

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 18 February 2019
at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

F J Rosamond (Chairman)
Mrs H Bainbridge, Mrs F J Colthorpe,
Mrs C P Daw, Mrs G Doe, Mrs S Griggs,
T G Hughes, Mrs B M Hull, F W Letch,
T W Snow and N A Way

Apologies

Councillor(s)

R M Deed

Also Present

Councillor(s)

C J Eginton, C R Slade and R L Stanley

Also Present

Officer(s):

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Claire Fry (Group Manager for Housing), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Michael Parker (Housing Options Manager), Maria De Leburne (Solicitor), Kevin Swift (Public Health Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

131 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.00.43)

Apologies were received from Cllr R M Deed.

132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.0055)

There were no declarations.

133 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.01.04)

There were no members of the public present.

134 MEMBER FORUM (00.01.15)

There were no issues raised under this item.

135 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.01.28)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2019 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

136 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (00.02.02)

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 7th February 2018 had been called in.

137 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.02.09)**

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had visited Petroc College with the Chief Executive. He explained that the College were looking into offering A levels alongside vocational studies but they would not be offering the same packages as before and were looking into a more targeted response to attract a wider range of students.

138 **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING REPORT (00.06.22)**

The Committee received and **NOTED** a *report from the Cabinet Member for Community Well Being.

He outlined the contents of the report and stated that it was generally good news. He then took questions from Members.

In response to questions he explained that the policy was to offer the first Trim Trail in Amory Park in Tiverton. As Cabinet Member he had not received a formal request from Crediton Ward Members for the installation of a Trim Trail in that area but that S106 monies could be used for that purpose. He explained that developers in the district were being actively encouraged to install Trim Trails as part of new developments.

Members, referring to the taxi inspection figures contained within the report, requested further information on the types of inspections completed as some felt that some taxi's in the area were not of a high standard. The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would get officers to provide details of the taxi inspection process.

Members explained that since the Council had gone cashless they had received complaints from elderly residents. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council still accepted card payments or on line payments and people could still pay by cash through the post office or banks. The Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation explained that people could still pay by cash through the kiosk.

There was a general discussion on concessions for elderly people using the Council leisure facilities and he explained that the concessions had moved from solely age based 12 months ago to people's ability to pay. He said that elderly people in receipt of benefits received concessions.

He explained the new triaging and co-ordination approach introduced to Public Health customer service requests which had made the service more efficient. The Public Health Officer confirmed that this meant that only complicated cases would be referred to more experienced staff for resolution therefore freeing up their time.

Members then discussed the standards that the Council used to register taxi drivers and that the Government was currently looking at new legislation which would prevent people who had already been refused a licence in one district from gaining licences in neighbouring authorities and continuing to work in the original district.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the emergency plan, which was on the on line intranet, was district wide.

He explained the introduction of a noise app in early 2019 would enable people to record instances of noise nuisance, freeing up expensive monitoring equipment and officer time and confirmed that a similar antisocial behaviour app was soon to be introduced.

Members requested further details of the additional work being undertaken by the Public Health Community team to support Bereavement Services.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

139 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00.25.37)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Group Manager for Performance Governance and Data Security providing an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2018-2019 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

She outlined the contents of the report highlighting the targets against the corporate plan aims and providing information from queries raised.

There was a general discussion about electric car charging points in the district and Members questioned how often they were used. The Chief Executive explained that the Council rented out the space to private companies and received a fixed fee regardless of usage. He further explained that although the Council was keen to have more charging points installed the private companies had not shown much interest and this could be down to the financial returns. Members asked if there was a protocol for people using the charging points as they felt that people could just park all day and prevent other vehicles using the spaces. The Cabinet Member for Housing informed the Committee that he would arrange for the number of uses and the protocol to be provided to Members.

The Chairman thanked the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security for the amount of work that went into the report.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

140 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (00.38.26)**

The Committee received and **NOTED** a *report from the Scrutiny Officer.

He explained that he had only received one response from Members about the issues of Broadband in their wards and that following this meeting there would be an informal discussion on the subject.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for the Environment stated that the State of the Debate was very well attended by the public and the speakers were excellent. He said that he felt that the public had found it very useful and that they were pleased that MDDC had raised the subject.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

141 **HOMELESSNESS WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT (00.41.34)**

The Committee received and **NOTED** a *report of the Scrutiny Officer outlining the scope and the work of the Homelessness Working Group.

He explained how the Homelessness Reduction Act had brought in changes to homelessness legislation and the requirements that the Council now had with regard to the treatment and timeframes of people presenting as homeless.

The Chairman of the Working Group said that it was a tribute to Cllr Mrs J Roach that the report was completed. He explained that the witnesses who attended the Group were very interesting and provided useful information.

He explained that the recommendations reflected the views of the Group.

The Group Manager for Housing and the Housing Options Manager explained that the Working Group had looked at the impact of the new legislation over the course of 18 months. The Council was required by law to have a Homelessness Strategy and the current strategy requires review. The Working Group recommended consultation with Members, Officers and external stakeholders to define the new strategy. They reminded Members that they were all invited to a meeting on 4th March 2019 to help define the strategy.

Members expressed concerns about the plight of male domestic violence victims and people with addiction issues accessing temporary housing in the district. The Group Manager for Housing said that these issues could be discussed and incorporated within the new homelessness strategy but Members needed to be a part of the consultation to ensure their concerns were addressed.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

142 **FORWARD PLAN (01.03.35)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** the Cabinet Forward Plan*

The Committee decided that it would like to be presented with the following reports once they had been seen by Cabinet:

Crediton Town Centre Masterplan
Supporting the formation of a South West Mutual Bank
3 Rivers Development Limited – Business Plan
Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan – Contract Award

Note: Forward Plan* previously circulated and attached to the minutes

143 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (01.07.03)

No items were identified.

(The meeting ended at 3.23 pm)

CHAIRMAN