

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 12 January 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

B G J Warren (Chairman)
E J Berry, W Burke, D R Coren,
Miss J Norton, R F Radford, R L Stanley,
L D Taylor and J Wright

Also Present

Councillor(s)

C R Slade, Ms E J Wainwright, R M Deed and R Evans

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Andrew Busby (Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change), Ian Chilver (Group Manager for Financial Services), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Vicky Lowman (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

49 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.03.31)**

There were no apologies or substitute Members

50 **REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.03.50)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Remote Meetings Protocol.

Note: *Remote Meetings Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes

51 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.56)**

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests when appropriate.

52 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.04.22)**

There were no questions from members of the public present

53 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.04.37)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd November 2020 were agreed as a true record

54 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.05.52)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

55 **BUDGET (0.05.58)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Budget report for 2021/2022 from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151).

The Group Manager for Finance explained that it was a very volatile period and the Budget included figures which were outside of the Councils control and related to the unknown impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. He stated that some of the income gap would need to be met from reserves.

Consideration was given to:

- The losses in the Environment portfolio had been partially offset by over performance in the Garden Waste service and the additional payment from DCC due to less waste being sent to landfill
- The core spending rise of 4.5% was an average across all councils but this included social care authorities and did not apply to MDDC
- There was no presumption that after the comprehensive trials that a 3 weekly bin collection service was going to be adopted across the district but the savings had been included in case that it was
- The use of reserves to plug the spending gap may be required
- The vital road link on the A361 would commence shortly as would the link to Blundells Road.

Members were asked whether there were any areas of savings that they were aware of that they would like investigated, to contribute to closing the budget gap.

Note: *Budget report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

56 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (0.35.20)**

The Group received a verbal financial monitoring report from the Group Manager for Finance who explained that as of November 2020 the forecast had improved by £133k and that the Council could realise a surplus of £109K. He explained that when the report had been produced there was no knowledge of a further lockdown so the situation could deteriorate

He further explained that if there was any surplus at the end of the year, it would not result in additional funds being available for expenditure. Rather it would contribute to bridging the gap in future years, noting that not only was there an outstanding deficit in next year's budget of £490k but also that the MTFP indicated a shortfall of c£2m in 2022/23.

57 **DRAFT INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN (0.45.43)**

The Group had before it a*report from the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change presenting the Interim Devon Carbon Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change gave an overview of the Plan by way of a presentation highlighting:

- Background
- Overview of emissions per district
- Breakdown of emissions across Devon
- The Plan did not provide solutions at this stage, the citizens assemblies would provide the detail
- Themes in the Plan
- 8 main objectives of the Plan
- Proposed Governance of the Plan

The Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change outlined the contents of the summary report and highlighted the 12 chapters.

Consideration was given to:

- Some Members felt that there was a mis-perception of the Farming community
- The costs were too high
- How did people picture the countryside in 2030
- How much each district would need to contribute financially to the Plan

The officer explained that the MDDC Climate Change action plan was live and all opportunities would be taken to apply for grant funding and that the main function of the Climate Change co-ordinator was to apply for funding and work with neighbouring authorities to achieve the Council's ambitions.

The Group requested that the Cabinet give consideration to the following in its response to the draft Plan:

- Anaerobic Digesters – for's and against must be addressed
- The size of the documents that the public were expected to read needed to be considered
- Costs needed to be explained and the affordability of Mid Devon residents taken into consideration. The Plan needed further explanation of the cost benefits
- There needed to be a bigger involvement with the farming community
- Air travel should be included

The Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change confirmed that the suggestions from the Group would be included within the Cabinet report.

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

58 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (1.48.10)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED** a *report of the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security providing updated information on the performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2020-21.

The officer outlined the contents of the report stating that the results were to the end of November. She explained that there had been reports in the press about the 3 weekly waste trials and the solar panel installation at Carlu Close.

In response to questions asked about the Electric Vehicle Charging units the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change explained that a contract was currently out to tender with neighbouring authorities and that the responses would be compared to the current supplier before a decision was made.

Consideration was given to Home Improvement Loans.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

59 **STREET SCENE SERVICES UPDATE - EDUCATION/ENFORCEMENT (01.57.28)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Operations Manager for Street Scene outlining future options within the Street Scene Education and Enforcement Service.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that the Council had been in contact with two suppliers to provide private enforcement but that one supplier required MDDC to go into partnership with a partner authority to make it viable and the other could not offer a cost neutral service. He explained that a further update on any progress would be brought back to the PDG in six months time.

With regard to the protection of District Officers, the Operations Manager for Street Scene explained that the use of body worn cameras would need to be fully justified as per the recently adopted Use of CCTV policy. He explained that the officers were currently fitted with alert devices which could show their exact GPS location if they ran into difficulties.

Members questioned if the District Officers had raised any concerns about their safety and it was explained that staff had the opportunity to raise concerns at the Health and Safety Committee but that nothing had been highlighted.

Notes:

- i.) *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes
- ii.) The Chairman advised that he had agreed with the Chairman of Scrutiny that the Public Space Protection Order would be brought before the Scrutiny Committee
- iii.) Cllr R L Stanley left the meeting at 7.28pm and took no part in further discussions

60 **RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR DEVON AND TORBAY (2.12.35)**

The Group had before it a *report from the Operations Manager for Street Scene presenting the draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that the strategy described how the Devon local authorities would manage Local Authority Household Waste.

Consideration was given to:

- The super aligned collection service was an initiative that the Council would aspire to
- The benchmarking that was used to set the targets
- Where the dry waste was sent to
- The ongoing communications with East Devon District Council on how they had increased their recycling rates
- Increase communications to residents about how to recycle items that the Council could not, like recycling plastic bags at supermarkets

Therefore it was **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- The draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay be approved and proceed to public consultation

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision: to ensure that the Council has a Resource and Waste Management Strategy which proceeds to public consultation

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

61 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (2.49.36)**

Members requested that the following be brought to a future meeting of the PDG:

- An officer report be brought to the Group when Motion 567 was brought to the March 9th meeting to explain how the governance arrangements for the Net Zero Advisory Group could be adjusted so that they could hold public meetings and make decisions.
- Local Farmer Mary Quick to be invited to speak to the PDG regarding farming and climate change

(The meeting ended at 8.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN