

FULL COUNCIL

28 FEBRUARY 2019

Present:

Councillors Kerswell (Chairman), Keeling (Vice-Chairman) Austen, Barker, Bullivant, Christophers, Clarence, Clemens, Colclough, Connett, Cook, Cox, Dennis, Dewhirst, Evans, Golder, Goodey, Gribble, Haines, Hayes, Hocking, Hockin, G Hook, J Hook, Jones, Lake, Matthews, Mayne, Morgan, Nutley, Parker, Peart, Rollason, Russell, Thorne, Winsor and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Bromell, Eden, Fusco, Jeffery, Orme, Pilkington, Prowse and Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Tom Butcher, Senior Estates & Development Surveyor
Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer
Sarah Selway, Democratic Services Team Leader
Phil Shears, Managing Director
Karen Trickey, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
Tony Watson, Interim Head of Commercial Services

14. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Gribble seconded by Councillor Peart that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 subject to the following amendments re question 4 in italics:-

2018 survey, page 4 - 78% from Devon and the South West
2017 survey, page 6 – 83% from Devon and the South West
2016 survey, page 5 – 82% from Devon and the South West
2015 survey, page 5 – 87% from Devon and the South West

were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4.5(J) (IF ANY)

Question

"In recent articles and debate here in the chamber the leader of the council has stated extensively that the Council are in possession of figures showing 80% of new homes purchased in the Council area are from within TQ and EX postcodes, yet the Council have as yet failed to provide the transparency needed to assess the accuracy of the leader's claims by publishing. Furthermore, the leader hasn't acknowledged that even if the entirety of new homeowners in this new development at Wolborough are 'local' that it would still represent a growth of the population locally in Newton Abbot, and therefore increase demand on services as indicated by the NHS. In light of that and your attacks on the NHS, I ask why you have not provided the detail and not apologised to the NHS over your unfair and accusatory stance?"

Response from the Leader

Thank you for your question. I can confirm that the council has been carrying out detailed analysis of residents of new housing developments since 2015, based on a survey delivered to recently built homes. The surveys are carried out and analysed by council officers or a consultant working on behalf of the council. They are published on the council's website each year.

This survey covers a wide range of topics, and includes a question on where people lived previously. The responses show that about 70% - 80% of residents in the new homes were previously within the TQ and EX postcodes. The year on year figures are pretty consistent and therefore give an overall reliable picture in our view – 80%, 67%, 77% and 75%. If anything, they are probably underestimates, since there are fewer responses from social housing tenants than you would expect, and 97% of social housing tenants move in from within Devon (according to official Devon Homechoice data).

The Council has a very good working relationship with the local CCG and continue to talk to them. The Council of course wants a fully functioning NHS and in response to the comments made by the NHS we were not attacking the NHS but defending our position of fulfilling our statutory obligations to other bodies and the public.

17. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4.5(K) (IF ANY)

The following question has been asked by Cllr J Hook

Question

Council notes that Government introduced a revised NPPF in July 2018 outlining a new standard national methodology for assessing housing need that Councils will be required to use. The new methodology takes away any of the limited local control that Teignbridge District Council had over deciding how many houses were needed. From May this year when TDC's Local Plan reaches its 5th

Birthday, Government tells us that the new methodology will be applied in Teignbridge. Our annual housing requirement will increase from 620 to 777 in May.

Council will also be aware of the recent independent assessment of housing need in Devon, commissioned by CPRE, and carried out by respected consultants ORS, who have identified significant flaws in the government methodology. ORS estimate that government have overestimated annual housing need in Devon by over 1000 houses, and in Teignbridge by over 200 per annum.

In light of this information, will the PH for Housing and Planning and the Managing Director write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the LGA, on behalf of our Council, and the residents of Teignbridge, expressing our deep dissatisfaction with the imposition of their needs assessment and ask that they examine again their formula for calculating housing need, in the light of the CPRE evidence.

Response from Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

The Government have just confirmed that they are retaining the existing calculation for objectively assessed need, based on the 2014 household projections and the latest (2017) affordability data for each local authority. While they are considering whether a revision to the formula is appropriate in the longer term, they have stated that any such revision will definitely take account of affordability/market factors. It is noted that the CPRE do not propose any method for taking account of affordability or market factors in their work.

Your officers note that the CPRE base their report on the belief that “there is no housing crisis” and that there is no problem with affordability. Hence their reliance on the official household projections produced by the Office of National Statistics. However, the Office of National Statistics themselves advise strongly against using the projections in this way – their official position is that “Household projections are not a prediction or forecast of how many houses should be built in the future.” In particular, they take no account of the impact of housing affordability on the ability of young people to form new households and other key determinants of housing need.

In your officers’ experience, the view that there is no housing crisis or problem with affordability is not tenable in Teignbridge (nor indeed in most of England). It is contradicted by the day to day experiences of officers in the housing service and is not a view held by any reputable housing organisation that your officers are aware of.

