

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 10 June 2019 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

F W Letch (Chairman)
R J Chesterton, R J Dolley, J M Downes,
R Evans, Mrs S Griggs, B Holdman,
B A Moore, R L Stanley, Ms E J Wainwright,
B G J Warren and A Wilce

Apologies

Councillor(s)

Mrs C P Daw, Mrs I Hill and D F Pugsley

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Maria De Leiburne (Solicitor) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN (00.02.00)

Cllr B A Moore was duly elected Vice Chairman of Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2019-2020.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr B G J Warren)

2 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.02.21)

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs C P Daw (substituted by Cllr Mrs S Griggs) Cllr D F Pugsley (substituted by Cllr R J Dolley and Cllr Mrs I Hill (substituted by Cllr J M Downes)

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.02.47)

There were no declarations.

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.02.59)

Members of the public, referring to the broadband agenda item, presented the following questions:

- Were members aware of the service that was being delivered in rural areas?
- How can rural area's make progress when they do not qualify under the current schemes?
- Why were there ongoing issues with the broadband service at Palmerston Park in Tiverton?
- Why was superfast broadband not installed when the new development was built at Rackenford?

The Chairman explained that the questions would be addressed when the agenda item was discussed.

5 MEMBER FORUM (00.09.44)

There were no issues raised under this item.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.09.53)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15th April 2019 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

7 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (00.10.34)

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 30th May 2019 had been called in.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.10.41)

The Chairman reminded members that there was a Member briefing on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme on 20th June.

He asked the Committee if they wanted an informal Scrutiny Committee meeting to be organised and it was decided that this would be postponed to later in the year.

9 BROADBAND PROVISION GIGACLEAR (00.12.05)

Matt Burrow, Stakeholder Engagement Officer from Devon County Council addressed the Committee and gave an overview of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) work programme. He explained that it was a partnership programme between local authorities, telecom providers and Government departments and was primarily to assist regions where the installation of superfast broadband was not financially viable for commercial companies.

He explained that current contracts to provide a service were with Gigaclear who provided fibre optic options and Airband who provided wireless solutions. He gave an overview of the issues that were facing Gigaclear and explained that a decision should be made in July or August about a way forward.

In response to questions asked by members of the public he explained the various options available to rural communities including the broadband voucher scheme. He provided an overview of why superfast broadband had not initially been installed in new developments but explained that legislation had changed in 2017 and it was now a requirement of developers to ensure the provision of superfast broadband in all new developments with over 37 units.

In response to Members questions he explained that possible solutions were to apply for the better broadband scheme in which 4G was used to provide a broadband service. He explained the differences with mobile 4G and broadband 4G and incorrect perceptions that properties which could not currently get mobile 4G could also not get broadband 4G.

There was a general discussion about the way that CDS had communicated the different options to the rural communities and members felt that the strategy had been disjointed and the difference between all the different schemes was unclear.

In conclusion Members decided that they would like continuing insight into the superfast broadband rollout and the contract with Gigaclear and requested that the Stakeholder Engagement Officer return to give an update in September.

10 **STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN LOCAL AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES (00.59.26)**

The Committee had a discussion on the implications of the *Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities which had been issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Members decided that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should begin discussions with the Cabinet and the Leadership Team to establish an Executive Scrutiny Protocol.

Note: * Guidance previously circulated copy attached to minutes.

11 **FORWARD PLAN (01.02.11)**

Members discussed the Forward Plan and requested that the following items be brought before the Scrutiny Committee for further investigation before they were presented to Cabinet.

- Design Supplementary Document - To be presented to Scrutiny Committee after Public Consultation
- Cost Recovery & Commercialisation in Growth, Economy & Delivery – to be presented to Scrutiny Committee after Economy PDG have made their decision.
- Strategy Grants and Service Level Agreements – To be presented to Scrutiny Committee before being presented to Community PDG

Notes:

- i) * Plan previously circulated, copy attached to minutes
- ii) Cllrs F W Letch and B A Moore declared personal interests as they were involved with INVOLVE

12 **START TIMES OF MEETINGS (01.12.23)**

It was agreed that the committee continue to meet at 2.15pm for the rest of the municipal year.

(Proposed by Cllr R L Stanley and seconded by Cllr R J Chesterton).

13 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (01.15.02)

The Committee agreed that the Cullompton Town Centre Contract Award should be brought before Scrutiny at the next meeting in July.

Members requested to look at the ICT arrangements currently being used by the Council and that a working group should be considered when the scope of this proposal had been agreed.

In response to a question about members being able to join in meetings remotely via Skype the Member Services Officer explained that current legislation did not allow members to participate or vote in meetings unless they were physically present.

(The meeting ended at 3.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN