

## **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of a MEETING of the MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday 2 September 2014 at 2.00pm**

#### **Present**

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

#### **Apology**

**Councillor:** Mrs D L Brandon

#### **Also Present**

**Councillors:** M Binks and R L Stanley

#### **Present**

**Officers:** A Cawdron (Finance Manager), S Noyce (Waste and Transport Manager), S Newcombe (Public Health Manager), A Cook (Open Spaces Manager) A Busby (Estates Manager), C Yandle (Audit Team Leader) and J Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

#### **Also Present:**

Martin Hutchings, Flood Manager, Devon County Council (DCC)

## **21. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

## **22. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2014 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

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

The Chairman introduced the Group to Stuart Noyce who had started in post the previous day as Waste and Transport Manager.

The Chairman requested that the Clerk and the Waste and Transport Manager liaise to arrange a date for Members of the Group to visit the new recycling depot.

Having been in contact with Devon County Council (DCC) the Chairman was able to update the Group regarding Binfo. The App, which would tell the householder their collection day and provide information about recycling was being revisited by DCC and they were looking at moving forward with the Mid Devon version. Three other Districts in Devon already had the App.

## 24. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

The Group received a presentation from the Flood Risk Manager at Devon County Council (DCC), updating them with regard to the strategy for Local Flood Risk Management. Mr Hutchings had previously attended the Group in November 2013 when the strategy was at the consultation stage.

Mr Hutchings showed the Group how to locate the strategy on the DCC website. He explained that the website showed who was responsible for what type of flooding and who to contact for each scenario. Different agencies were responsible for coastal waters, sewers, main rivers, water courses or run off from land. Discussion took place regarding the difficulties of knowing who to contact for each of these. The Officer explained that the strategy should ease this problem and he was working towards having one number for the public to call that would deal with any enquiry.

Leaflets detailing information about the strategy had been printed and were being handed out at events and roadshows. It was suggested that this sort of information could be sent out with Council Tax bills to ensure coverage to households.

The action plan was in its early stages and showed what was happening in each area. Works in Tiverton at Newts Hill and Arnold Crescent had already been completed and Pound Square in Cullompton was currently the subject of a study. Discussion took place regarding Bampton and Newton St Cyres which had both suffered flooding in the past. The Officer explained the importance of filling in the report form on the website so that historic data could be built up. Criteria used to determine funding for flooding prevention works included the number of properties affected, the frequency of flooding, the depth of flooding, the infrastructure affected, damage to the environment, risk to life and historic data.

Discussion took place regarding the fact that the Highways Service were looking to reduce gully clearing from an annual basis to once every three years. Mr Hutchings explained that this could be seen positively because by reducing the number of unnecessary clearances the resource could be used to clean critical gullies more often.

Councillor Binks raised a problem of continual flooding which covered a road in the Black Dog area of the District. There had been approximately two feet of water across the road for a considerable length of time. The Officer from Devon County Council offered to look into this matter further and would report back to Councillor Binks.

At the current time DCC were not consulted with regard to planning applications but would be in the future when they took on responsibility for Sustainable Drainage (Schedule 3 of the Flood and Waste Management Act, which was yet to be implemented). An Engineer had been employed in preparation for this but the Officer now anticipated that implementation would be in October 2015.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hutchings for his presentation.

25. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00hrs.50mins.00secs)**

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 the key business risks.

The Audit Team Leader explained that the figures shown for Waste and Recycling had been entered onto the SPAR system but had not yet been approved by Waste Data Flow.

The Officer also explained that the only strategic risk highlighted as relevant to this PDG was Waste Collection - Route Optimisation.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Missed collections were still showing as high for the first quarter of the year but data was not yet available for quarter two. The Public Health Manager explained that the number of reported missed collections had fallen significantly in recent weeks and that he was no longer receiving reports from households that had been missed over a number of collections. The Officer reminded the group that the main driver for changing the routes had been to ensure that all collections from each household were carried out on the same day of the week, and this had been achieved. There were still ongoing problems with the reliability of the recycling fleet but new vehicles had been ordered and were expected for delivery from November, this would solve the problems of capacity and reliability.
- The Group discussed advertising on vehicles and the Public Health Manager confirmed that the specification for the new fleet had included Agripa fixings which would allow for panels to be attached. There were a number of options available for the panels which included the promotion of recycling, promotion of the Council's services or private advertising for which a charge would be made.

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

26. **FINANCIAL MONITORING (01hrs.02mins.35secs)**

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 Finance Manager explained that budgets were getting tighter and that there was no 'slack' within budgets to allow for unforeseen expenditure. At the end of the first quarter of the year the General Fund was already showing a deficit of £227K.

