

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 24 September 2019 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors B G J Warren (Chairman)
D R Coren, C J Eginton, R Evans,
B Holdman, R F Radford,
Ms E J Wainwright and J Wright

Apologies

Councillor(s) E J Berry and R L Stanley

Also Present

Councillor(s) R M Deed and L D Taylor

Also Present

Officer(s): Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Busby (Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), Joanne Nacey (Group Manager for Finance), Stuart Noyce (Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

26 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.02.53)**

Apologies were received from Cllr E J Berry who was substituted by Cllr C J Eginton and Cllr R L Stanley who was substituted by Cllr R Evans.

27 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.02.53)**

Marie Yexley referring to item 9 on the agenda asked if MDDC were going to sign up to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles Government funding for residential on-street charging for plug-in vehicles which can give residents access to funding for electric car charging points on the road.

The Forward Planning Team leader advised the member of the public that this would be investigated and the Group would be updated at the next meeting of the PDG.

Amanda Davies referring to item 10 asked how the council could help council tenants to go low carbon as she had missed out on having solar panels installed and questioned if there was a plan to install double glazing.

The Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets advised the Group that he would take the details of the member of the public and respond direct to her about her questions.

Sally Chapman from Sustainable Tiverton referring to item 10 on the agenda said she had attended the climate change conference in Tiverton on Friday 20th September where there were over 40 people present. She stated that people wanted to be involved and asked if community organisations could be co-opted onto the Working Group which was being set up.

The Chairman advised that this question would be addressed at the appropriate item on the agenda.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.08.42)

There were no declarations made

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.08.57)

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2019 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.09.56)

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

31 MEETING MANAGEMENT (00.09.58)

The Chairman informed the Group (with their agreement) that he would move item 7 on the agenda, Financial Monitoring, to the next item on the agenda.

32 FINANCIAL MONITORING UPDATE (00.10.29)

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

She explained that the June figures showed that the Council was looking at a £427k deficit on the overall budget and this had reduced to £378k in July.

For the Environment PDG budget the figures showed a £5k variance in favour in June and that had increased to £31k to the good for July. She explained that this was partly due to increases in the customer base in trade waste and mixed plastics being collected.

33 PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00.14.29)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** the *Performance and Risk report from the Group Manager for Performance Governance and Data Security who explained that this was the second report for 2019/2020.

She explained that the Council was waiting for Devon County Council to verify the performance figures for increased recycling and reduction of the amount of waste.

With regard to the measure for reducing the Councils carbon footprint she explained that the proposal from Exeter University for the benchmarking of MDDC's carbon footprint had been received and was being considered.

Members pointed out that the target of 0.03% for missed collections very low compared to the amount of collections completed on a monthly basis.

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

34 **MEETING MANAGEMENT (00.19.00)**

The Chairman informed the Group (with their agreement) that he would move item 9 on the agenda, Update of Home Electric Car Charging Points, to the next item on the agenda.

35 **UPDATE OF HOME ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING POINTS (00.19.15)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration and the Chairman explained to the Group why he had requested the report.

Members expressed concern that the report had references to the GESP but their own investigations into the status of GESP had shown that the telephone numbers and email addresses were unobtainable. There was concern that as the Council was a member of GESP very little information had been received on the progress 5 months on from the local elections.

The Chief Executive informed the Group that the changes in administration and Leaders for all of the Local Authorities involved with GESP was a factor and that the new Leaders had taken some time to understand what officers were presenting to them. He explained that the new administrations would want to add their own ideas on the scope of GESP but that there were meetings due shortly and various reports on the scope of GESP would be presented to each of the Council's cabinets in due course.

The Chairman updated the Group on the decision of the Planning Inspector to place a condition on an upheld planning application appeal in Willand that all of the new build properties granted planning permission on the site required an electric car charging point.

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

36 **WASTE AND RECYCLING ANNUAL UPDATE (00.25.02)**

The Group received and **NOTED** the annual Waste and Recycling update by way of a presentation from the Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces who explained that returning Members had seen the format before but he would explain to new Members the journey that the Council had been on with regard to Waste since 2015.

He explained that MDDC was responsible for the collection of waste and that DCC was responsible for the disposing of it. He informed the Group that recycling rates had increased from below 10% in the 1990's to over 50% today.

He provided Members with details of the total tonnage of waste collected and explained that changes in the frequency of collection of residual waste had increased the amount of waste which was recycled.

There was a general discussion on the role that supermarkets could take to help reduce the amount of single use plastic that was being thrown away. Members felt that some of the supermarkets were now seeing that the reduction in the use of plastic on fruit and vegetables was a potential growth area for them and they were championing it.

In response to Members' questions about whether the Council knew that everything sent off for recycling was actually recycled, the Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces explained that there were laws which dictated the reporting where materials ended up. He explained that although some authorities were selling their mixed recycled waste outside EU, MDDC used kerb side sort collection schemes that sorted and split the materials which could then be sold to specialist recycling plants within the UK and the EU.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment confirmed that a decision on changing the frequency of waste collections had not yet been taken.

The Group Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces gave an overview of the service plan for 2019/2020 which included:

- Street Scene Service redesign
- Start of fleet supply and maintenance contract
- WEEE collections bid (small electrical equipment)
- Future refuse service options
- Mini round reschedule
- Expand recycling on the go
- Shared transport service

He gave Members an overview of the work of the Recycling Officer who was working with collection crews to identify households that don't recycle and the number of households who had received information about the scheme and a stage 1 notice to comply with current requirements.

37 **CLIMATE CHANGE DECLARATION (00.58.30)**

The Group received and **NOTED** a verbal update from the Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets on the action taken to calculate the Council's corporate carbon footprint and he explained that there was a coordinated approach ongoing with other District Authorities to scope out the level of emissions currently being used. He explained that this work would form part of the carbon footprint key performance indicator and would be reported back to members in line with the information being shared with other local authorities in the area.

Addressing the member of the public that asked a question on the carbon reduction measures being undertaken in council properties he stated that he would investigate the measures in her particular property but it could be an issue which could be raised at the Homes PDG.

Members then discussed the formation of the Working Group and the Chairman explained his thoughts that the group should explore how the PDG engaged with local community groups in the first instance and that information and ideas could be collected from them.

Members expressed a view that the Working Group should be a conduit for members of the public, environment community groups, farmers and school children to engage in conversation with the Council and bring their ideas forward to be considered.

Members requested that current constitution be checked to establish who could be co-opted as a member of the Working Group.

The Chief Executive reminded the PDG that the Climate Change declaration was to complete the baseline work within 6 months and that the Council was working with other Councils to align this. He explained that the baseline emissions would need to be established first and then the Council could look at ways to reduce them. Alongside this DCC were setting up a Citizens Assembly with the aim of getting public buy in for a Devon wide plan. He explained that the Working Group could be empowered to have discussions with the community groups and members of the public and bring those views back to the PDG.

The Group **AGREED** to the formation of a Working Group to consider:

1. Being a place for the community voice to be fed to the Council
2. To map that community voice and ideas against the Devon Carbon Plan
3. To present further recommendations for what MDDC could do as a District that goes beyond the Devon Carbon Plan

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Members suggested that the makeup of the Working Group should be of Members and not members of the public.

The Members of the Working Group were **AGREED** as:

- Cllr B Holdman
- Cllr Ms E Wainwright
- Cllr J Wright

Members discussed the Chairman's proposal that a recommendation be made to Cabinet that a lead Cabinet Member be assigned to progress the work of the Climate Change Declaration.

Members discussed the proposal and agreed that the public were unaware that the Cabinet Member for the Environment was currently also responsible for Climate Change and that this should be made clear.

The Group therefore **AGREED** to:

RECOMMEND to the Cabinet that the Cabinet Member for Environment title be changed to Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

(Proposed by Cllr Ms E Wainwright and seconded by Cllr C Eginton)

38 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (01.34.12)

There were no items identified.

(The meeting ended at 7.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN