

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 18 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present

Councillors

R M Deed (Leader)
R J Chesterton, R Evans, D J Knowles,
B A Moore, C R Slade, Ms E J Wainwright
and Mrs N Woollatt

Also Present

Councillor(s)

S J Clist, L J Cruwys, Mrs C P Daw, F W Letch and
B G J Warren

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Maria De Leiburne (Legal Services Team Leader), Andrew Busby (Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Mike Lowman (Building Services Operations Manager), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Stephen Bennett (Building Surveyor), Claire Fry (Housing Services Operations Manager), Catherine Yandle (Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety), Fiona Wilkinson (Principal Revenues & Benefits Officer) and Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

319. APOLOGIES (00-03-16)

There were no apologies.

320. PROTOCOL FOR REMOTE MEETINGS (00-03-24)

The protocol for remote meetings was **NOTED**.

321. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman read a statement on behalf of Mr Quinn:

Concerning Agenda Item 5 - Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet, on 4 February 2021, correctly record that I asked two questions regarding the £5,000 retention payment made to the Deputy Chief Executive.

The minutes also show that answers would not be provided until that item was discussed in the meeting.

I was made to wait, for four hours, before the Leader read out a pre-prepared statement about the payment.

However, this statement did not give the answers to the questions asked. So, please, will you give me a specific answer to each of the questions I asked at the last meeting:

- a) How many retention payments were made to other staff over this period?
- b) Can the Business Case, used to substantiate the award of this payment, be made available to the public?

The Chairman indicated that answers would be provided under Item 5 on the agenda.

322. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00-05-11)

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest when appropriate.

323. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00-05-25)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

The Chairman provided answers to the question posed in public question time:

With regard to the number of retention payments made to staff – just the one that was highlighted at the previous meeting.

With regard to the business case being made available to the public – this was sensitive information relating to an individual and therefore the business case would not be made available to the public.

324. RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR DEVON AND TORBAY (00-06-58)

Following consideration of a *report of the Operations Manager for Street Scene, the Environment Policy Development Group had made the following recommendation that: the draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay be approved and proceed to public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment outlined the contents of the report stating that the draft strategy provided a basis for the management of local authority collected waste across Devon and Torbay to 2030. Its objectives were aimed at reducing waste, reducing the carbon impact of managing waste and conserving natural resources and that by working together, the local authorities, their partners and the public would help to ensure a sustainable future for waste management across the county.

Consideration was given to the significance of the figures in the tables on page 112 of the agenda pack.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr C R Slade and Cllr R J Chesterton)

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, copy attached to minutes.

325. **CONDITION AND FUTURE USE OF COUNCIL OWNED GARAGES (00-12-21)**

Following consideration of a *report of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing, the Homes Policy Development Group had made the following recommendation that: the adoption of a 6 yearly planned garage maintenance programme by bringing forward budgeted funds from future years be approved.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report stating that this was an update on the current garage stock situation, with plans for modernisations and opportunities for change of use/redevelopment and the adoption of a 6 year rather than the existing 12 year planned maintenance programme. He outlined the number of units currently occupied and the number of voids, the opportunities available and the condition of the garage stock.

Consideration was given to:

- Discussions that had taken place at the meeting of the Policy Development Group with regard to the potential for various sites
- Whether the Ford Road, Tiverton site could be used for parking spaces rather than change of use
- The flexibility of the package before Members and that the request (above) be noted.
- Occupancy rates and the need to modernise some of the stock to fit the modern day car
- Whether Ward Members would continue to be consulted on the opportunities available
- The inspection programme for the stock.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R B Evans and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for the decision: the need to agree the adoption of a 6 yearly planned garage maintenance and modernisation programme by bringing forward budgeted funds from future years.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

326. GRASS VERGES ON HRA LAND WORKING GROUP REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET (00-26-38)

Following consideration of a report of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing, the Homes Policy Development Group had made the following recommendations:

- a) The procedure shown at Appendix A which is designed to ensure that the conflicting needs of stakeholders are taken into account when residents make requests regarding different maintenance arrangements/agreements relating to the upkeep of grass verges and other grassed areas on the housing estate.
- b) An increase in the Environmental Improvement Budget to £10,000 and a review of the procedures relating to it to ensure that it can be better used to support initiatives designed to encourage greater biodiversity.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report highlighting the work of the Task and Finish Group that had made recommendations to the Homes Policy Development Group. He informed the meeting that there were many strands associated with the service delivery in relation to grounds maintenance in general and grass cutting on housing estates and that the process map attached to the report considered the variety of requests for grass-cutting and how this would be progressed.

Consideration was given to:

- Health and safety and biodiversity issues
- The need to explore this work as part of the Climate Action Plan
- The work of the Neighbourhood Officers
- A review would take place in 12 months.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R B Evans and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for the decision: In order for a policy/procedure to be in place which provides a decision making framework for officers within the Estates team to use when considering requests made by different stakeholders.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

327. SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES (00-35-39)

Following consideration of a report of the Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety, the Community Policy Development Group had recommended that the Single Equalities Scheme and Equality Objectives be approved.

The Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being outlined the contents of the report stating that under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities had a duty to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

He also reiterated the equality objectives as outlined in the report.

Consideration was given to:

- Motion 564 to Council with regard to equalities
- Ensuring equality in procurement and commissioning
- Mental health issues and the recommendation from the Menopause Working Group with regard to well-being ambassadors being put in place.
- The processes that would take place to achieve the vision within the scheme

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr D J Knowles and seconded by Cllr Mrs N Woollatt)

Reason for the Decision – To ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2020

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes

328. **CORPORATE RECOVERY POLICY (00-42-31)**

Following consideration of a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151), the Corporate Manager of Revenues, Benefits & Recovery and the Principal Revenues and Benefits Officer, the Audit Committee had recommended that the updated Corporate Recovery Policy be approved.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that this item be **deferred** to the next meeting of the Cabinet so that the latest guidance available could be included.

329. **DRAFT INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN (00-43-16)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change providing Members with a copy of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan that was out for public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change outlined the contents of the report by way of presentation providing the following information:

- The background to the plan which identified the evidence gathering that had taken place, the consultation period, the proposed citizens assembly and the production of the final plan
- How the plan was designed for everybody, which created a roadmap for Devon and outlined barriers and opportunities
- The themes within the plan
- The 8 main objectives of the plan
- Details of how might MDDC be well placed to contribute to the plan and the opportunities that would work within Mid Devon
- The feedback that would be provided to the Carbon Plan team

Consideration was given to:

- Farming initiatives
- The pros and cons of anaerobic digesters which included transport issues and the impact of those on the climate
- The costs of achieving the plan
- How the Cabinet Member for Climate Change could liaise with other groups to further her work
- How supermarkets in Cornwall were working with local producers to sell local products
- The continued use of plastics on supermarket products

RESOLVED that the feedback from the Environment Policy Development Group on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan be **AGREED** and that feedback be submitted to the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

(Proposed by Cllr B A Moore and seconded by Cllr Miss E Wainwright)

Reason for decision – to provide feedback as part of the consultation process

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes)

330. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY (1-04-00)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) requesting approval of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report stating that the Council was required to operate a balanced budget which meant that cash raised during the year would meet cash expenditure; part of the treasury management operation was to ensure that cash flow was adequately planned with cash being available when it was needed and surplus monies invested. The counterparty limits set out in the report were to enable the continued administration of Covid-19 grants to businesses and to allow for the administration of future emergency grants as required.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) stated that the strategy was heavily prescribed by CIPFA with regard to whom monies could be lent to and that there was always a focus on the security of any investment.

Consideration was given to the acronyms within the report and an explanation of those and different types of credit ratings.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

1. The proposed Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22, including the prudential indicators for the next 3 years and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix 1), be approved.
2. The new limit on the Council's bank account be approved as per the table of counterparty limits in paragraph 5.2.6, and narrative in section 5.3, to enable the continued administration of Covid-19 grants to businesses and to allow for the administration of future emergency grant funds should they arise.

(Proposed by Cllr B A Moore and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for decision – there is a need for the Council to approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes

331. **CAPITAL STRATEGY (1-13-55)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) requesting Cabinet to recommend to Council the proposed Capital Strategy 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member for Finance outlined the contents of the report stating that the strategy underpinned the budget and focussed on the management of capital expenditure and treasury management decisions.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) stated that the majority of the strategy was prescriptive aimed to direct stakeholders to the relevant documents relating to treasury decisions, asset management and the capital programme for the coming years.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

The proposed Capital Strategy for 2021/22 is approved.

Reason for decision – there is a need for the Council to approve the Capital Strategy.

(Proposed by Cllr B A Moore and seconded by Cllr R B Evans)

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

332. **EXTERNAL PAINTING AND REPAIRS BEFORE PAINTING OF COUNCIL HOMES 2021-26 (1-18-51)**

The Cabinet had before it a * report of the Building Services Operations Manager advising Members on the results for the tendering of the External Painting and Repairs of the Council's homes for the next five years (2021-2026) and confirm award of the contract.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report highlighting the standard process for the results of the tender process.

Consideration was given to whether the ability to deal with local businesses was part of the tender process.

RESOLVED that the contract for works required to decorate the Council's homes for 2021-2026 be awarded to Contractor 5.

(Proposed by Cllr R B Evans and seconded by Cllr D J Knowles)

Reason for decision - there was a need to confirm the award of the tender so that the specified work could be progressed.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

333. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a * report of the Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety providing Members with an update on the performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets.

Consideration was given to the 'Build Council Houses' target and that a target would be set in the next financial year.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

(The meeting ended at 7.25 pm)

CHAIRMAN