

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**
held on 19 July 2022 at 5.30 pm

Present Councillors

E J Berry, W Burke, S J Clist, Miss J Norton,
R F Radford, R L Stanley and L D Taylor

Apologies Councillor(s)

J Wright

Also Present Councillor(s)

D R Coren, B G J Warren, J Buczkowski, Mrs C P Daw,
R M Deed, Mrs E J Lloyd and C R Slade

Also Present Officer(s):

Jill May (Director of Business Improvement and Operations), 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), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Jessica Watts (Member Services Apprentice) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

16 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.41)

Apologies were received from Cllr J Wright who was substituted by Cllr S J Clist.

Cllr E J Berry chaired the meeting.

Cllrs D R Coren and B G J Warren attended via ZOOM.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.03.03)

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

18 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.13)

Laura Conyngham, a local resident, referring to the Climate Change Action Plan update stated:

At your meeting on 24th May, I was on zoom and could not be heard, so my question was spoken for me. This evening I am here in person. I have driven from Crediton in our tatty VW Polo X reg car. When it dies, I will need to be able to use a Co-car.

On 24th May I asked about action being taken to facilitate Co Cars Exeter's ambition to put electric club cars, for hire, on the Market Street and St Saviours Way car parks in Crediton.

From the council's reply that day, two, or possibly three, remote meetings had already taken place with Co-Cars. Another was scheduled for early June. Quotes from other firms, who might possibly be competitive, were being sought and all this would be presented in a further paper to the Environment Policy Development Group in July 2022, (today).

To members of Crediton COP26 Action group, this seems slow progress, while extraordinary temperatures show that the Climate Crisis is here. Co Cars in Crediton has been 'on the table' for some twelve months, and neighbouring authorities - Exeter, Teignbridge and East Devon – are making significant progress.

Please will the council provide an update on actions and progress since your meeting on 24th May?

In response the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change stated that the Government offered funding for electric vehicle charging points and that the Council had secured funding for additional points to be installed in its car parks by the end of 2022.

He confirmed that officers had made contact with Co Cars but that they had yet to provide a detailed business plan. Once a plan had been received it would be used to benchmark car sharing options available and that additional options would be sought from alternative suppliers.

He explained that the offering to car share groups by Co Cars would not be dependent on the use of Council owned car parks and that alternative locations such as on street facilities and car share owners driveways had been used by the company in other locations outside of the district.

19 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.09.07)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2022 were agreed as a true record and duly **SIGNED** by the Vice Chairman.

20 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.10.14)**

The Vice Chairman had no announcements to make.

21 **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE (0.10.19)**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change gave an update on his portfolio and explained that in anticipation of the 3 weekly bin collections the residual waste bins and seagull sacks were being delivered to households. The bins and sacks included leaflets with frequently asked questions which would assist householders with the changes.

He explained that the public could request additional bins and sacks and that the Parish Council's had been advised of the roll out.

He provided detail of increased evening patrols by district officers in the town centres and car parks to tackle litter enforcement and that 48 abandoned cars had been dealt with in the previous 6 months.

Consideration was given to:

- All rounds are currently being reviewed prior to the roll out of three weekly to accommodate the new collections
- Paper copies of the waste and recycling schedules would be made available to all and the Parish Council's had the option to download and print a copy from the Council's website if required
- That people could request an alternative to the waste residual bins, such as seagull sacks, if required and the letters sent to residents would explain the process
- The removal of abandoned cars was cost neutral to the Council and if the registered owner could be traced it would be followed up with a fixed penalty notice

22 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (0.19.50)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist providing an update on the Climate Change Action Plan.

The officer explained that the decarbonisation of the leisure centres was underway with plans being developed to install ground heat source pumps.

A new art mural had been painted on a wall owned by the Council in the Tiverton Pannier Market. Sustainable Tiverton had worked with artist Kate Crawford and local people to turn a "Net Zero Vision" into a public artwork to inspire community ideas and actions for a low carbon future. It had been funded by a number of external bodies.

