

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday 9 July 2013 at 2.00pm

Present

Councillors: M A Lucas (Chairman), Mrs D L Brandon, D R Coren, J M Downes, J D Squire, Mrs M E Squires and Mrs N Woollatt.

Also Present

Councillors: C J Eginton, R L Stanley and R Wright

Present

Officers: P N Williams (Head of Environmental Services), S Newcombe (Waste and Transport Manager), A Cook (Open Spaces and Cemeteries Manager), C Gillard (Accountant) and S J Lees (Member Services Officer)

11. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2013 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

13. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had the following announcements to make:

- He reminded the Group that a 'Waste Away Day' had been planned for 24 July 2013 at Padbrook Park and it was hoped that all Members of the Group could attend as well as the Leader, Chief Executive, and other Chairmen of Committees. The idea behind the day was to put forward suggestions for a future waste strategy. There would be an opportunity for all Members to comment on this;
- He informed the Group that he had recently been elected the Chairman of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee. Cllr R F Radford had been elected Vice Chairman, there was therefore strong representation for Mid Devon on this outside body;
- The Head of Environmental Services was asked to provide the Group with an update on smoke free play areas. He confirmed that he had recently spoken with the co-ordinator for this initiative at Devon County Council who confirmed that Mid Devon District Council had been allocated £1k for signage. Signs were currently being evaluated and the funding would be released at the end of September. There would need to be some discussion about the most appropriate parks

to site the signs as they would need to be used in fenced off areas only.

14. **AIR QUALITY ISSUES**

The Head of Environmental Services provided the Group with an update following the submission of the annual report to DEFRA. The Council had examined the results from its air quality monitoring in the district. Concentrations outside of the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Crediton and Cullompton were all below the objectives at relevant locations. Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in Crediton remained above the air quality objective. Detailed analysis could be accessed via the Council's website. The Chairman requested that the Group be informed of exactly how to access the information so that they could inform their Town and Parish Council's. The following steps were identified:

1. Log on to the Mid Devon District Council website
2. Click on 'A' under the A-Z
3. Click on Air Quality
4. Click on Local Air Quality Management
5. Click on graphs or tables for the area you are interested in

It was confirmed that the limits for air quality were stated on page 8 of the report listed on the right hand side of the Air Quality web page.

15. **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Following discussion at a previous meeting, the Head of Environmental Services informed the Group that Pathfinder had submitted a Flood Risk Management Scheme to Devon County Council. Fifteen communities had been identified as needing assistance, none of which were in Mid Devon. However, the University of Exeter had applied for funding to work with Crediton in order to conduct some research into climate related community resilience. The Group felt that more information was needed if they were to understand what the research project hoped to achieve. The Head of Environmental Services **AGREED** that he would:

- Seek further information regarding the research project including when it would be commencing;
- Politely inform the project team that they would need to involve local councillors.

Discussion took place regarding the need to keep gulleys and culverts clear from detritus before any risk of flooding. Comments were made that the recent surface dressing of roads was not helping the situation since chippings often blocked these vital drainage channels.

16. **DOG CONTROL ORDERS**

Devon County Council had been contacted regarding the possibility of excluding dogs from those areas not covered by the Dog Control Orders however the District Council had not received a response. It was confirmed that a private landowner could exclude whomever and whatever they wanted. If the land was owned by the Council it could do the same.

17. **WASTE**

The Waste and Transport Manager gave a presentation on progress to date since taking up his new post within the Waste Service. This included what 'Waste Services' were, the situation he had inherited, what the positives were and what the challenges were for the future.

Priorities for the future included:

- Commence major route and round optimisation project – efficiencies for baseline services and plan for new;
- Comply with HSE Improvement Notices – new working practices/safe; system of work, avoid prohibition notice;
- Draft Waste & Recycling Strategy/Policy;
- Closer working with Members;
- Manage overtime and introduce time recording;
- Review street cleansing and improve service delivery;
- Bring in new refuse collection vehicles and improve driver/fleet practices - communication and staff development.

The Group thanked the Waste and Transport Manager for the thorough presentation which they had found very interesting and informative. They requested that they receive a hard copy of it to aid them in their discussions at the Waste Away Day. The Head of Environmental Services explained that the staff had been kept informed and involved since the management restructure and all were working towards finding a solution for the future.

An invitation was extended to all Members of the Group to visit both Station Yard to see the new refuse vehicles and also Silverton Mill to see the recycling facilities.

18. **WILDFLOWER MEADOWS**

Members received a presentation from the Open Spaces and Cemetery Manager regarding a planting trial of three types of wild flower seed in an unused area of Tiverton cemetery. The first type included a mixture of annual seeds which produced a wonderful display of flowers in the first year, the other two were a mixture of perennial native breeds, these took much longer to establish.

Discussion took place regarding where such planting could take place, for example, the roundabout in front of the bus station in Tiverton. The suggestion was made that in certain areas this could be used instead of traditional bedding thus reducing the cost and the need for seasonal changes and watering. Such planting would not be maintenance free however, would need to be sited correctly and the risks of contamination from dock and fennel for example would need to be reduced wherever possible.

19. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES (FPN)

The Head of Environmental Services presented up to date data for the Group's information with regard to the issuing of fixed penalty notices, this included:

- 3 FPN's had been issued this year compared with 4 last year. There had been one prosecution last year; another was likely this year in connection with littering;
- 'There is no dog poo fairy' posters were being displayed around the district and a scheme to spray paint excrement pink would be underway from September 2013;
- 4 people were on a warning for dogs on lead without direction;
- 40 dogs had been micro chipped already this year compared with 14 last year;
- There had been 138 dangerous dog incidents.

20. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – 3 SEPTEMBER 2013

The following items were identified for the next meeting:

- Performance and Risk
- Financial Monitoring
- Feedback from the Padbrook Park 'Waste Away Day'
- Climate Change/Environmental Strategy report from the Facilities and Corporate Building Facilities Manager
- Recycling publicity campaign update – a report from the Communications Manager
- Silverton Mill – verbal update
- Waste Efficiencies Working Group update
- 'Binfo' verbal update
- Surface dressing of Mid Devon's roads - with a view to writing a letter to Devon County Council with the Group's views

(The meeting ended at 4.27pm)

CHAIRMAN