

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 11 June 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present Councillors

E J Berry, W Burke, D R Coren, B Holdman,
R F Radford, R L Stanley,
Ms E J Wainwright, B G J Warren and
J Wright

Also Present Councillor(s)

R M Deed

Also Present Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration), Simon Newcombe (Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services), Stuart Noyce (Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL IN THE CHAIR) (00.00.24)

Cllr B G J Warren was duly elected Chairman for the municipal year 2019-2020.

(Proposed by Cllr E J Berry and seconded by Cllr B Holdman)

2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN (00.03.59)

Cllr J Wright was duly elected Vice Chairman for the municipal year 2019-2020.

(Proposed by Cllr B Holdman and seconded by Cllr Ms E J Wainwright)

3 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.05.37)

There were no apologies

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.05.53)

There were no declarations made.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.06.19)

Mr Way urged members to support Motion 556 which called for the District Council to ban developers from using netting on hedgerows to stop nesting birds.

Alderman Lucas again referring to Motion 556 stated that this should be part of planning policy and that he was concerned with the perceived ease with which developers circumvented conditions set by the Council.

Mr Richardson, speaking on item 9 on the agenda, brought the issues of fly tipping and littering within Tiverton to the attention of the Group and stated that he had already brought forward suggestions to Full Council that camera's be installed in high risk areas. He asked how many fines for littering had been issued and questioned how and where this was being enforced. He asked if there was a dedicated phone number for people to call if they spotted littering and fly tipping.

The Chairman explained that the questions would be addressed at the appropriate agenda item

Note:

- Cllr R L Stanley declared a personal interest as he was a director of 3 Rivers Developments Ltd

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.17.10)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2019 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman

7 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.18.25)

The Chairman had no announcements to make

8 MOTION 556 (COUNCILLOR N A WAY - 8 APRIL 2019) (00.18.34)

The Group had before it Motion 556 (Councillor N A Way - 8 April 2019)

Mid Devon District Council has a record of environmental protection and protecting wildlife.

Council is greatly concerned by the growing trend across the country of developers using netting over hedgerows and trees at development sites to stop birds nesting and other wildlife using the hedges and trees.

This is wrong and runs against the best interests of supporting and enhancing local wildlife.

We call on all developers not to use netting in Mid Devon. Additionally, we call on Government to ban the use of netting at all sites with planning consent, those sites identified in the Local Plan and the emerging Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration explained that the practice was not unlawful and there had been no instances of developers using netting in the district to date. She explained that from a planning perspective netting would not need planning permission in its own right and that the Council would need to investigate if the planning service had any control over such netting and what it could enforce.

Members advised the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration that the RSPB had issued guidelines for developers which could be utilised in any planning policy amendments.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Motion 556 be supported

(Proposed by Cllr R L Stanley and seconded by Cllr Ms E J Wainwright)

Note: Cllr Ms E J Wainwright declared a personal interest as she was a member of RSPB

9 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00.24.48)**

The Group received and **NOTED** the *Performance and Risk report from the Group Manager for Performance Governance and Data Security who explained this was the final out turn report for 2018-2019 and that it showed the highlights for the whole of the year. She highlighted key achievements including:

- Reduced costs
- Fixed penalty notices for the year
- Waste transfer station
- Reduction of carbon footprint
- Increased electric car charging points

In response to a question asked by members with regard to LED lighting she explained that this referred to changes to lighting in Council owned properties. The Director of Operations explained that the floodlights at the leisure centres were turned off when clubs had finished their activities but these did sometimes go on later in the evenings.

The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces explained that the measure for the amount of residual waste sent to landfill was determined during the last administration and that the Council no longer sent any waste to landfill and that the performance indicator description would be adjusted to reflect this.

He explained that enforcement for fly tipping was difficult as officers were reliant on intelligence from members of the public or evidence left. In some instances residents had paid a contractor to take rubbish away and this had subsequently been fly tipped by the contractor but that the household was still responsible for the correct disposal of their waste. A campaign had been run in 2018 to encourage people to use only registered waste carriers who supply paperwork of the end destination.

In response to a direct question he confirmed that he would provide the Group with a breakdown of the 17 fixed penalty notices issued in 2018-2019.

The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces then addressed the specific questions raised by the public and stated that there was a 2 man litter busting team introduced in 2018/2019 which responded to fly tipping and littering reports within 5 working days. With regard to enforcement he explained that 3.8 officers were employed by the Council to carry out enforcement and car parking enforcement and that the Environment PDG decided how much time was spent on each activity via the District Officer Discretionary Time report brought to the Group annually. He stated that littering enforcement was taking place in the towns but officers were in uniform and that enforcement activity was not covert. He explained to members that the Council could do whatever the Group wanted in relation to enforcement but they would need to be mindful of the cost of providing an increased service. With regard to the request for a dedicated telephone number for public to report littering he explained that the Council policy was to provide a single number for the public to contact the call was dealt with by the customer contact team (all calls are then logged. There was a dedicated email address streetscene@middevon.gov.uk where the public could report instances of littering and fly tipping.