He gave an overview of the Council's offering at the upcoming Mid Devon Show and explained that the theme would concentrate on environmental sustainability and officers on site would be accompanied by a range of sustainability specialists.

In response to a question asked about how the Council was doing against its target of Net Zero by 2030 the officer explained that the latest carbon footprint data was being investigated by Exeter University so the 2021-2022 figures was not yet known. He stated that there was more to be done to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including investment in additional electric vehicle charging points and that the investment to decarbonise the leisure centres would make a big difference to the Councils carbon footprint.

Consideration was given to:

- Members requested that the update reports provided more concise focus on what had actually been achieved rather than restating past achievements

- That engagement with the community was ongoing with contact being made with local sustainability groups to align the Council's communications with what people wanted to see
- Members were invited to the Mid Devon Show stand in order that they could introduce the Climate and Sustainability Specialist to members of the farming community
- There were financial constraints with moving the action plan at a faster pace as there were lots of different organisations bidding for grants from the Government
- The Hydro scheme for the river Exe was moving forward and a report on costs and data would be brought to the project board when completed
- The bid for funding for the decarbonisation of the Councils social housing stock had not been successful but officers would keep applying for funding opportunities
- Members could refer topics about sustainability to the Net Zero Advisory Group for conversation and research

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

23 **PLAY AREA SAFETY INSPECTION POLICY (0.49.20)**

The Group had before it the *Play Area Risk Assessment and Safety Inspection Review from the Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change.

The officer explained that the review detailed the way in which the Council managed its play area risk assessments and safety inspections.

He explained that the last review had been undertaken in 2019 and that currently the Council had 83 play areas, 17 play areas were leased to Parish Councils and there were 3 closed sites. The Council carried out 2000 inspections a year by qualified Council employees and independent surveys were completed to maintain quality control.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Cabinet:

- 1) That the current risk assessments and safety inspections were considered adequate to meet the Council's responsibilities and for individual pieces of play equipment to be identified on the risk assessment forms
- 2) That digital transformation of the current inspection method would make the task more efficient and implementation of a process would be expedited

(Proposed by Cllr L D Taylor and seconded by Cllr S J Clist)

Reason for the decision: The Council was required to have a maintenance and inspection regime for its play areas as stated within the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Note: *Assessment and Review previously circulated and attached to the minutes

24 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK OUTTURN REPORT (1.02.57)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Performance and Risk Outturn report for 2021/2022 from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste.

The Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste outlined the contents of the report and explained that it provided Members with an annual review of the Council's performance against the corporate plan, service objectives and targets for 2021/2022.

Consideration was given to:

- Members appreciation of the high rates of collection for Council Tax and Business Rates at 96% and confirmation that a report detailing the reasons for the 4% not collected was due to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in August
- Members would be provided with additional detail on how complaints were determined to have been closed
- £42m had been issued in business rate grants over the past 2 years
- Members would be provided with additional data on planning appeals granted for non-determination
- Funding had been received from the Governments levelling up fund by the Eden Project to develop plans for junction 27. No Council funds had been used

Note: *Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

25 **ENVIRONMENT ENFORCEMENT; REVIEW AND WAY FORWARDS (1.22.42)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a *report from the Environment and Enforcement Manager on Environment Enforcement, a review and way forwards.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and explained that it provided a summary of the quarterly performance statistics in relation to the Environment and Enforcement service. It also provided a vision on service development moving forward.

Consideration was given to:

- The Council had arranged access to use the Traffic Penalty Tribunal Service in order that fixed penalty notices could be issued for littering from vehicles
- The use of body worn camera's and other forms of CCTV surveillance equipment was being investigated
- Members concerns that anti-social behaviour including fly tipping was not being addressed in rural areas

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

26 **WORK PROGRAMME (1.35.04)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the *Environment PDG Work Plan for 2022-2023.

The Group agreed that in regard to electric vehicle car sharing options an update would be brought to the PDG at the September meeting as part of the Climate Change Action Plan update. An options paper would be brought to the PDG in November with recommendations to the Cabinet to progress available solutions.

Note: *Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes

(The meeting ended at 7.08 pm)

CHAIRMAN