

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 25 July 2022 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

S J Clist (Chairman)
G Barnell, E J Berry, L J Cruwys,
Mrs S Griggs, F W Letch, Mrs E J Lloyd,
S Pugh, R F Radford, Mrs E J Slade and
A Wilce

Also Present

Councillor(s)

J Buczkowski, R M Deed, R Evans and B G J Warren

Also Present

Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), Maria De Leburne (Operations Manager for Legal and Monitoring), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance), 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), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

12 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE (0.03.55)**

There were no apologies or substitute Members.

13 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.04.09)**

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

14 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.04.18)**

There were no questions from members of the public present.

15 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.04.27)**

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

Notes:

- i. Two proposals to amend the minutes of the last meeting were not supported
- ii. Cllrs G Barnell and A Wilce requested that their votes against the decision be recorded
- iii. Cllrs L J Cruwys, F W Letch and Mrs E J Lloyd requested that their abstention from voting be recorded

16 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0.19.52)

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 12th July 2022 had been called in.

17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.20.05)

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the next scheduled meeting on 22nd August 2022.

18 WHISTLEBLOWING 6 MONTH UPDATE (0.20.27)

The Committee **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing instances in the previous 6 months.

19 LEADERS ANNUAL REPORT (0.21.23)

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the Leaders Annual Report for 2021-2022.

The Leader informed the Committee that he had not received any advance questions and that an updated report would be presented to the next Audit Committee.

Consideration was given to:

- There was currently no data available to confirm how many failures of the Homes for Ukraine's scheme had occurred in Mid Devon
- The Government had allowed Ukrainian refugees to move schemes if a breakdown in families occurred which enabled them to stay in the UK
- If any Ukrainian refugees became homeless in Mid Devon due to break down of relationships with their hosts that the Council had a statutory requirement to rehome them and officers remained committed to helping refugees
- Members request that data on affordable housing be updated and included in future reports
- Members gratitude to the Revenue and Benefits Service for the high collection rates of Business Rates and Council Tax

Note: *report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

20 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (0.35.49)

The Committee had before it the Terms of Reference for a spotlight review into Participatory Budgeting.

Cllr Mrs E J Lloyd introduced the proposal and explained the review would look at how the Council could bring communities into the budget setting process.

The Corporate Manager for Finance explained that the review would need to be limited to smaller projects as the majority of the Council's budget was spent on mandatory services. He explained that some smaller projects were already open to public participation through the S106 Contributions process.

The Leader stated that the Members set the budget, not officers and that anything which brought the public into the process would be welcomed.

The Scrutiny Committee **AGREED** to the Terms of Reference for a spotlight review into Participatory Budgeting.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs E J Lloyd and seconded by Cllr G Barnell)

It was therefore **AGREED** that the following Members of the Scrutiny Committee take part in the Spotlight Review:

- Cllrs Mrs E J Lloyd and S J Clist
- The Cabinet Member for Finance would also be invited to take part in the review

Note: *Terms of Reference previously circulated and attached to the minutes

21 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee reviewed the current *Forward Plan and *Scrutiny Work Plan and **NOTED** the following items:

- Forward Plan – no items were identified for pre Scrutiny
- An update from the Policy Research Officer who stated she would chase East Devon District Council for a commitment into a joint project to look into the Bio Energy Industry and would also extend an invitation to Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- There had been some suggestions for work highlighted at the informal meeting on 11th July 2022 which had been added to the Work Plan for the remainder of 2022-2023
- Members requested the voids report being prepared by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services and the Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement be presented to the Scrutiny Committee
- Members requested that a report on the Councils involvement in the Homes for Ukraine scheme be presented to the Scrutiny Committee

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

(The meeting ended at 3.22 pm)

CHAIRMAN