Given these points, it does not seem appropriate for the Council to support the views set out in the CPRE report.

In response to Councillor J Hook’s supplementary question regarding the need to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to confirm why they overestimated the demand for housing in Teignbridge and increased the target by 150 homes. The Portfolio Holder for

Housing and Planning stated that the increase demand for homes had been across the whole country and therefore it would be in appropriate to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

18. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2019/2020

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources proposed that the Executive Budget as set out in the agenda papers and that the recommendations as per the circulated report be approved.

In presenting the budget, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources thanked officers for their preparation of the budget. He advised that Teignbridge would be setting a balanced budget despite the continuing pressures on costs and reductions funding streams.

He highlighted the following:-

- loss of the revenue support grant which was £4.5 million in 2013/24 and falling to zero next year;
- reduction in New Home Bonus of around £300k
- change in Business Rates from 100% trial to 50% for the coming year and the unknown outcome of the Government's full reset of the baseline
- increases in costs – due to inflation and energy price rises
- proposals to increase general reserves to just over £1.9 million
- able to balance budget through savings from the Council's BEST2020 process and service plan reviews
- the Council continues to be a debt free Authority, although have indicated potential borrowing but only at a time when the Council's cash balances were appropriate
- the capital programme including provision for affordable housing and capital investments which would generate jobs, boost the economy and tourism;
- some car parking charges frozen or reduced
- Council Tax was proposed to be increased by £5 per year for a Band D property, Teignbridge share of council tax bill would be a 3.03% increase
- This was a budget that maintained services and invests in housing and jobs.

The Leader seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Connett as budget spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats proposed an amendment of an adjournment of the meeting for five days. This would enable a list of the savings that had been requested, but he stated not provided, by the Overview and Scrutiny on 14 January 2019 to be circulated. He had concerns over the high risk land and investment plan, the lack of an overall project plan and transparency in the budget papers. He continued that there was not enough detail in the report, there should be a line by line review of the budget and an adjournment would enable more detail to be circulated.

Councillor G Hook seconded the amendment.

In response to comments that insufficient information had not been provided as requested at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting by Councillor Connett, it was confirmed by the Portfolio Holder and the Chief Finance Officer that the latter had as requested, been at the Executive meeting 7 February 2019.

Having seconding the amendment, Councillor G Hook, also considered that there was not enough detail in the budget and raised concerns regarding the proposal for car charging points coming forward as there was no budget provision for this.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Some Members who objected to the proposed budget raised concerns regarding the proposal for the funding of 'Rethink', the budget pressures that the Council was putting on Town and Parish Councils, the lack of investment in street cleaning and the increase costs in waste recycling.

The Managing Director clarified that the proposed 2019/20 budget did not include a figure of savings needed to be found in year although savings would be required to produce a balanced budget in subsequent years.

The Leader commented that, over the last few years, the Central Government Grant had reduced from £10 million to effectively zero despite this, the Council had increased wages so that no employee earned less than £9 per hour. There had been an increase in employment, this had been substantiated by a reduction in Housing benefits claimed. The Council had secured investment in the district with a hotel at Teignmouth and employment sites in Newton Abbot.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services commented that the Town and Parish Councils precept percentage increase had not changed year on year, that over £1 million had been invested in cleaning over the past two years and that the information provided in the report was consistent with the level of detail which had always been provided to full Council budget meetings.

RESOLVED that:-

- a That the Teignbridge band D council tax for 2019/20 is increased by 3.03% or £5 to £170.17 per annum;
- b That general reserves are increased to 12.2% of the net revenue budget for 2019/20 or just over £1.9 million;
- c That £100,000 of the general reserve balance in any one year continues to be available to the Executive to meet unexpected expenditure in addition to the agreed revenue budget;
- d All other decisions with regard to budgetary change will be approved by reference to virement rules in the financial instructions;
- e That the summary revenue budget for 2019/20 is £16.0 million as shown at appendix 4. In particular the revenue budget includes:

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- The agreed two year pay deal including increases linked to the national living wage for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and a 2% increase for all other staff from 1 April 2018 and changes to the central spine from 1 April 2019
- Revenue contributions to fund capital at £0.2 million in 2019/20 and increasing significantly thereafter
- Rural aid continuing at £40,000;

g That the capital programme as shown at appendix 7 is approved. In particular this includes:

- Increasing jobs and homes through continuing support for housing whilst backing business and encouraging community-led planning
- Infrastructure delivery plan investment contributing to improving education, transport links, sports and open spaces

Indicative figures are shown for four major projects investing in town centres and employment sites over the three years. These would be funded through prudential borrowing but individual business cases (BC) will be brought to members for consideration as they are developed. They are not being approved in this budget and are described as Provisions with funding as BC: Prudential Borrowing;

- h That the prudential indicators are noted and the prudential limits approved all as set out in appendix 10;
- i That the updated treasury management strategy statement and authorised lending list as set out in appendix 11 is approved together with the capital strategy in appendix 11a;
- j That each scheme will be considered on its merits as explained at the end of appendix 11 to decide the calculation of minimum revenue provision for capital expenditure in 2019/20;
- k That the treasury management mid year review for 2018/19 as taken to Executive on 4 December and shown in appendix 12 is noted; and
- l That the council tax resolutions as recommended in appendix 15 are approved.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the recorded vote was as follows:-

Voting for:-

Councillors Austen, Barker, Bullivant, Christophers, Clarence, Clemens, Colclough, Dennis, Golder, Goodey, Gribble, Haines, Hockin, Hocking, Jones, the Chairman, Lake, Matthews, Mayne, Peart, Russell, Thorne and Winsor.

