

Public Document Pack

Mid Devon District Council

Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 18 May 2020 at 2.15 pm
Virtual Meeting

Next ordinary meeting
Monday, 1 June 2020 at 2.15 pm

Important - this meeting will be conducted and recorded by Zoom only. Please do not attend Phoenix House. The attached Protocol for Remote Meetings explains how this will work.

To join this meeting, please click the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93702307182?pwd=MDkyUDI1Nk9IN0Z0bHdoNnpPQmRpdz09>

Meeting ID: 937 0230 7182
Password: 533698

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0800 358 2817 United Kingdom Toll-free

Meeting ID: 937 0230 7182
Password: 533698

Membership

Cllr F W Letch
Cllr W Burke
Cllr R J Chesterton
Cllr Mrs C P Daw
Cllr J M Downes
Cllr R Evans
Cllr Mrs I Hill
Cllr B Holdman
Cllr B A Moore
Cllr R L Stanley
Cllr B G J Warren
Cllr A Wilce

A G E N D A

Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place

- 1 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**
To elect a Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020-2021.

- 2 **VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL** *(Pages 5 - 8)*
Committee to note the virtual meeting protocol.

- 3 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).

- 4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**
Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest, and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest.

- 5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.

Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.

- 6 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** *(Pages 9 - 14)*
Members to consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 24th February 2020.

The Committee is reminded that only those members of the Committee present at the previous meeting should vote and, in doing so, should be influenced only by seeking to ensure that the minutes are an accurate record.

- 7 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**
To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting that have been called-in.

- 8 **CABINET MEMBER FOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES** *(Pages 15 - 24)*
To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services on area's within their portfolio.

- 9 **CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT** *(Pages 25 - 28)*
To receive the Chairman's Annual report on the Scrutiny Committee for 2019-2020.

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Thursday 7th May 2020

Covid-19 and meetings

The Council will be holding some meetings in the next few weeks, but these will not be in person at Phoenix House until the Covid-19 crisis eases. Instead, the meetings will be held remotely via Zoom and you will be able to join these meetings via the internet. Please see the instructions on each agenda and read the Protocol on Remote Meetings before you join.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to Committee@middevon.gov.uk by **no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting**. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed – as you can imagine, it is easier to see and manage public speaking when everyone is physically present in the same room. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

If you require any further information please contact Carole Oliphant on:
E-Mail: coliphant@middevon.gov.uk

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Mid Devon District Council - Remote Meetings Protocol

1. Introduction

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations permit remote attendance in Local Authority meetings.

Remote attendance is permitted as long as certain conditions are satisfied. These include that the Member is able to hear and be heard by the other Members in attendance. Also, being able to hear and be heard by any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting (in line with the public participation scheme). A visual solution is preferred, but audio is sufficient.

This also relates to members of the public attending the meeting also being heard. The regulations are clear that a meeting is not limited to those present in the same place, but includes electronic, digital or virtual locations (internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers).

2. Zoom

Zoom is the system the Council will be using for the time-being to host remote / virtual meetings. It has functionality for audio, video, and screen sharing and you do not need to be a member of the Council or have a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting.

3. Access to documents

Member Services will publish the agenda and reports for committee meetings on the Council's website in line with usual practice. Paper copies of agendas will only be made available to those who have previously requested this and also the Chair of a virtual meeting.

If any other Member wishes to have a paper copy, they must notify the Member Services before the agenda is published, so they can arrange to post directly – it may take longer to organise printing, so as much notice as possible is appreciated. Printed copies will not be available for inspection at the Council's offices and this requirement was removed by the Regulations.

4. Setting up the Meeting

This will be done by Member Services. They will send a meeting request via Outlook which will appear in Members' Outlook calendar. Members will receive a URL link to click on to join the meeting.

5. Public Access

Members of the public will be able to use a weblink and standard internet browser. This will be displayed on the front of the agenda.

6. Joining the Meeting

Councillors must join the meeting early (i.e. at least five minutes before the scheduled start time) in order to avoid disrupting or delaying the meeting. Councillors should remember that they may be visible and heard by others, including the public, during this time.

7. Starting the Meeting

At the start of the meeting, the Member Services Officer will check all required attendees are present (viewing the participant list) and that there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, the meeting will be adjourned. This applies if, during the meeting, it becomes inquorate for whatever reason.

The Chair will remind all Members, Officers and the Public that **all microphones will be automatically muted**, unless and until they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc. which is intrusive and disruptive during the meeting. The Hosting Officer will enforce this and will be able to turn off participant mics when they are not in use. Members would then need to turn their microphones back on when they wish to speak.

8. Public Participation

Participation by members of the public will continue in line with the Council's current arrangements as far as is practicable. However, to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and that no member of the public is missed, all those who wish to speak must register **by 4pm on the day before the meeting**. They should email their full name to Committee@middevon.gov.uk. If they wish to circulate their question in advance, that would be helpful.

At public question time, the Chair will invite the public by name to speak at the appropriate time. At that point, all public microphones will be enabled. This means that, to avoid private conversations being overheard, no member of the public should speak until it is their turn and they should then refrain from speaking until the end of public question time, when all microphones will be muted again. In the normal way, the public should state their full name, the agenda item they wish to speak to **before** they proceed with their question.

