

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the SERVICE DELIVERY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 23 June 2025 at 5.30 pm

**Present**

**Councillors**

J Buczkowski (Chair)  
M D Binks, M Farrell, B Fish, C Harrower  
(Vice-Chair), Stratton and J Poynton

**Apologies**

**Councillors**

M Jenkins and L Knight

**Also Present**

**Councillors**

F J Colthorpe, G Czapiewski, G Duchesne, J Wright and  
B Holdman

**Also Present**

**Officers**

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Matthew Page (Head of People, Performance & Waste), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience), Andy Mackie (Leisure Services Manager), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager) and Sarah Lees (Democratic Services Officer)

**Councillors**

**Online**

E Buczkowski and M Fletcher

**Officers Online**

Dean Emery (Head of Revenues, Benefits & Leisure)

**1 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2025/2026**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr J Buczkowski be elected Chair of the Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2025/2026.

**2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2025/2026**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr C Harrower be elected Vice Chair of the Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2025/2026.

### 3 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Jenkins.

### 4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### 5 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

No interests were declared under this item.

### 6 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

### 7 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair had no announcements to make.

### 8 **START TIME OF MEETINGS**

It was **AGREED** that the start time of meetings for the remainder of the municipal year continue to be at 5.30pm on Monday evenings.

### 9 **PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD Q4 (00:08:00)**

The group were presented with, and **NOTED**, two slides \* showing performance information in the Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement area.

The dashboards aimed to give an 'at a glance' understanding of how services were performing in terms of performance measures, finance and risk. Any measures that were also part of the Corporate Plan were listed in yellow text.

The indicators were presented with current performance, the annual target and a RAG (red/amber/green) rating to indicate whether or not the Council was on track to meet its target. Overall performance was presented in a pie chart which combined the RAG ratings for both the performance and the finance measures.

The following red and amber ratings were highlighted:

- Household waste collected was showing as amber, with the service reporting 300.3 kilogrammes of residual waste collected per household, just 300 grams over target. The performance represented a decrease from the amount of waste collected in 2024, which was almost 308 kilogrammes per household.
- Household recycling rate was showing as amber which was just behind target.
- It was noted that Mid Devon District Council was one of the highest performing authorities when it came to recycling.
- Missed bin collections were showing as amber, narrowly missing a very stretching target of nought.

- The public survey engagement rate was showing as red. This survey was now being run against a small number of new processes on the Customer Relationship Management system and only since August 2024. Performance continued to increase with each quarter towards target.
- 'Households on chargeable garden waste' was showing as amber. It was usual to see a seasonal trend in this performance indicator. So whilst performance was behind target, the number of subscribers may trend upwards in the summer months.
- Agency spend was showing as red. Additional agency staff had been required to ensure the smooth operation of the waste service, but these costs were more than offset by savings in salaries. Spend was lower than in previous years.
- The two finance indicators that related capital projects were both showing as red. The under spend reflected the slippage in 12 of 19 projects, particularly in Leisure and Waste. Within Leisure, there were delays in infrastructure projects due to sequencing of projects and the need to tender works. Within Waste, the delay was due to the long awaited clarification of the change in Environment Agency permit regulations.
- Showing as green was the financial out turn position which was under budget. This related to a number of factors, but notably additional income from Active Mid Devon, increased memberships and also increased recycling collected. There had also been cost savings through staffing and lower maintenance costs.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The reduction in staff turnover figures which may, in part, be due to the benefits of working for this authority which had good terms and conditions.
- Increased benefits of recycling including the positive effect upon income.
- Slippage of capital projects in the area of Leisure. It was explained that this was due to having to time projects so that they did not lead to a loss of income, for example, changing room improvements needed to be timed so that they did not coincide with the school holidays. It was further explained that every authority had capital slippage. Timetables were always estimated in advance and there could often be issues with contractors and tendering processes.
- The survey engagement target being very optimistic. Targets should be challenging but also achievable.

Note: \* Slide previously circulated.

## 10 LEISURE SERVICE UPDATE (00:22:00)

A verbal update on the Leisure Service was provided by the Operations Manager for Leisure. This included the following information:

- The Leisure Service was proud to have finished the financial year ahead of target not only financially but in participation numbers as it placed a lot of focus on getting the community active.

- July would see the first of three wellbeing walks being trialled in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton, with a view to giving potential volunteers confidence to lead walks themselves.
- Two junior park runs had been approved and funding was currently being sought.
- The service was currently out to tender for the access controls which formed an essential part of the digital transformation project. These would help the service manage entry, making the leisure centres more secure and provide better data around participation numbers.
- The opening hours at Active Tiverton had been extended freeing up space in the afternoon to offer more family swimming time.
- A student campaign was running currently and 57 had been sold in June so far.
- The summer campaign would be live soon which offered families the chance to use the facilities for 6 weeks of the summer holidays for just £60, it was a really popular offer last year and had been built upon again this year.
- The carers initiative had been launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, offering unpaid carers under the age of 18, free access to leisure facilities, and adult carers discounted use. The Leisure Centres were now officially registered as 'carer friendly'.
- The launch of the new App had already seen 3570 downloads and additions to the app were being worked on which would further enhance the experience and customer journey. The app would really be at its most beneficial when the access controls were in place, making entry into the centres quick and seamless.
- A recent latent demand report which provided far more information than the service had previously had, this enabled it to identify visually where members were coming from, what quartile of the index of multiple deprivation they were in and therefore helped to ensure services were affordable and accessible to those areas. A leisure database report titled 'the state of the industry' showed the market penetration national average for local authority leisure providers was 4.8%, Mid Devon's leisure service was above this with an average of 7.12% penetration rate.
- The Pool changing rooms project at both pools was now complete and the service had had very positive feedback on it. Customers had commented on what an excellent investment this was, making swimmers feel safer as they walk around.

Consideration was given to:

- Some concern with access issues and users having to queue to sign in. It was hoped the increased use of the digital membership card would ease this situation and reduce the burden on the front of house staff as well as the users. This was an improving situation.
- The pleasing work being undertaken with regard to the carer's initiative. Connections were being made with local groups which would help to promote the offer.
- It was hoped that the summer campaign for families would lead to people signing up longer term having developed a 'habit' or 'routine' in the summer months.

## 11 WASTE AND RECYCLING OPTIONS (00:34:00)

The Group had before it a report \* from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste detailing the results of a three month trial collecting unusable metal pots and pans in an area of the District.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- A trial was conducted between the 28th February 2025 and the 23rd May 2025 to assess both the feasibility of collecting pots and pans made of aluminium stainless steel and their subsequent collection rates from households as part of the Council's routine recycling collections.
- Two separate trials were conducted, one in an urban area in Willand involving 453 properties and one in a rural area, Uffculme, involving 346 properties.
- The results of the trial confirmed that collecting pots and pans via household recycling routes was operationally feasible, however, engagement had been limited.
- The trial was useful to understand potential participation rates across the district. It showed that residents initially used the service actively, primarily to dispose of old items. However, usage dropped significantly after the first few collections. This suggested that long term use may be lower than initial uptake, making it difficult to predict future usage levels across the district. This though, did highlight the importance of communication and how the Council needed to regularly remind residents of its services and how residents could use and access those services.
- The street scene service could collect residents, pots and pans as additional collection services if required with very limited or minimal extra associated cost to the Council and increased recycling should still lead to enhance income through the new EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) scheme.
- In conclusion, the trials gave a useful operational insight and demonstrated that there was not a consistent demand pattern for the collection of pots and pans across the district. Therefore, it was envisaged that rolling out this provision across the district should be delivered within current capacity, however, future additional collection materials will need to be appraised both on the understanding that adding pots and pans into recycling activity will place a slight additional pressure on the operation.

Discussion took place regarding:

- A trial regarding the collection of nappies would be considered in the future.
- The importance of regularly reminding residents what they could and could not recycle.
- The impact on the recycling centres.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- Permanent collections of unusable metal pots and pans are introduced across the District from a specific date supported by an effective communications plan and resident correspondence.

(Proposed by Cllr B Fish and seconded by Cllr C Harrower)

### Reason for the decision

This report identified with the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement section of the Corporate Plan for 2024-2028, and in particular 5.2 – *We will increase our recycling services, enabling our communities to achieve even higher levels of recycling.* Supporting and enabling customers to recycle and reduce residual waste contributed to Mid Devon District Councils' commitment to the Devon Climate Emergency.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## **12 UPDATE ON BIN-IT 123 (00:44:00)**

The Group received a verbal update on Bin-It 123 from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces.

This included the following information:

- Performance statistics gave a lot of cause for celebration. The Council had come 12th and 9th out of 197 district councils respectively for its recycling and residual tonnage that put us in the top 6% of all councils for its recycling rate and top 5% for the least residual tonnage placed out for collection per household. In addition the Waste Service was shortlisted for the LGC Environmental Award and although it didn't win it was a great achievement to get shortlisted and more importantly testament to the excellent service that it provided day in and day out to residents. Congratulations were due to all operatives and to the wider street scene team.
- The challenge was now to move from a message of compliance to greater recycling and there was a number of ways that the service was looking at how to do this particularly around engaging with residents to further increase their recycling and reduce residual tonnage.
- One of the ways Bin-It 123 had worked was by the capturing of hearts and minds and motivating the community to do it. Involvement with town and parish representatives has been key. Site tours, including the infamous opening of the black bag to show food and plastic and all sorts of other things including paper cupboard that should be in the proper recycling container, radio adverts and a lot of other different work as well had been undertaken.
- An open workshop was held a several weeks ago to talk about future appetite and direction. There were some really good ideas from Members including stickering of recycling containers. The service needed to look at how it enhanced its permanent education resource using a team of recycling advisers. A reassessment of enforcement would be undertaken to potentially bring in more stringent practise utilising new strategies, for example, CCTV.
- The service needed to ensure it was effectively positioned to take the above challenges forward. There were a number of external challenges on the service at the moment including Environment Agency regulations which basically stipulate what the service needed to store waste and recycling in cab technology, new EPR funding arrangements, managing collection of plastics and other materials from March 2027 and all of this work was underway.



- The communication strategy was really important including messages to emphasise to the district not only the importance of recycling but also the individual responsibility and contribution to this environment mission so that every household had an opportunity to contribute to reducing its carbon footprint.
- The more that was recycled, the more income that the Council received and therefore this not only made the running of the service cheaper, but also allowed it to invest more money into other areas and other services which was vital.
- Local Government Reorganisation provided an excellent opportunity for the Council to speak to its neighbouring authorities about their own collection practise and the education enforcement and resident engagement strategies that they use and which Mid Devon may want to look at and utilise.

Consideration was given to:

- The importance of keeping an open mind with regard to how the service could be run in the future having assessed how it was run by other neighbouring local authorities, for example in East Devon and other models used in Wales. Financial pressures needed to be borne in mind as well as having an understanding of the different 'types' of geographical area's.
- The need for greater recycling and an aspiration to do away with the black bin altogether at some stage in the future.

The Chair requested that the Group's thanks and congratulations be forwarded to the entire Street Scene Team for their impressive achievements and continued hard work.

### 13 **ENVIRONMENT AND ENFORCEMENT END OF YEAR REPORT (01:01:00)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Environment and Enforcement Manager providing an overview of the Environment and Enforcement service performance over the financial year 2024/2025.

The following was highlighted in the report:

- The service was moving in a positive direction and performance statistics were showing good results.
- Significant time was spent talking to residents trying to resolve issues.
- The team had recently met and discussed ideas for the future. There had been positive engagement from the whole team and many ideas and suggestions generated for the service moving forwards.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- Only 14 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued which seemed quite low. Fly tippers were often quite 'savvy' and left little evidence behind.
- The service had adopted some different measures as to how it dealt with fly tipping now. Some smaller cases were dealt with through littering legislation freeing up time to deal with the bigger cases.

- It was confirmed that all reported instances of fly tipping were triaged by the team.
- The Council incurred a 2.4% banking fee for using Ringo. Most customers were moving to a digital form of payment now.
- The advice was that any householders using or employing a company or individual to dispose of house clearance materials should check that the people/person involved were properly certificated.
- Legislation was currently passing through Government to streamline existing powers.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 14 WASTE DEPOT REMODELLING PRESENTATION

The Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience provided the Group with a high level briefing on the Waste Depot Remodelling.

This included the following information:

- The Environment Agency had announced changes to regulations on 18 December 2024:
  - Consolidating 24 standard rules permits into 8 new standard rules permits.
  - Coming into force on 19 June 2026.
- The new permit which affected MDDC was 4. SR2022 No 4: Non-hazardous waste recycling with asbestos, hazardous batteries, cable, and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electric Equipment recycling) storage. Currently the dry recycling side was covered by several waste exemptions, and only the waste transfer station (black bags, food waste and green garden waste) required an environmental waste permit. There was an operational requirement to increase the storage capacity. Regarding new initiatives, MDDC was financially recognised for its recycling performance.
- Minimum work required would include:
  - Providing covered storage for recycle bales.
  - Ensuring the fire detection system (thermal imaging etc), fire suppressant (sprinkler system etc) and water containment / management (bundling / drainage) was adequate.
  - Raising wall heights for the current bays in the Transfer Station.
  - Creating a sample testing area.
  - Whilst undertaking this work a number of other works could be completed to improve the efficiency of the site and enable it to be fit for purpose for the medium term.
- Other works to be undertaken:
  - Given the scale of the requirements, plus ensuring future proofing, the site had been expanded – a new unit on the business park had been secured, enabling:
    - The car park had to be moved into the new unit.



- Moved the offices into the old car park and welfare block to the current weighbridge location, to make space for extension and expansion of storage capacity.
  - Move the Grounds Maintenance area into the old car park to enable the replacement and relocation of the weighbridge and fuelling station.
  - Relocate the washdown area.
  - Relocate the bin storage area, potentially releasing a small unit currently being used and saving money.
  - Altering the traffic route / control system accordingly and overnight storage of vehicles.
  - Separately to this project, a new baler was being acquired.
- A number of photographs and maps were shown to the Group illustrating the proposals.
  - A table showing the timeline was also shown with an estimated operational date of June 2026.
  - A list of costs were shown with the estimated total being in the region of £1,550k - £1,750k.
  - Details regarding the Project Team and frequency of meetings were also relayed to the Group.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The need to future proof proposals for a 15 year period at least.
- Having spoken to other Waste Managers elsewhere in the region, officers were confident there would be need for a depot in this area of Devon following Local Government Reorganisation.
- The confidence of the public needed to be maintained.
- There was minimal cost difference in providing new office facilities as opposed to a 'retrofit'.

The information was **NOTED**.

## 15 **WORKSHOP FEEDBACK / WORK PROGRAMME IDEAS FOR 2025/2026**

The Group had before it a draft work programme for 2025/2026 \* and were invited to consider what they would like to add to this for the next 12 months. The Group were reminded of the workshop they had had on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The notes from this workshop had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Group were assisted in their deliberations by the officers present and discussion that had already taken place during the meeting.

It was **AGREED** to add the following to the work programme:

- A Waste and Recycling paper considering a town and parish council 'league table' for recycling, what was next for Bin-It 123 and a recycling communication strategy.

- A better understanding of 'latent demand' in the leisure area and a recirculation of the Social Value Report.
- A 'deep dive' into the customer satisfaction surveys and the use of Members as Digital Advocates.
- In the Bereavement Services and Parks & Open Spaces – a better understanding of the different roles across the different layers of local government, who has responsibility for what and what could be done to smarten up the street scene.

Note: \* Draft work programme previously circulated.

## 16 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The items listed in the work programme for the next meeting were **NOTED**.

(The meeting ended at 7.15 pm)

**CHAIR**