

**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

23 September 2021

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhirst (Chair), C Slade (Vice-Chair), Y Atkinson,
M Asvachin, J Brook, R Chesterton, P Crabb, M Hartnell, J Hodgson,
R Radford and I Roome

Apologies:-

Councillors J Berry and P Bullivant

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors S Hughes, A Saywell and P Twiss

* **1** Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 be signed as a correct record.

* **2** Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* **3** Public Participation

There were no oral representations from members of the public.

* **4** Scrutiny Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny updated the Committee as to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the following items be added:

- Loneliness in Communities
- Food poverty
- Rural Road safety

5 COVID-19 update

The Council's Chief Executive updated the Committee on the current position within Devon relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, which included the following:

Prevalence

- In the last 7 days, there had been 218 cases per 100,000 population compared to a national average in England of 259; of the 60+ population, cases were 95.2 compared to a national average in England of 118.
- Since the start of the pandemic, there had been 6.8% of population with confirmed cases, compared to a national average in England of 11.8%
- There had been 772 reported deaths during the pandemic, with the national average being 0.2% of the population and Devon just under 0.1%.
- July/August had seen a significant spike in numbers which had been impacted by tourism and high profile events such as Boardmasters, predominantly affecting unvaccinated younger people.
- Numbers in hospitals with Covid, including Plymouth and Torbay, were 23 RD&E, 10 North Devon and 60 Torbay.
- As to care homes, Devon & Cornwall had low death rates, with Devon having the 2nd lowest figure in the country in the 65+ age group, with just one significant outbreak currently in Devon.

Impact

- The Chief Executive referred Members to [Devon's economy](#), a paper that was being presented to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board that afternoon, which summarised the latest economic impact on Devon.
- Of major concern was the pressure that public services were currently under, e.g. the Ambulance service, coupled with workforce issues.

Vaccination

- Devon was above the national average for vaccinations, with around 90% of over 20s and over 95% of over 50s having been vaccinated.
- The booster programme and vaccinations for the 12-15 age would provide enhanced protection.

Organisation:

- Staff surveys continued to be conducted to gauge staff feeling and numerous channels existed for staff engagement.
- Longer term working models were being looked at to ensure best possible environment for staff.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his attendance and update.

6 Highways Performance Dashboard

(Councillor Hughes 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 Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/21/57) on the Highways Performance Dashboard, which provided an overview of performance on key seasonal aspects of delivery, namely Winter service; Reactive works including potholes and drainage cleaning; Delivery of planned works; Doing What

Matters – Defects; Divestment of Skanska Infrastructure Services; Staffing Issues; and Road Markings.

Member and Officer discussion covered:

- Pressure on the service due to staffing issues, where it was clarified that the report referred to DCC staff and not to those provided by Milestone contractors, and was a national picture;
- Apprenticeship and graduate training programmes were currently being recruited to;
- Inflation had been built into service contracts for next year; and
- Members were directed to the work programme which gave details of planned work to be carried out, and a link to this would be included on the Members' Sharepoint site.

7 **Spotlight Review - Milestone**

The Committee considered the Report of the Milestone Spotlight Review and the recommendations contained therein.

Milestone Infrastructure currently held a seven-year contract to provide the Council's highways maintenance services. The current contract was in year five of seven with options to extend up to ten years. Milestone Infrastructure were the Council's primary partner and made up the informal Devon Highways organisation, but the contract delivered less than 50% of the Council's overall highways budget, which was in the region of £30m a year.

Considering the evidence session in the Spotlight Review the two SWOT analyses had been completed, namely Option 1: Recommissioning the service and Option 2: Extending the contract with Milestone, which clearly showed that there were more detailed opportunities and strengths in extending the current contract.

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

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be endorsed and commended to the Cabinet, with a progress report to Committee in six months' time:

- (a) Extend the highways maintenance contract held with Milestone Infrastructure, taking advantage of the full option to extend by three years.
- (b) As part of the extension review the contract Service Information to meet the changing needs of the organisation and the population of Devon.
- (c) Communicate successes and measurables in Highways through the Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee

and in briefings for Councillors to share with Town and Parish Councillors as well as with members of the public.

8 Property Services & Facilities Management - Future Delivery Model

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support on the future delivery model for Property Consultancy, Facilities Management, Catering and Cleaning, the Joint Venture partnership for which ran until March 2022. The Report would be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 October 2021.

A comprehensive delivery model appraisal process had been undertaken and a Management Board convened to consider the most appropriate future delivery model for these services. This had led to recommendations as to the best future delivery model to fulfil the Council's requirements, and detailed contractual proposals had been negotiated for the prospective future service.

The Management Board shortlisted to a preferred option of an integrated joint venture. Officers subsequently developed proposals for a single, broader partnership to support the Council's needs, in conjunction with the Council's existing Joint Venture partner, Norse Group.

Member and Officer discussions centred primarily around the process as to governance and oversight and the composition of the proposed Liaison Board.

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

RESOLVED that the Report and actions taken be commended to Cabinet, subject to an additional part of the Report detailing the composition of the Liaison Board and required skills of the Board Directors, and how recruitment will be undertaken.

9 Locality Budget Annual Report 2020/21

The Committee received the Joint Report of the County Treasurer and Head of Communities (SC/21/2) on the annual statement which summarised the allocations approved by Members and submitted to this Committee for audit and monitoring purposes. The Appendix detailed the total Locality Budget for 2020/21; Carried forward locality Budget from 2019/20; and the Total Locality Budget payments allocated in 2020/21.

Members welcomed the £34,585 underspend for 2020/21 being utilised around food insecurity and distributed to families in need through small grants for emergency funding via the Council's Early Help teams.

10 **Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Communities (SC/21/1) which summarised the progress in delivering the Council's new statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. A draft Strategy was attached to the Report.

The Council had a new statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to assess the need and create a Strategy for domestic abuse support in the Devon area for all victims and their children who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of the area.

Regulations linked to the Act required local authorities to carry out their needs assessment and publish their strategy for delivery of the duty by the end of October 2021. Local authorities would monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategy and report back annually to central government.

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

RESOLVED that the Report be commended to Cabinet, subject to:

- (a) Devon County Council be asked to sign up to the employer's initiative on domestic abuse, and encourage partners to do the same; and
- (b) Outcome 2 objectives refer to needing a multi-agency approach that should specifically include employers and trade unions.

11 **Election of Commissioning Liaison Member**

In line with the recommendations of the ['Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Task Group Report](#), the Committee was asked to select a Commissioning Liaison Member, whose role was to work closely with the relevant Cabinet Members and Chief Officers/Heads of Service, to develop a fuller understanding of commissioning processes, and provide a link between Cabinet and Scrutiny on commissioning and commissioned services.

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

RESOLVED that Councillor Crabb be elected as Commissioning Liaison Member for the ensuing year.

12 **Election of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Member Champion**

At the Cabinet on 9 July 2021, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health, Communities and Equality wished to seek nominations for a Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Member Champion on each of the three Scrutiny Committees in order to better support the Council's responses across its services.

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

RESOLVED that Councillor Atkinson be elected as Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Member Champion for the ensuing year

* 13 **Standing Overview Group - Climate Change**

The Committee received the meeting notes from the Climate Change Standing Overview Group held on 6 September 2021.

It was noted that Councillor Davis was now the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change in place of Councillor Croad.

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.20 pm