Devon and Somerset, which exceeded their target;
  - take up of fibre service now stood at 36% compared to 33% in March and clawback discussions would shortly take place with BT on how this funding could be applied to enhance coverage.
- Phase Two:
  - Airband had now made superfast wireless broadband available to over 3,855 premises across the National Parks, of which 2,646 were on Dartmoor and 1,209 were on Exmoor;
  - this programme was now paused pending a change control process to enable more premises to be brought into the programme.
- Phase Two projects: The contract for Lot 4 had been awarded to Airband Community Internet Limited and the contract for Lot 1 would be announced shortly.
- Voucher Scheme: The scheme was now closed to new applicants and was under review. The deadline to use the vouchers had been further extended to 30 September 2017.
- Mobile Phone Coverage: A bid submitted to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for additional capital funding had been approved in principle, subject to some further work.

**RESOLVED** that a standing Task Group be set up comprising Councillors Ball, Bloxham, Saywell and Dewhirst to monitor the progress of the CDS Programme and mobile phone coverage improvements, reporting to the Committee.

\* 8 **Locality Budget Annual Report 2016/17**

The Committee received the Joint Report of the County Treasurer and Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (SC/17/2) which, in line with the Council's 'Locality Budget Operating Principles', provided an annual statement summarising the allocations approved by Members in relation to their Locality Budgets.

The Report omitted to include an amount of £3,135 spend for Councillor Greenslade, which took his allocation to the full £19,474.

The County Treasurer confirmed that the unspent allocation of approximately £30,000 in 2016/17 would revert to reserves as was usual practice in an election year. Members however put forward the suggestion that this sum be allocated equally to Members' Locality Budgets for 2017/18. The Chief Officer undertook to revert to Members on this suggestion.

\* **9      Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report 2016/17**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/17/62) on the Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report 2016/17 setting out the outturn position, reviewing performance and informing Members of any key matters arising from the Council's Treasury and Debt Management activities during the 2016/17 financial year. The Report also included an update on the 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

\* **10     Election of Commissioning Liaison Member**

**RESOLVED** that Councillors Atkinson and Ball be elected as Commissioning Liaison Members.

\* **11     Scrutiny Annual Report and future Work Programme**

**RESOLVED** that the following topics be included in the work programme for future consideration:

- Update review of school building materials
- Emergency planning
- Community Strategy
- Community Enhancement fund
- Air quality plans
- Co-ordination of highway activity / quality of highway reinstatements
- Ongoing Task Group on Broadband and mobile phone coverage
- LEP
- Devolution / Joint Committee
- Neighbourhood policing / Police and Crime Panel Chair / Chief Constable.
- Supporting Green travel
- 20mph speed limits

A draft work programme would be circulated to Members shortly.

[NB: The Council/Cabinet Forward Plan is available at:  
<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>]

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.50 pm