

EXECUTIVE

5 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present:

Councillors Connett, Dewhirst (Deputy Leader), G Hook (Leader), J Hook, MacGregor, Taylor and Wrigley

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Bradford, Bullivant, Clarence, Daws, Goodman-Bradbury, Keeling, Mullone, Parker-Khan, J Petherick, L Petherick and Purser

Apologies:

Councillor Jeffries

Officers in Attendance:

Tracey Hooper, Revenue, Benefits & Fraud Manager
Sarah Selway, Democratic Services Team Leader & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Phil Shears, Managing Director
Simon Thornley, Business Manager - Spatial Planning
Amanda Pujol, Head of Service Delivery and Improvement

58. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting on the 30th July 2019 were confirmed and approved and signed as a correct record.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

60. ARMED FORCES COVENANT ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and IT presented the report for an Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan. The action plan provided an overarching view of how the Council would work in the future to help and support to the Districts current and ex- Armed Forces personnel who live in district's area. He advised that the work on the plan would be on-going and that the Council would be looking into the position in respect of business rate purposes of the British Legion, Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) and Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) premises to investigate if they could be classified as charities in line with other community buildings. This was a live document which would be reviewed in six months' time.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and IT proposed the recommendation, this was seconded by Portfolio Holder for Waste Management & Environmental Health.

RESOLVED that the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan be approved and the plan be reviewed in six months to monitor progress and to add any further actions that may be required.

61. GARDEN COMMUNITIES

Prior notification - Member questions and responses attached to minutes.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report to confirm support for Garden Community status and for associated capacity funding to be used in planning high quality new neighbourhoods. This capacity funding would help to take forward a plan for the future growth of Newton Abbot and the support and involvement in the Exeter and East Devon Garden Communities would ensure that the district benefited from any impact of urban extensions on the district.

Non-Executive Members noted the excellent work that officers had done which resulted in the successful bid; raised concerns regarding the methodology used for the adopted local plan housing numbers and that these had not been explained; requirement for a root and branch review of the Local Plan; questioned the Council's sense of 'emergency' in respect of Climate Change; referred to a newspaper article that Bicester was not a good example of a 'Garden Community'.

To address the comments regarding the methodology, the Business Manager - Spatial Planning confirmed that it was not true to suggest that the local plan was based on "no set methodology" as indicated in the Councillor's question. He referred to an email which had previously been sent to the Councillor. The email had explained that in 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been introduced which required Local Planning Authorities to determine their own "objectively assessed need" (OAN) for housing. There was guidance about how to do this but the government had not required a specific methodology to be used. The Council's consultants had prepared an assessment of housing need using a detailed methodology based on factors such as projected population change, migration trends, household formation and affordability. The email had included links to the reports on the council's website describing the methodology in full.

The Leader commented that there would be an all embracing review of the Local Plan and he encouraged all councillors to take a full part in this review; that he had visited Bicester and it was an excellent example of a Garden Community with solar panels, triple glazing, tree planting and good public transport links and that the newspaper article referred to was several years out of date. He advised of a letter of support for the funding from the Newton Abbot Community Interest Company.

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change Emergency and Housing was on the Newton Abbot Community Interest Company Board.

During discussion Executive Members commented that a low carbon policy would be brought to Executive in October; the administration was genuine and serious in the need to address climate change; the new version of the housing numbers were a direct government requirement; need to ensure that Teignbridge members had control over development within Teignbridge within the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan; and the need to build communities.

The Business Manager - Spatial Planning advised that the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) would need to be agreed by all four of the Councils who had an equal say in its development.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning proposed the recommendation, this was seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Sport, Recreation & Culture.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Newton Abbot's status as a Garden Community be confirmed;
- (2) Teignbridge District Council support for the Exeter and East Devon Garden Communities status be confirmed; and
- (3) Receipt of associated 'capacity funding' from Government be agreed.

62. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Prior notification - Member questions and responses attached to minutes.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources presented the report that outlined the main reasons for recommending a move to a new simplified Council Tax Reduction scheme for the year 2020-21 which would be reviewed and revised as appropriate at the end of the year. The Council had a long record of providing Council Tax Support for those in need and this report sought to address the changes with the rollout of Universal Credit. The report also sought permission to consult with precepting authorities (Devon County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority) and such other persons as were likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

He brought Members attention to the proposed additional features which included incorporating a return to work incentive and the removal of the restriction that limited support to a maximum Band D property. He brought Members attention to the case studies in the appendix. The scheme would be cost neutral and Overview & Scrutiny Committee would have a chance to review the proposals in light of the consultation responses before coming back to Executive and Council.

Non-Executive Members raised issues regarding the inadequate response to the submitted questions; had concern regarding some the proposed changes, how they could affect low income residents; could not support the proposals; Overview & Scrutiny Committee would look at the scheme with the goal to develop the best scheme possible.

The Leader stated that everybody effected would be consulted.

Officers advised that it should be noted that any new proposals not considered in the original consultation could not take effect without fresh consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services proposed the recommendation, this was seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Waste Management & Environmental Health.

RESOLVED that plans to consult with major preceptors and the public on proposals to introduce a new working-age Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the year 2020-21 be approved.

It is recommended that the Council maintain overall support at current levels and that the following key features of our current scheme be retained:

- Maintain maximum support at 100%
- Maintain an Exceptional Hardship Scheme
- Continue to award 100% support to passported claims
- Disregard disability related benefits when calculating income
- Disregard child benefit and child maintenance when calculating income
- Disregard War disablement/widows pension when calculating income
- Limit the no. of dependent children in the calculation to a maximum of two for all new claimants
- Apply the minimum income floor for self-employed claimants
- Capital limit of £6,000
- Allow for childcare costs

It is recommended that the following **additional** features are included in the new scheme:

- Disregard Carers Allowance when calculating income
- Disregard Employment and Support Allowance (support element) when calculating income
- Replace current variable earnings disregard with a standard £25 disregard for all
- Incorporate a Return to Work Incentive for Universal Credit claimants and others by paying support for a period of one month beyond the return to work date.
- Apply the current two dependent children limit used in the calculation to existing claimants
- Remove non-dependent deductions from the scheme

- Disregard payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme, We Love Manchester Emergency Fund and similar Government funded compensation schemes
- Reduction to be awarded from the date of change as opposed to the 'Monday following' the date of change
- Remove the requirement for good cause to be proven before backdating the award.
- Increase the 1 month back-date time limit to 12 months.
- Remove the restriction that limits support to maximum Band D property.

63. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and IT advised that a report on a Youth Council for the district would be added to the Forward Plan for October.

The Portfolio Holder for Sport, Recreation & Culture commented that the Leisure Strategy would be coming forward before the end of the year.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

64. LAND AT STAPLEHILL ROAD, NEWTON ABBOT

The item was withdrawn.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.20 am.

Chairman