

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 15 August 2023 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

M Fletcher (Chairman)
E Buczkowski, G Czapiewski, C Harrower, B Holdman,
J Poynton, S Robinson, E Buczkowski and G Westcott

Apologies

Councillor(s)

C Adcock, and B Fish

Also Present

Councillor(s)

R Gilmour, D Broom, J Buczkowski, S J Clist, L Taylor and
D Wulff

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Andrew Seaman (Democratic Services Manager) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer)

13 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (03:50)

Apologies were received from Cllr C Adcock and Cllr B Fish.

The following Cllrs attended via teams:- Cllr G Duchesne, Cllr M Farrell, Cllr A Glover, Cllr S Keable, Cllr J Wright.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (04:14)

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest where appropriate.

None were declared.

15 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (04:24)

Questions were received from Town Councillor Sophia Beard, Castle Ward, Tiverton Town Council. The Chairman read out the following questions:-

In respect to your proposal to cease side waste collections from the 1 October 2023:-

Question 1

Please provide a detailed account of how this will be communicated to the wider public, including highlighting of your plan to reach those in the community for whom English is not their first language.

Answer

A wide variety of media would be used to include Press Releases, Social Media and potential posters. There is a google translation that is accessible on our website.

Question 2

How are you justifying giving less than 2 months' notice of this significant change to policy?

Answer

We should not be collecting side waste as part of a 3 weekly scheme as it defeats its purpose. We made it clear before introducing 3 weekly collections that the collection of side waste was a temporary measure and that all residual waste should be placed in the black bin.

Question 3

What consultation has been undertaken with the Town and Parish Councils in the district in respect of the implementation of your proposals?

Answer

We spoke with Cullompton Town Council before 3 weekly collections were introduced and also regularly speak to other Town and Parish Councillors around arising issues. We have continued to offer meetings and have also gone into certain different areas and proactively talked to residents around these issues.

Question 4

What consultations and collaborative working can you evidence has taken place with grassroot organisations on this issue for example Sustainable Tiverton, Tiverton Town Centre Partnership and their counterparts in the district?

Answer

We have worked with these organisations where appropriate according to the nature of the issues e.g. grass and hedge cutting, maintenance of town centre open spaces. We are willing to work with groups on increasing our recycling rates and cement best practice.

Question 5

How will you inform residents as to why the side waste left on pavements has not been collected? (assuming that they have not received your pre-implementation communications?)

Answer

Our Collections team have already been labelling both recycling and garden waste that has not been put out for collection properly over previous months and education has been invested in through the appointment of Recycling Officers. As you heard about in the last item the Environment Enforcement team have tackled the more serious waste offences including fly tipping. This will continue.

Question 6

What are you expecting residents to do with the additional side waste not collected (ie. Hold it for an additional 3 weeks?)

Answer

Ask them to put it into the black bin (and if capacity is an issue we look at that with them). Ultimately we would target problem areas for education through site visits and subsequent enforcement as we currently do so.

Question 7

Under the Equalities Impact Assessment, how will this change in policy effect residents who currently benefit from the assisted collections policy, will you be leaving their side waste also?

Answer

Again we would work with the residents on their needs and if capacity is an issue we would address it with them.

Question 8

Under the Equalities Impact Assessment, what considerations will be made for residents residing in HMOs, flats and properties with no outside in the implementation of this proposal if it goes ahead?

Answer

We would work with the residents on their needs and if capacity is an issue we would address it with them. We are also working with town centre landlords to look at appropriate solutions and if more want to come and talk to us they can do so.

Question 9

With regard specifically to Tiverton Castle Ward, given that the Town Centre has a larger concentration of HMOs, flats and properties with no outside space, how will you support the Town Centre Businesses who will be adversely effected by the implementation of this policy where it leaves the uncollected side waste outside trading premises, creating a negative impression of the town centre as it prepares for the Christmas season.

Answer

We regularly patrol town centre spaces and car parks to identify potential problem areas and where we require either additional education, enforcement or ad hoc waste collections we implement this. So this is already in hand.

Question 10

How do you envisage the policy working in the post Christmas period where additional waste is likely to be created combined with the addition of bank holidays, will you still implement no side collections during this period into January 2024?

Answer

We would look to be more flexible in the post-Christmas period regarding additional waste as this is always a challenging time.

Hilary Tosdevin**Question 1**

Would like details of who has been consulted regarding the Devon Carbon Plan. (Asked about who was consulted e.g. demographics, methods used, time given to respond, questions discussed.)

Answer

It was explained that 70 people were selected from across Devon and the assembly met over 4 weekends. All information can be found on the Devon Climate Emergency website.

The Chairman also indicated that a written response would be provided.

James King

Question 1

Cost of net zero plans - shows £117m for net zero projects. My concern is what is that money going to be spent on? Strongly believe it could be invested to make the community a 15 or 20 minute city. Tiverton seems to be shutting down quickly. Perhaps money could be better spent in developing the town rather than e.g. increasing car park charges.

Answer

The C&S Specialist apologised and said the figures should have a clearer explanation. All the costs for potential projects are estimates. Most are projects that the Council would not necessarily lead on or fund themselves. Mid Devon District Council would welcome any suggestions for ways to address climate change.

It was also indicated by the Chairman that a written response would be provided.

Elizabeth Anne

Question 1

Does council know the following?

The human and environmental suffering involved in EV/ green component mining i.e. lithium and cobalt, 300 year damage to the local water supply, human slavery and child labour. Shipping companies are starting to ban EVs because of the fires that can't be put out. UK companies have banned their use on trains and buses.

Question 2

Has Devon Fire Service been consulted with regard to management of toxic run off from EV fires?

Question 3

Have you individually independently researched this whole net zero carbon neutral narrative? Should you choose to continue with this extreme plan? Remember we are mostly carbon!

I am requesting a public forum where Council can evidence their climate data and their claim of a *man-made* climate emergency, because half an hour is not sufficient time.

Most people don't know the full extent of the Net Zero plans. Few have read the Absolute Zero, C40 Cities & IPCC reports and are blissfully ignorant of how much our lives will radically change if recommendations go ahead.

A few examples from these reports;

By 2030, UK airports close except Heathrow, Glasgow and Belfast, which close by 2050. By 2030, 50% less lamb and beef production... had *you* noticed we're being conditioned to eat insects? Industries destroyed, limited employment.

Petrol and Diesel completely phased out by 2050, but don't worry, you'll have a rather generous 3 item clothing allowance per year!
And so it goes on.

If you expect the public to willingly go along with losing our entire way of life, our livelihoods and our freedom and being impoverished, for generations, then you absolutely must *conclusively* prove it's necessary. Anything less is unconstitutional.

And evidence not just using cherry picked data the, zero authority IPCC put out. Full chart data showing everything, including the inconvenient ice core sample data which shows CO2 levels over 5 times greater than they are now with much higher global temperatures, with no detriment to the planet. CO2 is in fact a gas of life and at 0.04% of the atmosphere. The science community is not settled on this narrative, thousands of scientists have been silenced and threatened to not speak.

I'm not a climate change denier, she is alive so will evolve and change. The onus is on council to *prove* these effects are man-made and a disaster/emergency.

From your agenda today

"Legal Implications: Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019".?
Excuse me how is that legal?

Question 4

Can council confirm the constitutional basis by which either they, or central government (both organizations made by the people) may act in any of these respects?

All I can find is on 1st May 2019 uk gov passed a non-binding motion to declare a climate emergency. All that is, is an opinion it has no legal binding and never lawful binding. It could not be voted on as it would be unconstitutional to every man women boy and girl of the land.

The Chairman indicated that a written response would be provided.

Les Tosdevin

How can you communicate the Council's plans to the 86% of voters that did not vote?

The Chairman indicated that a written response would be provided.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (33:24)

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 June 2023, were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (34:11)

The Chair encouraged all members to share any ideas for this PDG to address and look into where possible.

18 CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME (34:47)

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change addressed the Group. She hoped the report would answer the questions raised and explained that the science had existed for several decades and should not deter us from delivery. This was an international problem as well as a local problem.

Following this the group had before it, and **NOTED**, a “report from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist giving an update on the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.

The contents of the report were outlined as followed:-

- There were several updates and milestone transformational projects that had been implemented such as at leisure centres and community outreach projects that had been celebrated across Mid-Devon.
- Some of these had made the local press and social media such as the wildlife gardening, wildlife recovery projects and green spaces.
- A summary of our carbon footprint report, overall the carbon footprint had risen since 2018-2019.
- The report showed the figures and charts, with key points about how the Council could focus and prioritise actions to reduce emissions.
- Good positive tangible progress had been made that the Council could be proud of.

Consideration was given to:-

- Zed pods and whether they would have electric chargers for cars.
- The amount of emissions and to continue working to reduce this.
- To continue to improve recycling rates.
- The fly over in Tiverton and the impact of air quality.

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

19 ENVIRONMENT AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY UPDATE/REVIEW REPORT (42:28)

The Chair advised the Environment PDG that the title of this Agenda Item was incorrect and should read Environment and Enforcement Update and Review and that there were two reports under this item: the End of Year report and the Quarter One report.

The Group had before it, and **NOTED** a *report from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which provided Councillors with an overview of the Environment and Enforcement service for the financial year 2022/23 – he introduced the report by advising the Environment PDG of the importance of the two reports to

look at the action taken around issues such as fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling and that there had been a real improvement and excellence over the last 12-18 months.

The Environment Enforcement Manager highlighted the following:-

- Schemes had been implemented to encourage members of the public to be more environmentally aware and encouraged to come forward and report incidents such as fly tipping, dog fouling and abandoned vehicles.
- The implementation of evening patrols of car parks had been undertaken as spaces were being occupied without permits.
- A health and safety introduction for District Officers had been made with a video camera which had shown to be effective as there were less confrontations with members of the public.
- There had been a uniform rebranding during the summer of 2022 for the District Officers who were now identified by wearing coloured vests - blue for car parking and red for environment duties.
- Visits to primary schools were being continued to raise awareness of environmental crime and to give advice.
- Clear procedure for interviewing people under Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) conditions which is a legally recorded interview.
- Mid Devon County Council also lead on a Task Group made up of several local authorities as part of the 'Clean Devon' scheme to tackle fly tipping which would meet every six weeks to discuss problems in Devon and engaging with ways to tackle this as a collective group.
- The new electric fleet had been delivered and being utilised and hand held devices were being looked at.
- That a short report was due to be submitted to Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Joint Committee (PATROL_ for recognition regarding changes to parking service. This was an organisation that oversees car parking elements and if recognised we would receive an award.

In addition, the Group had before it, and **NOTED** a *report from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which provided Councillors with an overview of performance from the Environment and Enforcement service during Quarter 1 of the financial year 2022/23. The Environment Enforcement Manager highlighted the following:-

- Statistics showed a strong improvement from last year.
- Cleaning inspections had shown a high proportion of highways and footpaths being graded as A or B.
- There had been several successful Fixed Penalty Notices issued to individuals for fly tipping.
- There had been a significant increase in the use of Ringo.
- The Street Cleansing Service had recently procured a walk-behind mechanical sweeper which had received positive feedback from the public.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The grading on the report and what they represented.
- Ringo and how income was gained.

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

20 **REVIEW OF BIN IT 123 SCHEME (01:37)**

The Group had before it a report* from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste as to the Bin it 123 Scheme and the future Waste Service provision.

The contents of the report were outlined as followed:-

- The Council moved to a 3 weekly bin collection which was implemented in October 2022 to drive a lower carbon footprint.
- The report showed encouraging early signs with a 4.5% in recycling compared to last year.
- During the past 10 months the Council had been flexible with collecting side waste and the provision of extra bins and caddies though it was made clear that this would not be for the long term.
- Other Authorities had a zero tolerance of side waste and we also need to eliminate this.

The following was discussed:-

- The need to engage with members of the public and landlords to provide advice and support.
- The lack of space for some properties for waste to be stored before it is collected.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet:

1. To cease collecting side waste from 1 October 2023 and deliver a comprehensive communications programme in advance of this to minimise the need for enforcement.
2. To postpone the trial scheduled for 2023-2024 to allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current scheme against the metrics of recycling % achieved, residual tonnage reduction, and overall cost to the Authority.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

21 **WORK PROGRAMME (01:58)**

The Group had before it their current work programme * for 2023/24.

The following was **AGREED** as needing to be added to the work programme for 2023/2024:

- The green standards in planning and information on how other local authorities put this into their work plan as residents had been sending examples of residential energy efficiency metrics.
- For waste to be an ongoing subject on the agenda.

Note: * Work Programme previously circulated

22 **QUARTER 1 POSITION AND FURTHER FINANCIAL TRAINING SPECIFIC TO THE PDG (02:00)**

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) gave a verbal update on the Quarter 1 position and explained that the report was on a rolling quarterly basis to give the Environment PDG a finance performance update along with service delivery metrics and associated risks.

The presentation would be distributed to all members of the Committee with a request for any queries to be send directly to him.

Note: *report previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 7.37 pm)

CHAIRMAN