

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
held on 6 August 2019 at 5.30 pm

### **Present Councillors**

E J Berry, W Burke, D R Coren, L J Cruwys,  
R Evans, B Holdman, R F Radford,  
Ms E J Wainwright and B G J Warren

### **Apologies Councillor(s)**

R L Stanley and J Wright

### **Also Present Councillor(s)**

R M Deed, C J Eginton and L D Taylor

### **Also Present Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Andrew Busby (Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), Lisa Lewis (Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Stuart Noyce (Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces), John Bodley-Scott (Economic Development Team Leader) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

## 15 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.02.00)**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Wright who was substituted by Cllr L Cruwys and Cllr R L Stanley who was substituted by Cllr R Evans.

## 16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.02.37)**

There were no declarations made.

## 17 **VICE CHAIRMAN (00.02.46)**

In the absence of the Vice Chairman the Chairman requested that a Member of the Group take the role of Vice Chairman for the meeting.

The Group **AGREED** that Cllr D Coren act as Vice Chairman for the meeting.

## 18 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.03.37)**

Mr Richardson spoke with regard to item 6 and stated that he was a resident of Bolham. He commended officers for keeping Tiverton clean over the summer, the cleaning of the Westexe pond and the installation of a litter bin at Morrisons which had reduced litter in Kennedy Way. He highlighted the amount of litter in Westexe

Park and informed the Group that he clears the park of rubbish weekly. He asked that part of the budget for 2020/2021 included the purchase of mobile cameras which could be installed in Westexe Park initially and then used in other locations to monitor littering. He stated that despite numerous complaints to the Council that there was a build-up of rubbish behind the changing rooms which had not been cleared.

The Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets explained that the annual CCTV report would be presented to the Community PDG on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and that he would ensure that the report was updated with reference to the possibility of the Council to use mobile CCTV cameras. He stated that he would contact the tenants of the changing rooms at Westexe Park to establish why the rubbish had not been cleared.

Ana Hendy referring to item 9 on the agenda asked the Group what plans they had to involve the Tiverton Town Centre Working Party on climate change in discussions about the work required to achieve the climate change declaration.

Theresa Pointing again referring to item 9 on the agenda and explained that she was part of a transition group, Sustainable Tiverton, who were an association of people leading the way on low carbon and setting examples. She made the Group aware of plans for local open public sessions throughout Mid Devon where people could meet and discuss the issues. She asked the Group if they would look to engage with local groups already set up.

Charles Mossman from Sustainable Crediton referring to item 9 asked the Group what timeframes were being put in place for local communities to achieve the declaration and how local groups could be involved.

Denise Ross speaking with regard to item 9 on the agenda asked the Group how community groups could be involved in achieving the declaration.

## 19 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.18.13)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2019 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 20 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.19.17)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

## 21 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00.19.30)**

The Group received and **NOTED** the \*Performance and Risk report from the Group Manager for Performance Governance and Data Security who explained this was the first report for 2019-2020. She highlighted to the Group that the current performance indicators were based on the existing corporate plan which would need to be adjusted to incorporate the climate change declaration.

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

## 22 CONNECTING THE CULM PROJECT (00.22.19)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a \*report of the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration with regard to the Connecting the Culm Project he Economic Development Team Leader outlined the contents of the report and explained that the project was a partnership with MDDC, DCC, the Environment Agency and the National Trust, looking at the resilience of the Culm to climate change. He explained that the Culm was chosen for the project because of its size.

He outlined the aims of the project and that flooding issues, biodiversity and enjoyment of the river were all being investigated. The reason for MDDC involvement was the development of the Garden Village and that the findings would be fed into the design which included off site mitigation for flood risk. He explained that the project was a planning requirement for the Garden Village.

Members discussed the role that agriculture and in particular soil compacting played on the flood risk of local developments.

The Economic Development Team Leader confirmed that the project would be looking at hydroelectricity solutions but as the flow in the Culm was small there were a complex number of leats which may be able to be utilised.

