

## **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
held on 11 October 2022 at 5.30 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

J Wright (Chairman)  
E J Berry, W Burke, Miss J Norton,  
R L Stanley and B G J Warren

### **Apologies**

#### **Councillor(s)**

R F Radford and L D Taylor

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillor(s)**

D R Coren, S J Clist, L J Cruwys, 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), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Clare Robathan (Policy and Research Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

## **27 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.36)**

Apologies were received from Cllr R F Radford and Cllr L D Taylor.

Cllr D R Coren attended via ZOOM.

## **28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.02.57)**

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations where appropriate

## **29 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.13)**

There were no members of the public present

## **30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.03.42)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were agreed as a true record and duly **SIGNED** by the Chairman

## **31 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.04.28)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make

32 **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE (0.04.38)**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change gave an update on his portfolio and stated the 3 weekly bin collections had commenced and gave thanks to the crews and officers for their work in rolling out the service. He confirmed that 95% of black bins and seagull sacks had been delivered and that black bin liners left out during the initial stages of the changeover would be collected and crews would educate the public on the best ways to recycle.

An options paper to introduce weekly recycling would be brought to the PDG and Members were advised to contact Street Scene if residents reported that seagull sacks or bins had not been received. A decision had been made early on to provide 180 litre black bins and this would be more than adequate for most households if they increased their recycling rates.

In addition the Cabinet Member reported that 180 abandoned vehicles had been solved and dealt with during the last period.

In response to a question asked he confirmed that the 2 weekly garden waste service would remain over the winter period as this was a paid for service.

33 **CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (0.11.43)**

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 report before Members was a more concise version which excluded repetition. It included Audit recommendations and action plan as well as the Climate Action Plan update. Options for the progress of electric vehicle car charging had been included and the officer asked for a steer from the Group on which way they would like officers to investigate.

The officer highlighted the increase in Council's carbon footprint by circa 3k tonnes per annum in 2021-2022 and gave the following reasons for the increase:

- A much higher spend than the previous year on carbon neutral projects
- More energy use in buildings due to required ventilation during the pandemic

He highlighted some positives:

- 53% of the Council's electricity consumption was certified renewable
- Hybrid working had reduced business travel and staff commuting
- 10 electric vehicles to be delivered to the Council's transport fleet in December
- New low carbon energy systems were being installed in the Leisure Centres

Consideration was given to:

- 5 new sites had been identified for additional electric vehicle charging points across the Council's car parks in Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton which would provide 10 rapid charge points (5 sites with 2 charging bays each)
- The charge points operator/ supplier will use 100% renewable electricity

- Solar panels on Council houses might have life spans of 25 years but would lose efficiency over time but this would be looked into
- The stakeholder engagement for the Hydro Scheme was ongoing
- The website signposted individuals to groups and organisations with regard to sustainable farming
- Officers would investigate whether information regarding grants for energy usage and energy saving could be provided on the website
- As noted in Audit there were opportunities for progressive procurement linked to training

In response to officers request to highlight preferred green travel options Members responded that a mixture of options A & B should be explored but further research would be required. Members also expressed a concern that communities within the district may not be of such a size that any of the options would be viable.

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

#### 34 **ENVIRONMENT ENFORCEMENT UPDATE REPORT - Q1 (0.50.48)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a \*report from the Environment and Enforcement Manager providing the Q1 report for the Environment and Enforcement service.

Members were pleased to be informed that District Officers had been provided with body worn cameras for personal health and safety but were concerned that the devices could not be used to capture evidence of crimes and general surveillance. Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste clarified that although the cameras were procured on the basis of strengthening individual officer health and safety, footage gained from the cameras could potentially be used as long as it was compliant with GDPR guidance. The officer stated there was another paper due to come for quarter 2 in November and the position would be clarified at this meeting.

Members requested that officers look at providing receptacles for chewing gum disposal on lamp posts in the town centres.

In response to questions asked the Environment and Enforcement Manager explained that on average the time a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) was issued to a warrant being obtained to collect payment was 4 months but this timeframe was set in legislation and not under the control of the Council. Members requested more frequent reporting of the number of PCN's issued where payment had yet to be received.

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

#### 35 **WORK PROGRAMME (1.18.11)**

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

The Policy and Research Officer provided an overview of area's in which the Group had previously requested items be added to the work plan and requested a steer on which projects to take forward.

The Group agreed that the following be further investigated:

- Cycling and Walking Routes – Members requested that officers produce a cost benefit analysis to explore if routes were financially viable with the intention that a working group be set up to explore further possible options. It was noted that the Economy PDG were also looking at possibilities with the Forward Planning team so it may require a joint approach from both PDG's.

Members requested that the following be considered for a future item:

- Water quality in the districts rivers – was effluent being routinely discharged into our water courses and was the river quality as good as it could be. The Environment Agency and South West Water would be invited to attend a future meeting of the PDG to discuss the issue.

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

(The meeting ended at 7.03 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**