

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY, PEOPLE & EQUALITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 25 June 2024 at 2.15 pm**

**Present**

**Councillors**

B Holdman (Chairman)  
C Connor (Vice-Chair), D Broom, A Cuddy,  
M Farrell, A Glover, C Harrower and  
H Tuffin

**Also Present**

**Councillor(s)**

G Duchesne, J Lock and D Wulff

**Also Present**

**Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Maria De Leiburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Simon Newcombe (Head of Housing & Health), Harriet Said (Team Leader (Commercial), Public Health), Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer) and David Parker (Democratic Services & Policy Research Officer)

**Councillors**

**Online**

L G J Kennedy and S Robinson

**Officers Online**

Dr Stephen Carr (Corporate Manager for Performance and Improvement), Tanya Wenham (Operations Manager for Public Health), Lewis Dyson (Resilience Officer), Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager).

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIR (0:03:11)**

The Chair of the Council invited nominations for the election of Chair of the Policy Development Group (PDG) for the municipal year 2024/25.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr B Holdman be elected Chair of the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024/2025.

(Proposed by Cllr A Glover and Seconded by Cllr D Broom).

**2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR (0:14:32)**

The Chair of the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group invited nominations for the election of Vice Chair of the PDG for the municipal year 2024/25.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr C Connor be elected Vice Chair of the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2024/2025.

(Proposed by Cllr C Harrower and Seconded by A Glover).

**3 START TIME OF MEETINGS (0:07:10)**

Cllr A Glover proposed, seconded by Cllr C Harrower that the Community, People and Equalities PDG meet at 12.30pm for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.

This was AGREED.

**4 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0:09:34)**

There were no apologies.

**5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0:09:57)**

No members of the public had registered to ask a question in advance.

**6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0:10:13)**

No interests were declared under this item.

**7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0:10:34)**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26 March 2024 were amended to record that Cllr A Glover sent her apologies and that Cllr D Wulff attended the meeting. Subject to those amendments the minutes were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

**8 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0:16:38)**

The Chair commented that under the new Corporate Plan the following thematic areas for this PDG were:

- Emergency Plan
- Parish Liaison
- Community Engagement and Consultation
- Grants and Funding
- External Health & Safety
- Equalities
- Local Welfare Assistance
- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Licensing

- Food and Water Control
- Pollution and Noise Control
- Poverty Premium/Vulnerable Persons Strategy
- Benefits
- Health Services
- Community Safety
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- CCTV
- Gazetteer Management
- Land Charges
- Street naming and numbering
- Public health,
- Environmental Health (e.g. food standards, water quality)
- Presentations from grant funded organisations
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Community engagement and consultation
- Digital transformation – broadband,
- Local welfare assistance, Benefits, Presentations from local interest groups such as Drink Wise Age Well, Youth Services, Older Persons strategy,
- Updates from the clinical commissioning group,
- RIPA,
- Targeted families.

## 9 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN (0:19:05)

The Group had before it a report \* from the Chief Executive, Head of People, Performance and Waste and Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager to consider the draft Corporate Plan for 2024-2028. The Group were invited to provide feedback on the document to recommend back to the Cabinet before the final draft was presented to Full Council for approval.

The contents of the report were outlined by the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager and the following was highlighted in the report:

- The draft document had been developed by officers and Members over the past 6 months and set out the draft aims and objectives of the Council from 2024 – 2028.
- The document had been presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> June and had been discussed at every PDG, before returning to Cabinet and ultimately Full Council in mid-July.
- The draft plan was structured around five thematic areas for which the Council now had a fifth PDG in place.
- Draft performance measures and targets were set out within the report. It was explained that these metrics were still in development

Discussion took place regarding:

- The performance measure targets should exceed those achieved in 2023/24.
- Whether planning enforcement was going to be supported by a viable number of officers? That would be a challenge for the budget but the Council should be willing to accept the challenge.

- Whilst the document mentioned supporting groups and stakeholders e.g. voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, there was no mention of more meaningful engagement. This should be added to the Plan.
- Why there was no performance target for supporting residents and communities through the Cost of Living Crisis? Officers responded to say that not all Aims and Objectives suit being measured through metrics. An annual report will be presented covering all aspects of the Plan.
- Why the target set for complaints resolved within time scales was being reduced? It was explained that the time scales in which to respond to complaints were due to be reduced even for complex cases. The proposed target is pragmatic based upon the revised timescales.
- Whether the targets in the document could show an improvement year on year? The targets in the document stated the Council's minimum aspirations but the Council always tried to be ambitious and to improve. The Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager commented that sometimes maintaining performance was an achievement when the Council had fewer resources.
- What areas complaints were more prevalent in and whether it was possible to be more specific in areas of complaint. The levels of complaint were higher in the Council's major areas of service due to their volume – Housing, Waste and Street Scene and Open Spaces.
- Geographically, where did more complaints come from? Officers commented that an annual complaints report is presented to this PDG that provides a more in-depth analysis of the Council's complaints.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the draft Corporate Plan for 2024 – 2028 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr C Connor and seconded by Cllr A Glover)

#### Reason for the decision

Setting out the Council's aims and objectives through a Corporate Plan, communicated and provided a framework for the delivery of strategic priorities.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 10 **PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD AND OUTTURN QUARTER 4 (0:19:05)**

The Group received, and **NOTED**, information \* showing performance data for quarter 4 of 2023/24.

This included the following summary in relation to the red and amber RAG ratings:

- The only Corporate Risk relating to this PDG was Severe Weather Emergency Recovery and that risk rating remained at 12.
- All Council complaints resolved within timescale was amber and this reflected lower levels in performance in quarter 1 relating to housing complaints. Performance had recovered towards target levels throughout the remainder of the financial year.

- Environmental protection service requests (red rated) was a new indicator in 2023/24. Following data cleansing from quarter 2, performance had continued to improve (quarter 3 was 100% and quarter 4 was 98%).
- Capital Slippage of projects was red and that related to delays in projects such as getting the new Changing Places toilets into operation.
- The performance dashboard would be reviewed as part of the new Corporate Plan. Any changes for this revised PDG would be reflected in the performance data for quarter 1 2024/2025.

Consideration was given to the following:

- What were the reasons for the slippage in getting the Changing Places toilets into operation? The Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager would investigate and reply in writing.

Note: \* Performance Dashboard and Outturn previously circulated.

## 11 **FOOD SAFETY PLAN (0:40:33)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Head of Housing and Health relating to Public Health Food Safety Service Plan and Service update.

The contents of the report were outlined by the Head of Housing and Health. He highlighted that the Council operated under the guise of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and that the Council worked in partnership with the FSA. The FSA set the standards and the Council had to deliver the functions locally. Public Health and Food Safety were a statutory service. The Team Leader (Commercial), Public Health stated that they had an obligation to provide data back to the FSA. Previously the Council had fallen short and as a result was in a period of enhanced engagement with the FSA. Once the new plan was in place the FSA were content for the Council to return to six monthly reporting.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The backlog the service had been experiencing was a result of the Covid pandemic. Now measures had been put in place the Council was on top of the situation.
- Whether the Council had enough resources? Two new posts were being advertised and once filled, the manager was confident that they would have sufficient capacity to move forward. There had been a loss of competent staff across the industry and so the Council were now training their own staff in house.
- Whether the team regulated tattoo piercing premises? The lead officer confirmed that they were responsible for infectious disease control and so did regulate that area.
- With regard to Food Safety Service it was clear in the district that the standard was high but it had to be accepted that there would always be those businesses that needed to improve. Where any business was rated zero, one or two, then, the team would work with them to achieve a level of compliance that was acceptable.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 12 RESILIENCE STRATEGY (0:54:24)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Head of Housing and Health relating to Resilience Strategy.

The report was introduced by the Head of Housing and Health who noted that this report was before the PDG for the first time. It was not a mandatory requirement for the Council to have this strategy, but the document did set out how the Council would meet its statutory duties under Civil Contingency legislation. The report covered the response the Council would take if there was a major incident. That response included the recovery of the various communities in mid-Devon.

The report covered the areas of Risk Management, Core Plans, Supporting Plans and Preparedness. It was largely a framework for officers to follow.

The Head of Housing and Health then introduced the Council's Resilience Officer who outlined the contents of the report:

- The Council were a category 1 responder.
- The plan covered both response and recovery.
- The Resilience Officer and the Corporate Management Team had an on-call rota should an emergency occur.
- Each service area had a business continuity plan detailing how best to manage resources in the event of a problem.
- Community Resilience – the officer would be working with people at local community level.
- The Resilience Officer stated that he would provide another update at the next Community, People and Equalities PDG on the Council's plans for Community Resilience going forward.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Volunteers – was there a list, how were they managed, what training were they given and were volunteers DBS checked? – The Resilience Officer explained that they were internal volunteers who were employed by the Council and were suitably trained.
- The perception of some communities as to whether their town or parish Council was doing enough.
- The strategy outlined was about getting the Council's own house in order first, in terms of a wider community strategy, the Council would work out where their key risk areas were through their community risk register, that document would give the Council a much better understanding as to where the key risks were across mid-Devon.
- Devon Communities Together were a partner organisation in this work and the officer would check with them whether they had engaged with the community. Work needed to be done in communicating the community plans.
- Any review of the strategy would be brought back to the PDG.
- A target had been proposed relating to the number of communities that had an Emergency Plan and the number of communities that the Council had engaged with, this would show on the PDG's performance dashboard.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### 13 **TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER (1:12:55)**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Town and Parish Liaison Officer.

The Town and Parish Charter reflected a partnership between the Council and the Towns and Parishes within its district.

The PDG had considered the Charter and the process for renewing it, at its meeting in January 2024 and had approved a decision to send the Charter to the Towns and Parishes for consultation. Subsequently, the draft Town and Parish Charter and its annexe regarding planning, had been sent to the Town and Parish Councils in the district and their views on the Charter sought. The Towns and Parishes had been given three months in which to respond in order that it would fit into their meeting cycle.

The Council had received 24 responses out of 50 Towns and Parishes, some of the town and parish councils had made comments, the majority had accepted the proposed changes and only one had not accepted the document. Many of the suggestions that the Towns and Parishes had made, had been incorporated into the revised Charter documents.

The Chairman of the Group expressed his thanks to those Towns and Parishes that did engage with this piece of work. The Town and Parish Liaison Officer was also thanked for an excellent piece of work.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the revised Town and Parish Charter and its annex be approved as set out in the report.

(Proposed by Cllr A Glover, Seconded by Cllr C Harrower)

Reason for the decision:

The Town and Parish Charter is evidence of the Council's vision to engage with others in a collaborative way and to work closely with Town and Parish Councils.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### 14 **WORK PROGRAMME (1:16:35)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the current work programme for the Community, People and Equalities PDG for 2024 / 2025.

Members were asked to consider whether there were other areas that they wanted to focus on in addition to those already listed in the work programme.

The following was discussed and **AGREED**:

- The Police would be invited to the September meeting of the Group.



- Would it be possible for a CCTV operator to come and speak with the Group? The CCTV was managed and run out of a hub in Exeter. It was hoped that the Group would be able to understand the operator's perspective of operating the equipment and whether it covered all areas or whether there were blind spots. The Corporate Manager for Housing and Health commented that this linked back to the Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the Corporate Safety Partnership. CCTV was one small area of the policy, it was not just about geography but also about targeting the individual. It would be better to bring the Police in first and then look at CCTV.
- Were there any available statistics from the Police on cases where they intervened following information received by CCTV operators?

**AGREED** that an operator from the CCTV Central Hub be invited to address the Group.

(Proposed by Cllr A Glover, seconded by Cllr C Harrower)

Note: \* Work Programme previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 3.50 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**