

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 31 August 2021 at 10.00 am

Present

Councillors

R M Deed (Leader)
Mrs C P Daw, R Evans, D J Knowles,
B A Moore, C R Slade and Mrs N Woollatt

Apologies

Councillor(s)

R J Chesterton

Also Present

Councillor(s)

G Barnell, S J Clist, L J Cruwys, R J Dolley, B G J Warren
and A Wilce

Also Present

Officer(s):

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Maria De Leiburne (Operations Manager Legal and Monitoring), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader), Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer) and Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

55. APOLOGIES (00-03-30)

Apologies were received from Cllr R J Chesterton.

56. PROTOCOL FOR HYBRID MEETINGS (00-03-46)

The protocol for hybrid meetings was NOTED.

57. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00-03-53)

Ms Pole referring to Item 7 (Playing Pitch Strategy) on the agenda stated that:

Could the public please have a firm date for provision of a public-accessible 4G pitch in Tiverton, convenient to the local population in a location such as Amory Park? Labour's Jason Chamberlain has been campaigning for this on behalf of clubs and adult and youth football leagues who are asking for this, and it is also needed for other sports such as hockey. Provision of upgraded all weather pitches were in the 2010 play pitch strategy and never happened, and Tivertonians are now looking for firm plans to avoid unnecessary cancellation of matches due to rain, and unnecessary injuries from playing on Astro turf. The recommendations in the new play pitch strategy call for a new all-weather pitch for Tiverton. We are looking for a firm undertaking to provide one in Tiverton conveniently located for access by residents, and for the soonest date by which it is to be delivered.

The Chairman indicated that an answer would be provided when the item was discussed.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00-05-46)

Members were reminded to make any declarations of interest when necessary.

59. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00-05-56)

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT (00-06-05)

Following consideration of the *draft Housing Strategy by the Homes Policy Development Group and the Scrutiny Committee, the following recommendations have been made:

The Homes Policy Development Group at its meeting on 20th July 2021: had recommended to the Cabinet that the draft Housing Strategy 2021 – 2025, attached at annex 1, be approved for external and public consultation.

The Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16 August 2021 had recommended that the strategy be approved for consultation subject to:

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report stating that the draft strategy has been well received by both the Homes Policy Development Group and the Scrutiny Committee and that now the comprehensive document was before the Cabinet for approval to go out to consultation.

Consideration was given to:

- How well the draft strategy had been received
- Whether the draft strategy was ambitious enough, the housing crisis was about affordability, did the strategy address social housing and council housing and whether the priorities of the Cabinet were correct.
- Whether the 2 week consultation period was sufficient – it was explained that the consultation period would be for the whole of September and that the draft strategy set out what was deliverable, there were possibilities beyond this and that these would be worked on

RESOLVED that:

- a) The draft Housing Strategy 2021-25 as attached to Annex 1 of the report be approved for external and public consultation;
- b) The proposed timeline and stages for adoption of the Housing Strategy be **NOTED**

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

Reason for the decision – there is a need for public consultation prior to the adoption of the strategy.

Note: * draft Housing Strategy previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

61. **PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY (00-16-07)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Forward Planning Team Leader requesting the Cabinet to endorse the Mid Devon Playing Pitch Strategy as a technical document that could be used by the Council.

The Leader stated that further work was required to finalise the strategy and it was understood that Sport England would not be able to sign off the Playing Pitch Strategy until early September:

It had therefore been suggested that the report before the Cabinet meeting today be deferred and brought to the next available meeting once the Playing Pitch Strategy had been completed and signed off by Sport England. This would be the meeting of 28 September.

It was also highlighted that Lead officers for both masterplans (the Garden Village and the EUE) are conversant with the salient content of the Playing Pitch Strategy in its current form and the amendments needed to it. With regards the provision of replacement cricket pitches at Cullompton, planning permission had been granted for those on land that would form part of proposed development to the east of Cullompton.

In response to the question posed in public question time, the Forward Planning Team Leader stated that he had been advised by the consultants that 4G pitches do not officially exist according to Sport England and technologies beyond 3G Football Turf Pitches have not been recognised by the sports governing bodies. The strategy (at 3.10) did recognise the lack of 3G football turf pitches in Mid Devon and that there was a need for 3G football turf pitches at Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton. This finding was consistent with the Mid Devon Local Football Facilities Plan completed by the Football Association. The strategy also noted a number of potential sites in Tiverton, which included Amory Park, Tiverton High School, Blundells School and the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension. The strategy also included actions and recommendations based on technical assessments, which would require consideration by the Council in the management of its own playing pitch facilities, and also consideration by other providers of playing pitches in Mid Devon.

Consideration was given to:

- Terminology with regard to cricket pitches and it was hoped that these could be corrected
- Reference to the Willand Rovers practice pitch following concerns raised that this had been included in the strategy and not removed as requested
- The possibility of further public engagement prior to the strategy returning to the Cabinet in September for consideration.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the item be deferred so that the strategy could be formally signed off by Sport England prior to consideration by the Cabinet at its September meeting.

(Proposed the Chairman)

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

62. **FINANCIAL MONITORING (00-27-55)**

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) provided a verbal report presenting a financial update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year. He stated that Council Tax, Business Rates and housing rents were reasonably close to budget. Other income streams were trending close to budget with the exception of car parking and that Leisure was showing signs of recovery. He was pleased to report that commercial rent was above the budget forecast with Market Walk and Fore Street properties being fully occupied. The Government Income Protection Scheme had been withdrawn on 30 June and the Council had made its final recovery claim against the scheme. He also reported that the external auditors work on the financial accounts was ongoing.

63. **UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (00-30-57)**

The Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement informed the meeting that she had been working on 33 cases, 11 of which were now closed, 15 had been actioned which she was continuing to monitor and 7 were with the directors for action. This month she would be focussing on voids and thanked members for their input. She hoped that as many members as possible would attend the briefing on voids that evening. She added that she was continuing to monitor overall numbers of planning cases that had passed their deadlines.

64. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (00-33-20)**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** it's *rolling plan for October 2021 containing future key decisions.

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

65. **3 RIVERS DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED UPDATE REPORT (00-35-26)**

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a * report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) providing an update on current project performance and any key risks.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report stating that works at St Georges Court were on target and that the project had not adversely suffered from the shortage of materials which did seem to be a problem for other developers. He also reported that work had commenced on the Bampton site.

Consideration was given to:

- Whether there was any intention to sell the properties at St Georges Court 'off plan'?
- The amount of profit to be returned from the Halberton site to the Council
- The number of parking spaces available at the Halberton site.
- Whether the company's performance figures would be discussed by the Audit Committee.

66. **ACCESS TO INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (00-47-00)**

The Chairman indicated that discussion of the following item, may require the Cabinet to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 12 12.02(d) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Cabinet would need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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)

67. **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE DISPOSAL OF PARK NURSERY**

At the Cabinet meeting held on the 13 May 2021, during the discussion on the monthly performance update from 3Rivers, it was proposed that the Council reflected on the process taken to dispose of the old Grounds Maintenance depot (Park Nursery), Park Road, Tiverton and to consider whether there were any lessons that could be learned.

The Audit Committee at its meeting on 27 July 2021 undertook such a review and its views would be reported to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet considered and noted the lessons learnt document.

(The meeting ended at 10.56 am)

CHAIRMAN