

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 28 July 2020 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

C R Slade (Chairman)
E J Berry, W Burke, L J Cruwys,
Mrs C P Daw, J M Downes, B Holdman,
D F Pugsley and Mrs M E Squires

Also Present

Councillor(s)

R M Deed, D J Knowles and Mrs N Woollatt

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Ian Chilver (Group Manager for Financial Services), John Bodley-Scott (Economic Development Team Leader), Lee Chester (Leisure Manager), Nicola Cuskeran (Senior H R Business Partner), Tanya Wenham (Lead Officer Private Sector Housing), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL IN THE CHAIR)

Cllr S R Slade was duly elected Chairman for the municipal year 2020-2021.

2 VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL (03.25)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Virtual Meeting Protocol.

Note: *Virtual meeting protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

3 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN (04.06)

Cllr B Holdman was duly elected Vice Chairman for the municipal year 2020-2021.

4 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (04.35)

There were no apologies or substitute members.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (04.55)

Members were reminded to make declarations of interest when appropriate.

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (05.10)

There were no members of the public present.

7 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (05.19)**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28th January 2020 were **AGREED** as a true record.

8 **CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (06.08)**

The Chairman thanked members for his re-election of Chairman..

9 **MEETING MANAGEMENT (07.00)**

The Chairman indicated that he intended (with the Groups approval) to take agenda items number 15 (Access to information) and 16 (Leisure Services update) as the next item of business.

10 **ACCESS TO INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (07.11)**

Prior to considering the following item postponed from item 16 on the agenda, discussion took place as to whether it was necessary to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 15 15.02(d) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. The Community Policy Development Group decided that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

It was therefore:

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

(Proposed by the Chairman)

11 **LEISURE SERVICES UPDATE (08.54)**

The Leisure Services Manager gave a brief overview of the service throughout the pandemic and answered questions about the re-opening of the Leisure Centres.

12 **DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL'S JOINT SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND MDDC GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES (09.15)**

The Group had before it the *Devon District Council's Joint Safeguarding Policy and MDDC Guidance and Procedures. The Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation explained that the report had been initially issued under the incorrect Cabinet Member portfolio but this would be rectified before it was presented to the Cabinet.

The Senior Human Resources Business Partner explained that it was an annual report and detailed the progress over the previous 12 months. She stated that there were no changes to the policy and that there were three main area's of consideration:

- Safeguarding policy
- Training – All required training had been completed
- Monitoring – There were 12 reported instances in 2019-2020

The PDG therefore:

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Group had reviewed the policy and noted that no amendments had been made to the policy in the last 12 months.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: * Devon District Council's Joint Safeguarding Policy and MDDC Guidance and Procedures previously circulated and attached to the minutes

13 **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (12.04)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Community Safety Partnership priorities report 2020-2021.

The Lead Officer, Private Sector Housing, explained that the report detailed the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership for the municipal year 2020-2021. She stated that the activities would be centred around the Devon Partnership Trauma informed approach. This approach encouraged practitioners and staff to recognise that many service users had experienced some form of traumatic event. This may impact on their life choices, activities and actions.

She explained that people suffering trauma needed extra support during the pandemic and there had been an increase in domestic violence and anti social behaviour during the lockdown.

Note: * Community Safety Partnership priorities report 2020-2021 previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

14 **CONTAMINATED LAND COST RECOVERY POLICY (15.35)**

The Group received the *Contaminated Land Cost Recovery Policy prepared by the Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services.

The Lead Officer, Private Sector Housing, explained that the policy related to the recovery of costs for remedial action taken to clear private contaminated land.

She explained that previously the Council had been reimbursed for this service by the DEFRA Contaminated Land Capital Project Programme by this initiative had closed in 2017 and the Council now had a duty to reclaim the costs via individuals. She further explained that there was a Hardship policy aimed at people who could not afford to pay for remedial actions.

She outlined the revisions to the policy:

- Reformatting the policy in-line with current policy document templates and changing reference to the 'local authority' to 'the Council' where necessary
- Minor legislative updates (EU Exit regulations on Environmental Regulations in 2019 and repeal of Housing Act 1996 in England)
- Pending changes to updated Environment Agency Guidance (Land contamination: risk management (LCRM – due to replace current model procedures called CLR11 in 2020)
- Closure of the Defra Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme in March 2017
- The updated Housing Assistance Policy 2019-22 (availability of Healthy Homes Grants in addition to the on-going Wessex Home Improvement Loan product)

It was therefore:

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet to adopt the revised Contaminated Land Cost Recovery Policy

(Proposed by Cllr B Holman and seconded by Cllr Mrs M E Squires)

Note: * Contaminated Land Cost Recovery Policy previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

15 **GRANT PAYMENTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (THE STRATEGIC GRANTS REVIEW PROCESS) (20.00)**

The Group received the *Strategic Grants Programme Evaluation and Review report from the Economic Development Team Leader.

He explained that the grants review process was due to commence in March 2020 but had been delayed by the current pandemic. He informed the Group that the programme for 2021 – 2024 now included both Strategic Grants and Economic Grants which were previously dealt with separately.

He further explained that the Council urgently needed to look at priorities for funding of grants as the Council would be looking at budgets in September and partners needed sufficient time to prepare bids.

The Group **AGREED** to set up a Working Group to review the processes and level of funding to individual strategic and economic grant recipients for 2021-2024. The members of the Working Group were agreed as:

- Cllr J E Berry
- Cllr B Holdman
- Cllr Mrs M E Squires.

Cllr D J Knowles, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, was co-opted onto the Working Group.

(Proposed by the Chairman).

Note: *Strategic Grants Programme Evaluation and Review report previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

16 **REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT (29.93)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Revenue and Outturn report previously presented to the Cabinet on 9th July 2020.

The Group Manager for Finance explained that this was a generic report which detailed the performance against budget. He explained that in December 2019 the budget deficit had been predicted at £252k but this had improved to an actual year end deficit of £232k which was very close to an overall budget of £10m.

He explained that the £863k utilised from the Ear Marked Reserves indicated the progress of projects and that funds had been set aside for future projects.

In response to questions asked he explained that not all of the capital projects had been completed in 2019/2020 and therefore there was a recommendation to carry forward any unused capital projects funding to future years.

He confirmed that he would provide answers to specific questions about the loss of income from the Tiverton Town centre regeneration project.

Note: *Revenue and Outturn report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

17 **CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT (47.32)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a draft report * by the Chairman of the Committee, a final copy of this report would be submitted to Council on 26 August 2020.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

18 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (48.24)**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Group that a Working Party would be proposed at the next meeting to look at the Customer Engagement Strategy before it was presented to the Group in November.

19 **START TIME OF MEETINGS (50.41)**

The Group **AGREED** to continue with a 2.15pm start time for meetings for the remainder of the municipal year.

(Proposed by the Chairman).

(The meeting ended at 3.29 pm)

CHAIRMAN