

# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **4 MARCH 2019**

### Present:

Councillors Haines (Chairman), Prowse (Vice-Chairman), Clarence, Colclough, Dennis, Dewhirst, Eden, Hockin, G Hook, J Hook, Jeffery, Jones, Kerswell, Mayne, Nutley, Orme, Parker, Peart, Smith, Thorne and Wrigley

### Members in Attendance:

Councillors Bullivant, Christophers, Clemens, Golder, Goodey and Russell

### Apologies:

Councillors Connett, Cox, Evans, Gribble, Hocking, Matthews, Morgan and Winsor

### Officers in Attendance:

Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer  
Amanda Pujol, Interim Head of Service Delivery and Improvement  
David Eaton, Environmental Protection Manager  
Graham Davey, Housing Enabling Manager  
James Toler, Housing Strategy Officer  
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

## **25. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 28 January and 4 February 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Thorne declared an Appendix A interest in relation to Minutes 33 and 34 by virtue of his employment at Exeter City Council.

## **27. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY) UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 5.8(H)**

There were no public questions.

## **28. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS (IF ANY) UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 5.8(I)**

There were no Councillor questions.

## **29. SOUTH WEST MUTUAL BANK**

The Committee welcomed Tony Greenham from the South West Mutual.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4.3.2019)

The Chairman, referred to the report and appendix circulated with the agenda. The appendix consisted of information Mr Greenham presented to Members on 8 January 2019.

The purpose of the formation of a South West Mutual Bank was to provide cost effective banking for local residents and businesses, in a period of bank closures. It would provide opportunity for greater banking provision in the South West, economic growth, business investment and employment, potential for an investment return and share price growth over the medium term.

South Hams, West Devon and East Devon District Councils have signed up to contributing £49,995 each. It was anticipated the investment into the Mutual would provide investor confidence for private and institutional investors to also invest and provide a substantial proportion of the remaining funding required to allow the bank to launch and start trading.

In response to concerns and questions regarding the risk factor, the Chief Finance Officer advised that the figures had been substantially analysed. The funding would not be drawn down unless sufficient funds were pledged to meet the Mutual's requirements for initial stages. Whilst the investment is risky, the potential benefits may not be realised to the local economy if the investment funding is not approved. Mr Greenham added that South West Mutual had been meeting with Government Ministers, the Economic Secretary and The Rt Hon Baroness Kramer to progress the formation of the Mutual Bank.

Resolved

The Executive be advised that the Committee supports:

- (a) The approval of a grant of £49,995 funded from capital receipts to support the formation of South West Mutual Bank.
- (b) The Chief Finance Officer being delegated responsibility to conclude the acquisition of 3,333 shares in South West Mutual.

### **30. CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins.

### **31. STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 28 JANUARY 2019**

The Minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 28 January 2019 were received and noted.

### **32. ELECTRIC AND LOW EMISSION VEHICLE POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Assets and Tourism presented the report circulated with the agenda, which sought committee endorsement for the progression of a Council policy for electric vehicles, infrastructure and ultra low emission vehicles. The publication of the governments "Road to Zero" would help increase the number of low emission vehicles nationally which currently was 150,000, and accounted for 2% vehicle sales, with 14,000 charge points.

In response to questions on funding, the Environmental Protection Manager advised that some projects would be 100% grant funded.

The proposed vision and actions for a policy were set out in the report. The Policy would go out to consultation for some 6-8 weeks. The policy would be brought back to the Committee on 2 July for further consideration following the consultation period.

Resolved

The progression of an Electric Vehicles, Infrastructure and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Policy be approved for consultation as set out in the report.

### **33. COUNCILLORS COMMUNITY FUND**

Consideration was given to recommended amendments to the Councillors Community fund scheme following the completion of a Councillor survey.

Resolved.

The Executive be advised that the Committee supports the following amendments to the Councillor Community fund Scheme:

- That carry forward of funds into the next financial year in Election years cease with immediate effect.
- That any underspend on grants within the current financial year 2018-2019 could be allocated to the Crowdfunding initiative; this would allow community groups to access any residual funds.
- Fund administration: a more streamlined method of submitting requests be sought. For example, an application could be submitted automatically to the grant co-ordinator, with a copy to the ward councillor, who could then sanction the application by email. This will reduce paperwork and speed up response.
- An up to date spreadsheet of allowances remaining be available on the website.

### **34. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN TEIGNBRIDGE**

The Chairman referred to the report circulated with the agenda, which provided a brief summary, including statistical information, of the appended report Housing Services – Housing Affordability Report. It also listed strategic and operational actions being undertaken by officers to address affordability.

The Housing Enabling and Development Manager advised on the broad range of housing offered by the Council in partnership with housing organisations to meet local need, including an ageing population, and Government policies. The number of affordable housing developed in Teignbridge over the last nine years had exceeded targets of the Local Plan by 31%.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4.3.2019)

Teignbridge's rising affordability ratios had been recognised by Homes England, the Government housing body, in its June 2018 published addendum to the Affordable Housing Grant bidding guidance. Teignbridge was listed as an Authority with high affordability ratios. This enables Registered Providers within Teignbridge to bid for higher levels of grant to deliver homes as social rather than affordable rents. The Council aimed to keep affordable rents as low as possible.

A review published in January 2019 by housing charity Shelter states an additional three million one hundred thousand social homes are needed to solve the housing crises over the next 20 years. This would equate to 150,000 houses per year nationally and 285 additional homes for Teignbridge. Locally these houses could only be developed with government subsidy or by more open market homes to cross subsidise and make the delivery viable.

Concern was raised regarding the affordability of 'affordable' homes. Members were advised that Teignbridge was delivering affordable homes in accordance with the Government's definition of 'affordable.'

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Christophers advised that he would be attending a Local Government Association meeting and would have access to the Housing Minister to discuss this issue with him, and the positive solutions that can be taken.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

### **35. TEIGNBRIDGE TENANCY STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report circulated with the agenda.

The Housing Strategy Officer advised that under Section 150 of the Localism Act 2011 Councils have a duty to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy. The updated strategy of consideration reflects changes in housing legislation and welfare reform, and increased affordability issues across the area. The strategy sets out the matters to which registered providers of social housing are to have regard in formulating policies.

The aims of the strategy were set out in the report and included: encourage a wide range of housing options; promote affordability; make the best use of the available social housing stock; ensure that vulnerable households are able to access appropriate accommodation and promote mobility within social housing and other housing tenures.

In response to questions from Councillors, the Housing Strategy Officer advised that social rents were cheaper than affordable rents; and the Council was working with the Department of Works and Pensions to align rent due dates with Universal Credit payments.

Resolved

The Executive be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the endorsement of the Teignbridge Housing Services Tenancy Strategy as circulated with the report and agenda for the meeting.

**36. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY MONITORING REPORT**

The Principle Delivery Officer referred to the report circulated with the agenda. The report outlined the background to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which was introduced by the Planning Act 2008. The process of reporting funding received and future income and expenditure forecasts, was governed by the 2010 Community Infrastructure Levy regulations.

The Council introduced CIL in October 2014 and is a fixed charge on new development floor space, with available exemptions. Town and parish councils receive a neighbourhood funding element of 15%, and 25% with the establishment of a neighbourhood Plan. By March 2018, £722,255 had been passed to town and parish councils, and a further £248,891 was due.

Having recognised £4,933,944; sent £722,255 to town and parish councils; and spent £1,596,151 on infrastructure, Teignbridge's recognised CIL income retained amounted to £2,366,697 by March 2018. A recently published Government consultation document on proposed amendments to future CIL monitoring reports advocates that three year CIL forecasts are prepared on an annual basis.

In response to questions the Principle Delivery Officer advised that the funds did not have to be allocated immediately and could be used within a ten mile radius.

Resolved

That the summary of the Community Infrastructure Levy, financial reporting and funding forecasts be noted.

**37. SOUTH EAST DEVON HABITAT REGULATIONS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Committee welcomed South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee (HREC) officers involved in the management of the Exe Estuary, a nationally important wildlife area, and compliance with the South East Habitats Regulations. Members also referred to the report circulated with the agenda which provided the background and reasons for forming the joint HREC, as well as associated governance arrangements. The report explained that the Habitat Regulations require that councils must only approve plans or projects if they will not adversely impact on designated European Sites.

In 2010 Natural England, the responsible Government body for advising councils on how to apply the Habitat Regulations, advised the Council, and Exeter and

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4.3.2019)

East Devon's councils that they should consider the potential impacts of development growth on the protected habitats and species. Failure to meet the requirements of the Habitat Regulations can lead to an embargo on development until matters are resolved.

The Partnership Executive Committee across the three authorities and the officers involved arrange for the mitigation measures in line with the Habitat Regulations to be delivered through the implementation of the joint South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy. Other organisations and user groups assist with this, and the process maintains the finely balanced situation where human disturbance does not result in mortal consequences for the protected species. As a result the councils are able to continue granting housing planning permissions, and tourists and residence are able to enjoy the area.

The HREC officers presented further information about the European Sites, the evidence gathered, the Mitigation Strategy, Habitat Mitigation Officers' day-to-day role, engagement with the public, and user groups, and how the HREC operates. The Principal Delivery Officer and the HREC officers also responded to Members questions in relation to the work of the Executive Committee since its last meeting.

In response to questions from the committee regarding possible additional byelaws to restrict use, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing advised that the HRCE officers were successfully controlling and monitoring use through communication and engagement with users, and a voluntary code of conduct and exclusion zones.

The next meeting of the HRCE would be April 2019. Members of the public could attend. Notice of the meeting would be available on the HRCE website.

### **38. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS Q3**

The Committee received the Council's quarter 3 2018-19 strategy performance report, which updated members on the progress of the Teignbridge Ten programmes. The Teignbridge Ten programmes (T10) were the 'super projects' that would bring major benefits to the district. Each T10 had seven or more actions with performance indicators to monitor progress against a series of agreed targets.

In response to comments and questions from Members, the Committee was advised:

- PI CSROH 5.1 - there would always be some rough sleepers and every effort was made to keep this number to a minimum.
- Fly tipping - the fly tipping problem between Ideford and Haldon was of particular concern .
- PI CSHAH 5.9 - the current sickness monitoring was being reviewed due to long term sick of a few employees substantially influencing the overall figures.
- PIs CSZH 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 – gas, electric and water consumption. This was being reviewed by an officer working group.

Resolved

The report be noted.

**39. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the Executive Forward Plan circulated with the agenda.

**40. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and noted the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme circulated with the agenda. It was noted that it would be updated by: the T10 programme overviews Clean Scene and Zero Heroes being deferred until the meeting on 28 May, 2019; and the Electric Vehicles, Infrastructure and Ultra Low Emission Vehicle policy being included for the meeting on 25 June to consider the policy for approval following consultation.

CLLR MIKE HAINES  
Chairman