

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 8 October 2019 at 2.15 pm

Present Councillors

C R Slade, W Burke, Mrs C P Daw,
J M Downes, Mrs I Hill, B Holdman,
E G Luxton and B A Moore

Apologies Councillor(s)

Miss J Norton and Mrs M E Squires

Also Present Councillor(s)

E J Berry, L J Cruwys, R M Deed and R Evans

Also Present Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Lisa Lewis (Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Simon Newcombe (Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), John Bodley-Scott (Economic Development Team Leader), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

28 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00.00.40)**

Cllr Ms J Norton gave apologies and Cllr Mrs M E Squires gave apologies and was substituted by Cllr B A Moore.

29 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00.00.58)**

There were no declarations made.

30 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00.01.09)**

There were no members of the public present.

31 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00.01.13)**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th August 2019 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

32 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00.01.43)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

33 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00.01.53)**

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 this was the second regular review of Performance and Risk and included results to the end of August.

Members discussed the results and there were no questions for officers.

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

34 **SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVE (00.03.57)**

The Group received a *report from the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security outlining the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.

She explained that the Leadership Team had introduced a new objective to look in more depth at issues in relation to specific Protected Characteristics and this would begin with mental health issues which would contribute to the work to reduce staff sickness but also work for the wider community such as Dementia awareness. She informed the Group that a meeting with staff had been set for 22nd October to debate a way forward and that once a terms of reference had been agreed it would be opened up to Members and other groups.

In response to a question asked she detailed the Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability (including people with learning disabilities, people with mental illness and people living with HIV and/or AIDS)
- Gender reassignment
- Material status, family circumstances, or caring responsibilities
- Pregnant women and mothers with young children (under 5's)
- Race, including nationality, national or ethnic origin, being a traveller or gypsy
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Group discussed the report and it was:

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that the Equality Policy and Objectives for 2019-2021 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr B A Moore and seconded by Cllr W Burke)

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

35 AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR CULLOMPTON AND CREDITON (00.07.53)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services providing progress on the adopted Air Quality Action Plan for Crediton and the Cullompton Air Quality Management Areas.

He explained the legal framework and that it was statutory requirement for the Council to provide an action plan in Air Quality Management Areas. He informed the Group that there were various conflicts between two sets of Government policy and that air quality issues were the cause of 60,000 deaths a year which was on a par with smoking.

He explained to the Group the status of air quality across the district and that there had been a slight deterioration since 2018 which could be attributed to a change in weather patterns and had been replicated across the UK.

Members expressed concerns that although an action plan had been in place in Crediton for over a decade no practical action had appeared to have been taken by the Council and they asked about the likelihood of monies being used to combat the issues and identify measures which could make a difference.

The Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services explained that key progress and improvements had been delivered in the Exeter Road area of Crediton but there had been challenges around heritage and traffic management and getting key partners on board but the Council was trying hard to find solutions for the High Street. A new approach to combine street scene enhancements with more innovative traffic management measures set out in the PJ Associates study led by the town council was likely to result in a series of new measures key stakeholders could support. He further explained that previous S106 contributions had been held back until these new solutions had been agreed and the Council was currently looking to see if there were some early wins once these had been fully evaluated, costed and prioritised. A key update for the Action Plan was being brought forward to 2020 to enable these specific measures to be properly incorporated and subsequently delivered.

He also informed the Group that new air quality monitors had been installed in Crediton and Cullompton and that there could be a possibility of situating these outside of schools in the future to monitor the air quality in those areas, with opportunities to work alongside teachers and pupils for additional educational benefit.

Members then discussed the air quality issues outside of schools and that it was difficult to encourage parents to stop using cars for the school runs.

In response to questions asked the officer explained that the Council worked closely with DCC on the local transport plan and where there were gaps in the strategic approach they were working to try and influence this.

He explained that if the public wanted to see a more interlinked public transport system which included greener links to the rail network then this would have more influence as part of the relevant towns Neighbourhood Plans.

Consideration was given to:

- Walking was better than travelling in cars
- A shuttle bus from Tiverton to Tiverton Parkway Station
- Cycle Lanes outside every school in the district
- A survey which suggested 70% of parents who drove to school lived within 1km

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

36 **STRATEGIC GRANTS AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT PROGRAMME 2020-2023 (00.43.35)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration presented by the Growth and Regeneration Officer outlining the process for agreeing the level of grant funding for the Strategic Grants and Service Level Agreement Programme for 2020-2023.

He explained that the report set out the process for the 5 recipients of strategic grants and that a Working Group would be required to agree the suggested level of funding and the process to be used. He informed the Group that the timescales were quite tight and that the Working Group's recommendations would need to be presented to the PDG at the next meeting on 10th December in order to assist with the budget setting process.

The Group **AGREED** to set up a Working Group to review the level of funding to individual strategic grant recipients in light of the reduced level of council funding. The members of the Working Group were agreed as:

- Cllr W Burke
- Cllr B Holdman
- Cllr Mrs M E Squires

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

37 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (00.48.22)**

The Group received and **NOTED** a verbal update from the Principal Accountant presenting a financial update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year.

He explained that the largest variance was in Planning (mainly related to a forecast under recovery in budgeted Planning Fee income to the end of the year) and that as this was a demand led service it was experiencing a reduced level of revenue. He explained that the service was dependant on the size, scale and numbers of planning applications received.

In response to questions he explained that the figures quoted for the Planning service was the amount of revenue collected to date from planning applications and associated services and forecast income to the end of the year.

38 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (00.56.41)**

The Group received a **RECOMMENDATION** from the Audit Committee that the PDG considered the internal auditor's recommendation that a Customer Engagement Champion was introduced by the Council.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee addressed the Group and explained that the overall remit of the Committee was risk which was not always about money but included health and safety and the Council's reputation. He explained that internal audit had highlighted that the engagement process could be improved and that the Engagement Champions did not have to be officers but could be Members.

Members felt that the idea was good and a discussion took place about who would be best served to act as a Customer Engagement Champion. Members felt that the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and the Chairman of the Audit Committee would be best placed to make that decision.

The Group therefore endorsed the recommendation and **AGREED** that the Leader should consult with the Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being to agree a way forward.

39 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (01.05.12)**

Recommendations from the Strategic Grants and SLA Programme Working Group to be presented at the next meeting.

Members requested that as part of the 6 month leisure update, the policy for allowing opposite sex children into changing rooms with their parents within Council run Leisure Centres be investigated.

(The meeting ended at 3.22 pm)

CHAIRMAN