

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 5 April 2022 at 10.00 am

Present

Councillors

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

Also Present

Councillor(s)

J Cairney, S J Clist, L J Cruwys, R J Dolley, J M Downes,
B Holdman, F W Letch, L D Taylor and B G J Warren

Also Present

Officer(s):

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place), Karen Trickey (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader), Nicola Cuskeran (Interim Corporate Performance Manager & Safeguarding Officer), Jessica Watts (Member Services Apprentice) and Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

166. APOLOGIES (00-02-39)

There were no apologies for absence.

167. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00-02-45)

Mr Morgans referring to Item 8 (Junction 27/28) asked whether the Council had considered development of a different type on the J27 site, for example joint working with the County Council, Parish Councils and the NHS to provide convalescence and care units to reduce bed blocking or even affordable housing units – this would be a useful development for the benefit of the larger community and the NHS, even a triage hub could be developed – he asked whether this was of any interest to the Cabinet?

The Leader stated that both the Cabinet and officers had noted this idea and that this would be considered.

168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00-50-10)

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest if and when necessary.

169. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00-0516)**

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

170. **SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES (00-05-52)**

Following a report of the Director of Business Improvement and Operations the Community Policy Development Group had made the following recommendation: that the Single Equality Scheme and the Equality Objectives for 2022-2023 be adopted.

The Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services outlined the contents of the report highlighting the work that had been completed in the last year.

Consideration was given to the number of officers trained in mental health first aid, the accessibility of Phoenix House and whether Members should be trained in first aid

RESOLVED that the Single Equality Scheme and the Equality Objectives for 2022-2023 be adopted.

(Proposed by Cllr C J Eginton and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for the decision - To ensure that the Council was in compliance with the Equality Act 2010

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

171. **SAFEGUARDING CHILDRENS AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY AND PROCEDURES (00-13-13)**

Following a report of the Director of Business Improvement and Operations, the Community Policy Development Group had made the following recommendation: that the Safeguarding Children's and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures be adopted.

The Cabinet Member for the Working Environment and Support Services outlined the contents of the report stating that over the last year the number of referrals and allegations made by officers totalled 41 incidents, 33 of the referrals had been made by the Housing Service.

Consideration was given to the work of the Housing Officers, their daily dealings with the public and how proactive they had been in recognising issues.

RESOLVED that the Safeguarding Children's and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures be adopted.

(Proposed by Cllr C J Eginton and seconded by Cllr Mrs C P Daw)

Reason for the decision: To ensure that the Council met its legal obligations in respect to safeguarding and child protection

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

172. **CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24 - MID POINT REVIEW (00-16-40)**

The Cabinet had before it and noted a *report of the Chief Executive considering the progress against delivery for the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 at its midway point.

The Leader outlined the contents of the report stating that it had been two year's since the Council adopted its second Corporate Plan and that now was the time to reflect on the progress of delivery and refresh the plan as necessary. The plan had been adopted just weeks prior to the start of the pandemic which had impacted on some of the delivery strands.

Consideration was given to:

- The designation of the Exe Valley AONB and whether any progress had been made on the proposal, the process for designating an area of outstanding natural beauty and whether the idea should be put on hold until the Government changed its processes
- The Mid Point Review would be considered by the Policy Development Groups and return to Cabinet for further consideration with a view to updating the Corporate Plan with refreshed delivery priorities

Note: *Report previously circulated copy attached to minutes.

173. **JUNCTION 27 AND 28 REPORT (00-26-54)**

The Cabinet had before it and noted a * report from the Director of Place providing an update on work being undertaken to progress opportunities for business growth by development at the motorway junctions in Mid Devon.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report welcoming the proactive approach of the Economy Policy Development Group to ensure a sustained focus on the promotion of sustainable economic development within the district.

Focussing on Junction 27, he informed the meeting that no plans for the site had been progressed, the Eden Project had secured funding to further refine and develop their proposals, there was a need to revisit some of the original assumptions owing to the passage of time since the original scheme was proposed and that officers were proactively working to engage landowners in a discussion about the future development of the allocated land.

With regard to Junction 28, he advised that an employment and skills study was currently underway which would consider opportunities for further economic growth and development in the area, specifically aligned to the new Garden community. He added that the Plan Mid Devon would be looking at both junctions and that any changes to planning policy would need to be driven through the Local Plan policy route.

Addressing the issues raised in Public Question Time any changes in policy would need to go through the Local Plan process or the landowners could choose to put in an exception to the policy.

Consideration was given to:

- The need to engage with residents and local people
- The involvement of the Economy Policy Development Group, the proximity of the two junctions and that they should be viewed as a whole considering prospects for both junctions together
- The need to consider the economic development of the whole of the district
- How the Policy Development Group could be involved in the Local Plan process considering background documents and evidence as it was made available
- Economic growth at Junctions 25 and 26

Note *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

174. **DEVOLUTION AND THE 'COUNTY DEAL' (00-48-52)**

The Cabinet had before it and noted a *report of the Chief Executive updating the Cabinet on the status and progress of the county deal discussions for Devon.

