

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2021

Present:

Councillors H Cox (Chair), Jenks (Vice-Chair), Clarence, D Cox, Foden, Hocking, Mullone, Nutley, Patch, Rollason and Thorne

Members Attendance:

Councillors Connett, J Hook, Jeffries, Keeling, Purser and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Eden and Gribble

Officers in Attendance:

Neil Blaney, Head of Place & Commercial Services

Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

William Elliott, Climate Change Officer

David Eaton, Environmental Protection Manager

Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer & Head of Corporate Services

Liz Gingell, Business Improvement Project Officer

Richard Rainbow, Drainage and Coastal Manager

Jack Williams, Performance Data Analyst

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and authorised to be signed at the earliest convenience.

13. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

14. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

15. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

None.

16. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan listing items to be considered by the Executive over the next few months was noted.

17. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

18. CONNECTING DEVON AND SOMERSET SCHEME (CDS)

The Committee welcomed Matt Barrow from Devon County Council, the CDS Stakeholder Engagement Officer, who updated the Committee on the progress of the CDS scheme.

The project was now working with Airband to deliver the scheme. There were some 68,000 residential and commercial premises within Teignbridge. To date, nearly 83% of premises in Teignbridge had been provided with improved internet coverage through the project, some 56,000 premises. The next phase planned to reach a further premises increasing to just over 96% of premises within Teignbridge by the completion of Phase 2. The remaining 5,351 premises were in the further to reach areas of the district, and the Committee noted how coverage to these areas would be enabled.

The full presentation can be found [here](#).

19. FINAL FINANCIAL PLAN PROPOSALS 2021/22 TO 2023/24

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Councillor Keeling presented the agenda report on the final financial plan proposals for 2021/22 to 2023/24. He commended all staff for finding savings of £2million, and in particular the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and his team for producing a balance budget for 2021/22.

The proposals included recommended revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22 and planned in outline for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Executive would be considering the budget and recommendations from this Committee at its meeting on 11 February 2021, and then Council on 22 February 2021.

The Committee noted the current budget position and the savings that would need to be found in future years, to deal with budget gaps of £1.2m and £2.6m expected respectively for 2022/23 and 2023/24. He confirmed that the New Homes Bonus that would continue for another year was being reviewed by Government and there was no details of what could replace it going forward. Business rates were also being reviewed by Ministers, and there was no central government direction on the local government reform.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that Government would be advising the 2021/22 final settlement the following day. The budget figures reflected the effects of the latest lockdown, the mid-year review of Treasury Management and costs of service areas. He reported on the income and expenditure for the revenue and capital budgets. The former would be partly funded over the

medium term by savings found, additional income and use of earmarked reserves built up to cover anticipated future reductions in funding, however work was still required to identify the significant budget gaps for 2022/23 and 2023/24 amounting to £3.8m. In addition further savings were required to meet aspirations of the capital programme in future years. Contributions to capital had been reduced to zero to support the revenue budget and should be reestablished at around £0.5m per annum.

The 2021/22 budgets could be balanced using ear marked reserves. The CFO referred to the statutory requirement to balance the budget each year, and the potential need to issue a Section 114 notice if it was not achievable to balance the budget for 2022/23 or 2023/24.

It was noted that research into establishing a voluntary tourist tax was progressing and was envisaged to be in place for the coming season. It was suggested that this could be a potential income source if made compulsory. The Executive Member for Economy, Business and tourism advised this would be pursued and assessed.

It was unanimously

RECOMMENDED

1. The following proposals be considered together with any subsequent consultation comments for approval by Council as the final budget for 2021/22 and the outline plan for the subsequent years 2022/23 and 2023/24, as follows

The proposed budget includes:

- An increase in council tax of £5 or 2.85% to £180.17
- Continued funding for a climate change officer and enhanced planning enforcement
- Increased provision in the capital programme for climate change projects
- The continuing reduction in new homes bonus
- Other central funding reductions – in particular provisional assumptions for business rates for future years and reset of the baseline
- Reserves at 13.0 % of the net revenue budget or just under £2.0 million
- Increased support for housing including the Teignbridge 100 whilst backing business and bringing people and organisations together for local neighbourhood planning
- Infrastructure delivery plan investment funded by community infrastructure levy and external sources where available
- Continuation of grant funded South West Regional Monitoring Programme
- Town centre investment in infrastructure and employment
- Use of long term borrowing where appropriate
- Assumptions of a 1.5% pay deal
- Rural aid funding frozen during the Covid 19 pandemic

2. That Council notes the mid-year review of Treasury Management as set out at appendix 8 of the agenda report.

Councillor Clarence left the meeting during this item and did not vote.

20. COUNCIL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q3

The Committee referred to the agenda report which gave an update on the delivery of the Council Strategy 2020-2030, and an overview of performance for the Teignbridge Ten Programmes for quarter 3, 1 October to 31 December 2020, during which the second national lockdown occurred. It provided the detailed performance information used to track its delivery, and advised Members where performance was not on track.

The Council's service performance had improved compared to the previously quarter. 7 of the Council's ten T10 programmes were on track, along with most of the performance indicators and T10 projects. Only 4 of 38 performance indicators were underperforming, along with 7 of 54 T10 projects. Underperformance was due to the covid situation. The appendix detailed underperformance of areas under the auspices of the Committee.

The Leader advised that the Council was being inventive and adaptive to the situation and improving performance where possible but there were some issues, such as the rate of house building in the area which the Council had no control.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED

The report and actions being taken to rectify performance issues as detailed in the appendix be noted.

21. EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIENNIAL PRESENTATION - CLIMATE CHANGE, COASTAL AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The Executive Member for climate change, coastal and flood risk management, Councillor J Hook presented her biennial update to the Committee which included:

- Climate and Ecological Emergency – the Climate Change Officer was progressing the Council's Carbon Action Plan in partnership with other stakeholders to reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint, and supporting the Devon wide Carbon Plan; partnership working with Action on Climate Teignbridge (ACT), a local public engagement and joint working group; partnership working with the University of Exeter for innovative ways to reduce carbon emissions; progression of the district heating network; increasing opportunities for electric vehicle charging; applications and schemes for grant

funding to reduce carbon emissions across the District; Council led housing initiatives with high energy standards; and ecology schemes to reduce the District's carbon footprint.

- Flood and Coastal Risk Management – The Council acted as the Risk Management Authority (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act, and the Coastal Protection Authority under the Coastal Protection Act 1949; the Council hosted the Teign Estuary and Coastal Partnership, and the South Devon and Dorset Coastal Authorities Group; Devon County Council's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-27 was currently being finalised for approval in Spring 2021 which prioritised Dawlish, Teignmouth, Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton; supporting strategic planning growth; management and improvement of the Council's drainage and flood risk management assets; responding to flood risk during storms such as storm Dennis early February 2020; Beach Management Plans such as that for Teignmouth and Holcombe which was used to secure external funding from, for example the Environment agency, and data for flood defence projects such as Network Rail Resilience works.

In response to questions the Executive Member advised that a proposed Carbon Action Plan to project manage achievable carbon targets by 2025 would be considered by the Executive in April. This would be a multi-authority joint approach and plan.

The full presentation can be found [here](#).

22. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

The Chair referred to the agenda report to consider forming a Task and Finish Group, the purpose of which was detailed in the report.

RESOLVED

A Climate and Ecological Emergency Task and Finish Group, be set up as detailed in the agenda report, consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, and four other overview and scrutiny Members.

CLLR H COX
Chairman