

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 8 March 2022 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

J Wright (Chairman)
W Burke, D R Coren, Miss J Norton,
R F Radford, R L Stanley and L D Taylor

Also Present

Councillor(s)

E J Berry, Mrs C P Daw, R M Deed, R Evans,
Mrs E J Lloyd, C R Slade and B G J Warren

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), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

53 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.45)

There were no apologies for absence.

Cllr E J Berry attended via ZOOM.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.00)

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

55 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.18)

There were no members of the public present.

56 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.03.30)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th January 2022 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

57 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.04.07)

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

58 CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (0.04.17)

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change gave an overview of his portfolio and stated the three weekly waste collections were due to start in September and that a project board and team had been established and that the

Environment and Enforcement Manager had taken up his post. All waste collections had been sustained and there had been some positive feedback to actions taken due to the recent storms.

In relation to a recent residents survey he advised that 90% were supportive of the Council's Climate Change agenda, 81% were supportive of the waste service. Disappointingly only 47% of residents were happy with the street cleaning service and this would be investigated further to establish the reasons for this.

Answering a question about whether the 3 weekly bin collections would come back to the PDG, the Cabinet Member explained that the decision had been made to go to 3 weekly and that there would be a Member briefing in June which would set out the full implementation plan. He confirmed that communications would be ongoing to inform residents of the change.

In response to Members concerns about escalating fuel prices and the need to bring the 3 weekly collections forward to save fuel, the Cabinet Member explained that the Council needed to look into resident's special circumstances before implementation so that these could be accommodated when the service went live and that this would take some time. The Member briefing in June would explore all possibilities.

The Chairman asked if the exact questions asked in the resident's survey could be provided to the PDG.

Answering a question about the consequences of rising fuel costs the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) explained that the position was being monitored but there was little the Council could do in the short term, longer term there were some electric vehicles on order. He offered to do some modelling of the effects of rising fuel prices and provide these to the Group.

59 **CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE (0.24.12)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Climate and Sustainability update presented by the Climate and Sustainability Specialist which documented progress against the Climate Action Plan.

The Officer gave an overview of his report and highlighted:

- The energy saving measures at the leisure centres had been completed
- Decisions on funding bids were due shortly
- 650 trees had been planted throughout the district
- Work with the Devon Climate Emergency continued
- The upcoming State of the District Debate was themed around Climate Change and the debate included costs and who was going to have to pay for them

In response to a question asked how the Council was progressing against its 2030 Carbon target and examples of habitat work completed the Climate and Sustainability Specialist explained that no habitat work had been completed yet but it was something the Council could invest in. The current net Carbon position was on the Council's website for Climate and Sustainability <https://sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/>.

Members then had a general discussion about farming and how they had been effected by increasing prices and how the Council could assist farmers to become more sustainable. It was confirmed that a report on sustainable farming would be presented to the next meeting of the PDG.

The Chairman advised that the equality impacts in the report should be stated in future to reflect the impact on people and how the costs of tackling climate change effected them.

Note: *update previously circulated and attached to the minutes

60 **ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION NETWORK CAPACITY FOR INCREASED RENEWABLE ENERGY (0.48.09)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist providing an overview of the local electricity supply networks and their role in supporting community and the Council's actions to address climate change.

The Officer gave an overview of his report and highlighted that it provided links to a lot of information regarding the electricity network and its future resilience. He had attend various workshops and looked at the business plan for Western Power Distribution (WPD) and that it appeared to be very well prepared for the changes ahead and was very positive.

The Chairman requested that a list of activities which were already happening with regard to the Councils role as Local Planning Authority should be provided to Members and that an updates on officers managing data and engagement with WPD should be reported back to the PDG.

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

61 **SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT - NET ZERO ADVISORY GROUP (0.54.56)**

The Climate and Sustainability Specialist gave an update on the work that the Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG) had undertaken with regard to sustainable procurement. He advised that the NZAG had looked at what Devon County Council (DCC) were doing and that the Council was working to align its practices with them. They were currently reviewing what the Council did at officer level and training was being rolled out. They were also currently raising awareness, reviewing the Council's financial regulations and engaging with suppliers.

The Chairman requested details of examples where the Council's procurement strategy had changed due to the work completed so far by NZAG.

62 **CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT (0.59.06)**

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

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

63 **WORK PLAN (1.00.30)**

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

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

(The meeting ended at 6.32 pm)

CHAIRMAN