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

## 23 PLAY AREA SAFETY INSPECTION POLICY (00.35.40)

The Group had before it a \*report from the Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets regarding the Play Area Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection review.

He explained the content of the report and informed the Group that this was the risk assessment process and that the Council had a duty of care to inspect all of its play areas. He stated that the areas with the highest risk required more frequent inspections.

He confirmed that the report was recommending that the number of weekend inspections be reduced but stated that there would be more robust inspections on Fridays immediately preceding a bank holiday.

Members complimented officers on the safety record of the play areas and the frequency of bin emptying on the sites. Members thanked officers for ensuring that the Westex Paddling Pool had been re-opened for the summer.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that the following be **NOTED**:

1. That the current risk assessments and proposed reduction in safety inspections were considered adequate to meet the Council's responsibilities and for individual pieces of play equipment to be identified on the Risk Assessment Forms
2. That digital transformation of the current inspection methods would make the task more efficient and that the implementation of a process would be expedited

(Proposed by Cllr E J Berry and seconded by Cllr D R Coren)

Note:

Cllr B G J Warren declared personal interest as he was the Chairman of Willand Parish Council who used MDDC to carry out safety inspections on its play areas.

\*Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

**24 CLIMATE CHANGE DECLARATION (00.43.46)**

The Group had before it \*reports of the Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets which provided Members with an overview of measures already introduced by the Council which support the intent behind the climate change declaration and the Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement which considered the best way to facilitate public engagement in the climate change public policy agenda.

The Chairman explained that the Group wanted to understand what the Council had already done in terms of carbon reduction measures and they were keen to find ways to involve the public moving forward. He explained that MDDC officers were involved with the DCC taskforce and would be feeding into the project.

Members discussed ways of involving a public discussion on the subject at parish level and the provision of a template that Members could utilise at parish meetings to facilitate discussions.

The Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement stated that the Council was very conscious that people wanted to be involved and that she would point both Members and the public to the DCC website to see what was being done at county level. She informed the Group that officers would be willing to facilitate public meetings if that was required and would take the details of the public at the meeting today in order to contact them and establish how this could work.

Members stated that MDDC had already implemented a strategy of energy efficiency that helped towards carbon reduction and needed to consider what could be done and how fast at local level so that public expectations could be managed. Members felt that the Council should get the information across to the public on what had been achieved so far.

The Chief Executive reminded the Group that when the declaration was made there was a commitment that the Council would provide details of its own carbon emissions (baseline) within 6 months. He explained that officers were working with the county council and other districts and that this first piece of work would be looking at the Councils own carbon emissions. There was a second part to the declaration regarding carbon emissions across the wider district area, and this was a county wide process being administered by DCC which would bring together a 'Net Zero Task Force' and would also include public participation through a Citizens Assembly. He stated that the Mid Devon strategy should be bringing together local requirements and feeding into what was happening at county level.

Conversations were held about the knowledge base within the local community groups which had evolved and that the council and the groups should be working together to come up with solutions for the district. Members felt that climate change was an issue that members of the public were engaged in and just wanted to be heard and to help make a difference.

Members discussed local press reports which suggested that MDCC would encourage residents to ditch their cars and agreed that, despite reports in the press, the Council's policy and strategy with regard to the climate change declaration had not yet been formulated.

The Chairman explained that he was mindful that officers required a steer from the Group on what they required to formulate a policy and strategy and the Group discussed the setting up of a working group to define this. Members **AGREED** that the formulation of the working group should be deferred until the DCC taskforce was operational and there was more information on the scope of the taskforce.

The Group then discussed the Chairman's proposal that a recommendation be made to Cabinet that a single Cabinet Member be responsible for the climate change declaration and the Group **AGREED** to defer any decision on this until the September meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the update report on the climate emergency declaration and the climate change and public engagement report be **NOTED**.

(Proposed by Cllr L Cruwys and Cllr R Radford)

Note: \*Reports previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 25 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (01.23.13)

There were no items identified for a future meeting.

(The meeting ended at 7.00 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**