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## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
held on 24 January 2023 at 2.15 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

Mrs M E Squires (Chairman)  
W Burke, L J Cruwys, B Holdman, S Pugh  
and Mrs E J Slade

### **Also Present**

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

Mrs C Collis, S J Clist and Mrs C P Daw

### **Also Present**

#### **Officer(s):**

Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Fiona Keyes (Operations Manager for Revenues Benefits & Recovery), Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

#### 40 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.02.48)**

There were no apologies or substitute Members.

Cllr Mrs C Collis attended via ZOOM.

#### 41 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.02.56)**

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations where appropriate

#### 42 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.03.05)**

There were no members of the public present.

#### 43 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.03.14)**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

#### 44 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0.03.51)**

The Chairman had no announcements to make

#### 45 **THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME & EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP POLICY (0.04.10)**

The Group had before it a \*report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) providing a review into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme & Exceptional Hardship Policy.

The Operations Manager for Revenues and Benefits explained that there were changes to the policy required and that officers were looking to review and amend the current scheme in order to expand the assistance for our customers from 85% to 100% relief.

A customer survey had been conducted with over 1000 responses in favour of amending the scheme.

Consideration was given to:

- MDDC would only bear 11% of the costs circa £56K
- The cost to DCC would be circa £356K
- Pensioners were protected by schemes set by Government
- North and East Devon had proposed similar schemes

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

- 1) TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM REDUCTION FROM 85% TO 100%
- 2) TO DISREGARD THE HOUSING ELEMENT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN THE CALCULATION
- 3) TO INCREASE THE INCOME BANDS BY INFLATION EACH YEAR
- 4) THAT ANY INCOME FROM WELFARE PROVISION TO BE DISREGARDED
- 5) THAT THIS POLICY IS ADOPTED

(Proposed by the Chairman)

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

#### 46 **DRAFT BUDGET (0.12.58)**

The Group had before it a \*report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) providing the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Corporate Manager for Finance explained the current position by way of a presentation and advised Members that he was looking for a steer on which service areas should be considered high priority and therefore protected as far as possible and those services the committee considered to be a lower priority and would accept savings being made.

Consideration was given to:

- The largest driver was inflation specifically pay awards, energy costs and fuel
- Service pressures included pension contributions, climate change commitments, infrastructure and less reliance on New Homes Bonus
- Options included vacancy management in lower priority services

After discussion the PDG **AGREED** that officers should consider the following:

- Planned maintenance within Leisure services being reduced, as long as this does not impact on health and safety.

(Proposed by Cllr S Pugh and seconded by Cllr W Burke)

- A vacancy factor be set for Leisure services, as long as this does not impact on health and safety or income generation.

(Proposed by Cllr S Pugh and seconded by Cllr Mrs E Slade)

In addition the PDG **AGREED** that officers should not consider the following:

- Savings within Community Safety as this should be considered a high priority service area which should be protected.

(Proposed by Cllr S Pugh and seconded by Cllr W Burke)

- Savings within Public Health as this should be considered a high priority service area which should be protected.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs E Slade and seconded by Cllr Mrs M E Squires)

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

#### 47 **WORK PROGRAMME (1.04.15)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*Community Policy Development Group Work Plan for 2022-2023.

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

(The meeting ended at 3.23 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

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