There was a discussion about the amount of food waste which was not currently being recycled and Members felt that the Council should be taking a tougher stance. The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces explained that we already provide weekly food waste collection from residents but not for trade premises. That the Waste Education and Enforcement policy was adopted by the Environment PDG and that if Members wanted to make changes to current enforcement practices for homes and recycling they could recommend them at the review of the policy which would be coming back for review later in the year.

The Group then discussed further details on the report and gave consideration to:

- Devon Waste Authorities – working with other authorities and community groups to educate the public to reduce, reuse and recycle
- Clean Devon – a group being set up with county, district and local authorities to tackle litter issues jointly
- 3 weekly collections – Has not been proposed at this time. To make these changes would require changes to the waste fleet and that if the Council mandated receptacles such as wheelie bins for residents to store increased waste the Council would need to fund them
- Garden Waste figures were over target

Note: * Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

10 **OUTTURN 2018-2019 (01.04.49)**

The Group received and **NOTED** the *Outturn report for 2018-2019 from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) who explained that the Environment PDG controlled a significant amount of the Council's overall budget.

Consideration was given to the following:

- Service budget variances
- Non service income and expenditure
- Executive summary

- Earmarked funds
- Sinking fund for waste vehicles
- General Fund reserve
- Financial forecasting
- Retail portfolios
- Increased trade waste customers
- HRA
- Council tax collection rates

Note: * Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

11 **UPDATE ON CAR CHARGING POINTS IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS (01.26.26)**

The Forward Planning Team Leader gave the Group an update on the proposal by the Group that the Council consider the introduction of home electric vehicle charging points in all new build properties across the district.

He outlined the contents of the report and explained that the Government's target was to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040. He informed the Group that current national planning policy does not prescribe the standards for the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new development. This is a matter for Council's to set out in their local plans and needs evidentially based. The Forward Planning Team Leader referred to current standards (e.g. 1 charging point per 10 dwellings) in the adopted Local Plan and which will be rolled forward in the Local Plan Review that is currently being examined by a Planning Inspector.

He explained the options available through future plan making to introduce a new requirement for developers to install electric charging points in all new build properties constructed in the district:

- New Local Plan – this was timetabled for a review to be started 2020 and it would be unlikely that the review would be completed before 2023
- Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) – an 'options consultation' was due to take place in June 2019 and it is expected this plan would be adopted by April 2020
- Neighbourhood Planning – could be completed by a Town or Parish Council in a shorter timeframe and once adopted would carry full weight in planning decisions

The Group discussed the options and felt that the timeframes of all three presented were too long and that Mid Devon District Council should be leading the way and should be speeding up the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

There was further discussion on how the Group could speed up the process of changing policy to ensure that electric vehicle charging points would be installed in new builds in the future and consideration was given to:

- The need for up to date evidence that can be used to influence future plan making

- The length of time that it would take for new policy requirements through the preparation of the GESP or a New Local Plan, a that a quicker process was needed
- Changing technologies – current technologies may soon become out of date
- Increased usage of existing car charging points

The Forward Planning Team Leader explained that the quickest option was for the Council to seek a requirement for electric vehicle charging points in all new build properties through the preparation of the GESP.

The Group **NOTED** the report and agreed that the wishes of the Group should be included within the GESP consultation document.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: * Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

12 **NATIONAL ASSISTANCE BURIAL PROCEDURE (01.55.53)**

The Group received the 3 yearly review of the *National Assistance Burial Procedure from the Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets presented by the Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services.

He gave an overview of the policy and explained that there were instances when people passed away and there were no next of kin, family or friends who were able to organise the funeral. In these instances the Authority had a statutory duty to act and arrange for the burial of these individuals.

He explained that MDDC only ran cemeteries and therefore when the Council had to act they arranged a burial in one of the Council run cemeteries.

The Group agreed that the policy was required and therefore:

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the revised National Assistance Burial Policy be adopted.

(Proposed by Cllr R F Radford and seconded by Cllr D R Coren.

Note: * Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

13 **START TIME OF MEETINGS (02.16.11)**

Following discussion the Group **AGREED** to hold its meetings at 5.30pm for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

14 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (02.33.05)**

There were no items identified for a future meeting.

(The meeting ended at 4.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN