

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday 14 January 2014 at 2.00pm

Present

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

Apologies

Councillors: Mrs M E Squires and J M Downes

Also Present

Councillors: C J Eginton and E J Berry

Present

Officers: P N Williams (Head of Environmental Services), A Jarrett (Head of Finance), L Wright (Accountant), Claire Gillard (Accountant), A Busby (Corporate Buildings and Facilities Manager), J Taylor (District Officer), L Hearn (District Officer) and J Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

46. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2013 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

47. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed the group that he had recently been in contact with the previous Waste and Transport Manager, and was pleased to say that he was progressing well.

As Chairman of DAWRAC (Devon Authorities Waste and Recycling Committee) he was pleased to inform the committee that new contracts for the sale of newspaper and glass had been agreed on a Devon-wide basis. These contracts would be worth £11 million over a five year period. Paper would now be sent to Palm Recycling in Norfolk and glass to Berrymans in Yorkshire.

48. CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Property Services providing Members with a Climate Strategy and Action Plan document, regarding the Environmental Strategy.

The Corporate Buildings and Facilities Manager informed the group that the purpose of the document was to provide Members with a Climate Strategy and Action Plan that captured previously reported policies and identified which Officers and Policy Development Groups would monitor the document.

He explained that there would be a minor change to the report on page 18 due to the grants mentioned no longer being available, but this would not have any impact on the Strategy.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The policy would be reviewed every two years.
- Private Sector Landlords
- The roll out of smart meters
- Policies already in existence had been used from services such as Forward Planning
- Energy saving measures at Phoenix House, the Multi Storey Car Park and the Leisure Centres were showing favourable results.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the Climate Strategy and Action Plan be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs D L Brandon and seconded by Cllr D R Coren)

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

49. **FINANCIAL MONITORING**

The Head of Finance outlined the financial situation at 30 November 2013 in respect of the services within this PDG's remit.

The Officer explained that not a great deal had changed since the last report to this Group but that a formal report would be presented at the March meeting.

There were two areas to bring to the attention of the Group:

- The overall financial position on car parking had improved
- The situation for Refuse and Recycling had deteriorated. This was due to repair and maintenance of the aging vehicle fleet.

This resulted in a £20K worse situation that previously reported.

50. **BUDGET 2014-15**

The group received a verbal report from the Head of Finance updating them on the draft 2014/15 budget position and outlining the options proposed to produce a balanced General Fund and Capital Programme.

The report presented to the Committee at the November meeting was prior to receipt of the Formula Grant figure and had shown a deficit of £361K. The grant settlement figure was received on 18 December and the Head of Finance was now able to put forward a draft balanced budget.

The Officer highlighted the following:

- The formula Grant was £66K better than expected
- The 15/16 Grant figure showed a further cut of £656K, so planning to cut operating costs by circa £2m over the next three years would start in January 2014
- The Head of Finance included within his figures the acceptance of the Council Tax Freeze
- Expected savings of £86K from Waste and Recycling, following route optimisation, had been included
- Leisure Services had been set increased targets
- Pension contributions had increased by 2%.

Updates from the Autumn Statement included:

- 1% pay freeze for a further 2 years
- The transfer of New Homes Bonus to the LEP would not happen yet
- Changes to Business Rates
- Further support for town centres
- Relaxation of HRA borrowing limits.

Final recommendations from the Head of Finance would be reported to the Cabinet on 6 February 2014.

51. **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE**

The Group received a verbal update from the Chairman informing them that the Cabinet had approved the recommendation from the Group as follows:

(i) The broad principles for any future changes be agreed as follows:

- a) to reduce service delivery costs while meeting statutory obligations;
- b) to improve the recycling service to include card, plastic bottles/plastic packaging and food waste;
- c) to continue to provide a garden waste collection service;
- d) to reuse our investment in wheeled bins to hold residual refuse and improve safety conditions for staff.

(ii) That officers develop a detailed business case as outlined in the report, based on the above principles and report back to the PDG in March 2014.

(iii) The recommendation set out in section 8.3 of the report be agreed and that the Council commence the procurement process for replacement recycling vehicles, as outlined.

RESOLVED that subject to an amendment to (d) to include the following wording “ we will continue our existing practice not to restrict the amount of residual refuse available” the above recommendation be approved.

Discussion took place regarding the collection of plastics. The Head of Environmental Services explained some of the difficulties with plastic collection, which could involve loss of income if quality was lost, as well as the impracticalities of collecting such volumes on the current fleet of vehicles.

The Chairman confirmed that a full report would be presented to the March 2014 meeting.

52. **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

The Head of Environmental Services informed the Group that there had been 2896 tickets issued for on-street parking during the period from 19th December 2012 to December 2013. In the same period 913 tickets had been issued in the Councils own car parks.

From January 2013 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued as follows:

Littering	6	
Dog Fouling	6	
Smoking in a public place	2	
Litter Clearance Notice	1	
Abandoned vehicles removed	3	

There was also one prosecution pending and one existing Litter Clearance order.

53. **‘PINK FAIRY’ CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

The Head of Environmental Services updated the Group on the Pink Fairy Campaign that took place in Cullompton during October 2013.

The initiative began after a local Ward Member and a local school composed a poem and song regarding dog fouling. The song gave the message that dog owners should pick up dog fouling because ‘there is no such thing as the poo fairy’, which led Council Officers to come up with the Paint the Town Pink Campaign. Officers, dressed as a dog and a fairy, spent time in Cullompton at hotspots reported to have high incidents of fouling. Here they spoke to local dog owners and issued Fixed Penalty Notices to two offenders. They sprayed dog fouling bright pink to highlight the problem and placed posters in local shops. The Dogs Trust were also involved in the campaign and they spoke to school children about responsible dog ownership.

The Ward Member had reported a reduction in the number of incidents of dog fouling in the area and, though a time consuming exercise, the Pink Fairy Campaign

had been considered a success. Silverton and Bradninch were highlighted as areas that would benefit from the same scheme in the future.

The Committee thanked the Officers and Ward Member for their efforts, which caught the imagination of the public and raised awareness.

54. SILVERTON MILL

The Chairman had requested at the previous meeting that the Head of Environmental Services update the Committee regarding issues relating to the Recycling Depot at Silverton Mill.

The Officer explained that the current lease, which was due to expire at the end of February, had been extended for a further six months. The current site was in a dilapidated state and in the wrong location for efficient operations. He explained that he had been looking for a new depot for a considerable time and that there were currently a couple of options being investigated.

There was an aspiration to combine a waste to energy plant with a depot for waste and recycling but this was a long term project and an interim depot was required for a 5 – 10 year period. The Head of Environmental Services would update the Group on the negotiations at the next meeting of this Policy Development Group.

55. CAR PARKING

This item was deferred until the next meeting in order for the Car Parking Report to be discussed at the Cabinet meeting of 6 February 2014.

56. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – 11 March 2014

The following items were identified for the next meeting:

- Chairman's Annual Report
- Financial Monitoring Report
- Performance and Risk
- Waste Update
- Silverton Mill
- DCC Flood Management update
- Amenity Car Parking Order
- Public Conveniences
- Car Parking

(The meeting ended at 3.40pm)

CHAIRMAN