

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 28 November 2017 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors B A Moore (Chairman)
Mrs A R Berry, Mrs C P Daw, Mrs G Doe,
R J Dolley, F W Letch and Mrs E J Slade

Apologies

Councillor(s) Mrs E M Andrews and Mrs H Bainbridge

Also Present

Councillor(s) C J Eginton and Mrs M E Squires

Also Present

Officer(s): Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Lee Chester (Leisure Manager), Simon Newcombe (Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Kevin Swift (Public Health Officer) and Julia Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

33 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs E M Andrews and Mrs H Bainbridge.

34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman read out a question that had been received in advance of the meeting from Mr P Talbot, Chairman of Stoodleigh Parish Council referring to item 9 on the agenda.

The question refers to a comment submitted on behalf of Stoodleigh Parish Council in respect of the current lack of consultation with Parish Councils in respect of Prior Notification 'applications' (see Page 4 of your officer's report).

This issue arose in 2016 as a result of what was regarded by many Stoodleigh parishioners as a wholly inappropriate proposal to convert a large modern barn into a dwelling and a number of industrial/business units.

As a result of those concerns Councillors Stanley and Chesterton pursued the matter by way of Council Motion 530. That Motion was supported by your Cabinet at its meeting on 1 December 2016 and approved by Council on 14 December 2016 and appropriate representations were made to the Minister.

In light of:

- the support of the Cabinet and Council for Parish consultation on prior notifications;
and

- the response of the Minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government that it is open to local authorities to consult more widely on applications for prior approval if they so wish

Do you consider the response set out in the report that ‘as there was no clear direction from the DCLG this has not been progressed’ to be adequate?

Whilst recognising the very tight timescale placed on the Local Planning Authority, would it not be appropriate for such consultation to be incorporated within the Parish Charter?

The Chairman informed the Group that this question would be answered at the agenda item and that Mr Talbot would receive a response in writing.

Mr Ben Holdman, Tiverton Town Councillor for Castle Ward, referring to item 9 on the agenda asked if something could be added to the Town and Parish Charter with regard to the transfer of assets. Mr Holdman stated that it looked like a lot of properties were being pushed onto town and parish councils and that this should be done to mutually benefit each other and the local community. He asked if there was a way that consultation could be undertaken with the public to find out what they wanted to happen to assets to keep them in the public domain, such as toilets.

The Chairman informed Mr Holdman that his question would be answered in writing.

35 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

36 **CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

37 **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH 00:08:00**

The Chairman welcomed Tina Henry, Consultant in Public Health to the meeting. Mrs Henry explained that she was representing Dr Virginia Pearson, Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity/Director of Public Health at Devon County Council (DCC).

The officer explained that the purpose of the Directorate was to bring public health together with health and well-being. Public Health had been moved to local authority responsibility in 2013 and worked closely with Mid Devon, having previously been the responsibility of the NHS. It was considered that the greatest impact could be made by local authorities. It had three core responsibilities; health improvement, health protection and health assurance. The Directorate produced an annual report on the state of the health of the population. Areas that had to be provided were substance misuse, lifestyle services, a commissioning responsibility and some mental health issues. Due to reduced budgets priority was given to the ‘have to’s but there were also areas where influence could be used to deliver health and well-being.

Ms Henry had been sent some questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to the NHS and Leisure Services the officer explained that DCC commissioned a 'Lifestyle' service which looked at lifestyles and aimed to change behaviours such as smoking, sensible drinking, being more active and being a healthy weight. This was an online signposting service which would point people to local events, leisure centre promotion and diet groups for example. There was also a GP referral service which Mid Devon Leisure Services took part in.

DCC also had an officer dealing with food and nutrition, in particular with the Sugar Smart campaign. They had taken part in lobbying regarding money from the sugar tax that had been earmarked for National Health Services and the money had now been put towards schools to promote future good health.

The officer also provided information regarding the promotion of walking and cycling, explaining that they had promoted a number of national campaigns such as Active 10 and the Big March, encouraging the public to use the environment. They had worked with local walking groups and promoted Naturally Healthy Month. Areas such as the implementation of cycling routes were expensive but DCC could bid for funding and had been successful in changes to the road network at Blundell's Road, Tiverton and at Tiverton Parkway. Infrastructure could be influenced within new developments and the team were working closely with planners regarding the Garden Village at Cullompton, to maximise health benefits.

School transport, which was procured by the County Council was an area of potential improvement and getting the balance right with providers and routes was an area of future work.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Mental health and the link with diet;
- Early help for mental health services being provided in schools, KOOTH;
- The need to promote initiatives with effective communication.

The Chairman thanked the officer for attending.

38 **AIR QUALITY 00:35:00**

The Group had before it a report * from the Group Manager for Public Health & Regulatory Services, providing a final version of the Statutory Air Quality Action Plan for the District 2017-21, for consideration.

The officer explained that the report had been before the Group at an earlier meeting and that comments received had been noted and incorporated into the plan before them. The officer reminded Members that the plan was a living document and could be changed annually. DEFRA required an annual update on the plan which gave an opportunity to update, to add new measures and to add value to the plan.

The Public Health Officer highlighted areas within the report that had been amended following previous meetings, including road infrastructure and the need for improvements, the difficulties of living in rural areas without a car, local roads and

cycling safety, the train station and access issues, ECO Stars and school transport, electric vehicles, bus passes, potential cycle routes, school travel plans and a requirement for greater enforcement measures.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Tiverton Parkway and links to tourism;
- Electric bikes were now available for hire in Crediton;
- Crediton Town Council were funding a feasibility study to look at High Street issues;
- Engagement with Town Councils;
- Air Quality issues and new infrastructure plans for Cullompton;
- School transport and the need for new vehicles and intelligent routing.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet approve the proposed Air Quality Action Plan as attached in Annexe 2 with the addition of wording to emphasise the need for major infrastructure in Cullompton.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

39 **DRAFT BUDGET 00:59:00**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report *from the Director of Finance, Assets & Resources asking them to consider options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2018/19 and agree a future strategy for further budget reductions for 2019/20 onwards.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Working Group be put in place to look at areas within the budget that fell under the remit of the Group and to identify areas for priority and areas that Members considered could be put forward for reduction. Members of the Working Group would be Cllr B A Moore, Cllr Mrs E J Slade and Cllr R J Dolley.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

The Chairman informed Members that feedback from the Working Group would be via email due to the tight time scales in place.

Discussion took place regarding future management of Leisure Services and it was **AGREED** that this would be discussed at the Working Group.

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

40 **FINANCIAL MONITORING 01:13:00**

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 Chairman had raised questions in advance of the meeting as below:

Section 3.2

There had been a notable overspend in leisure facilities. What were the reasons and what controls were being applied to bring it back to budget?

In relation to action to mitigate an overall predicted General Fund overspend of £181k, actions were as followed:

- Vacancy approvals were approved by Leadership Team on a case by case basis.
- Ongoing surplus asset disposal and reinvesting in income generating properties i.e. Coggan's Well & 36 & 38 Fore Street
- SPV set up to generate income
- Applying for 100% Business rate pilot
- Increasing investment to £5m with CCLA from 01/02/17
- More proactive marketing of the Garden Waste scheme - now up to 9,500 customers.

Appendix A & B

Recreation and Sport 480% over budget. The reasons were given within the report but with such a significant overspend what was going to be done to ameliorate the situation and also learn lessons for the 2018/19 budget?

In relation to Recreation and Sport forecast overspend of £224k:

- A number of cost pressures were inescapable including an increase in utilities and recent NNDR rating increase amount to £41k
- The income budget for 17/18 was set in November 2016 with 'full cost recovery' in mind; in hindsight this was too challenging. The budget for 18/19 had been set to include any recurring pressures so the 18/19 base budget should be more realistic.

Appendix G

Exe Valley Leisure Centre extension overspend of £49k. What were the reasons and what were plans to recover? When planning this project was there any provision for contingency, and if not why not, given that this was a prudent precaution on all projects?

Exe Valley Leisure Centre capital project:

- During the build of the extension additional planned maintenance work originally scheduled for 19/20 was rolled forward to be undertaken at the same time to maximise efficiency, this was recommended and agreed at cabinet on 26/10/17.

- As with all major capital projects this project did have a contingency in the contract that was felt appropriate at the time it was let (in this case £60k).

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

41 **TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER 01:15:00**

The Group had before it a report * from the Member Services Manager presenting the findings of a review into the Charter between Mid Devon District Council and the Town and Parish Councils in Mid Devon.

The officer outlined the contents of the report, highlighting consultation that had taken place with the Town and Parish Councils and amendments that had been made.

With reference to a question asked at Public Question time by Mr P Talbot, Chairman of Stoodleigh Parish Council, the officer explained that the question referred to a Motion regarding permitted development at Full Council on 14th December 2016. The outcome of the Motion was that a letter had been sent to the Secretary of State in January 2017 and a response was received on 6th February 2017. This response had been circulated to all Members. Legislation talked in detail about permitted development and in particular regulations regarding site display on or near the land to be developed and serving a notice to adjoining land owners. Legislation did not state that it was a requirement to consult with Town and Parish Councils but it was up to the Local Authority to consult further if they so wished.

Permitted Development, which was introduced in April 2015, allowed a change of use from an agricultural building to alternative uses such as shops, financial and professional services, restaurants or cafes for example. The right was subject to criteria and consideration by the Local Planning Authority on whether prior approval was required, in relation to certain impacts, only applied where the cumulative floor space of buildings exceeded 150 square metres and could only be considered on the transport and highways impact of the development, noise impact of the development, contamination risks on the site and flooding risk. Below this floor space there was no requirement to consider these issues.

The officer further explained that the authority only had 56 days-notice following application to respond or development could begin. This did not allow much time for consultation but site notices would be displayed and Town and Parish Councils could comment at this stage. This information had been conveyed to Mr Talbot at the time.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Charter be approved for a further three years subject to the amendments highlighted in Appendix 1.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

42 **SIX MONTHLY UPDATE - PUBLIC HEALTH 01:20:00**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Group Manager for Public Health & Regulatory Services providing a further update on progress of the Public Health Plan.

The officer reminded Members that the Public Health Plan 2017-19 identified four key priorities for the Mid Devon area based upon data provided by Public Health (Devon). These priorities were:

- Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer
- Decent high quality housing
- Emotional/mental health and resilience
- Air quality.

The Public Health Officer identified some highlights within the report such as GP referrals to the Leisure Service which had totalled 82 to date, work that was being undertaken to audit the sugar content of food and drink sold at leisure centres, an unsuccessful bid to the Warm Homes Fund to which a phase 2 application would be made and the new switching service for energy suppliers which would live from 1 December 2017.

Note: Report previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

43 **SIX MONTHLY UPDATE - LEISURE 01:28:00**

The Group received a six monthly update from the Leisure Manager.

Note: - Presentation attached to the Minutes.

Presentation

44 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK 01:59:00**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Director of Corporate Affairs & Business Transformation, providing Members with an update on performance against the corporate plan and local service targets for 2017-18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

Note: Report * previously circulated and attached to Minutes.

45 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Community Engagement Strategy
Trim Trails 6 monthly update
Grant Funded Agencies
Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy
Community Cohesion (Consultation Working Group)

(The meeting ended at 4.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN