

## **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY WELL BEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 2.15pm**

#### **Present**

**Councillors:** Mrs H Bainbridge (Chairman), E J Berry, R M Deed (replacing Cllr M R Lee) and Mrs S Griggs

#### **Apologies**

**Councillors:** Mrs C Heal, M R Lee, D J Knowles and P F Williams

#### **Also Present**

**Officers:** L Reeves (Head of Customer Services), R Fish (Accountant), C Yandle (Audit Team Leader), S Bennion (Leisure Facilities Manager), L Chester (Centre Manager) and J Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

#### **21 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

#### **22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 July 2014 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

#### **23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Group that the Tiverton Citizens Advice Bureau were celebrating 75 years of service and were holding an evening reception to celebrate this on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014. The Chairman was unable to attend so she offered the invitation to the rest of the Group.

The Chairman informed the Group that the LEADER bid had been submitted and results were due in November. This would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of this Group.

#### **24 LEISURE SERVICES**

The Leisure Services Manager made a presentation to the Group giving an overview of the three leisure facilities in Mid Devon.

The Officer explained that in the previous financial year the service had shown an achievement of £6k. The expected over achievement for 2014/15 was £10k which would be an increase of 3.8% on the previous year.

The Officer informed the Group that the service was working to improve by:

- Retention – monitoring new members, risk members (those paying and not visiting), lapsed members and converting promotional members to full members;
- Shape up for Summer – this promotion had shown a 50% conversion to full membership at Cullompton;
- Customer interaction – providing training and development to staff;
- Marketing – a new website would be launched at the end of the year, SMS text messaging, mapping members and newsletters;
- Researching 'spend to save' opportunities.

Consultants had been appointed to find ways of improving the service at the Exe Valley and Culm Valley centres.

#### Cullompton

The consultants suggested improving class sizes by holding them in the sports hall and to try to increase take up for squash as well as using the courts for other activities. Sports hall usage was high but had been affected by the new sports hall at Uffculme. The consultants suggested investment in a flood lit MUGA (multi-use games area), for which funding would be investigated.

#### Exe Valley

The consultants confirmed that membership was high for the centre but income yield was low. This was due to catering for all income groups. Membership of 1400 exceeded industry averages. Tennis coaching might increase income. The consultants suggested extending the gym facility. A working group of officers, the Chairman of this PDG and the Cabinet Member would look at feasibility.

The consultants had suggested investing in commission based selling for memberships, this was being investigated. They also recommended that pricing and discounts be looked at to improve yield per member, investment in branding and promotional material and researching utility rates.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The hard courts at Cullompton – these belonged to the High School and had been offered to the public for use over the summer holidays, managed by the Leisure Centre. It was anticipated that this would continue for future holidays.
- The Cullompton Youth Club based at the John Tallack Centre may be able to make use of the centre facilities.
- The Sports Hall at Culm Valley was part of a dual use agreement with the school. This was working well with some flexibility regarding the use of the gym.

The Centre Manager for Lords Meadow Leisure Centre at Crediton updated the Group on developments at the Centre. He informed the group that income was on an upward trend since the investment and had increased by

£80K on the previous year. Attendance at the fitness studio had grown each month and was currently up by 42% (£15K) from the previous year.

Attendance at fitness classes was up and they were now utilising the sports hall and outside areas as well as the designated spaces for classes.

Staffing costs at the centres had reduced due to the removal of enhancements for weekend and evening working.

The Officer showed pictures of the centre as it had previously been and the newly developed areas.

As well as the areas shown there had also been improvements made to the Meadow Suite which was now a designated training room and the reception area which now had a café. Improvements had also been made with regard to energy saving and the use of chemicals in the pool.

Corporate membership take-up had improved with 389 members (11.4% of membership) and hours had been extended to include 6.30am opening three times a week.

Lighting for the outside pitches had caused some problems to start with due to the direction of the lighting but this had been resolved and the pitches were well lit.

Extra signage would be in place to direct customers from the new bypass.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation.

## 25 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (01.11.39)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report\* from the Head of Finance detailing financial monitoring for the three months to 30 June 2014 in respect of the services within this PDG's remit.

The Accountant highlighted areas relating to this PDG which included a variance of £10k for Leisure Services and £103k for Revenues and benefits, to the end of June. This was due to the Housing Benefit Subsidy doing well and changes to NDDR which had resulted in a budget no longer being required.

The Accountant would provide a breakdown of car park income to Members of the Group following the meeting.

The Officer informed Members that budgets were now being worked on for 2015/16 and the draft budget would be discussed at the next meeting.

Note: \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

## 26 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (01.25.00)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report\* of the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for the first quarter of 2014/15 as well as providing an update on any key business risks.

The Audit Team Leader informed the Group that the performance reports and risks shown reflected the recommendations of the Scrutiny Performance Management Working Group. Operational risks were now being reported only to the Audit Committee and Cabinet. Key decision risks would continue to be reported to PDG's.

The Officer highlighted the figures shown for the number of empty shops in the main towns and explained the food hygiene rating system.

Note: \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

27 **REVIEW OF THE CUSTOMER CARE POLICY (01.33.40)**

The Group had before it a report\* of the Head of Customer Services providing Members with information regarding the Customer Care Policy, for review.

The Policy had been updated to reflect changes in the way in which the public wanted to communicate with the Council, such as email and social media. Digital Transformation would mean further changes but it was important to allow for those that still wanted to make contact in the traditional ways.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the revised Customer Care Policy be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

28 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – 2 DECEMBER 2014 (01.37.31)**

- Community Safety Partnership update
- Financial Monitoring
- 2014/15 Budget consultation
- Performance and Risk
- Single Equalities Scheme
- Leader Funding Bid Results
- CCTV Annual Report

(The meeting ended at 4.15pm)

**CHAIRMAN**