

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY WELL BEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 8 December 2015 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

Mrs B M Hull (Chairman)
Mrs E M Andrews, Mrs H Bainbridge
(substituting for Miss C E L Slade),
Mrs A R Berry, Mrs J B Binks, R M Deed,
F W Letch and Mrs E J Slade

Apologies

Councillor(s)

B A Moore and Miss C E L Slade

Also Present

Councillor(s)

C J Eginton, C R Slade and R L Stanley

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Head of HR and Development), Andrew Jarrett (Head of Finance), Amy Tregellas (Head of Communities and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

42 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr B A Moore and from Cllr Miss C E L Slade (who was substituted by Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge).

43 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

44 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Group were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

45 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

46 MEETING MANAGEMENT

The Chairman indicated that she intended to take item 10 on the agenda before item 6.

47 DRINK WISE AGE WELL

The Chairman welcomed Mr Darren Walker, Prevention Worker from Drink Wise, Age Well to the meeting.

Mr Walker explained that the Drink Wise Age Well project was self-funded through the National Lottery and was one of five throughout the country that had been set up as a trial. There was an aspirational aim to be country wide. This was a seven year project, the first year had been research and they were now in the second year which was implementation. Year 7 would be evaluation.

The project had three strands. The first strand covered prevention and involved marketing, education and knowledge. The project looked specifically at the over 50's and their relationship with alcohol. Research had shown that the over 50's were the fastest growing group that had a harmful relationship with alcohol. In Devon, rural isolation, lack of transport and life changing events that happen in that age group were all a cause. The prevention team were working in the community spreading the word, through events, festivals, stalls and by talking to employers.

The second strand of the project was the Resilience Team which was community driven, aiming to get to those that may be isolated out into the community, trying to connect with them to avoid the triggers that might lead to drink.

The third strand involved working with hospitals and GP surgeries to work with those that already had an alcohol problem.

Mr Walker explained that the group worked as a signpost to direct clients to options such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Age UK and other agencies that could support them.

Mr Walker thanked the Committee for their time.

48 GRANT PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS 2016/17 (0.30.23)

The Group had before it a report * from the Grants and Funding Officer regarding Grant Payments to External Organisations 2016/17, the minutes of a meeting of the Grants Working Group, which had met following the last meeting of this Group and an amended proposed recommendation.

The Head of Communities and Governance explained that funding for the Grand Western Canal had been removed from the Grants Budget. Future funding for this would be from the New Homes Bonus and a meeting would be put in place for January to allow a longer term business case to be discussed.

The Officer explained that the Working Group had met and their recommendations were included within the report.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The grant to the Crediton Arts Centre that the Working Group had recommended remain unchanged although its main purpose was not to help vulnerable people;

- The grant to Community Housing Aid Nightstop that was recommended to be cut by 20% and the fact that most of their clients were Exeter based but Mid Devon was contributing a higher grant.

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

- a) The grant for the Grand Western Canal be removed from the grants budget and be paid from the New Homes Bonus;
- b) The revised grant allocations for 2016/17 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R M Deed and seconded by Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge)

and

- c) That the authority put in place procedures to ensure that monitoring of activity and finances of those in receipt of grants took place in the future;
- d) And that the Community Well Being Policy Development Group, Grants Working Group, be involved in any initial discussions regarding the setting of proposed cuts to future grants.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note:- i) Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

ii) A proposal to remove the grant for the Crediton Arts Centre was not supported.

iii) Cllr J B Binks declared a personal interest as she knew some members of the Crediton Arts Centre.

49 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (0.52.27)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Finance presenting a financial update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year.

The Officer informed the Group that there was an adverse variance of £229k at the time of the report. Areas under the responsibility of this PDG with a negative variance were Planning Services at £120k and Leisure at £70k. Planning was due to enforcement action that had taken place in Cullompton and Leisure was predominantly due to a decrease in income and some extra maintenance at the centres.

The Officer further explained that monitoring since the report had been produced showed a larger variance, which was in part due to the cost of restructuring at Leisure Centres.

The Head of Human Resources and Development explained that the Leisure Service had been through a robust reorganisation and was now undertaking a more strategic approach. This would free-up officer time to promote the business. Some long-term

members of staff had left and the centres were in a transition period at the moment. A strong steer from Finance stated that the Leisure Service needed to break even by 2019-20. Cuts in formula grant meant that discretionary services must break even. The service needed to get new customers and not alienate existing customers. A very experienced management team was now in place with specific targets and aims, new teams of duty managers would be more efficient and more stream lined.

Discussion took place regarding free parking in the long stay car parks leading up to Christmas and the need to ensure that this was clearly signed.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

50 DRAFT BUDGET 2016-17 (1.07.06)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Finance presenting options available for it to consider in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2016/17.

The Officer outlined the contents of the report stating that Service Managers had been tasked with producing savings and substantial savings had been found, however there was still a budget gap of £827k. It had been reported that the Treasury had reached agreement with four government departments, including the Department for Communities and Local Government, for an average of 30% cut in government funding over the next four years. There was no question that the formula grant would be cut and it was now likely that the Revenue Support Grant of £1.7m would disappear entirely by 2019/20.

Consideration was given to the following table:

Reconciliation of Major 2016/17 Budget Variances

Variances	Amount £000
<i>External items outside of our control</i>	
Reduced formula grant settlement	597
Increased pension contributions - auto enrolment	110
NIC rebate removed from contracted out pensions	180
NNDR GP surgery appeals	100
Pay award circa	100
Falling commodity prices for recycling	125
<i>Subtotal</i>	1,212
<i>Other changes</i>	
Deficit on our 2015/16 budget taken from reserves	187
Increase in sinking funds for asset replacement	132
Increased interest payable	78
Decrease in Collection Fund surplus	32
Income from garden waste scheme	(250)
Increased leisure income	(155)
Increased income from investments	(102)
Contributions from town and parish councils	(100)
Increase Council tax income	(95)
Other net savings	(112)

Discussion took place regarding:

- Take up of the garden waste collection scheme had been higher than expected and to date 6000 permits had been sold, it was hoped that there would be further uptake in March;
- The salary bill was reduced by £130k due to redundancies;
- It was hoped that Devon County Council would enter an agreement for the savings made by a reduction in waste to landfill;
- Customer Services providing for more and more areas to be completed on line, which was a cheaper service to provide;
- Areas of uncertainty such as the level for the Council Tax Freeze Grant, the New Homes Bonus and the level of the Council Tax referendum;
- A number of assumptions such as the level of salary increase, car parking fees and income flows.

The Head of Finance explained that a further report would be presented in the New Year.

Note: - * Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

51 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (1.30.23)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the corporate plan and local service targets for 2015-16 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

Discussion took place regarding the number of empty shops in the main towns.

Note: - Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

52 **ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STATISTICS (1.34.34)**

The Group had before it a briefing paper * from the Head of Housing and Property Services updating Members on anti-social behaviour performance for the last 12 months.

The Officer outlined the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014, explaining that during February, March and April 2015, five training sessions had been arranged and run by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to inform local officers how the new ASB legislation would be implemented in Mid Devon. 55 staff had received this training including council staff from Housing, Environmental Health and the District Officers; Police Officers and PCSOs, and Housing Officers from seven different Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

The Officer informed Members that the Closure Power had been used in Mid Devon, and had been reported in the local paper, to stop people living in a particular property. He explained that this process had taken approximately three weeks prior to a hearing at the Magistrates Court as statements had been needed from the Police, Social Services and neighbours had been interviewed. The Order was in place until March 2016; in the meantime the Housing Service would apply for possession on Absolute Grounds for Procession, for anti-social behaviour.

Note: - Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

53 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Leisure Pricing
Budget
Town Team Update (all three areas)
Grant Recipient Presentation
Young Carers
Citizens Advice Bureau
Inward Investment Strategy
Public Health Update
Single Equalities Policy
Economic Development Strategy
CCTV Annual Report

(The meeting ended at 4.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN