

**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

12 June 2018

Present:

Councillors A Dewhurst (Chair), P Colthorpe (Vice-Chair), Y Atkinson, K Ball, R Bloxham, J Brook, P Crabb, A Eastman, M Shaw, C Slade and H Ackland

Apologies:

Councillors J Berry, J Hook, I Hall, J Berry and R Radford

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors M Asvachin, R Croad, R Hannaford, J Hart, A Leadbetter, B Parsons and A Saywell

\* 65

**Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2018 be signed as a correct record.

\* 66

**Matter of Urgency: Highway safety defects**

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

(Mr Simon Kane, Contract Manager from Skanska, attended and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Chair had decided that the Committee should consider, as a matter of urgency, this issue in view of concerns raised by both Members and the public relating to the high number of potholes not being repaired and the concern at Skanska's performance.

The Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste recognised the concerns raised, which were attributed to the extreme winter weather conditions and the high volume of potholes. She explained that over 40,000 potholes had been dealt with, but it was also acknowledged that delivery of the repairs had not been as expected.

In discussion, Members raised concern at the lack of gulley clearing, causing flooding onto roads which increased the size of the potholes and also the efficiency of pothole filling and re-filling.

The Chief Officer emphasised that Skanska would only repair potholes they had been authorised to do by the Council and that the highways team were currently trialling different ways of working with Skanska to improve efficiency.

Mr Kane reported that Skanska were undertaking work relating to the quality side of the business which would be cascaded to the operatives on the ground.

**RESOLVED** that the Task Group previously established be initiated with immediate effect.

\* 67

**Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the committee received and acknowledged oral representations made by Mr David Incoll on behalf of the Exeter Cycling Campaign and Mr Julian Burn relating to item 9 on the Agenda - Air Quality and Congestion.

(a) Mr Incoll highlighted the risk to health that prevented some people from taking up cycling and if there were any proposals to address this; and

(b) Mr Burn wished to make the Committee aware of the Dutch Cycling Infrastructure which could help to reduce air pollution and the research conducted into how air pollution impacted on health.

The Chair thanked Messrs Incoll and Burn for their representations which would be taken into account by the Committee during its subsequent deliberations.

\* **68**      **Call-in of Cabinet Member Decision - Haldon View, Exeter**

(Councillor R Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item and Councillors A Leadbetter and J Hart attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee.)

In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the requisite number of Members of the Council (Councillors Aves, Hannaford, Whitton, Atkinson, Brannan, Asvachin) had invoked the call-in procedure in relation to the decision of the former Cabinet Member for Resources and Asset Management relating to the proposal to declare the building Haldon View, Exeter as surplus to the requirements of the Council.

This was on the grounds that, *'Haldon View is an asset that we understand will not continue with being used by Devon County Council but with the lack of social housing in Exeter we want to call in this decision to find out what can be done to make sure this asset is used for social housing in Exeter working with key partners such as Exeter City Council'*.

Councillor Hannaford spoke on behalf of the Members who had called-in the decision to highlight the lack of affordable housing in Exeter and the problems of young people getting on the property ladder; how historically the Council had worked with Exeter City Council on vacant sites; and the concern lest Haldon View became further student accommodation.

Councillor Hart, as Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management, explained that a Cabinet Member decision to declare Haldon View surplus had been confirmed on 12 April 2018. He further added that it fell within a Conservation Area and that affordable housing and student accommodation were not responsibilities of Devon County Council.

Councillor Hart commented on access to the property, a previous planning permission, likely valuation, and the opportunity for renovation and/or conversion.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Ball and

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Member decision to declare Haldon View surplus to requirements be confirmed.

\* **69**      **Project Genesis Update and Changes to Local Policing**

(Councillor Ball declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a Street Pastor in Okehampton)

(Chief Superintendent Jim Colwell from Devon and Cornwall Police attended and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

Chief Superintendent Colwell provided the Committee with a progress report following the recommendations made in the Committee's Impact of Changes to Local Policing Spotlight Review report of November 2017 as follows:

Recommendation 1

The Police had undertaken an investigation across the County and there was to be an announcement at the Police and Crime Panel on Friday relating to numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Chief Superintendent Colwell would share this information with the Committee when available.

Recommendation 2

Considerable research had been undertaken to give a more detailed understanding of the role of PCSOs, guided significantly by neighbourhood policy.

Recommendation 3

The Connectivity Steering Group now had a delivery plan identifying 10 minimum standards which formed a key part of the business plan, to which all its members were signed up to.

Recommendation 4

Special Constables were being recruited again, but this remained a challenge in North Devon. Also, people from the private sector were being brought in to tackle the problem of cyber crime and a number of voluntary driver roles had been formalised as well as student volunteers. A Connect Group had opened in Okehampton and a Rural Engagement Team had signed up to work with Farm Watch. A road safety strategy was also being developed.

Recommendation 5

The Safer Devon Partnership (of which the Chief Superintendent was Chair) had a strong focus on the Prevention agenda and had supported several bids by Devon County Council for Government funding. Also, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner supported the Pathfinder Scheme, which challenged and changed the behaviour of first time offenders.

In response to Members' questions and comments, the following points in particular were highlighted:

- close working with Street Pastors was an effective resource, especially in Torbay and Newton Abbot;
- a Street Cadet group was to be established in Okehampton;
- the Councillor Advocate Scheme was promoting a number of seminars; take-up was mixed and the Police and Crime Commissioner was working on attaining a consistent take-up;
- a Policing Education Qualification, requiring a Degree, would be rolled out shortly;
- lack of awareness of the Councillor Advocate Scheme; and
- decline of PCSOs, their role and the delivery of a 2-year fast track programme linked to Exeter University.

**RESOLVED**

(i) that Chief Superintendent Colwell attend a future meeting of the Committee and present a written report on further progress in relation to the recommendations made in the Spotlight Review report; and

(ii) that the Police and Crime Commissioner be asked to share information on the Councillor Advocate Scheme with County and City Councillors.

\* 70

**Libraries Unlimited - Progress report**

(Councillor Croad, Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services, attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and Ms C Eastell, Chief Executive of Libraries Unlimited, Ms J Dent, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Emily Macaulay, Staff Trustee and Emily Williams, Cultural Associate attended and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Cabinet Member and the Chief Executive of Libraries Unlimited (the company) provided Members with an update on progress to date, highlighting the following in particular:

- book issues had dropped nationally but computer and Wi-Fi hours had increased;
- 3D printing was available;
- the company had been recognised nationally;
- there were 350 employees in over 50 libraries;
- the contract for Torbay libraries had recently been taken on, together with three Prisons contracts;
- savings had been made in the first two years, with efficiencies still to be made;
- there were new libraries in Ottery St Mary, Bampton and Chagford and one shortly in Topsham; and
- the company had been awarded an accreditation from the Arts Council.

A presentation was shown which gave a flavour of the variety of uses for libraries. In particular, Exeter Library was recognised by the Exeter Mosque as a 'safe place', and a TEDx event had recently been held there.

The Company's Annual Report 2016/17 was made available to Members.

**RESOLVED** that Libraries Unlimited give a presentation to a Masterclass on the morning of 25 September 2018 providing further details on numbers of issues, performance and the new computer system, which would then be considered at the Scrutiny Committee meeting in the afternoon, with questions to be submitted through the Head of Scrutiny.

\* 71

### **DYS Space Update**

(Councillors Croad, Cabinet Member for Community and Environmental Services, in accordance with Standing Order 25(1), Councillor Hannaford, in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and Mr Kevin Henman, Chief Executive of DYS Space, attended and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

Councillor Croad introduced Mr Henman who shared with the Committee the progress of tackling the challenging issues that DYS Space faced in its nine centres across Devon.

