

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 15 May 2018 at 2.00 pm

Present

Councillors

R F Radford (Chairman)
D R Coren, Mrs C P Daw, R Evans,
D J Knowles, Mrs J Roach, J D Squire and
R Wright

Apologies

Councillors

R M Deed and Mrs E J Slade

Also Present

Councillors

C J Eginton and L D Taylor

Also Present

Officers

Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Stuart Noyce (Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Andrew Busby (Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), Vicky Bowden (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Karen White (Cemeteries Administrative Assistant) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL IN THE CHAIR)

RESOLVED that Cllr R F Radford be elected Chairman of the Group for the municipal year 2018/19.

Cllr Radford then took the Chair.

2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Cllr D R Coren be elected Vice Chairman of the Group for the municipal year 2018/19.

3 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs E J Slade and R M Deed, who was substituted by Cllr Mrs J Roach.

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that the Group needed to decide what time to start their meetings for the remainder of this municipal year. It was **AGREED** that the start time of meetings should remain at 2.00pm.

7 MOTION 542 (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROACH - 30 NOVEMBER 2017)

The Group had before it Motion 542 (Councillor Mrs Jenny Roach – 30 November 2017).

That this Council consider the use of recycling trolleys as a pilot project, hopefully in Silverton, as an alternative to assisted collections for those who wish to try out such a system.

This motion, previously considered by the PDG on 9 January 2018 had been referred back to the Group by Council (in line with Procedure Rule 15.1(e) for further consideration at its meeting in March 2018. At the March meeting the Group had **RESOLVED** that a sample trolley be sourced which was suitable for use with the current recycling fleet, in order that Members could have a look and see how it operated. This had taken place prior to the meeting.

In speaking to her Motion, Cllr Mrs Roach stated that the issue had not been about replacing assisted recycling box collections but rather to allow people to have independence and choice. It was stated that some people might prefer not have people entering their premises, especially if they had a dog and did not want access and exit points to their premises left vulnerable.

Officers had been tasked with obtaining sample boxes and a trolley from the current supplier. During the demonstration prior to the meeting it was explained that it was not possible to fit the sample boxes on to the current lorries for the operatives to sort. The stacking system and slots into which recyclables could be deposited were also not ideal but these were the only boxes the current supplier provided.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The possibility of less physically able residents having alternative methods of recycling rather than having to sign up to assisted bin collections, thereby allowing them greater independence.
- Researching costs involved in sourcing alternative boxes that would be compatible with the current lorries for what would essentially be a small number of people.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Motion 542 be rejected.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: Cllrs D J Knowles and Mrs J Roach requested that their vote against the decision be recorded.

8 **MOTION 545 - (COUNCILLOR L TAYLOR - 10 APRIL 2018)**

The Group had before it Motion 545 (Councillor L Taylor – 10 April 2018)

That this Council considers the use of British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) stickers on all Mid Devon grass cutting machinery, requesting that all users check the area to be cut before using the equipment. The stickers are free and are being used by other Councils such as East Devon District Council, Derbyshire County Council and Manchester City Council to name but a few.

Cllr Taylor explained that in the 1950's hedgehogs had been voted as the national species of Great Britain and there had been 30 million in existence but that number had now reduced to 1.5million representing a 97% reduction. He further explained that it was predicted that hedgehogs could be extinct within 10 years. Councils in other parts of the country had signed up to placing stickers on their ground maintenance equipment and there had been a significant reduction in the number of hedgehog deaths as a result.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Motion 545 be supported

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs J Roach and seconded by Cllr R Evans)

9 **BEREAVEMENT SERVICES FEES AND CHARGES**

The Group had before it a report * from the Director of Finance, Assets and Resources setting out the Bereavement Service fees and charges for 2018/19. This report had previously been considered by the Group at their meeting on 6 March 2018 where the Group had made a recommendation to the Cabinet. The Cabinet had considered this on 5 April 2018, however, due to a change in Government guidance with regard to fees and charges, the Cabinet had resolved that the matter be referred back to the PDG for further consideration.

It was explained that the Government had implemented an instruction on 31st March 2018 to set up a Children's Funeral Fund for England thereby removing the fees for burials and cremations for those under the age of 18.

Discussion followed with regard to the proposed fees for the 'Exclusive Rights of Burial and Right to Erect a Memorial' for 30 years for those children under the age of 18. This was a sensitive area and the Council needed to show compassion.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that, subject to the removal of a charge for 'Exclusive Rights of Burial and Right to Erect a Memorial' for 30 years for those who die under the age of 18, the proposed Bereavement Service fees and charges for 2018/19 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Roach)

Note: * Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed minutes.

10 DISTRICT OFFICER DISCRETIONARY TIME

The Group had before it a report * from the Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces outlining the first full year performance of the Street Scene Education and Enforcement Services following the service review in 2016/17.

Consideration was given to:

- The high number of dog fouling complaints to Ward Members;
- The limited amount of District Officer resource available and the need to put this where it would have best effect;
- Investing in the further education of dog owners might not be constructive since many knew fouling was wrong but still did not want to pick up after their dogs;
- Localities could still be provided with signs to deter owners from allowing their dogs to foul;
- The Government had introduced a new Litter Strategy for England to curb littering with proposals for new enforcement, education and community engagement. Mid Devon District Council was now proposing to adopt those powers;
- District Officers were very reliant on intelligence from the public and this was encouraged. However, members of the public had to be prepared to sign a statement and stand up in court if a successful prosecution was to ensue if a fixed penalty notice was not paid.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:

- a) The fine for littering be increased to the statutory maximum of £150.
- b) The time allocated to discretionary duties be varied as specified in paragraph 2, Table 2.
- c) Policies, systems and procedures necessary to enable Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) to be served on the relevant person(s) associated with littering from vehicles be introduced.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr R Wright)

Note: * Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed minutes.

11 PERFORMANCE AND RISK

The Group had before it a report * from the Director of Corporate Affairs and 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.

The Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security reported that it had been a very good year for the Street Scene service with the service costing less per household than the target which had been set.

Consideration was given to the following:

- Targets in relation to residual household waste per household (measured in kilograms) which it was felt were higher than current actual. These targets had been set 4 years ago when the Corporate Plan had been approved, since then a new scheme had been introduced and performance had been better than targets;
- Carbon monoxide levels at Carlu Close were now being managed and monitored and were improving since extra controls were put in place. Previous high levels had been detected as a result of the collection and bulking vehicles keeping engines running in a confined space which was being managed better now.
- Alternative uses of plastic and the opportunities that arose from this. An example was provided whereby some countries were considering using recycled plastic to make roads. There was a need for a collaborative approach locally and nationally with some innovative thinking in terms of recycling plastic rather than just stopping using it;

ACTION: It was requested that the Committee Clerk to this Group contact the Clerk administering the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (which the Leader from Mid Devon District Council attended) to seek an item on the next available agenda to discuss the recycling of plastic and a future innovative collaborative approach;

- Working with local independent traders in Tiverton to reduce the amount of plastic used, for example ceasing to use plastic carrier bags.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the annual target in relation to residual household waste per household be reduced from 420kg per year to 378kg.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr R Wright)

Note: * Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed minutes.

12 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No other items were identified for the next meeting others than those already listed in the work programme. However, the Chairman requested that the Group Members contact the Clerk should they have a specific item they would like discussed at the next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 3.09 pm)

CHAIRMAN