

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 16 August 2021 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

B G J Warren (Chairman)
G Barnell, Mrs F J Colthorpe, L J Cruwys,
P J Heal, R F Radford, R L Stanley,
Ms E J Wainwright and A Wilce

Apologies

Councillor(s)

E J Berry, Mrs S Griggs and F W Letch

Also Present

Councillor(s)

S Pugh and R Evans

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Maria De Leiburne (Operations Manager Legal and Monitoring), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Arron Beecham (Forward Planning Officer), Claire Fry (Housing Services Operations Manager), Tanya Wenham (Lead Officer Private Sector Housing), Catherine Yandle (Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

32 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.03.44)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs S Griggs, F W Letch and Cllr E J Berry who was substituted by Cllr R L Stanley

33 HYBRID MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.04.26)

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Hybrid Meetings Protocol.

Note: *Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.04.55)

Cllr R L Stanley declared a personal interest as a Director of 3 Rivers Developments Ltd.

Cllr Mrs F J Colthorpe declared a personal interest as she was a private landlord.

35 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.05.33)**

There were no members of the public present.

36 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.05.44)**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

37 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0.07.03)**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 3rd August 2021 had been called in.

38 **CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.07.16)**

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that only 3 Members had attended the recent Work Programming Session but he hoped that Members would continue to engage in the Work Programming process.

39 **HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT (0.09.03)**

The Committee had before it the *Housing Strategy Consultation Draft presented by Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing who gave an overview of the Strategy.

The Officer explained that the Consultation Draft had previously been presented to the Homes PDG where it had been well received.

He explained that homes were a basic necessity and a fundamental requirement for everybody and the Strategy would enable the facilitation of new housing within the district. The project team were taking a multi disciplinary approach to include a wide range of internal stakeholders and contributors.

The Strategy set out the 5 year vision to meet the housing needs and aspirations by offering new homes and adapting existing stock.

He explained the 4 key priorities of the Strategy which contained 40 specific objectives and specific targets and a delivery group would be formed to test progress against delivery.

Consideration was given to:

- Consultation would be tailored to the consultees but would include current tenants, DCC, CHAT and existing partners
- The views of some Members that the housing targets were not ambitious enough
- The views of some Members that there was a lack of clarity on the housing mix and sight of costed plans

- That the housing needs would be continually reassessed as more data became available such as the 2021 Census
- The Strategy was realistic on the numbers of units which could be delivered and was the baseline and not the final numbers
- The Authority was required to pay market value for properties which it previously owned and had been sold to tenants at a discounted price under the Governments Right to Buy scheme
- Members views that the strategy should make reference to the Devon Carbon Plan
- The correct term was Net Zero Carbon and the Strategy should reflect this
- The Standard for Decent Homes had not changed

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that: the strategy be approved subject to:

- Net Zero Carbon terminology be consistent throughout the strategy
- The Project Board to only reference job titles and not named individuals

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision: To ensure the Council can progress to the next key consultation stage leading to the adoption of the Strategy

Note: *Housing Strategy Consultation Draft previously circulated and attached to the minutes

40 **MENOPAUSE WORKING GROUP UPDATE (0.52.48)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste providing an update on the recommendations of the Menopause Working Group.

He explained that a staff survey was due to be implemented in the autumn to gauge success in the education programmes which had been introduced.

The Menopause would be included within the Wellbeing and Reasonable adjustments policy.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

41 **ESTABLISHMENT 6 MONTH UPDATE (0.54.38)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste providing an update on the Establishment.

The Officer explained that sickness absence had dropped in 2020 and that there were many factors behind this, however there was expected to be an increase in the autumn.

Turnover did reduce in 2020 but had dramatically increased in the first quarter of 2021 due to lack of specialist staff. Agency spend had increased as a result of this but there was a lack of supply of essential workers such as HGV drivers.

The Covid 19 infection rates amongst the workforce had remained low with only two outbreaks. The Authority had been more affected by the pandemic when 25% of the workforce had been required to self-isolate.

He continued by explaining that the Authority was looking at the longer term with regard to hybrid working and that would include decisions on redundant offices. He explained that there was a need to look at each service individually and ensure that public facing services were still offering a face to face service required by customers.

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

42 **FORWARD PLAN (1.07.09)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** the *Forward Plan.

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

43 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (1.10.00)**

To Scrutiny Officer informed Members that at the Work Programming session on 5th August Members had received an update on the items which were to be added to the work program. She informed Members that they could continue to identify items and that subjects to be added to the work program and this would be achieved via scrutiny proposal forms which she would assist Members to complete.

44 **WORK PLAN (1.13.12)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Scrutiny Committee Work Plan for 2021-2022.

No additional items were brought forward for consideration for inclusion on the Work Plan.

Note: *Work Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes

(The meeting ended at 3.31 pm)

CHAIRMAN