

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 3 November 2020 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

B G J Warren (Chairman)
E J Berry, W Burke, D R Coren,
Miss J Norton, R F Radford, R L Stanley,
L D Taylor and J Wright

Also Present

Councillor(s)

R M Deed and C R Slade

Also Present

Officer(s):

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Darren Beer (Interim Group Manager Street Scene and Open Spaces), Andrew Busby (Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Vicky Lowman (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

35 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.56)**

There were no apologies or substitute members

36 **REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.03.07)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Remote Meetings Protocol.

Note: *Remote Meetings Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes

37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.31)**

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests when appropriate.

38 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.57)**

There were no questions from members of the public present

39 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.04.15)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th October 2020 were agreed as a true record

40 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.04.54)**

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Cabinet had followed the recommendation of the Group with regard to the PSPO and that he and the Cabinet Member for the Environment would find a way forward to progress the PSPO. He explained that a revised PSPO would be brought back to the Group.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment explained that much of the redrafting work had already been completed and that it was hoped a special meeting of the Group could be convened in January.

The Chairman further explained that he had been in discussions with the Legal Services team and that advice would be provided to members on the different forms of legislation available and this would be discussed at the January meeting.

41 **CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE (0.09.26)**

The Group Manager for Property Services and Commercial Assets gave an update to the Group on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

He explained that the Climate Handbook was near completion and that there had been communication with companies to provide car share schemes, electric bikes and additional electric car charging points.

The officer informed the Group that the Devon Climate Change Plan was due to go out to public consultation in December for a period of 10 weeks and that it would be brought before the Group in January so that the comments of Members could be included.

He explained that the Climate Change Officer post had been agreed and was due to be advertised shortly. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change had been speaking to universities with regard to funding and a Green Homes bid was being worked on.

He informed the meeting that additional funding was being sought for additional electric car charging points and that the solar array at Carlu Close was now live.

Consideration was given to:

- The Climate Change Action Plan concentrated on funding streams in the first 4 years after which bigger projects would be developed and defined
- The Climate Change Action Plan was a living document which would be regularly updated
- There was a robust procurement exercise completed for the installation of solar panels at Carlu Close and officers were satisfied with the supplier eventually chosen
- Officers would investigate the possibility of working with retailers to install electric car charging points at the larger retail sites in the District

42 **DRAFT BUDGET (0.21.47)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting the initial draft 2021/2022 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget and agree a future strategy for further budget reductions for 2022/23 onwards.

The Principal Accountant explained that this was the first iteration of the General Fund Budget and that the Medium Term Financial Plan was due to go to the Cabinet on 3rd December 2020.

The officer outlined the contents of the report stating that we were living in unprecedented times and the difficulties that were faced in considering a draft budget for 2021-22; this was the final year of a four year fixed funding settlement, there was uncertainty with Business Rates, the rural settlement payment, the New Homes Bonus and interest rates and that the pandemic had had a significant impact on service income. General assumptions had been provided in the report, the overall proposed deficit was shown in the report as was the impact of the pandemic on business and the standard pressures. There was a need to work with officers to make significant savings across the board and to consider revenue opportunities.

He explained that there may be a need to look at the Council's statutory services and downgrade them from the current platinum service to a silver service but this would be dependant on the priorities of Members. He explained that MDDC were currently a high performing Council and that it was a question of, if monies could be saved this way and would Members want that.

The Chief Executive stated that the dilemma for Members was what level of service they wanted to provide against what the Council could afford. He stated that the Council could provide a minimum service level or an enhanced level at an additional cost.

Consideration was given to:

- Queries with regard to 3 Rivers financing
- Queries with regard to Climate Change initiatives within the budget
- Queries with regard to the increase in the open spaces budget

The Principal Accountant stated he would provide written answers to the queries raised by Members.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

43 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (0.58.26)**

The Principal Accountant provided the meeting with a verbal report with regard to income and expenditure to date. He stated that Month 5 reporting showed a forecast deficit reduction of £1,177k to £41k as more details had been received on income streams from the Government re Covid.

44 REFUSE WASTE OPTIONS (1.06.59)

The Group had before it a *report of the Interim Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces which reviewed the need to increase recycling in the District in line with the government guidelines to recycle 65% of household waste by 2035 and Devon's proposed 60% target rate by 2025.

The Officer explained possible options for future waste and recycling collections following a review carried out by WYG Consultancy including a proposed trial to ascertain viability.

He explained that East Devon District Council was one of the first to move to 3 weekly collections in 2015 and he and the Cabinet Member for the Environment were due to meet with their officers to discuss the benefits and pitfalls of the scheme.

He gave a background to the proposed trial and explained that it would take place in both urban and rural areas. He explained that pre and post surveys would take place.

Consideration was given to:

- Members concerns with regard to the ability of some communal areas to store bins and the need to individually assess these properties for alternative solutions
- Members concerns about the numbers of disposable nappies which would accumulate over a 3 week period and if there were any schemes available to recycle these
- The need to increase the education programme and getting the message to school children
- The increased costs and carbon footprint of increasing recycling collections to weekly
- The importance of following up education with enforcement for people who do not comply

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- The options in the report be considered; and
- Authority should be given for the Service to complete a trial to a limited number (around 1000) of households for a minimum of three months

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the Decision – To enable the Council to increase its household recycling rates in line with government guidelines.

Notes:

- i.) Cllrs W Burke and L D Taylor requested that their abstention from voting be recorded
- ii.) *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

45 **UTILISING COMMUNITY PAYBACK SERVICE USERS IN MID DEVON (1.53.49)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Interim Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces presenting the key aspects in utilising service users provided by DDCCRC (Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company).

The Officer explained that Community Payback was a punishment and a way that individuals could payback to the community. The Courts sentenced individuals to between 40-300 hours dependant on the seriousness of the crime and the service users record.

He explained that during the current restrictions the service would need to be concentrated in the Towns where welfare facilities were available.

Consideration was given to:

- Members support of the initiative
- The types of work that the service could provide and the quality of the work completed

The Cabinet Member for the Environment explained that the initial thought would be to replace the weed busting team but that all Members would be able to apply for completion of projects in their wards. He hoped that Members would apply for the use of the service.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

46 **WASTE AND RECYCLING AND DISTRICT OFFICER UPDATE (2.11.17)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Interim Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces presenting future options within the Street Scene Education and Enforcement Services and Recycling Service.

The Officer explained that it was not currently possible to recycle coffee pods as they were made of mixed materials but the report had provided details of how the manufacturers of these pods provided recycling options for their users.

He explained that it was possible for residents to recycle metal trays, pots and pans and that the Council was currently looking at capacity before the initiative would be made public. He confirmed that since the introduction of WEEE recycling and it is estimated over 6 tonnes had been collected.

The Environment and Enforcement Officer explained that officers were waiting for answers to questions from East Hampshire DC who had been approached to provide a trial private enforcement service for the issuing of fixed penalty notices. She explained that the aim of the trial would be to reduce street littering and dog fouling at a cost neutral service. She further explained that the provider had indicated that it would not be able to provide a cost neutral service with the current level of FPN's issued in the District and this would need to increase to 250 FPN's a month: any less than this per month would see cost implications for the Council.

The officer then provided an update on Protection Equipment for District Officers and that they were actively seeking information about possible devices.

The Chief Executive informed the meeting that the Use of CCTV policy would be presented to the Community PDG in November which would have a bearing on how all forms of surveillance camera systems could be used.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

47 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (02.25.00)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security providing updated information on the performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2020-21.

The officer outlined the contents of the report stating that all the Environment measures were at or close to target.

She explained that progress was being made on the Climate Change agenda and that a set of proposed measures was now included.

She explained that the report detailed new performance measures which were to be included in the Corporate Plan Performance Framework and offered Members the opportunity to express their views on the proposals.

Consideration was given to:

- Members concerns that the measures for Homes repairs had been reduced and should remain at 100%

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- The Corporate Plan Performance Framework be approved with the exception of the following measures in the Homes Portfolio which should be reset to 100%:
 - KPI Item 40 – Emergency repairs
 - KPI Item 41 – Urgent repairs
 - KPI Item 42 – Routine repairs
 - KPI Item 43 – Repairs appointments kept

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the Decision – To ensure that the Corporate Plan priorities and targets are effectively monitored so that key business risks can be mitigated effectively

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

48 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Members requested an update on the following for the next scheduled meeting of the Group:

- Private Enforcement
- Protection for the District Officers following consideration of the CCTV report

(The meeting ended at 8.06 pm)

CHAIRMAN