It was anticipated that there would be an overspend at the end of the financial year, which had not happened for a number of years.

Areas of overspend in respect to services within this PDG's remit included costs associated with the move to the new recycling depot (£70K) and extra costs incurred during the recent Route Optimisation.

The Officer informed the Group that the Head of Finance had met with the Chief Executive and senior officers to investigate savings that could be made for the coming year and to identify cost pressures. The Head of Finance was now undertaking more detailed work on these savings and would report these to Members in November.

The Finance Manager made particular note of paragraph 8.2 of the report which informed Members that "looking ahead we will feed the current data into our budget compilation for 2015/16 and indeed meetings with managers are now taking place to try and find further savings going forward. Members will recall that further funding cuts are almost certain and therefore the service provision status quo cannot remain. In due course Members will have to consider the impact of various scenarios that will reduce the net budget and enable a balanced budget to be set."

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

## 27. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (01hrs.23mins.30secs)**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Head of Housing and Property Services which provided an update regarding changes to the provision of public conveniences within the District and the savings made to date, as well as the estimated budget for 15/16.

The Estates Manager outlined the contents of the report, informing Members that since the last report savings of circa £14.5K for the year 2014/15 had been made, with further planned savings of circa £37K for 2015/16.

Discussion took place regarding the closure of toilets at the Green in Crediton whilst the toilets at Newcombes Meadow remained open.

The Officer explained that the toilets at the Green did not have any disabled facilities and that the facility at Newcombes Meadow was used by families using the paddling pool and park in summer.

Members reported that the toilets on the Green had far higher usage than those at Newcombes Meadow, that coaches and buses could pull in near the toilets and that there was parking nearby. The Officer pointed out that it was not a statutory duty to provide toilets and that neither Crediton Town Council, nor the coach company had offered to contribute towards costs.

Members agreed that it would have been useful to have some sort of usage report or monitoring of the facilities.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- a) Officers continue discussions with Parish Councils, with the exception of Crediton and Cullompton, as detailed in the report and

- recommend the actions for each parish as identified;
- b) Discussions take place with Cullompton Town Council to negotiate a contribution of 50% towards running costs from 1 April 2015;
  - c) To continue negotiations with Crediton Town Council to determine public convenience provision, within MDDC budget restrictions;
  - d) To investigate the use of coin operated locks or methods of recording footfall data.

(Proposed by Councillor Mrs M E Squires and seconded by Councillor F J Rosamond)

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

28. **PLAY AREAS (02hrs.16mins.10secs)**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Head of Environmental Services which provided an update on the current condition of the Council's play areas and advised Members of a consultation process to be held with Town and Parish Councils over future provision.

The Open Spaces Manager outlined the detail of his report, explaining that in some areas of the District play area provision was above that specified as necessary in the Play Area and Open Space Strategy. The report highlighted play areas that had been identified for consideration and consultation.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The criteria used in the play area condition survey;
- The destination park at Newcombe's Meadow, which was likely to be installed early next year;
- Play area inspections being carried out on behalf of Town and Parish Councils;
- What the land could be used for if play areas were decommissioned, for example community orchards, allotments, building plots;
- Whether plots could be sold and the complications of S106, some of which restricted future use of the land;
- Consultation would be necessary to establish usage of facilities.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

1. Members note the current condition of Mid Devon's play areas at Annex 1;
2. That Officers consult with Town and Parish Councils over future provision, especially those areas shown at Annex 2 which may be over provided;
3. That a further report be brought back to this PDG following the consultation exercise.

(Proposed by Councillor F J Rosamond and  
seconded by Councillor Mrs M E Squires)

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

29. **FOUNDRY DEPOT (02hrs.39mins.00secs)**

The Public Health Manager updated the Group with regard to the recent move from Silverton Mill to the new depot.

The Officer informed the Group that the move had gone well, with operations ceasing at Silverton Mill on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July and commencing at the new depot on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Staff had settled in well and the baling system was now up and running. The site was more compact than Silverton Mill but the benefits of being undercover outweighed this.

Unloading of materials was a noisy operation and triple glazing had been fitted to the office windows to allow staff to work there.

Silverton Mill had been handed back to the landlord and the site had been cleared to their satisfaction.

The Chairman thanked the staff concerned for enabling such a seamless move.

The Chairman also thanked Mr Newcombe for the work he had carried out in his post as Waste and Transport Manager and welcomed Mr Noyce, his replacement.

30. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

**Items for the next meeting 18 November 2014**

Financial Monitoring  
Performance and Risk  
Private Water Supplies  
Waste and Recycling Update  
Wildflower Meadows Update  
Budget

(The meeting ended at 16.54)

**CHAIRMAN**