

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 7 September 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

J Wright (Chairman)
E J Berry, R F Radford, R L Stanley,
L D Taylor and B G J Warren

Apologies

Councillor(s)

Miss J Norton

Also Present

Councillor(s)

D R Coren, Mrs C P Daw, R M Deed, R Evans, C R Slade
and Mrs E J Lloyd

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Andrew Busby (Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

17 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.03.07)**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Norton and Cllr D Coren attended via ZOOM.

18 **HYBRID MEETINGS PROTOCOL (0.03.27)**

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

Note: *Protocol previously circulated and attached to the minutes

19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.35)**

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations where appropriate.

20 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.56)**

There were no questions from members of the public present

21 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.04.09)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2021 were agreed as a true record and were duly **SIGNED** by the Chairman

22 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.04.49)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

23 **CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (0.04.59)**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change explained that the waste and recycling strategy supported the Council's commitment to the environment and that the 3 week bin trial would last until mid-October.

He explained that the MDDC Litter Strategy before Members today aimed to change attitudes and practices of the public and the key aspects included:

- An awareness Campaign
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Effective Enforcement

He confirmed that the workforce was facing pressure on the front line services due to vacancies, especially HGV drivers and he wanted to thank the workforce for maintaining collections.

In response to questions asked the Operations Manager for Street Scene confirmed that due to the success of WEEE collections the introduction of collections for pot and pans had been delayed but it was still the intention to offer this service in the future.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the 3 week bin trial was going well and that where there were issues with compliance they were offering customers 1 to 1 education to encourage greater recycling.

Members raised concerns with:

- The shortage of HGV drivers and whether agency drivers were the solution
- The unacceptable wait for bulky waste collections in some areas of the district

The Cabinet Member assured Members that officers would look into their concerns

24 **CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE (0.24.04)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report of the Corporate Manager Property, Leisure and Climate change giving an update on the Climate Change Action Plan.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and summarised the actions and progress in achieving the Council's Corporate Plan aims and Climate Strategy priorities.

In response to questions asked about the damage done by Anaerobic Digesters versus the benefits and the officer explained that the Council had fed their thoughts into the Devon Climate Change Plan via the citizens assemblies.

With regard to sustainable farming practices the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change explained that the new Climate website would signpost farmers to experts who could help them achieve their goals.

Consideration was given to:

- The focus of the work of the Scrutiny Committee with regard to Anaerobic Digesters and the bio energy industry and where environmental concerns fitted into this
- The Devon Carbon Plan had introduced a blog which people could contribute to
- Retro fitting of older stone properties would concentrate on the reduction of carbon as far as reasonably practical
- LED lighting on the sports pitches would be replaced when funding was available
- There had been very positive feedback from the public on the ZED Pods and they had on the whole been very supportive
- If the electricity supply network would be able to support the changes required, such as increased electric car charging, to reach the Council's Net Zero targets
- The current limited amount of suppliers of modular housing who were accredited to tender for Local Authority contracts
- Additional electric car charging point had been approved in the 3 main towns
- The need for the Council to look at progressive procurement to ensure that suppliers were local and used sustainable processes

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

25 **DEVON AND TORBAY WASTE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT PLAN (1.09.26)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Operations Manager for Street Scene which summarized the consultation response to the draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay.

The officer outlined the contents of the report which contained the consultation response and a proposal to reduce the waste prevention target.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change explained that the strategy was to align the disposal processes for waste but the individual authorities were still free to be flexible in setting their own collection policies and targets.

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

- a) That the proposed amendment to reduce the waste prevention target to 400kg/head/year by 2030 be approved and;
- b) The final Strategy be approved

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision: The Authority has a duty to arrange collection for household waste

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

26 **DRAFT MDDC LITTER STRATEGY (1.19.34)**

The Group had before it a *report of the Operations Manager for Street Scene which presented the MDDC Litter Strategy.

The officer explained that the strategy concentrated on the impacts of littering and education of the public, and looked to work with local charities and stakeholders. It looked at the infrastructure, of where bins were located and focused on the areas with frequent littering. The strategy concentrated on problems area's with effective enforcement and a softer approach via education.

Consideration was given to Members views which included:

- The cost charged to Parish Councils for the collection of waste from additional litter bins was not viable for the Parishes
- That Fixed Penalty Notices fines were not high enough and were not a deterrent
- That education of the public was not enough and that surveillance camera's should be utilized to catch and fine people who litter
- That there was a perception from some Members that senior officers did not want to make difficult decisions with regard to enforcement
- Who was going to do the education of the public?
- The Strategy did not deal with the litter on the roads into the District
- Some Members supported the education and prevention approach, especially with the younger generation, rather than an enforcement approach

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) explained that Members had before them the overarching strategy for litter but what he was hearing was that Members wanted to be involved in creating more detail around the operational processes and detailed guidance.

It was therefore **AGREED** that the MDDC Draft Litter Strategy be deferred to enable a Working Group to be formed where Members and officers could agree a final Strategy which could be recommended to the Cabinet.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Reason for the decision: No decision was made

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

27 **WORK PLAN (1.56.59)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the Environment PDG *Work Plan.

The Chairman proposed that the following items be tasked to the Net Zero Advisory Group for further investigation and possible recommendations that the PDG could recommend to the Cabinet:

- Sustainable Procurement

- Planning Heritage Policy

The Chairman proposed the following items be added to the Work Plan for further investigation:

- Recycling – defined plans to introduce recycling of pots and pans and reduce the wait time for bulky waste
- Sustainable Farming Practices
- Western Power Distribution capacity for increased renewal energy

In addition to the above the Chairman would investigate the work proposed by the Scrutiny Committee on Anaerobic Digesters to see if additional work looking at the effect on the environment would be required.

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

(The meeting ended at 7.33 pm)

CHAIRMAN