

CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 January 2018

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhirst (Chair), P Colthorpe, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, R Bloxham, J Hook, J Brook, C Chugg, R Edgell, I Hall, A Saywell, M Shaw and C Slade

Apologies:-

Councillors K Ball and P Crabb

* **43** Items Requiring Urgent Attention

(a) Bridges in Devon

The Chair had decided that the Committee should consider this item as a matter of urgency because of the recent RAC press release regarding the number of sub-standard bridges in Devon.

The Chief Officer for Highways Infrastructure Development and Waste reported that although the headline figure showed that Devon had the largest number of sub-standard bridges in the county, it needed to be considered in the context that Devon had the largest road network length of any authority in the UK and had 40% more bridges. Given the fact that the 249 sub-standard bridges figure included the 90 clapper bridges on Dartmoor, together with several bridges where it was impossible for heavy vehicles to get there because of the geometry of the highway network, they would not be considered for upgrading.

Furthermore, every three to five years the ADEPT Bridges Board carried out a survey of highway authorities to look at the condition of bridge stock. The last survey in 2015 showed that Devon was in the top 3 in the country for overall condition.

(b) Council's Gritting Policy

The Chair had decided that, at Councillor Colthorpe's request, the Committee should consider this item as a matter of urgency because of recent adverse weather conditions.

Councillor Colthorpe reported on the number of recent accidents in her area due to the icy weather and difficult driving conditions and requested that the Council's gritting policy be looked at in relation to criteria for gritting and primary salting network.

RESOLVED that a Member Development session take place on 26 February 2018 to consider the Council's gritting policy on primary routes and thereafter, if felt necessary, to form a Task Group, to be chaired by Councillor Colthorpe, to further investigate the gritting policy.

* **44** Public Participation

There were no oral representations from members of the public.

* **45** **Broadband and Mobile Phone Connectivity Task Group Update**

The Committee received the Report of the Task Group (CSO/18/06) which gave an update on the work undertaken to date and a summary of the evidence received.

In discussion with Members, the following points were raised:

- that future Scrutiny work could focus more greatly on the accessibility of mobile phone coverage in the County; and
- the possibility of ducting to new houses being a condition of future planning permissions.

The Task Group planned to continue with further meetings and to publish its final report in March 2018.

* **46** **Impact of Brexit on Devon Economy**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills (EES/18/1) on some of the key themes potentially impacted by Brexit. It was however acknowledged that key aspects of the UK's exit from and future relationship with the EU remained subject to considerable uncertainty, making it difficult to assess the potential impact of Brexit on Devon's economy.

The report highlighted the potential opportunities and impacts of Brexit for Devon, which were the Labour market; Trade; EU funding; Agriculture and Fisheries, Confidence and Investment and Intra-UK migration.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- that Devon MPs and stakeholders should be lobbied;
- the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group were working with the LEP and other local authorities looking at the important sectors of agriculture and construction, and also conducting a business survey, monitoring impacts, where the first stage of the research was due to be completed in the Spring;
- the Council were also working with existing businesses and the Department of International Trade to bring together Devon's exporting businesses to feed into the development of future exporting opportunities;
- the Council would be lobbying on the new Shared Prosperity Fund (a replacement for EU funding) to ensure it met the needs of the South West; and
- that due to the complexities and uncertainty around the UK's future relationship with the EU, full economic modelling of the potential impacts of Brexit on the Devon economy would not be financially viable at this time.

The Head of Service undertook to provide Councillor Shaw with an estimate of labour market migration data.

* **47** **Income Generation: Task Group Update**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills (EES/18/2) on progress made to date by the Income Generation Task Group on the recommendations that were made at the Committee's September 2016 meeting and subsequently endorsed by Cabinet.

The Report provided an update on the progress made against each of those individual recommendations and a summary of general developments since September 2016. It also highlighted further planned activity in respect of the issues identified.

Members suggested this might be a possible Task Group investigation for the Farms Estate Committee.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Dewhirst, **SECONDED** by Councillor Brooks and

RESOLVED that a further update be provided to the Committee in six months' time enabling the Committee to input into the development of practical measures for improving the Council's approach to income generation activities.

* **48** **Co-ordination of Highway Activity**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HCW/18/2) highlighting the Council's responsibilities in managing and co-ordinating works activity on the highway; how the Council monitored those works and the challenges currently faced; and the performance information for the four main utility companies on noticing and reinstatement activity.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- the poor quality of work carried out by some sub-contractors and badly repaired potholes;
- lack of penalty for returning to 'make good' work, and
- the establishment of a 'one point of contact' for utility companies.

* **49** **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2018/19**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/18/08) on the proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2018/19 financial year, prepared in accordance with the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and revised CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, to be submitted to the Cabinet and the County Council for ratification following consideration by this Committee.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Atkinson, **SECONDED** by Councillor Brooks, and

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 be endorsed and commended to the Cabinet and County Council.

* **50** **Community Strategy Action Plan**

The Committee received the Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (SC/18/1) providing the Committee with further information regarding its delivery and implementation, as requested at its November meeting.

The Chief Officer reported that the delivery of the strategy would be best achieved in partnership and through collaborative working. Key action areas were Commissioning and Funding; Volunteering; Communications and Engagement; Role Development and Evidence and Evaluation. Of particular interest to Members was the crowd funding opportunities and how Members would be supported. It was proposed to have a pilot scheme in place by Easter.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Committee undertake further work examining and inputting into the key action areas from the Community Strategy, specifically crowd funding and how the Council supports community development; and
- (b) that an invitation to join this piece of work be extended to all Scrutiny Members.

* **51** **Clear Channel Contract Update**

Councillor Asvachin reported that following a conducive meeting with Clear Channel, a 'one point of contact' had been established in the Council to ease communication.

The Member Investigation would provide a further report to the Committee at a future meeting.

* **52** **Scrutiny Work Programme**

RESOLVED that a future Masterclass be held on the Council's strategy for cycling and walking, including the use and design of roundabouts, and that a more in depth piece of work be undertaken if felt necessary.

* **53** **Future Meetings**

Please use link below for County Council Calendar of Meetings:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=427>

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.50 pm