

Environment PDG – Chairman’s Report – 2018-2019

This past year has been no different to other years, the challenges do not get any easier, as long as austerity lasts, we will face the same challenges. Last year I was able to report of our move to Carlu Close, this has now proven to be a positive good financial move for the District, particularly now we have moved the ground maintenance to Carlu.

May 2018

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 - **RECOMMENDED** to Council that Motion 542 be rejected.

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 - **RECOMMENDED** to Council that Motion 545 be supported

Bereavement Service fees and charges for 2018/19 - **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.

Street Scene Education and Enforcement Services - **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.

Also at our May meeting, we made a recommendation to Cabinet that the annual target in relation to residual household waste be reduced from 420kg per year to a more challenging target of 378kg.

July 2018

Motion 549 (Councillor B Evans – 27th June 2018) - That this Council phase out the use of single use plastics (SUP) by MDDC and its suppliers by the end of 2018 or whenever current contracts expire that would be effected by the required removal of the use or supply of SUP that may run past this date - It was **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Motion be supported.

Repairing Footpaths and Roads Policy - It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet approve the revised Repairing Footpaths and Roads Policy as attached in Annexe 1 and that the number of inspections be added to the Performance and Risk Report.

Members also had the usual performance and risk before them, updating them against the corporate plan and local service targets for 2018/2019, as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Group were proposing that fixed penalty figures be removed from the performance report and fly tipping be included in its place.

September 2018

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status for the Exe Valley - **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the Council consider option 1 to seek full AONB Designation. This created quite some discussion. Members discussed their disappointment that the public consultation exercise, that had been conducted by Members, which showed overwhelming support for the local Towns and Parishes, had not been included in the report. Members acknowledged that there would be a cost of pursuing the ANOB status but they felt that this would not outweigh the benefit.

The Group noted a verbal report from the Group Manager for Finance presenting the financial update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year.

The figures included a £52k overspend in the Environment portfolio and this could be contributed to additional staff costs, a reduction in income received from recycling cardboard and vehicle maintenance costs. The Group discussed the cost of kerbside recyclable waste and the Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces stated that it was still better value for money than going to mixed collection and then having to sort the waste.

November 2018

Waste and Recycling update- The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces provided the following service update by way of presentation. He provided the Committee with further information on:

- The amount of waste collected
- Dry recycling rates
- Waste growth numbers
- Service updates
- Garden waste customer numbers
- The relocation of the Grounds Maintenance Team to Carlu Depot

He also explained potential changes to legislation in the pipeline.

The Group also had before it and noted a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) asking it to consider the initial draft 2019/2020 budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget and agree a future strategy for further budget reductions for 2020/2021. It was agreed that the Group would look at the budget proposal again in January when funding from Government was known. The Group then discussed the

proposed increase in Bulky Waste charges for the 140 litre bin and a report would come back in January.

January 2019

Bulky waste and garden waste bin charges and an alternative charging structure - **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet to abolish the Fixed Price Items charge of £27.00

The Group had before it an update on the 2019/2020 Budget for a **RECOMMENDATION** to Cabinet. The Provisional Statement confirmed some of our previous assumptions. As a Council we have been fortunate to receive recognition of our rurality and also an unexpected redistribution of excess Business Levy although the New Homes bonus top slice of growth had not been quite as high as we anticipated. It is encouraging that the Council has managed to significantly close the budget gap which had created significant pressures in the areas of Waste and Street Scene Operations.

After significant discussions on the 2019/2020 Budget proposals we were able to support a recommendation to support the Budget as set out in our papers.

March 2019

We will have various agenda items that we will consider and discuss which will be noted or given appropriate recommendations. These will be available on our website after the meeting.

This Environment PDG does recognise the efforts and co-operation that the Town and Parish Councils have given us, it has been a difficult year for Mid Devon which will only get more difficult each year as funding gets less and less and we are asked to do the same or more with less funding. This is likely to go on for the next year or two. I would like to thank Members of my PDG who have given their valuable support and keen insight into matters covered and discussed. We could not have operated without the stinging help we have had from all of the staff at Mid Devon District Council. Our move to Carlu Close has proven successful and with everyone's co-operation it went remarkably well.

I do thank the staff in Member Services for all the help they have given our PDG, particularly Carole Oliphant, she has been great to keep us on the right course. Many thanks.

Thank you to all members of the PDG.

Cllr Ray Radford – Chairman of the Environment PDG 2018-2019