Unless they have registered, a member of the public will not be called to speak.

If a member of the public wishes to ask a question but cannot attend the meeting for whatever reason, there is nothing to prevent them from emailing members of the Committee with their question, views or concern in advance. However, if they do so, it would be helpful if a copy could be sent to Committee@middevon.gov.uk as well.

9. Declaration of Interests

Councillors should declare their interests in the usual way. A councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest is required to leave the room. For remote meetings, this means that they will be moved to a break-out room for the duration

of this item and will only be invited back into the meeting when discussion on the relevant item has finished.

10. The Meeting and Debate

The Council will not be using the Chat function. The Chair will call each member of the Committee to speak in turn and will continue in this way until no member has anything more to add.

When referring to reports or making specific comments, Councillors should refer to the report and page number, so that all Members of the Committee have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

11. Voting

On a recommendation or motion being put to the vote, the Chair will go round the virtual room and ask each member entitled to vote to say whether they are for or against or whether they abstain. The Member Services Officer will announce the numerical result of the vote.

12. Meeting Etiquette Reminder

- Mute your microphone – you will still be able to hear what is being said.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly and please state your name each time you speak
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

13. Part 2 Reports and Debate

There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or “exempt” issues – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – are under consideration. It is important to ensure that there are no members of the public at remote locations able to hear or see the proceedings during such meetings.

Any Councillor in remote attendance must ensure that there is no other person present – a failure to do so could be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Member Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, remove them to a break-out room for the duration of that item. They can then be invited back in when the business returns to Part 1.

Please turn off smart speakers such as Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Home or smart music devices. These could inadvertently record phone or video conversations, which would not be appropriate during the consideration of confidential items.

14. Interpretation of standing orders

Where the Chair is required to interpret the Council's Constitution and procedural rules in light of the requirements of remote participation, they may take advice from the Member Services Officer or Monitoring Officer prior to making a ruling. However, the Chair's decision shall be final.

15. Disorderly Conduct by Members

If a Member behaves in the manner as outlined in the Constitution (persistently ignoring or disobeying the ruling of the Chair or behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs the business of the meeting), any other Member may move 'That the member named be not further heard' which, if seconded, must be put to the vote without discussion.

If the same behaviour persists and a Motion is approved 'that the member named do leave the meeting', then they will be removed as a participant by the Member Services Officer.

16. Disturbance from Members of the Public

If any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly. If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair will ask the Member Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

17. After the meeting

Please ensure you leave the meeting promptly by clicking on the red phone button to hang up.

18. Technical issues

In the event that the Chair, the Hosting Officer or the Member Services Officer identifies a problem with the systems from the Council's side, the Chair should declare a recess while the fault is addressed. If it is not possible to address the fault and the meeting becomes inquorate through this fault, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as it can be reconvened.

If the meeting was due to determine an urgent matter or one which is time-limited and it has not been possible to continue because of technical difficulties, the Chief Executive, Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall explore such other means of taking the decision as may be permitted by the Council's constitution.

For members of the public and press who experience problems during the course of a meeting e.g. through internet connectivity or otherwise, the meeting will not be suspended or adjourned.

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 24 February 2020 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

F W Letch (Chairman)
W Burke, R J Chesterton, Mrs C P Daw,
R Evans, Mrs I Hill, B A Moore, R L Stanley,
B G J Warren and A Wilce

Apologies

Councillor(s)

B Holdman

Also Present

Councillor(s)

G Barnell and R M Deed

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration), Matthew Page (Group Manager for Human Resources), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

123 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.00.59)**

Apologies were received from Cllr B Holdman.

124 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.01.19)**

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

125 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.01.24)**

There were no members of the public present.

126 **MEMBER FORUM (00.01.34)**

There were no issues raised under this item.

127 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.01.51)**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27th January 2020 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

128 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (00.02.10)**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 13th February 2020 had been called in.

129 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.02.16)**

The Chairman informed Members that he and the Scrutiny Officer had attended a Devon County Council Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on 5G and that many interesting questions had been asked by the public present.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that the event had lasted all day and about 140 Members of the public were present to be involved in the discussion. She stated that the sessions included reference to misunderstanding of scientific evidence and that questions would now be selected and put to a panel of experts in a few months' time.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the sessions had highlighted the requirement that new masts for 5G would need to be 200 metres apart and he requested that the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration bring a report to the Scrutiny Committee in April with future implications for planning applications.

130 **CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION (00.07.21)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration who gave Members an overview of the areas within his portfolio. He explained that the report detailed a large area and specific projects including:

- Town centre regeneration schemes
- Town centre masterplanning
- Garden Village at Cullompton
- Ongoing Housing Infrastructure Schemes
- Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension
- The Local Plan
- Greater Exeter Strategic Plan
- Building Control and Regulation

In response to questions about the Hydro Mills Project he informed Members that a business case was being brought before the Economy PDG and would then be presented to the Cabinet.

The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration explained that applications have been made to the Environment Agency after long standing discussions with regards to ecology and flood issues.