(23 Members)

Voting against:-

Councillors Connett, Cook, Cox, Dewhirst, Evans, Hayes, (G) Hook, (J) Hook, Keeling, Morgan, Nutley, Parker, Rollason and Wrigley.

(14 Members)

Absent:-

Councillors Bromwell, Eden, Fusco, Jeffrey, Orme, Pilkington, Prowse and Smith

(8 Members)

19. BAKERS PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation introduced the report to obtain approval to invest Section 106 funding to carry out the improvement works at Bakers Park, Newton Abbot. These included works to the tennis courts, new football changing room facilities, new kiosk and carpark extension to create 53 additional spaces.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation proposed the recommendation, this was seconded by the Leader.

Councillor J Hook proposed an amendment of deferral to enable further consultation to be undertaken with the Town Council and the local community, this was seconded by Councillor Wrigley.

During discussion, some Members whilst welcoming the investment, raised concerns regarding the lack of consultation with the Town Council and local residents, the need for 53 additional carpark spaces, what where the time for the allocation/expenditure limits on the Section 106 monies and the ownership of the road at Steppes Meadow.

The Leader commented that the proposals would support the merging Leisure Strategy and improve the facilities in Bakers Park.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation stated that the Council would consult the public through the planning process and that the time limits on the Section 106 monies was between four to six years. This proposal would provide much need investment for the park.

Councillor J Hook proposed an amendment to defer to add that the report be agreed subject to further details being brought back to Council as to how the funds would be spent. This was supported by the seconder Councillor Wrigley.

This was put to the vote and lost on the Chairman's casting vote.

The recommendation was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Approve capital expenditure of £705k, to be funded from S106 contributions, towards improvement works as outlined for Bakers Park.
- (2) Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Operations, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the works.

20. PLAYING PITCH IMPROVEMENTS

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation presented the report on the capital expenditure of Section 106 funds to carry out drainage improvement works to Council Playing Fields as highlighted by the adopted Teignbridge Playing Field Strategy. The improvements included works for 13 pitches over four sites at Newton Abbot – Decoy Country Park and Bakers Park, Bishopsteignton - Michaels Field and Dawlish Leisure Centre. The programme of works would be undertaken over the summer with completion in time for use over the winter.

The recommendation was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation, seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) capital expenditure of Section 106 funds for drainage improvement works as outlined for the Council's Playing Pitches Strategy July 2018 be approved; and
- (2) the Interim Head of Operations be given delegated authority, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation to award a contract to the most economically advantageous tender for the works following a compliant procurement procedure.

21. NEWTON ABBOT, HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Tourism introduced the report for a Hotel Development in Newton Abbot. The proposal would regenerate the town centre and create jobs.

During discussion, some Members raised concerns regarding the phasing of the development including the main ramp to the multi storey car park, improvements to the public realm, ensuring that proposals fit in with the Masterplan and the preferred developer for the hotel.

In response to Members, the Senior Estates & Development Surveyor clarified that the public realm was being looked at with Devon County Council, the marketing of the site and the offers that were received.

The Leader stated that the proposal would create vibrancy in the town centre and support both the day time and night-time economy. The Council had responded to the market through the type of hotel proposed.

The Leader proposed that, because of the financial issues concerning the Council and third parties, and competitive tender implications and the public interest in considering such matter in confidence, the Council go into Part II session and exclude the press and public. This was seconded by Councillor Matthews and carried.

22. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that press and public be excluded from the meeting of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

23. NEWTON ABBOT, HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

The exempt elements of the discussion on this agenda continued. The Senior Estates & Development Surveyor providing additional information in response to Members' questions. Members were advised of the options for Hotel, the potential risks, the procurement, the financial implications for the Council, the type of the hotel proposed and the lease details.

It was proposed by the Leader to proceed with Option B for the Hotel development and Option C for the Cattle Market, this was seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Economy Skills & Tourism and carried.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) To progress plans to self-develop a 72-bed hotel for lease to a national chain operator; and
- (2) Adopt a phased closure, converting the sheep pens below the multi-storey car park to parking in summer 2019 and closing the cattle pens at a later date once the development of the hotel is due to start.

(Councillor Connett left the meeting before the vote was taken)

Chairman