Mr Henman explained that national funding had been drastically reduced and around 600 youth centres had closed since 2012 with large numbers of qualified youth workers having been made redundant. One-third of school children referred to CAMHS were deemed not to have met the threshold and were without additional support and 808,000 young people remained NEET (not in education, employment or training). Since 2012, there had been a 335% increase of 14-year-old girls being admitted to hospital after attempted hangings. Among issues being addressed were mental health, loneliness, high levels of child sexual exploitation and drugs.

Mr Henman added that DYS Space ran the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; were currently looking to work with the Atkinson Unit and had, since 2012, appointed three apprentices. One important area of work was the Open Access Network which ran across the nine centres.

DYS had a three-year contract with the County Council until January 2020 and its Annual Report had previously been circulated to Members.

Councillor Hannaford questioned whether this item would be better considered under the Children's Scrutiny Committee and suggested the Annual Report be taken to a future meeting of that Committee.

The Head of Scrutiny clarified that the work of DYS Space spanned between both the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee and the Children's Scrutiny Committee.

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

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the operational scrutiny of DYS Space be led by the Children's Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in their work programme and that invitations be extended to this Committee for any future Task Group work relating to this issue; and

(b) that Members of this Committee be included in the consideration of the re-tendering of the youth services contract.

\* **72**      **Air Quality and Congestion Task Group**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Committee received the Report of the Air Quality and Congestion Task Group (CSO/18/20) and noted the recommendations contained therein. The Chair of the Task Group thanked everyone involved with the preparation of the Report and stated that note had been taken of what had been said earlier in the meeting during the Public Participation item.

Councillor Hodgson welcomed the recommendations made in the Report and acknowledged that it was a national issue affecting health, safety, obesity and quality of life, where a change in behaviour was challenging. There was a need to look long term at reducing air pollution and congestion by concentrating on the next generation.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Bloxham and

**RESOLVED** that the Task Group and recommendations be commended to the Cabinet with a view to undertaking further work on this issue as appropriate.

\* **73**      **Locality Budget Annual Report 2017/18**

The Committee received the Joint Report of the County Treasurer and Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (SC/18/2) 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.

\* **74**      **Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/18/48) on the Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report 2017/18 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 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management Stewardship Report for 2017/18 be endorsed and recommended to Cabinet.

\* **75**      **Gender Pay Gap**

The Committee received the Report of the County Solicitor (CSO/18/18) on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) figures which the County Council were required to publish under the Equality Act

2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, explaining that GPG was the difference between the average earnings of men and women, and not a measure of equal pay.

The Report provided the Council's GPG figures, external comparisons, both national averages and council averages, the reasons for the Council's GPG and the action committed to reducing it. Appended to the Report was a graph showing the number of employees by grade and gender. The Council's figures did not include Schools.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee welcome the commitment of officers to undertake further research and analysis on the gender pay gap in order to formulate an action plan, which will report back to the Committee in due course.

\* **76**      **Clear Channel Contract**

(Councillor M Asvachin attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee.

The Committee received the Report of the Member Investigation (CSO/18/22) providing details of the investigation undertaken into the provision of bus shelters by Clear Channel under its joint contract with the County Council and Exeter City Council.

The Report outlined progress on the current bus shelter replacement programme and difficulties preventing replacement; reporting and monitoring for the future; discussions taken place and recommendations made.

Councillor Asvachin highlighted in particular the poor communication between parties and the lack of regular invoicing.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations contained in the Task Group Report (CSO/18/22) be endorsed and referred to Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee for consideration.

\* **77**      **Election of Commissioning Liaison Member**

**RESOLVED** that Councillors Atkinson and Ball continue as Commissioning Liaison Members for the ensuing year.

\* **78**      **Scrutiny Work Programme**

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

Potholes and Safety Defects Task Group  
Membership: Councillors Ball (Chair), Dewhirst, Crabb and Shaw.

Problem Gambling – One-day Spotlight Review  
Membership: Councillors Dewhirst (Chair). Dates to be canvassed.

Speed Limits Task Group  
Membership: Councillors Dewhirst (Chair), Colthorpe, Shaw and Bloxham

Universal Credit

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 5.55 pm

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12/06/18