The Leader outlined the contents of the report stating that through the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper, local authority partners within Devon, Plymouth and Torbay had been offered an opportunity to negotiate a new style of devolution deal for the area. To facilitate discussions, local authority partners had identified a number of initial thematic areas on which they wished to focus; this was an opportunity to shape decision making locally without an Elected Mayor

Consideration was given to:

- The need for regular updates when information was available
- Governance arrangements

Note *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

175. **PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY - POST CONSULTATION (1-05-07)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Director of Place recommending the approval of the Mid Devon Playing Pitch Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report stating that the public consultation process had taken place and that 32 responses had been received which had been considered by officers and the consultant. The Playing Pitch Strategy had been updated through three amendments to the site actions plans and comments had been received in relation to the population forecasts which had been considered. The strategy included a vision and 6 key objectives for sports pitch provision in the district and recommended the provision of a full size 3G football turf pitch in each of the three main towns.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Mid Devon Playing Pitch Strategy be approved.
- b) The status of the Strategy as a technical document and the recommendations therein (including the setting up of a Strategy Delivery Group) be noted.

(Proposed by Cllr R J Chesterton and seconded by Cllr C R Slade)

Reason for the decision – the Playing Pitch Strategy will support the development of sports facilities across the district and be a technical document to aid planning permissions and local planning policy.

Note *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes.

176. FINANCIAL MONITORING (1-10-58)

The Deputy Chief Executive provided a verbal update in respect of the income and expenditure so far in the year. He informed the meeting that the HRA and the General Fund were trending close to budget; the outturn would be reported to the Policy Development Groups and the Cabinet; the collection rates for Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debtors had all performed well. He paid tribute to the work of the Council Tax Team who had delivered all of the grant schemes throughout the pandemic and were now working on the Energy Rebate Scheme. He reported that the pay award had been settled and that agency spend had increased due to Covid levels amongst frontline staff.

177. PERFORMANCE AND RISK (1-16-30)

The Cabinet had before it and noted a *report of the Corporate Manager for People, Performance and Waste providing Members with an update on the performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets.

The following items were raised:

- Car charging usage was well above the target
- The corporate tree planting scheme
- The carbon zero proposals for the Post Hill development
- Whether the risks associated with reduced funding and 3 Rivers Development Limited could be reworded

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

178. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (1-20-51)

The Cabinet had before it and noted a *report of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) providing the Cabinet with an update on how the Continuous Improvement process was working after its implementation in March 2021.

The officer outlined the contents of the report highlighting the table within the report which identified the issues raised with the three directors and the specific service

changes/improvements in the following services, planning enforcement, car parking income collection, abandoned vehicles, public health and housing.

The Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement outlined her work and the improvements made to date.

Note: *Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes

179. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (1-25-02)**

The Cabinet had before it and noted it's *rolling plan for May 2022 containing future key decisions.

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

180. **3 RIVERS DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED - PERFORMANCE UPDATE (1-26-36)**

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 informed the meeting of the uplift in the projected income forecast for St Georges Court having taken into consideration increased costs for materials and labour and he reported that the marketing scheme was being progressed.

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

181. **3RDL BUSINESS CASE FOR A NEW SITE AND CONSIDERATION OF CHANGES TO COUNCIL BORROWING ARRANGEMENTS (1-30-35)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) reviewing the request for further borrowing to support the business case and to consider the implications of recent changes to Council borrowing arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report explaining the change in Government guidance with regard to lending issues for projects outside of the district.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) outlined the impact on the Council's borrowing ability (via the PWLB) if it were to lend monies to 3 Rivers Development Limited for projects outside of the district

Consideration was given to:

- The impact of the Prudential Code on 3 Rivers Development Limited
- Whether the pan Devon combined authority would change the impact of the borrowing issues
- The need for an interim Business Plan to be considered

RESOLVED that: the Cabinet give its support to the business case, but does not offer to provide finance for this project, or any others outside of the District boundary, based on the recent changes to Government lending.

(Proposed by Cllr R B Evans and second by Cllr B A Moore)

Reason for the Decision – Investing in projects outside of Mid Devon would impact on the Capital Programme and the borrowing already planned

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

182. **DIRECTORS REMUNERATION OF 3 RIVERS DEVELOPMENT LIMITED (1-49-18)**

The Cabinet had before it a *report of the Deputy Chief Executive in order to comply with the current governance arrangements under schedule 2 of the Shareholder Reserved Matters, the level of remuneration of a company Director was a reserved matter for the Shareholder, and that this was currently a Cabinet decision.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report.

RESOLVED that in view of all the current terms and conditions of employment, the Council does not approve the proposed remuneration level.

(Proposed by Cllr R B Evans and seconded by Cllr B A Moore)

Reason for the decision - the level of remuneration of a company Director is a reserved matter for the Shareholder.

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

(The meeting ended at 11.51 am)

CHAIRMAN