

EXECUTIVE

1 DECEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillors: Christophers (Leader), Barker, Clemens, Goodey, Gribble, Hellier Laing, Lake and Russell.

Non-Executive Members in Attendance:

Councillors: Brodie, Bullivant, Dewhirst, Haines, Hook, and Prowse.

Officers in Attendance:

Nicola Bulbeck – Chief Executive

Sue Aggett – Business Lead

Lorraine Montgomery – Business Manager, Environment & Leisure – Open Spaces

Lesley Tucker – Chief Finance Officer

Neil Aggett – Monitoring Officer

Tracey Hooper – Revenue, Benefits and Fraud Manager

Chris Braines – Waste & Cleansing Manager

Executive decisions will take effect from 10.00 am on Tuesday, 8 December 2015 unless called-in or identified as urgent in the minute.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive held on 3 November 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS OF URGENCY / MATTERS OF REPORT ESPECIALLY BROUGHT FORWARD WITH PERMISSION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The Leader advised that he had been invited to 10 Downing Street for the launch of the National Self & Custom Build Group which would see a Tool Kit rolled out to all Council Leaders. He submitted the document would be important for Members and Officers to digest as Councils tried to develop other methods of housing delivery. Currently six big developers tended to dominate the market and Councils needed to be helping the small and medium size firms back into fore.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

5. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4.5(L)

The Executive considered a report relating to the Notice of Motion tabled by Councillor Hook at the Full Council meeting on 28 September 2015.

In presenting the report, Councillor Hook made the following points:

- whether the take up figures in the appendix were complete. He was advised that the figures were now out of date due to the nature of the ongoing roll out. Currently there had been a 30-31% take up rate and a breakdown of the rollout by Ward was tabled;
- the figures contained within the second bullet point on page 2 of the agenda report were not strictly accurate;
- there was no flexibility in the scheme; and
- the scheme ran for 12 months however someone moving in to or within the district part way through would have to pay the full amount with no element of discount taken into consideration.

The Business Manager for Environment & Leisure advised that the scheme was now fully rolled out with subscriptions to the optional garden waste scheme ongoing. Figures tabled at the meeting drilled down to Ward level with take up percentages. To date, 30-31% of properties had signed up to the optional garden waste collection.

Councillor Dewhirst submitted that:

- (a) there should be no reason for the topic to be referred to Overview & Scrutiny to be properly examined;
- (b) it was reasonable that a charge was being levied and somebody withdrew they should be entitled to a refund; and
- (c) you should not expect the public to pay the full amount with, for example, only three months left of the subscription year.

The Waste & Cleansing Manager submitted that figures will always be skewed by the fact that in some cases households were sharing bins and in others, additional bins were being asked for.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets & Resources reminded Members that it was a voluntary scheme and was about encouraging residents to compost and increasing recycling rates. He submitted that nothing more should happen until the scheme has run for its full 12 months when subscription renewals will be looked at.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment Services thanked Members for the praise given to all officers involved in the scheme. The system was encouraging

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home composting, bin sharing and evidence that in some cases additional bins were being asked for. Additional recycling was taking place and residual waste was falling. Current figures showed a good take up rate and no real evidence of customer dissatisfaction. The scheme was designed to be as simple as possible and was delivering on that basis.

Resolved

That the current optional garden waste scheme charging administration as currently set i.e. as simple as possible to maintain the overall subscription cost as low as possible, be maintained.

6. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Members received a report which provided an update on the current cost of the scheme and the recommendations of the Devon Benefit Officers' Group for the 2016-17 scheme.

The Revenue, Benefits & Fraud Manager submitted that the recommendation for Members was continue with the current scheme and carry it forward to the 2016/17 financial year.

She advised that the Council Tax reduction spend had reduced year on year since introduced 2013 and equated to a reduction of 9.1% or approximately £900K. The Government was also conducting a review of reduction schemes which would report in March 2016 however no significant changes were expected. All other Devon authorities were continuing with their schemes

In 2017/18, taking account of changes to other benefits it would more than likely be necessary to align the scheme with those to ensure the administrative burden remained low as well as the cost of the scheme.

The Government had announced a reduction to the tax credits system but had since reneged on this therefore there would be no increase in cost to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets & Resources stated that the Council stood alone in delivering the scheme and was supporting low earning individuals and families. He recommended that Full Council be asked to approve the Scheme.

Resolved

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) That Full Council be recommended to approve the current Council Tax Scheme be adopted for the financial year 2016-17.

7. BUDGET MONITORING – INCLUDING REVENUE, CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Executive considered a report that

- identified the principal areas where there are likely to be departures from the approved 2015/16 budget and summarise the likely overall variation based on the information available to the end of October 2015. Also to inform Members of progress that has been made with achieving savings and efficiencies;
- updated Members on progress with the capital programme and funding and brought the latest details for members' approval; and
- brought the mid-year treasury management review for information.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that there had been no significant changes since the last budget monitoring report but a surplus of £95K was now predicted and an updated on the waste and recycling scheme had been included in the agenda report.

In addition, she advised that:

- income from recycling had reduced but savings had been made elsewhere within waste; the service was expected to be in surplus or balanced by the end of the year; and
- full details arising from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement had not yet been received but changes included a consultation on the New Homes Bonus beginning in late December with proposals to reduce the funding by 2/3rds likely to impact on Districts the most.

Following questions, Members were advised that:

- air quality management funds had been allocated in the current budget and it was unknown at this stage what would be received for next year;
- £167K is being received for housing emergencies of which £90K had been spent;
- There is a £2M total council tax surplus following the closure of last years' accounts – this has to be shared between county, police, fire and Teignbridge and is due to more houses being built than had been expected and because council tax support costs had reduced; and

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- The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills & Tourism would speak with Tony Watson regarding an update on the state of the road surface at Bradley Lane.

Resolved

- (a) That the revenue budget variations as shown at appendix 1 of the agenda report be approved;
- (b) That the updated capital programme as shown at appendix 2 of the agenda report be approved; and
- (c) That Council be recommended to note the mid-year review of treasury management as shown at appendix 3 of the agenda report.

8. DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Leader provided an update regarding the ongoing development of a devolution bid to Government by the 19 authorities of Devon and Somerset.

He advised that broadly speaking the majority of councillors were signed up to the idea with a Members workshop taking place when putting together the Council Strategy. He and the Chief Executive had attended a number of meetings where achieving a consensus amongst the 19 partners had been a challenge but the prize of greater investment from Government was the goal that was being strived for.

Following a meeting on the 25 November at Collumpton, agreement on the pitch to government was reached concerning productivity – three golden opportunities for the region included:

1. Marine & Maritime in Plymouth;
2. Nuclear Power at Hinckley Point; and
3. Environmental Futures focusing on the greater Exeter area.

Alongside this work had been Teignbridge's involvement with Greater Exeter Greater Devon which had focused on enabling better jobs, skills, homes and environment for local people. This was all being developed with Innovation Exeter which was a collaboration of the University, colleges and the new science park. With this in mind it needed to be recognised that the new power station at Hinckley Point was moving forward and Councils were trying to assess the potential sapping of skills from areas. The work in hand was not based on political areas but functioning economical areas.

Models of governance were now being looked which included:

- 1 – form following function;
- 2 – combined authority; and

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3 – combined authority with a directly elected mayor.

The Leader submitted that Teignbridge needed to look beyond the title of mayor and realise that generally it is areas with directly elected mayors who received greater funding from government and it was his view that this model needed to be pursued for the Heart of the South West proposals. A group of representatives will put this to The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government towards the end of January 2016.

The Chief Executive advised that Members were being kept up to date following the distribution of a weekly newsletter to Group Leaders and officers through the extended Corporate Leadership Team. Emerging chapters which involved six work streams were being developed however a compelling narrative was currently lacking and an idea as to what the Government would get out of the proposals was being worked on. A submission of sorts would be sent by the 18 December with Andrew Campbell, the Civil Servant advising Leaders and Chief Executives saying that it was better to work slowly and get the proposals right rather than rushing them.

Following comments from Members, the Chief Executive advised that:

- The recommendation in the devolution report to Council which stated it would be for the Executive to approve such matters would be amended; the report had been written on behalf of all 19 authorities and it would be a decision for Full Council to make; and
- Further Full Council meetings would be held as appropriate to consider the issue of devolution.

Resolved

That the update be noted.

9. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan was noted.

Jeremy Christophers
Leader