There was a general discussion with regard to the use of consultants for masterplanning and Members were informed that consideration on the use of consultants was based on specialist skills available, the duration of the work required and the capacity within the Council to deal with the work internally.

In response to a question about using officers from other authorities the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration explained that the Council's planning officers regularly liaised with their counterparts and were aware of the skill sets of officers in other authorities but everyone was working at or close to capacity and there was currently no usable resource that could be utilised.

Consideration was given to:

- Crediton Town Masterplan timings
- The need for the employment of a Tiverton Town Centre Manager now that the Tiverton Town Centre Partnership had been reformed
- Garden Village Project and how this would be funded in the future
- Details of the current Housing Infrastructure Fund projects

Members expressed concerns with regard to the recent Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) that they were not being given enough time to look at the emerging policies.

It was explained to Members that the Planning Policy Advisory Group were scrutinising the policies one by one and making suggestions for changes. Members were reminded that any Member who was not a member of the Planning Policy Advisory Group was welcome to attend and contribute to the discussions.

Members questioned the benefits of MDDC being part of the GESP and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration explained that MDDC had to provide a 5 year land supply which was mandated by Government. The options available were to do this on our own or in consort with other authorities. He explained that by working alongside neighbouring authorities there would be a joined up approach to infrastructure, leisure and tourism.

The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration explained that MDDC had a duty to co-operate with other authorities and that there were a lot of cross boundary issues that would be easier to look at strategically as a group of authorities rather than stand alone, including climate change. Planning across larger GESP area rather than within individual council boundaries would also mean greater engagement with the Government over funding and infrastructure provision.

Members discussed the need to provide social housing for larger households.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration thanked officers for producing his comprehensive report.

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

131 **ESTABLISHMENT 6 MONTH UPDATE (01.08.17)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report of the Group Manager for Human Resources informing Members of the overall structure of the Council showing the management and deployment of officers.

He provided Members with further detail on the following:

- Increase in the Establishment
- Sickness rates had improved over the past 12 months
- Increase in short term sickness
- New sickness policy introduced
- Increased support for mental health and wellbeing of staff

- Increase in staff turnover

Members discussed the current sickness rates and took some positives from the report and the new sickness policy. Concerns were raised with regard to the average 8.2 days sickness and Members felt that this was still too high compared to the private sector where rates were much lower.

Members requested that sickness rates were benchmarked against neighbouring authorities and companies within the private sector.

Members expressed disappointment that leavers tended not to give a reason for leaving the authority and did not complete a staff exit interview. Suggestions were made that an independent body or persons be used to complete staff exit interviews rather than line managers.

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

132 **FORWARD PLAN (01.29.15)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** the *Forward Plan.

Note: *Forward plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes

133 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (01.29.43)**

The Scrutiny Officer provided Members with an update on the Climate Change workshop she had attended the previous week. She explained that the discussions had centred on the carbon emission targets and the shrinking budgets of local authorities. She explained that there had been a focus on the importance of the procurement process understanding the climate target and that MDDC were ahead of the curve as a Members briefing with regard to procurement had been arranged for 19th March 2020.

Members discussed Carbon Offsetting and that it was not clear if this was adding to the solution.

134 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (01.36.05)**

The Chairman of the Customer Experience Working Group informed Members that a final report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee and once concluded she would like to lead a new Working Group into woman's health issues within the workforce.

The Chairman requested that the Committee investigate High Street Security within the 3 main towns but this investigation could be deferred until after the Police and Crime Commissioner election and the roll out of the CCTV Policy and Guidance to the Community PDG in June 2020.

Members requested an update on timings of the 3 Rivers Governance report due to be presented to Cabinet.

(The meeting ended at 3.56 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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Cabinet Member for Support Services and the Working Environment Annual Report to Scrutiny May 2020

Human Resources

Workforce and Establishment Data

A good amount of work and progress has been made in relation to reporting on workforce data and establishment performance. Data that is reported on includes sickness absence, turnover, agency expenditure, number of dismissals, number of grievances (and reasons), recruitment and appraisal timescales. This has allowed discussions to take place with our Finance colleagues to better inform our establishment and manage our vacancies, leavers and posts in need of re-evaluation. More closely aligning our HR and Finance services can really help enhance the quality of our performance management.

Policy and Intervention

Good line manager intervention which effectively addresses the issue in hand and sets the right precedent is vital to gaining employee confidence in leadership. A new Sickness Absence Policy has been introduced to tighten the reporting of sickness and set a new six day guideline for managing sickness more effectively and robustly. A number of policy reviews have commenced into key subject areas which include Change Management, Conduct and Leave.

A coaching and training plan to upskill line managers on how to deliver effective intervention is under consideration and will look to enable the demonstration of leadership qualities and behaviours that underpin good performance management. We will also educate line managers further on how to understand and own risk that arises in situations, then address it.

Employee Engagement and Wellbeing

An all staff consultative group called 'Impact' has been established which allows employees to give feedback and input on both Council work programmes and new initiatives. In addition to encouraging greater ownership and collaboration in the organisation, the group encourages the exchange of views and ideas so there is an open and transparent culture on employment and workplace issues. We also intend to carry out a comprehensive staff survey in the Autumn.

The Council has arranged a series of wellbeing and mental health first aid training sessions for staff to raise awareness around these important issues. We are also emphasising the employment practice that can help underpin effective intervention on mental health including supervision.

Payroll

In this financial year we have extended the outward facing MyView (that you can access from home) to include expenses claims. This means that we now have no need for employees or councillors to complete paper forms.

The paycales were changed this year from numerical to alphabetical, the rates follow the guidelines and the lowest hourly rate is now £9.00 per hour so no need for an adjustment to incorporate the new National Minimum Wage.

Learning and Development

The Evolve project (a series of initiatives around supporting our workforce and allowing training needs and skill development to be co-ordinated effectively) has made good progress this year with the finalising of a new competency framework which will allow all Council employees to identify the qualities that are pertinent to their professional responsibilities but also their professional development. There will be a series of workshops in this year which will outline how the competency framework should be used in the forthcoming Appraisal/PDR process.

Appraisal 20/21 will be co-ordinated and stored by the Learning nexus online system. As well as allowing us to capture which Appraisals have been completed, the strengths, development areas and talent opportunities that are identified from using the competency framework will be stored to give us a skills analysis of the organisation.

Group Managers were allocated their required portion of the Corporate Training Budget to remain responsible for their individual employee's specific training and development for 2019. The remainder of the L&D budget was held centrally and used for the South West Coaching Pool, Dementia Awareness Training, Suicide Awareness Training and Disclosure Training. Investigation Training, Mental Health Awareness sessions and First Aid Courses across the Council have been held along with sessions on raising awareness of Domestic Abuse throughout the 2019/2020 financial year.

L&D has also worked with South Devon College and provided employees with training on Effective Communication, Project Management and Train the Trainer using the funding they acquired. PRINCE2 training via The Knowledge Academy for Group Managers, and other staff involved in project work, is in the process of being rolled out with 9 employees completing both the foundation and practitioner course in February with another 12 booked in to complete in April.

We have secured the training provider CRISP to deliver a catalogue of courses throughout 2020 focusing on management training, customer service and employee wellbeing based on trends within the service training plans together with team requests.

7 members of staff across the services have been signed up to Post Entry Training to enable them to get a specialised formal qualification including an Urban Planning Degree, Certificate in Housing Practice, Facilities Management Certificate, Diploma in Paralegal Practice and the NEBOSH general certificate, however it is the Apprenticeship Levy which really has created opportunities for new and existing staff to obtain on the job learning and formal qualifications at no extra cost (the cost is deducted from the levy). The Levy has been used to its full potential with us working closely with Petroc, Exeter College, Exeter University, Plymouth University, Lifetime Training and Bridgwater and Taunton College to ensure the 22 Apprenticeships are delivered to the highest standard. 18 members of staff completed their Apprenticeships in 2019 and 15 are due to complete this year ranging from Level 2 up to MBA.

Health & Safety

Work carried out during 2019-20

- 15 x Health and Safety, safety reviews
- Phoenix House, Carlu Close Depot, Old Road Depot, Pannier and Market Walk, and the Leisure sites, have had Fire Risk Assessments review carried out with recommendations made to Managers were required.
- Phoenix House, Carlu Close Depot, Old Road Depot, Pannier Market and the Leisure sites have had Legionella risk assessments created with Property Services carrying out work were required.
- The Learning Management system is now being used to deliver fire and legionella awareness a courses.
- The following in-house training courses where completed:
 - 8 First Aid courses
 - 2 Accident investigation
 - 3 First aid for mental health
 - 7 Service specific H&S courses

Accident Reporting 2019-20

To date a total of 36 accident reports have been received of with 3 requiring reporting to RIDDOR. All 3 RIDDOR accidents were due to employees being off work for longer than 7 days following a work related accident. All incidents have been investigated and improvements made or training given where appropriate.

Health and Safety Policies

All health and safety policies are up to date

Planned Work for 2020-21

Due to the retirement of the existing Health and Safety Officer the work plan for 2020-21 will be created when the new Health and Safety Officer starts on the 4th May 2020.

The work plan will continue to focus on the high risk services of Street Scene, Leisure, Building Maintenance, Housing and Property Services. However, the role will be changed with the training aspect delivered by the Learning Management system supported by in-house or external face to face training where required. This will allow the new H&S Officer to develop and support the Wellbeing project.

Electoral Services

Electoral Registration 2019-20

- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration
- Achieved a response from 99% of Mid Devon households for annual canvass of electors, as was the case last year
- 30% of the returned household electoral registration forms were electronic (internet, phone and text), compared to 24% last year
- Will end the year on budget

Elections 2019-20

- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for the Returning Officer
- Ran the following major elections:
 - District and Town/Parish elections - 85 elections with a total of 482 candidates
 - European Parliamentary Election at short notice
 - Snap UK Parliamentary General Election during annual canvass of electors
- Administered 3 uncontested parish by-elections
- Planning for May 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner Election – now postponed until 2021 due to Coronavirus pandemic
- Planning for Neighbourhood Planning Referenda
- Planning for District by-election (Taw ward) – now postponed until 2021 due to Coronavirus pandemic
- Only MDDC election budget is for district elections (all other elections recharged to the relevant authority). Within budget.

Our Electoral Services Manager, Jackie Stoneman, received a national award in February 2020 in recognition for her support to the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), South West Branch, and contribution to electoral services.

Member Services

Provide support, advice and assistance to elected Members and Council Officers both informally and through the formal decision-making structure of the Council and maintaining and improving the quality of decision making throughout the Council.

- Meetings support – support services to the Council, Cabinet, Committees, Policy Development Groups, working groups etc. Providing advice on meeting procedures and

legislation. Ongoing work continues on a day to day basis in this regard with the monitoring of decisions to be made via the Forward Plan, the publication of agendas for all meetings (formal and informal) and the preparation of minutes and actions from these minutes.

- Member support – supporting the Council’s elected Members including training and development: A comprehensive raft of training and member briefings took place as part of the 2019 induction programme, and following on from that a wide range of learning opportunities has since been delivered. The majority of these are group sessions that take place as part of the “briefing programme”, with some committee/group specific training which has been requested. Individuals have also requested specific training that is appropriate to them either in their Ward Member role or specific Council duties and these are paid for out of the Member Development budget.

The Council works with other local authorities in Devon and Somerset providing a shared service for Member Development. The shared service consists of 7 partners which widens our opportunities to provide learning and development with other local authorities in a cost effective manner, offering networking opportunities and the benchmarking of good practice across the field. The programme for the current year has included:

- An introduction to Scrutiny – this unfortunately clashed with our members away day
- Chairing Skills – with 11 of our own members attending alongside those from other authorities
- Questioning Skills – 4 of our own members attended from this authority alongside those from other local authorities
- Time Management and Managing Casework – 8 of our own members attended alongside those from other local authorities

The Shared Services Officer (DCC) has also visited us and undertaken some personal development discussions with members, the outcomes of these conversations will feed into the development programme for the coming year.

Further training sessions have continued throughout the year on relevant subjects.

- Keeping the Chairman of the Council’s diary and responding to invitations on his/her behalf. Civic events – arranging civic and ceremonial events

A member of the team is also the Civic Officer and carries out the above functions on a daily basis when required. She is also the officer leading on Operation London Bridge.

- Provision of support and assistance to the Independent Remuneration Panel on their annual review of Members Allowances. Administration support is provided to the IRP throughout the year.
- Parish Liaison support to the Town and Parish Councils

A member of the team is also provides specific support as the single point of contact for the town and parish councils, election year is extremely busy for the officer as she had to deal with over 600 register of interest forms and also provide support to new parish

clerks. She also provides a monthly town and parish newsletter and organises the annual clerks meeting.

- Support to the Monitoring Officer (Deputy Monitoring Officer role) – the Member Services Manager is also one of the Deputy Monitoring Officers and supports the Monitoring Officer with regard to meeting procedures and work on the Constitution.
- Scrutiny/Policy Research – providing support to the Scrutiny Committee and Policy Development Groups with regard to research, providing information and report writing – our new officer took up her post in September 2019 and has undertaken research and policy analysis to further the work of the council’s scrutiny function as well as shaping thoughts around the future policy direction in servicing the councils policy development groups. Specific work has taken place with the Customer Engagement Working Group and the Net Zero Working Group. The officer is also working with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change with regard to progressing work following the Climate Change Declaration and working with Devon County Council’s Scrutiny Officers with regard to the 5G project.

Health Services

Mid Devon Leisure supports and leads on health initiatives across the district via variety of Referral schemes. These schemes are either funded through the health sector, or subsidised and included in the pay and play activities across the Mid Devon Leisure portfolio. Access to the facilities is also available for 3rd party organisations to deliver health and wellbeing sessions to their own clients.

Funded Referrals. In order to deliver the quality and expertise required when dealing with clients with complex medical needs, Mid Devon Leisure staff require professional qualifications and training. In some circumstances this training is funded by; Public Health, the NHS or more specialist organisations such the British Heart Foundation. Other funding streams take the form of payments directly to MDDC based on per client activity.

- a. **Cancer Rehabilitation (NHS).** Activity is based on individual needs rather than group exercise. Clients can attend the set GP session which is instructor supervised and benefit from social support with group peers. Qualifications are funded
- b. **Escape Pain. (NHS)** Physiotherapy pilot specifically for Osteoarthritis. 2 sessions of group exercise per week, for 6 weeks. This pilot has ended (March 2020) with a proposal of MDL continuing a 6 week scheme currently pending. Funding payments to MDDC after completion.
- c. **Strength & Balance Pilot (NHS).** Targeting '*Falls and fear of falling*'. Clients participate through self-referrals or referred by specialist and undertake a 12 week course. **Active Devon** have now taken over the initiative, may reduce to 6 weeks and funding is to be identified. Mid Devon Leisure is in discussion regarding how to continue the scheme

- d. **Walking Football (Active Devon/Public Health)** Funding paid for the launch of the activity for participants and pitch hire. This is no longer funded, and the groups are self-managed paying a reduced rate for pitch hire.

