

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 23 March 2021 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

Mrs C P Daw (Chairman)
Mrs E M Andrews, Mrs C Collis, W Burke,
L J Cruwys, J M Downes, C J Eginton,
B Holdman and Mrs M E Squires

Apologies

Councillor(s)

E J Berry

Also Present

Councillor(s)

D J Knowles, R M Deed, F W Letch and B G J Warren

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Kathryn Tebbey (Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Catherine Yandle (Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety), Rob Fish (Principal Accountant), Jane Lewis (Communications and Engagement Manager), Clare Robathan (Scrutiny Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

72 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.04.13)

Apologies were received from Cllr E J Berry who was substituted by Cllr C Eginton

73 REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.04.29)

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

Note: *Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.04.40)

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

75 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.05.07)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 2021 were approved as a correct record

76 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.06.12)

There were no members of the public present.

77 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.06.22)

The Chairman informed the Group that she had attended meetings with the Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services and Customer Services officers to progress the recommendations of the Scrutiny Customer Experience Working Group. She explained that the recommendations were relevant to the work of the Community PDG via the Community Engagement Strategy.

78 COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN (0.07.10)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing providing an update on the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities and planned activities for the coming year.

The officer outlined the contents of the report highlighting the priorities for the year ahead and changes to grant funding. He explained that direct grants had been replaced with community grants and that he was exploring how the CSP could access grant funding with partners.

He informed the Group that the CSP had sharpened and shaped its priorities and they were aligned with the County priorities and that the CSP would continue to focus on five key areas which were:

- Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Youth Risk and Vulnerability
- Problem Alcohol and Drug Use
- Exploitation
- Violent Crime

The CSP would have a focus on building resilience for children and young people across all themes.

In response to a question asked, the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing, stated that he would recommend to the CSP that the current schemes were strengthened to include violence against women.

Consideration was given to:

- The statutory partner for the CSP was the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing but there was no reason that the PDG could not have greater representation from the Group
- How the CSP would be analysing and responding to the new responsibilities for Local Authorities as a result of the new Domestic Abuse and Serious Violent Crime legislation currently going through parliamentary approval
- The effect of social media and cyber bullying on young people and what the CSP were going to do, including bite size workshop sessions in schools

- The thoughts of the Chairman who recommended to the Group that a Working Group be established to investigate the effect the pandemic had had on the work of the CSP and how priorities may have changed

The Group then **AGREED** to form a Working Group to consider the future priorities and planned activities of the CSP and to bring recommendations back to the PDG. The Members of the Working Group were agreed as:

- Cllr B Holdman, Cllr Mrs M E Squires, Cllr Mrs C Collis, Cllr Mrs E M Andrews and Cllr W Burke

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing was invited to take part in the Working Group.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

79 **AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE (0.31.19)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing providing a progress report on Local Air Quality Management and the Air Quality Action Plan for the Crediton and Cullompton Air Quality Management Areas.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that there were two air quality management areas, Cullompton and Crediton. He informed the Group that the action plan had stalled during 2020 as Public Health officers had been redeployed to assist with services dealing with the pandemic.

He explained that S106 funding had been secured to employ an external consultant to assist with the action planning process and producing a technical supplementary document.

He explained that the statutory reporting to DEFRA had been completed and that officers were currently trying to draw out the data collected during the pandemic. It was not known at this stage what air quality levels would look like in the future and if working and commuting practices would change in the future.

In response to a question asked, the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing stated he would provide data regarding any changes to air quality in Crediton due to the installation of traffic lights in the High Street.

Consideration was given to:

- That the Local Plan had to be in place before the Air Quality Action plan could be updated to include its requirements
- A supplementary planning document would set out how the Council would measure the impact of development on air quality

The Chairman then requested a Member representative to be involved in the preparation of the draft Air Quality Action Plan and Cllr J M Downes agreed to take on the role.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

80 **CORPORATE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY (0.49.16)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing providing the 3 year review of the Corporate Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that the policy had received a light touch update. The policy was to ensure that all ASB notifications were dealt with consistently across the Council and that staff were trained on all tools available to them including different legislation already in place to help tackle the issues.

He explained that the Council had a dedicated corporate resource available who co-ordinated and trained staff in a consistent way in line with current legislation and practice.

Consideration was given to:

- Court injunctions were case specific and therefore no consistent course of action could be taken

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

It approves the updated Anti Social Behaviour Policy as attached in Annex 1

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision – To ensure a consistent approach across the organisation in line with current legislation and practice

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

81 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (1.01.18)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) providing the annual review of the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Policy.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that this was the annual review of the Policy which had been in place for a number of years. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) reviewed the policy every three years and was due to be reviewed by them in the autumn of 2021.

The Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) went on to thank Cllr A Wilce for his assistance in reviewing the policy.

In response to a question asked, the officer explained that with regard to using social media posts for enforcement, that although people lived out their private lives in public via social media, that the information they shared was still private and could not necessarily be used. She further explained that the rules about officers using Council systems to view and use private social media posts to instigate enforcement action was not clear and further clarification was being sought from the ICO.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- a) The revised Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy be adopted; and
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) to review the designation of the Co-ordinating Officer within the RIPA policy and to make such changes to that designation as she considers appropriate

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision – Statutory guidance requires the Council to use of RIPA and the RIPA policy annually.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

82 **FINANCIAL MONITORING (1.13.57)**

The Principal Accountant provided the Group with a Financial Monitoring update and stated the financial position had improved since the last report and that there had been larger movements at individual service level. He stated that the current position was a good achievement for the authority during the pandemic.

The officer stated that the forecast improvement of £43k now indicated a year end deficit of £46k.

He explained that the lack of leisure income had made up a large proportion of the variance due to lockdown but the planning variant had shown an improvement. He confirmed that the £775k claim for the Government's Income Compensation scheme had been approved and was expected to be received by the end of the Month. A further claim was due to be submitted.

In response to a question asked, the Principal Accountant stated that he would inform the group what the authority would be bidding on via the Governments Levelling Up fund which had been announced.

83 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (INCLUDING ACTION PLAN) (1.21.16)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Communication and Engagement Manager providing the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and an update on the achievements made since the last strategy was approved in 2018.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and stated that the PDG Working Group had reviewed the 2018 strategy and contributed to the revised strategy.

Consideration was given to:

- Members concerns with the public being able to use the Planning Portal effectively and that it was not easy to use and how the Communications Team could assist other service areas with accessibility

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

The revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and Media and Social Media Policy be approved subject to the inclusion of 'In addition to the existing channels of engagement in the table above the Council also has statutory functions to fulfil in terms of communication and consultation, this includes planning matters via the Statement of Community Involvement' on page 10 of the strategy.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision – To ensure that customers, staff, Members and stakeholders are informed and engaged with Council services and news through appropriate and varied channels

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

84 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (1.28.46)**

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 and explained that the mental health training target would be carried forward to 2021/2022 and that training would be offered to all Members as well as staff.

The Officer then outlined the targets suggested for 2021/2022 against the Corporate Plan Performance framework and asked for any amendments or suggestions. There were no amendments or recommendations.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

The suggested targets for 2021/2022 against the Corporate Plan Performance framework be approved

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision – To ensure that performance is monitored so that appropriate corrective action can be taken

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

85 **CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT (1.35.07)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Chairman's Annual Report.

The Chairman thanked both Members and officers for their support during her Chairmanship and stated that she was looking forward to the PDG becoming more involved in the development of policies. She stated that an informal work programming session would be set up to look at policies due to come to the PDG for the next municipal year so that the Group could decide which they wanted to have more involvement with before they were brought to the PDG for approval.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

86 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (1.36.43)**

No additional items were identified.

(The meeting ended at 3.54 pm)

CHAIRMAN