

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
held on 8 November 2016 at 2.00 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

R F Radford (Chairman)  
D R Coren, Mrs C P Daw, R Evans,  
Mrs E J Slade, J D Squire, R Wright,  
J L Smith and F W Letch

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillor(s)**

K Busch, Mrs C Collis and R L Stanley

### **Also Present**

#### **Officer(s):**

Andrew Jarrett (Director of Finance, Assets and Resources), Stuart Noyce (Waste and Transport Manager), Suzanne Kingdom (Auditor) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

## 35 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no apologies.

## 36 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

## 37 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Following discussion regarding items for the next meeting, Minute 34, the Minutes of the last meeting were signed as a true record.

## 38 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed the new Cabinet Member for the Environment, Cllr K Busch to the meeting.

## 39 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (0.08)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation which provided Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2016-17 quarter 2 to the end of September, as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Audit Officer outlined the contents of the report and Members raised concerns regarding the use of similar green colours within the document. The officer was asked to revisit the use of colour and perhaps highlight areas that were well above target in a different colour.

Discussion took place regarding missed collections and how they were logged. The Waste and Transport Manager explained 'drivers notes' which could be used to inform collection crews about assisted collections and also to log properties that made a series of complaints regarding missed collections in order to ensure that the waste was in fact out at the right time and in the right place. Overall numbers for missed collections were very low. Officers and drivers did their best to work with contractors when there were road closures to ensure that the waste was collected from properties in the area.

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

#### 40 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (0.16)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Director of Finance, Assets & Resources presenting a financial update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year.

The officer explained that the position for the general fund had improved by £220k as a result mainly of the Shared Waste Agreement with Devon County Council. This was an agreement that all Devon Authorities could enter whereby the County Council shared savings that had been made by the reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill from a change in collection scheme.

Waste Services showed an overspend which was due to the depot move to Carlu Close but in other areas within the service savings had been made. Plans to replace aged vehicles and invest in a modernised fleet would reduce operational running costs and maintenance expenses so further budget savings would be made in the following year.

Other budget lines within the remit of the Group remained unchanged.

Note: - Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

#### 41 **DRAFT BUDGET (0.23)**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Director of Finance, Assets & Resources considering options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2017/18 and agree a future strategy for further budget reductions for 2018/19 onwards.

The Director explained that the current budget for the General Fund showed a deficit of £419k. In addition there was a predicted funding deficit of just under £1m on the General Fund by 2020/21. This highlighted the need to take steps to plan for further reductions to ongoing expenditure levels.

The Director reminded Members that the authority had recently applied to the Department of Communities and Local Government for a four year fixed funding settlement which would see the complete removal of the remaining Revenue Support Grant of £1.0m by 2019/20. It was a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to set a balanced budget each year.

Consideration was given to the following table:

## Reconciliation of Major 2016/17 Budget Variances

<b>Variances</b>	<b>Amount £k</b>
<b><i>External items outside of our control</i></b>	
Reduced formula grant settlement	609
Decrease in Housing Benefit Grant	25
Pay award	100
Pension provision	35
Price inflation	50
New Apprenticeship Levy	40
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>859</b>
<b><i>Other changes</i></b>	
New apprentices	20
DCC sharing of waste	(200)
Market Walk income	(20)
Increased income from CCLA investments	(38)
Increase in Collection Fund surplus	(45)
Contributions from town and parish councils	(8)
Increase Council tax income (£5 rise + new 200 properties)	(176)
Department of Work and Pensions rent	(45)
Additional election monies	(29)
Various additional fee income	(60)
Other net cost pressures (including reflection on 16/17 budget pressures)	161
<b>Draft budget gap for 2017/18</b>	<b>419</b>

Discussion took place regarding:

- Garden waste sacks and where they could be purchased;
- Potential income from sub-letting space at Carlu Close to Devon County Council;
- Shared Waste Savings from Devon County Council;
- Numbers of large and small garden waste bins being used and the fact that there were a number of large bins in stock;
- The Apprentice Levy which the authority was obliged to pay.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:

- a) Bulky Waste collection fees be increased by £1 from April 2017;
- b) Garden Waste collection fees be increased by £1 for both size bins from October 2017.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs E J Slade and seconded by Cllr Mrs C P Daw)

Note: - Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

## 42 WASTE AND RECYCLING SCHEME 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report \* from the Waste and Transport Manager providing an update on performance of the new recycling scheme during the first year of operation.

The officer gave a presentation in which he provided information regarding the current scheme and statistics such as recycling rate up to 56% from 48%, residual waste down in Q1&2 from 225KG per HH (15/16) to 186KG per HH -17% reduction, overall waste arisings down, 8,533 garden waste customers, cost per household down (target to reduce the annual cost by 20% by 2020). Information was provided concerning the types of materials collected and the tonnage for each and the Devon table for performance and the fact that the officer hoped that Mid Devon would be in the top three in Devon for the coming year.

Further information was provided regarding the shared savings scheme with Devon County Council that had been discussed during the previous agenda item and information regarding the proposed transfer station at Carlu Close.

The officer informed the Group that following the introduction of the Education and Enforcement Policy over 600 households that had not been recycling were now doing so.

Discussion took place regarding:

- An imbalance in the collection rounds which would be rectified with an optimisation exercise;
- The proposed closure of Broadpath landfill site and the transfer of waste to the Exeter incinerator.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his report and the Group praised the work of the Waste and Recycling team.

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

## 43 MOTION FROM COUNCIL (1.15.12)

The Group gave consideration to the following Motions that had been referred by Council.

### **Motion 528 (Councillor P J Heal - 10 August 2016)**

That the council investigates the provision of an elasticated net system for use on recycling boxes to prevent light materials such as plastics and cardboard being blown out and causing litter.

The Chairman read the following statement from Cllr P J Heal:

It is with regret that I will be unable to attend the PDG meeting today due to work commitments. When I put the motion forward for consideration it was because I had

been approached by a number of residents of both my ward and my home village who were concerned that because of the amount of lightweight plastics that were now being put out for recycling there was a problem with them being blown around causing litter.

I appreciate that the boxes as supplied do come with lids but from personal experience the lids do not fit well, and in my case have been damaged because they are often just thrown down on the floor on collection days, also if a box is over full they will not fit.

I appreciate that residents can always have an extra box but often that causes problems with storage in the house or flat. I have conducted a straw poll amongst residents when attending parish council meetings and there is overwhelming support for a net system rather than lids and most people seem to be happy to purchase nets to prevent the problem of plastic being blown out of boxes and causing litter in the countryside of products that do not decompose and will remain for years to come and could cause injury to animals.

I have read the officers report and do appreciate the problems of cost but don't really see why the nets should slow up the collection.

It may it be worth considering a trial of nets in a rural area to try and prevent the litter problem that will become worse as we approach winter and wind speeds increase.

Consideration was given to:

- Boxes could be stacked to prevent items blowing out and lids could be kept in place by use of a heavy weight, such as a brick;
- Difficulties for staff when handling the nets with gloves on and the extra time that this could create on the rounds;
- Issues regarding the ongoing replacement of lost or damaged nets;
- There was no restriction to the number of boxes that households could use and replacement lids could be requested.

It was **RESOLVED** that Motion 528 not be supported.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

### **Motion 529 (Councillor Mrs C A Collis - 17 August 2016)**

That the Council investigates joint working with other Councils to recycle soft plastics such as polythene and film and to avoid putting these non- biodegradable items into landfill. This will benefit the environment for future generations and expand on the recycling that Mid Devon is already doing so well.

Cllr Mrs Collis explained that her concerns that light weight plastics were being sent to landfill had led her to suggest that they were sent to Exeter for recycling.

The Waste and Transport Manager explained that the authority already worked with all Devon authorities for the joint selling of paper, glass and textiles and also worked with Exeter City Council for the joint selling of cardboard and mixed plastic.

There were well established markets for the materials that were currently recycled which ensured that a good income rate was secured and the moving of products was timely. The selling of polythene and film was often problematic and could reduce the value of the material that was already collected when mixed in.

The officer further explained that if all of the materials that were currently collected for recycling and composting in the new scheme were placed in the correct container the Council could have a recycling rate of over 85%. He suggested that it was perhaps more important that the Council concentrated on ensuring the existing materials were recycled rather than adding more materials which due to their low weight were unlikely to effect the recycling rate dramatically.

Consideration was given to:

- Waste currently landfilled would be sent to the Exeter Energy from Waste Plant from April 2017;
- A reduction in income if lower grade plastics were mixed with currently collected plastics;
- The need to lobby government to reduce packaging.

It was **RESOLVED** that Motion 529 not be supported.

(Proposed by Cllr J L Smith seconded by Cllr D R Coren)

#### 44 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Street Cleansing Review  
Budget  
Gypsy and Traveller Policy

(The meeting ended at 3.46 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**