Subsidised Referrals. These schemes support recovery for clients with health related needs and require the direct supervision of Mid Devon Leisure staff. Funding for activities is not currently supported although Mid Devon Leisure pricing subsidises the session costs to the clients from the equivalent full paying fee. Clients pay either per session or where appropriate with a monthly fee through the membership scheme.

- a. **Cardiac Rehabilitation.** Following a Cardiac event clients complete Phase 1 and 2 recovery within the hospital.
- **Phase 3** is hosted at a Mid Devon Leisure site with sessions led by; NHS Cardiac Nurse and Leisure staff. This activity is group exercise and based in the class studio.
 - **Phase 4** is led and supervised by Mid Devon Leisure staff and follows the structure set by the Cardiac Rehabilitation framework for group exercise in the gym. Support is available from the NHS cardiac teams should any concerns for client welfare arise .
- b. **GP Referrals.** A scheme where GP's can refer clients to exercise rather than medication for a 12 week programme specifically designed by the team to improve the clients individual health circumstances. Examples of these circumstances are; weight loss, mobility, joint and muscular pain, high blood pressure and more. This scheme is hosted and led by Mid Devon Leisure and was established over the past 20 years with local GP surgeries. For a short period this scheme expanded into a Devon wide initiative where set criteria and qualifications were met in order to meet the agreed NHS standard. The Devon wide initiative has since been disbanded and Mid Devon Leisure continues to provide the service in conjunction with the local surgeries to maintain the quality of offering.

3rd Party Organisations. Hire of facilities (courts, pitches and rooms) is in place for local providers such as physiotherapists, sheltered accommodations, and local support charities to provide their offering to their customers. This includes, although is not limited to groups such as; Age Concern, Inclusive Crediton, Involve, Active Devon, Crediton Hospital, Grapevine Church Charity, Creedy Court and The Woodmill Disability Trust.

Mid Devon Leisure is currently engaging with NHS 'Social Prescribers' in Tiverton and Cullompton. These prescribers can signpost to multi agency providers to support their clients, this can also include activities facilitated by Mid Devon Leisure. This initiative is yet to be launched, and the social Prescribers in Crediton are yet to be established with the Mid Devon Leisure team.

Customer Services

Customer Services is a support service, providing front line customer service and admin support for other council services.

The team is the first point of contact for many of our customers and across many access channels, including phone, web, email and face-to-face. They also provide a central admin service, handling incoming and outgoing post, printing, scanning and much more.

2019 has seen a continued decrease in footfall, or face-to-face visitors, as customers choose to transact with us via phone and online.

As a result they are reviewing our service provision. Work has commenced on cross-training staff to ensure resilience of the service. Although having to carry some vacancies recently has impacted on this project and also intermittently resulted in increased wait times.

	18/19	19/20 Annualized	Comment
Visitors to our offices	23,078	14,832	36% Decrease
Number of Calls	135,809	114,662	16% Decrease
Items of post Despatched	162,625	145,382	11% Decrease
Kiosk Payments – Cash (self Service)	4980	9,809	97% Increase
Kiosk Payments – Card	4770	9,810	106% Increase
Payments Via website (including online forms)	25994	30,629	18% Increase
Phone Payments (automated)	17,070	19,342	13% Increase
Post Office	29179	31,567	8% Increase
Scanning at post opening	30975	34,388	11% Increase
Emails received via Customer Services	14,165	15,608	10% Increase

The service has been actively working with the Customer Experience Scrutiny Working Group as they examine some of the challenges and opportunities around Customer Service generally.

Customer Services will be organising a customer survey around satisfaction and barriers to digital inclusion to identify how they can better plan their services going forward with diminishing resources, whilst ensuring we continue to support residents. A campaign on advertising our online services is also planned to continue the trend towards self-service.

The last few weeks of this financial year has seen many more customers change the way they engage with the Council due to the restrictions resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic.

As many might have seen, Revenues and Benefits have implemented a Customer Access Solution for Council Tax and other services. Customer Services will be assisting with signposting and encouraging customers to register to obtain real time access to account and

balance information, saving time for them and Mid Devon and also contributing to reduction in carbon footprint by reducing printing and postage mileage.

LEGAL SERVICES

The small Legal Services team provides legal advice and support across the full range of council functions. Where, due to capacity or expertise, some work requests cannot be undertaken in-house, external advice is commissioned. However, that is kept to an absolute minimum. Court advocacy is mostly undertaken by the solicitors – unless it is a particularly complex matter, or there are no advocates available for the date set by the court.

Some high level stats by way of a snapshot of activity are:

- 24 completed Right to Buys
- 4 repurchases of Council houses under the statutory right of first refusal
- 15 completed section 106 agreements
- 3 significant (and successful) prosecutions - The Manor House, The White Hart and a Taxi Licensing case
- 5 planning enforcement or stop notices
- 6 anti-social behaviour injunctions
- 4 closure orders for council properties affected by 'cuckooing' with associated injunctions
- 2 bankruptcy proceedings
- Significant work involved in council land asset disposals, including working with the Charity Commission and the Land Registry on certain parcels

Members of the team have also undertaken the following work, in addition to day to day legal advice on planning, housing, licensing, property, contracts, employment and all other council functions:

- Advice on public spaces protection orders, including drafting
- Off-Street Parking Places (our car parks and increases to charges)
- Play area leases and sales of public conveniences
- Advice on assets of community value
- Tree preservation orders
- Applying to court for charging orders on properties where council tax is outstanding
- Injunction for threats against council employees
- Injunction for gas safety
- Commercial property leases, renewals and forfeiture (the Council's retail properties primarily), with associated court proceedings
- Housing possessions and debt recovery

The team provides advice and support in and to council meetings and considers the legal implications of all reports going to them. Where policies (new and updated) are referred to members, these will also have been through Legal Services before issue.

Two team members are undertaking professional qualification training – to practise as a Chartered Legal Executive and as a Paralegal respectively. One solicitor has this year completed the Law Society

in Local Government Law and Practice to complement their existing knowledge and skills – another solicitor has already done so. And to cap it off, Maria de Leburne (Legal Services Team Leader) has been shortlisted for ‘Legal Professional of the Year’ at the national annual Lawyers in Local Government awards. The award ceremony has been postponed to later in the year, but we are keeping our fingers crossed.

Cllr Nikki Woollatt

Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services

April 2020

Scrutiny Committee Chairman's Annual Report

Just two of the previous Scrutiny Committee are Members of the current Committee. The 10 June meeting started with Andrew Moore being elected Vice-Chairman and the meeting time staying at 2:15 pm. The Committee also received an update on Broadband provision in the District from Matt Barrow from Devon County Council, and heard questions from members of the public around how rural areas can receive improved broadband. Members decided that they would like continuing insight into the superfast broadband rollout and the contract with Gigaclear and requested an update in September.

The meeting of 8 July received an overview on the roll out of Universal Credit, including the number of people expected to be in receipt across the District. Members discussed the effect of Universal Credit and requested an evening Members briefing on the issue. The Committee also discussed the Council's adoption of the Devon Climate Change Declaration.

The 5 August meeting saw Cllr Bob Deed giving the Committee the Leader's Annual Report for 2018/19. There was also an interesting report on the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), it was enlightening to see the cooperation of the various agencies that work alongside the CSP. The Committee was pleased to note no whistle-blowing reports. Members also considered the Establishment 6 month update and they were concerned at the absenteeism figures and reasons given for leaving the organisation. This included 2% for bullying and for dissatisfaction with their line manager.

Two decisions made by Cabinet were called in for consideration by the Committee at the 2 September meeting. The Committee discussed the decision to abolish night time car parking charges and resolved that the Cabinet reconsider the decision, and resolved to accept its decision on the sale of the Park Road Nursery depot. We also had Inspector Steve Bradford answering some questions about policing in Mid Devon, including a discussion on the effectiveness of CCTV and the presence of police in rural areas.

The 30 September meeting gave the Committee its first opportunity to meet its new Scrutiny Officer, Clare Robathan. She gave a brief introduction about her previous experience and it was agreed that she would make a fuller presentation at the next meeting and help the Committee to draw up a meaningful scheme of work. At this meeting the Committee had its first report from a Cabinet Member, namely Cllr Simon Clist, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services. We also received and noted the annual Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) report and were told that the powers had not been needed. Members urged Officers for a list of the areas where surveillance could be used. Officers agreed to circulate such a list to Members. The Committee also received the Annual Report on Complaints, Comments and Compliments, and Members noted that in many areas the numbers of comments outweighed the number of formal complaints received.

Because Matt Barrow of DCC was unable to attend, the October meeting could have been a bit of a damp squib, rather routine, but the Committee took the opportunity to discuss the future with our Scrutiny Officer. We agreed to have a further meeting to plan the Work Programme. During a discussion on Performance and Risk the Committee also discussed the Cabinet's recent decision to defer the Tiverton Town Centre regeneration tender.

Our meeting of 2 December was a much livelier affair with members of the public coming to ask questions and express concerns about the roll out of 5G. This was because Matt

Barrow did attend and gave us an update of the provision of Broadband in Mid Devon. Progress is being made slowly but the main challenge remains the outlying areas and the inconsistency even in areas better provided. We also looked at the work programme and considered ways of choosing and prioritising areas of investigation. We agreed to look at helping staff with the delicate issue of the menopause and menstruation, as well as a potential review looking at procurement.

The first meeting of the decade saw all Members present, but sadly no members of the public, as one of the most important agenda items was the Members' call in of the Cabinet's decision to defer a final decision on the Tiverton Town Centre Regeneration Project. After a lively and civilised discussion it came down to the Chairman to cast the deciding vote and I supported the request by the three Members who had called in the decision to ask Cabinet to reconsider their decision to defer the Regeneration Project.

The Committee also looked at and noted a Carbon Baseline Report which was a result of the Council's Climate Change Declaration made in June 2019. We also considered the Performance and Risk report but nothing was raised.

Finally our Scrutiny Officer, Clare Robathan, reported on a scrutiny conference she had attended which will lead to a focused approach by our Committee.

The second meeting in January on the 27th was chaired by Cllr Andrew Moore with Cllr Ashley Wilce as his assistant. The meeting can be summed up as "quiet" and once again there were no members of the public, several reports were noted and there were no recommendations.

The first item of note was an update by Cllr Dennis Knowles, the Cabinet Member for Community Well Being. He told Members about MDDC's new "Noise App" which can record noise nuisances so that they can be sent directly to the Council, this can be found on the Council website. Members offered their congratulation to the Food Safety Team for the recent successful prosecution of an errant Cullompton business.

The proposed budget was discussed with close questioning from Members. It seems the budget gap at that moment stood at £243k. Members were concerned there was nothing set aside in the budget for climate change specific projects.

Clare Robathan, our Scrutiny Officer, gave a brief summary of 5G progress and told the Members that serious work was being done by DCC Scrutiny Committee on 5G. She also pointed out that following initiatives from the Scrutiny Committee there would be an all Members Procurement briefing on March 19 and she urged all members to attend to discuss the strategic investment opportunities.

I enjoyed chairing the meeting of 24 February because it demonstrated the role of the Committee being exercised at its best. The Chairman and Scrutiny Officer jointly reported on a 5G event run by Devon County Council to which they had been invited as observers. One issue that we flagged up was that of Planning because of the need for many more masts in the District. The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration gave an undertaking to look carefully at the planning implications for 5G masts.

The first report given to the Committee to note was presented by Cllr Graeme Barnell, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration. Asked about the Hydro Mills Project he confirmed that a business case was to be brought to the Economy PDG and

then Cabinet.

Members raised the issue of consultants and inter District Council cooperation. The Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration explained that we used Officers from other Districts if they had the expertise and capacity and we reciprocated whenever asked. Sometimes outside consultants were necessary however.

Members expressed grave concerns about the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and its benefits to Mid Devon. They were reminded that Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) had already held one meeting on the policies of GESP and there was a second meeting of PPAG on this issue on 28 February.

The second report before the Committee was presented by the Group Manager for Human Resources. Members took some positives from the new sickness policy but were still concerned about the average days sickness of 8.2 which is higher than the private sector. They asked that research be done to ascertain sickness levels in other Local Authorities.

When considering items for future meetings the Chairman of the Customer Experience Working Group informed Members that the group's report will come to the April meeting. I also suggested the Scrutiny Committee should look at High Street Security after guidance had been reviewed by the Community PDG.

Finally, I would like to thank all Committee Members and substitutes, in particular Andrew Moore for acting as a superb Vice Chairman and Chris Daw on leading our first Working Group. On behalf of Committee Members I would like to thank all Officers who have helped us throughout the year with heartfelt thanks to our excellent Committee Clerk, Carole and our Scrutiny Officer, Clare. I am sure we all look forward to a busy and useful year!

Cllr Frank Letch

Scrutiny outcomes for 2019/20

Customer Experience Working Group

A Working Group was established by the Scrutiny Committee to review the customer experience. At the first meeting in October 2019, Cllr Chris Daw was appointed Chair. The Group's focus is to look at how the Council's systems work, to ensure they are effective and delivering a positive and efficient service for customers.

In order to fully understand the customer experience, the Group has undertaken a number of site visits across the Council, including to: Customer Services; Housing; Planning; Building Services; Property Services; and the Waste Department. The site visits enabled Members to follow the customer experience from beginning (initial contact) to end (resolution or closure of case). The Group has had detailed discussions about how issues are handled in the Council, and will also visit North Devon District Council to see their system in place. The group has not yet formally reported back to the Committee with recommendations, but hope to do so early in the April meeting.

Other outcomes include:

- Following a request from the Committee, Lee Tozer, DWP Partnership Manager, gave a Members briefing on **Universal Credit** in August.

- The Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2019 resolved that the Cabinet be requested to reconsider the decision to abolish **night time car parking charges**. As a result, the Cabinet has reconsidered their decision.
- At the January meeting the Committee requested that the Cabinet reconsider its decision to postpone the specific scheme that came forward in advance of the forthcoming **Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan**, and allow the second stage of the process to be properly completed before seeking to prioritise strategic investment opportunities. Discussion took place at Cabinet and subsequently resolved that having reconsidered the decision to postpone the specific scheme, the original decision be confirmed. The Cabinet wishes to expedite a substitute scheme to be implemented as quickly as possible with a view to improving the Tiverton Town Centre Regeneration Project.
- Following public representation on the **health concerns of 5G**, the Committee is closely following the progress of the Devon County Council (DCC) Scrutiny Committee review on 5G. Members of the Committee have heard members of the public's concern, attended other public meetings on the issue and attended the Spotlight Review meetings run by DCC. The Committee will keep a close eye on the outcome of the DCC Scrutiny Review, in order to consider if any further work is needed on the issue, as well as consider the planning implications for the District.
- The Committee will now continue to ensure an impactful work programme for the following year, and alongside our regular standing items we will consider looking further into: women's health issues; sustainable procurement; 5G planning implications; and the Council's disability policy.