

**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

28 January 2020

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhirst (Chair), P Colthorpe, Y Atkinson, K Ball, J Brook, P Crabb,
A Eastman, R Edgell, I Hall, J Hook, R Radford, M Shaw and C Whitton

Apologies:-

Councillors J Berry, R Bloxham and C Slade

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor B Parsons

* **167** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* **168** **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from members of the public.

* **169** **Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Head of Scrutiny updated Members as to the Work Programme and requested that Members who wished to be a part of the 5G Spotlight Review should contact her directly.

* **170** **Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (the Fire Service)**

(Chief Fire Officer Lee Howell and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Glenn Askew from the Fire Service attended at the invitation of the Committee.)

The Committee received an extract of the Report of the Chief Fire Officer from the Fire Service Agenda dated 10 January 2020, which set out the outcomes of the Safer Together Programme Service Delivery public consultation following the Fire Service's proposals for closing or removing a number of low risk/low activity fire stations and appliances and reinvesting the savings into prevention work in the community. The public consultation ran from 1 July 2019 to 20 September 2019.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- Budleigh Salterton fire station would close with existing firefighters responding instead from Exmouth;
- Topsham fire station would close and appliances and firefighters relocated to Clyst St George and Middlemoor.
- some vehicles could now operate with less than four crew members, which meant that some places that were earmarked for closure could operate differently;
- 'aggregate crewing' was a new concept, where crews joined together to form a single crew, boosting availability of appliances, and was proving successful;

- there was a new On-call duty system that paid for staff availability, enhancing their pay and likely improving retention of staff, receiving an £1.8 million investment;
- the Fire Service's risk management plan would be kept under review; and
- Members welcomed the new community responder role - this was currently a pilot project with the Devon & Cornwall Police which was hoped to be expanded.

The Committee thanked the Chief Fire Officer Lee Howell and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Glenn Askew for their report and attendance and requested that they attend a future Masterclass to keep the Committee updated.

* **171** **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/21**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/18) on the proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/21 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.

The County Treasurer highlighted in particular the proposal to pay £32 millions into the Pension Fund during April 2020, which represented the total deficit contributions set for the Council for the next three years. In return for making an advance payment of three years' deficit contributions, the Pension Fund would give a 4.5% discount on the payment required, resulting in a saving of £0.5 million in each of the next three years.

The County Treasurer also tabled a comparison paper of the Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2019 (£millions) for County Councils in England.

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

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 be endorsed and commended to the Cabinet.

* **172** **A Resilient Economy**

(Councillor Gilbert attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee.)

The Committee received the report of the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills (EES/20/1) which provided a summary of the current state of the Devon economy, highlighting the current structure of the County's economy, trends, opportunities and challenges. The report also set out the direction of travel for the Council's new Strategy for Growth 2020-2030.

Devon's economy currently remained buoyant overall, but there was a continuing need to intervene in a targeted way to help address market failure in some communities and sectors, which the Council's Strategy for Growth aimed to achieve. The Council would continue to monitor the economy, including more vulnerable sectors such as retail and construction, and would work in partnership with other public, private and third sector organisations to help ensure economic growth benefits were shared by the County's residents and businesses, whilst working towards ensuring Devon's businesses and residents were able to share in the opportunities that emerged from growing sectors and trends, locally, nationally and globally.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- the low level of earnings for people working locally in some areas of Devon and the aim to improve Devon's standard of living;
- Petroc College, with its three campuses in North and Mid Devon, was expanding its vocational training; and

- the Careers Hub, which was run on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership, had enterprise advisers in schools to help inform curriculum and career choices for young people.

Members welcomed the report and requested that an item on Learn Devon and the Skills Advisory Panel work be brought to a future Scrutiny Committee.

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

RESOLVED that the report be commended to the Cabinet.

*** 173 Highways Dashboard Performance**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/20/1) on the Highways Performance Dashboard, which provided an overview of performance on key seasonal aspects of delivery, namely winter service, cyclical drainage works, carriageway safety defects and civil parking enforcement.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- as of yesterday (27 January), there had been 33 gangs out on the highway network and 5,173 potholes had been repaired;
- the wet weather during the autumn and into December had caused big problems with flooding and drainage this year; and the current adverse weather conditions had meant that many potholes had to be returned to for repair again;
- the 'beat pattern' of civil parking enforcement officers was intelligence-based, where problems had been reported; and
- appendix D to the report showed the monthly breakdown of Penalty Charge Notices issued by community, as opposed to number of visits, and the Chief Officer undertook to explore the availability of the latter.

*** 174 Climate Change Standing Overview Group (SOG)**

The Committee received the report of the Climate Change SOG which met on 6 December 2019 to discuss and comment on the recommendations from the University of Exeter on the development and operation of the Devon Net-Zero Citizens' Assembly, with the final design being decided by the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

The Head of Scrutiny explained there would be a robust process for selection to the Citizens' Assembly which would be representative of the wider population.

*** 175 Energy from Waste Visit**

The Committee received the Notes from the Exeter Energy from Waste Unit visit that took place on 27 November 2019.

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 5.16 pm