

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 19 April 2022 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

B G J Warren (Chairman)
S J Clist, Mrs F J Colthorpe, L J Cruwys,
P J Heal, F W Letch, S Pugh, R F Radford
and Mrs E J Slade

Apologies

Councillor(s)

Mrs S Griggs and Mrs E J Lloyd

Also Present

Councillor(s)

E J Berry, J Buczkowski, Mrs C P Daw, C J Eginton and
B Holdman

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Karen Trickey (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Tanya Wenham (Operations Manager for Public Health and Housing Options), Julia Ryder (Community Safety & Emergency Planning Officer), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

141 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.03.16)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs H S Griggs and Mrs E J Lloyd. Cllr E J Berry attended via Zoom.

142 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN (0.03.31)

Cllr S J Clist was duly elected Vice Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

143 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.05.36)

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

144 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.05.43)

There were no members of the public present.

145 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.05.57)**

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

146 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0.06.31)**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 5th April 2022 had been called in.

147 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.07.24)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

148 **DRAFT STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN (0.07.24)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste presenting an updated establishment report and the draft staff survey action plan.

The Officer outlined the contents of the report and explained that it was a follow up report and provided detail on an independent staff survey completed from September 2021 to October 2021.

He explained that the pandemic had made a difference to the result and had highlighted numerous challenges faced by employees which included hybrid working.

Consideration was given to:

- A wide range of services were offered to employees with regard to their wellbeing and mental health
- Updated employment offerings would have an impact on budgetary considerations
- The Council was looking at a myriad of solutions to tackle the shortfall in recruitment. It could not afford not to look at its employment offerings to attract permanent staff due to the increase in costs in employing temporary agency staff to cover the shortfall
- Existing levels of employee pay would not be lowered but the wider employment offer may change (subject to role, service requirements and budget)
- The pandemic had highlighted challenges with communication as staff were working in different ways and the Council was looking to address this including the introduction of staff briefings
- The survey was sent to all staff and departments and included questions from the independent facilitator
- The acronym PDR stood for Professional Development Review
- Scrutiny would receive progress against the action plan at its 6 monthly Establishment review report

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

149 **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (0.26.43)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing presenting the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Annual Report for 2021-2022.

The Specialist Lead Community Safety & Emergency Planning Officer outlined the contents of the report and explained that it gave Members the opportunity to look at how the partners were working together.

She explained that the Community PDG had agreed the priorities of the CSP by way of a working group to define the options available.

She further explained that the way the CSP was funded was changing from 2022-2023 and it would no longer receive a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to distribute to local groups and organisations. In future the individual groups would need to apply directly to the PCC for funding, and the CSP would assist them with their applications. The CSP would receive direct funding from additional sources but this would be ongoing and full details of this was not yet known.

Consideration was given to:

- The issues that local groups would now face in obtaining direct funding from the PCC
- The scheme for 2021-2022 was open to all organisations across Mid Devon and annex 1 of the report provided details of where the PCC funding was spent
- The groups previously funded directly from the CSP qualified for funds from other sources and did not rely solely on the PCC grant to operate
- The argument to introduce body worn surveillance cameras for District Enforcement Officers was under review
- All staff received safeguarding training
- The Community PDG would be considering the Council becoming trauma informed over the summer

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

150 **FORWARD PLAN (1.05.42)**

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

Note: *Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes

151 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT (1.06.15)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Chairman's Annual Report.

The Chairman thanked the Scrutiny Officer, Committee Clerk and Members of the Committee for their support over the previous 12 months.

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

152 SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (1.10.59)

The Scrutiny and Policy Research Officer provided the following update:

- Programming Panel: The Chairman had proposed a Programming Panel meeting next week. Chairs of Scrutiny Audit, PDG'S plus the Chief Executive and the Leader to review the work of the 6 bodies. This would be to take a brief review of current work programmes, progress and to see if anything needed tweaking. Members would also be looking to agree to do some work programming and then to come back together once that was completed.
- Participatory budgeting - Meetings were held with Cllrs Lloyd, Moore and the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) last week to discuss participatory budgeting. It had been agreed to bring a proposal form for a spotlight review on this to the next Scrutiny meeting, with the idea being that a spotlight review would look at how participatory budgeting worked, how it was currently being used in other organisations (and the impact) and consider if there were any projects or ways for MDDC to use it in the budgeting processes.
- Bio-energy – The Chairman and the Scrutiny Officer would be speaking to Torrington Council on this next week to encourage them to join the review.
- Broadband – There was no update on broadband and are awaiting confirmation of who will take over from Paul Nethercott. The Scrutiny Officer apologised to those members who were awaiting meetings. If there was no satisfactory answer soon, the Committee may want to consider a different approach.

153 WORK PLAN (0.14.20)

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the Scrutiny work plan for the municipal year.

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

(The meeting ended at 3.31 pm)

CHAIRMAN