

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 30 July 2015 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

C J Eginton (Leader)
R J Chesterton, N V Davey, P H D Hare-
Scott, C R Slade, Mrs M E Squires and
R L Stanley

Also Present

Councillor(s)

R M Deed, R F Radford, Mrs J Roach and F J Rosamond

Also Present

Officer(s):

Kevin Finan (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Head of Finance), Amy Tregellas (Head of Communities and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning and Regeneration), Jill May (Head of HR and Development), Liz Reeves (Head of Customer Services), Chris Shears (Economic Development Officer) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

30. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received

31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

33. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Arising from a report * of the Head of Housing and Property Services and a recommendation from the Community Well-Being Policy Development Group, the PDG had recommended that the Cabinet approve the new priorities within the report and supports the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in delivering safety messages to the communities of Mid Devon.

The Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services outlined the contents of the report regarding the CSP and the priority areas of work on the CSP Plan for 2015 to 2017.

She further explained that there was a statutory obligation for local authorities to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The partnership was obliged to produce a three year plan to outline how it would achieve this.

She explained that following analysis of data and feedback from members of the public the priorities for the next three years had been agreed as:

Domestic, family and sexual abuse;

Substance misuse;

Anti-social behaviour;

Online safety and scams;

Crime prevention, including rural crime and Prevent (anti-extremism and radicalisation).

Discussion took place regarding:

- The types of crime experienced in Mid Devon;
- The reduction in Police funding and staffing levels;
- A 'pop up shop' that had been established in Tiverton to inform the public about on line scams;
- Funding for policing being lower in rural areas and the fact that the Police and Crime Commissioner was campaigning against this;
- Crime nationally and locally being on the decrease;
- Targeting the cause of crime rather than the symptom.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Community Well-Being Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

34. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK: RECOMMENDATION FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (00.15.21)**

Following discussions at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2015 regarding performance and risk, the Committee had recommended that the following area be identified as a matter of concern:

- Performance for Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Consents.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration informed the Committee that the Article 4 Direction, which had been delayed, would be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting at the end of August and that some of the delay had been caused due to waiting for guidance to be published.

He further outlined the current situation with the Manor Hotel at Cullompton, explaining that the Scrutiny Committee had recommended that a meeting of interested parties be convened. This had taken place with local Councillors, Ward Members, Planning Officers, Conservation Officers, Highway Officers from Devon County Council and representatives of Historic England. Issues were discussed regarding the site and the problem of traffic congestion due to Tiverton Road being closed.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration informed the Committee that the site had deteriorated and was in need of urgent works. This would involve scaffolding works which would further encroach onto Tiverton Road, completely blocking it to traffic.

This would create a further burden to the road network and would prevent access by emergency vehicles. Traffic Orders would be implemented to prevent parking in the areas which caused the backlog, negotiations were being undertaken to establish a time for traders to load and unload from their businesses. Scaffold would also be erected to the inside of the property in order to support the structure and it was estimated that works to make the building safe would take in the region of six weeks to complete.

35. **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS, SILVERTON, MORCHARD BISHOP, CHERITON FITZPAINE, NEWTON ST CYRES AND THORVERTON (00.24.43)**

The Committee had before it a report * of the Head of Planning and Regeneration requesting that the Cabinet consider the adoption of conservation area appraisals and management plans for the above villages and amendments to conservation area boundaries as appropriate.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained that consultation regarding this document had been completed. Responses from the public had been highlighted in the report and whenever possible their wishes had been complied with. He explained that consultation events had taken place in all of the areas concerned and that the process had been fully supported.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration confirmed that those householders that would be affected by the plans would be communicated with.

Discussion took place regarding funding sources which could be available from grants or from developers for enhancement or mitigation works in areas affected.

RESOLVED that the conservation area boundaries be amended and the appraisal and management plan documents for Cheriton Fitzpaine, Morchard Bishop, Newton St Cyres, Silvertown and Thorverton conservation areas be adopted.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

36. **SILVERTON TOILETS (00.32.50)**

The Cabinet had before it a report* of the Head of Housing and Property Services to advise the Cabinet of the capital market value of the former public conveniences at Silvertown and the alternatives for disposal.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services explained that the former public conveniences had been valued at £83K if sold on the open market. There was a need to save money and efforts had been made to transfer the provision of public toilets into local care. Room4U proposed to use the room for community use and as the building would be beneficial to the community it was considered appropriate to sell it for a lower than market value rate.

RESOLVED that:

1. That the Head of Housing & Property Services be authorised to dispose of the former public conveniences to Room4U for the provision of a health and well-being centre in the consideration of:
 - a) £30,000, to include the provision of an externally accessible unisex public toilet, to be available during Room4U opening hours and that the provision of the public toilet be for a minimum of 5 years or
 - b) £50,000, without the provision of an externally accessible unisex public toilet;
2. That should the sale not be completed by 31 March 2016, the Head of Housing & Property Services market and sell the conveniences on the open market;

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Notes: i) Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

ii) Councillor Mrs J Roach declared a personal interest as she was the Chairman of Room4U.

37. AMENDMENT TO THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (00.40.13)

The Cabinet had before it a report * of the Head of Finance requesting consideration of an investment in CCLA Commercial Property Investment Fund.

The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that current investment holdings were only receiving a return of around 0.5-0.6%, therefore it had been agreed that the Head of Finance investigate a property investment fund specifically tailored to Local Authority deposits, such as the CCLA.

CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) had delivered a return of just under 5% in the last year and slightly higher than that in the preceding two years. The Cabinet Member confirmed that funds could be withdrawn within one month, without payment of termination fees.

RESOLVED that the inclusion, in the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 of the ability to deposit medium term cash balances of no more than £2.5m in to the CCLA commercial property fund, be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

38. FINANCIAL MONITORING (00.45.58)

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * of the Head of Finance presenting financial monitoring information for the income and expenditure for the 2015/16 Financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report, highlighting areas that showed significant movements to date. Discussion took place regarding:

- A projected surplus from the Market Walk and Fore Street properties;
- It had been an encouraging start to the new year;
- Recreation/Sport and Planning were currently performing below budget;
- Expectations that the settlement for the next year would be reduced.

The Head of Finance informed the Committee that the Annual Accounts had been signed off by the External Auditor. He added that Mid Devon had been the first authority in the South West to do so. He informed the Committee that service managers were now meeting to discuss budgets for the 2016-17 financial year.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

39. **WORKFORCE PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY (00.50.35)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * of the Head of Human Resources and Development providing a review of the current strategy and reflecting the latest legislative and economic changes.

The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that a skills audit would be undertaken later in the year, to identify gaps for training. She also highlighted the fact that the majority of staff currently employed were over 35 years old and that apprentices were now being appointed to encourage young people to join the organisation.

Discussion took place regarding the living wage and whether adopting it would cause any financial strain or issues with wage differentials.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

40. **GROWTH FUND BID (00.57.41)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * of the Head of Communities and Governance informing them of activities being undertaken to develop a Growth Hub service for the Heart of the South West.

The Economic Development Officer explained that a Growth Hub was a regionally based service that provided business diagnostics, and signposting to relevant business support services. There were 25 operational hubs across the UK, and all LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) had a legal duty to provide a Growth Hub service by March 2016. What a Growth Hub service looked like was highly flexible, but it must achieve 2 main objectives:

- It must have a governance structure which is part of the LEP
- It must be able to signpost to all relevant services, on a local, regional and national level

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) were due to commission a Growth Hub service, with the tender going live by the autumn of 2015. The service was likely to have £2.1m allocated to it over a 3 year period. However, there were concerns shared by Economic Development teams across the region, that if a new Growth Hub model was developed without the local authority's direct involvement or consultation, it would not meet local business needs. It was important

that any procured service added value to existing business support services, without replicating or competing with local provision.

The Officer explained that he had been working with the Better Business for All (BBfA) group and Economic Development staff from across the region to explore the opportunity to bid for the Growth Hub service as a collaborative project. BBfA involved integration of regulatory services as part of the business support offer, and making those services more business friendly, so that they were seen as an enabler of business growth.

There were many benefits to Mid Devon District Council, and the Mid Devon businesses that were supported, by taking the lead on developing this project.

- Significantly better business support services would be delivered for the local business community. Services would be tailored to meet local needs.
- The authority would be playing a much more significant role in the development of business support for the South West. The group that was set up during this project would set a precedent that would see Mid Devon leading on future business support initiatives.
- Mid Devon would have greater influence over regional strategic priorities, ensuring that money coming into the region was better allocated to meet the needs of our businesses and that regional support was led by local intelligence. This would make it far more likely that we would get a more significant share of funds.
- Mid Devon would receive national recognition if the bid was successful, and our Growth Hub could be used as an example of best practice.

Discussion took place regarding rural broadband. The Leader informed the Committee that a representative from BT would be providing a Member Briefing in September to answer queries regarding the roll-out of high speed broadband in Mid Devon.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

41. **ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS (1.17.30)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * of the Head of Customer Services providing an annual report on complaints, comments and compliments as set out in the Corporate Complaints Policy.

The Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services explained that the report provided a summary of the number of complaints, compliments and comments received for each service from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 that were recorded on the Corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

42. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (1.21.30)**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED**, it's * rolling plan for August/September 2015 containing future key decisions.

Note: *Plan previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

43. **ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (1.21.55)**

As there was a need to discuss property and land matters in terms of a tender award for new dwellings at Palmerston Park and Birchen Lane, Tiverton, a conversion of redundant public convenience into retail/office space at Lowman Green and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA):

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 and 1 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information relating to any individual.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

44. **TENDER AWARD FOR NEW DWELLINGS AT PALMERSTON PARK AND BIRCHEN LANE, TIVERTON**

The Cabinet had before it a report * of the Head of Housing and Property Services placing before Members proposals for new dwellings at Palmerston Park and Birchen Lane, Tiverton

The recommendation in the report was approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

45. **LOWMAN GREEN - CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT PUBLIC CONVENIENCE INTO RETAIL/OFFICE**

Arising from a report * of the Head of Housing and Property Services requesting Members to consider the outcome of the tender process prior to the award of the contract.

The recommendation in the report was approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

46. **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Office of Surveillance Commissioner.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

(The meeting ended at 4.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN